

Cartoon Controversy: Semiotic Analysis of Political Cartoon by Zunar Portraying the Issue of 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB)

Syaza Marina Ramli¹
Mokhtar Muhammad²

*Centre for Media and Information Warfare Studies
Faculty of Communication and Media Studies
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)
40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, MALAYSIA*

*syaza.marina@gmail.com¹
mokhtar413@uitm.edu.my²*

Received Date: 2/2/2019 Accepted Date: 14/5/2019 Published Date: 30/6/2019

ABSTRACT

As 1MDB rose into one of the most controversial issue in the political arena, a Malaysian cartoonist known as Zunar took the storm as well for constantly being arrested for a crime of provocative political drawings believed to mock the government and the leaders. The results of this study would provide insights into understanding the meanings and determine the real depictions behind his caricature drawings on the event of 1MDB. This study analyses the semiotic meanings behind the illustrations made by Zunar and the most prominent political cartoon elements he used in the illustration to portray the controversial political issue of 1MDB. The study employed a qualitative content analysis as the mode of the research. Two instruments namely coding sheets were used: an adopted standardised coding sheet designed by U.S. National Archives and Record Administration to analyse the cartoons – visual, words, and colour, and another coding sheet which was

ISSN 1985-563X

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constructed based on standardised elements of political cartoons – symbolism, exaggeration, labelling, analogy, and irony – by Library of Congress and Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation. Results on the semiotic meanings of Zunar’s drawings on 1MDB issue showed that he was depicting the real-life events, and mocking political individuals involved accordingly to facts and news released several days before his cartoons were published. Most of his works contained elements of political cartoons without crossing rules that would sometimes were done excessively by other political cartoonists.

Keywords: *1MDB, caricature, political cartoon, semiotic, Zunar*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) is a government-linked company that was established in 2009 as a strategic development company for the country to initiate a strategic drive for Malaysia economic development in long-term through the construct of worldwide partnerships and direct foreign investment. The company is currently involved with high-profile projects that include Tun Razak Exchange, Bandar Malaysia, the acquirement of three Independent Power Producers and many more. 1MDB began to receive a number of controversies after several allegations were made against the company by several newspapers that include the Wall Street Journal [1]. The source believed that one of the biggest allegations that have been told by many is the funnelling of the state fund into the accounts owned by Prime Minister Najib Razak and those whom associated with him.

There are eight issues that need to be recognised as it could shape the politics in 2016 [2]. An article based on the U.S. 2016 presidential election shows a distinct policy differences between both candidates of the Republicans and Democrats. It was believed that the issues will tramped on the campaign route to define the nation’s election. The issues are listed as economy and jobs; terrorism or foreign policy; federal deficit and budget; wall street or equality; health care; immigration; environment and global

warming; and gun control.

On a daily basis, there is a notion of politicising nearly everything in life in which one may not be able to form anything without being intended to send a political message of some form [3]. Comics or cartoons has its own ways to capture and hold the reader's attention in which has make it being used as a propaganda tool. Surveys even showed the best well-read part of daily newspaper is the comic section. The form and structure of a comic art – combination of both words and pictures – provides a whole explanation that allows the illustrations to communicate the political agenda directly to the reader.

Generally, political cartoons could be considered as any types of illustration that contained political or social messages that normally in regard to current events or incidents. Political cartoons are intended to disseminate, and communication political information means as well as achieving goals [4]. It will all came down to the elements of political satiric drawings that cartoonists illustrate to form mental and emotional images into the mind of the readers. The ability of cartoons could not only evoke the attention of the less educated, but also the well-educated, politicians, as well as the government. It will tell its own stories related to any issues within the political realm.

In the context of Malaysia, Zunar made it to the top as the most controversial political cartoonists in the country. He is willing to wage imprisonment in the name of art [5]. Most of his cartoons will focus on the accusation of Prime Minister Najib Razak of deviating the state fund for millions of dollars. Zunar claimed that the Malaysian people have been oppressed from voicing out their opinions by the government and adopting other methods to express their feelings is what they have been doing through the use of drawings, cartoons, posters, even video clips.

1.2 Problem Statement

Political cartoons in general are a form of illustration that contains some sorts of commentary in order to express the cartoonist's opinion or viewpoint. The cartoons or caricatures were illustrated with aim to convey commentary in editorial's form namely towards politics, politicians, and other events. Most political cartoons are great in hyperbole and satire with combination of artistic skill, which could lead the meaning behind the cartoons to question the authority and dispute a variety of controversies among the politicians along the lines of corruption, political abuse, and many more [6]. In some government, the political cartoons may be one-sided towards the politician or government on certain issues. The political cartoons are rich in agenda-setting is creates another structure of a normative agenda that will represent the interests of certain political power.

Later in 2011, political cartoons are believed to sometimes cause controversies due to the illustration of the cartoons could violate opinions in a way that several neuroscientists and Freudians explained and found that cartoons as medium could be so threatening because it might be exaggerated, distorted, and biased [7]. Political cartoons are mostly drawn by the cartoonist to illustrate a political issue, the cartoonist's opinion, the audience's thoughts and opinion about the issue, and whether or not the cartoon appear persuasive which could lead to a sense of propagandising the issue. When propagandistic messages cohabit with the strategy of disseminating information, it will shift as propaganda strategies as the messages will be spread through a form of a medium [8].

In 2004, humour was stated to held as one of the most crucial element in a cartoon which can act as a mean of fun or a weapon. It will act as one of the fastest medium to deliver a particular viewpoint as well as a way of criticism and satire [9]. In Malaysia, humour has been used critically in cartoon to act as a weapon to refine the attitudes of Malay in general. The cartoons are used in humorous way to criticise, satirical, or even to reveal the contemporary issues flaws discovered locally or internationally. Portrait caricature began to emerge in Malaysia within the 1990s to criticise local issues. However so, local cartoonists are not completely aware of its

effectiveness as a weapon due to the culture of Malay that prohibits one to ridiculing others publicly. For some, they believe they are practising freedom of expression that centralise to a society that exercise democracy effectively but the receiving party might find that there should be limits to such freedom in expressing one's view [10].

Looking back in 1831, the case of Charles Philipon (1806-1862) was disclosed in which his caricature in weekly *La Caricature* was believed to have offended both the king and government of the day namely Louis-Philippe [11]. He was thrown in jail numerous of times on the offence of being satire. He offended the king for depicting his head as a pear – resembling the king's head and which also a sexual pun for French – and was required by the court to convince the jury by preparing sketches that did show how a pear resemble King Louis-Philippe's head. A law was then passed as a direct result of Philipon's case that requires the reduction of press freedom and efficiently banning political critiques as the government was convinced that it is too handful for them to control it leading to censorship to happen in France in 1948.

The central concern based on history, then, is the question to what extend Zunar and his illustrations really did pose a controversy? Following from this there is a cluster of several other questions. Zunar's drawings are believe to create controversies and putting the previous government and political leaders to feel uncomfortable or threaten by it, causing the cartoonist to be detained under several penal codes and as an act of crime; so in a democratic country like Malaysia today, is drawing cartoon depicting a local issue now considered as an act of crime? What makes the government or several political individuals to feel scared and threatened by what a cartoonist drew in a humorous way to caused him to be detained and imprisoned? How powerful can cartoons, caricatures, drawings, or illustrations could bring to somewhat shiver the government's spine? The controversies of cartoons are now perplexed as offense, identity, or oppression.

1.3 Research Objectives

- To understand the semiotic meanings behind the illustrations made by Zunar in portraying the issue of 1MDB.
- To analyse the most prominent political cartoon elements used by Zunar in his illustrations to portray the issue of 1MDB.

1.4 Scope and Limitation of Study

The scope of this study focused on the semiotics within the visual representation as well as the propaganda technique that was being implemented by Zunar in his cartoons in portraying the issue of 1MDB. A thorough analysis on the semiotics behind the visual representation or signs within the cartoons drawing has determined the meanings behind the issue as intended by the cartoonist which in this case, Zunar himself. The cartoons were selected based on which the issue of 1MDB dated within the peak of its controversy and it has been scope down until before the 2018 General Election took place.

Time constraint was one of the limitations for this study. The issue of 1MDB began ever since the year of 2009 and the issue has not yet seen to be resolved to this day. The issue became controversial after Malaysian Prime Minister took over the fund in 2009 after he turned the oil-rich state Terengganu into a development fund owned by the federal government. This has causes a state in which the Prime Minister need to be surrounded by scandals, ending up with numerous investigations towards 1MDB causing the nation and him to be linked with corruption along with economic disappointment by the entire nation due heavy debts of the company. Due to this particular condition, it has causes another limitation for this study in which there was a limited legitimate source to refer for this issue. In spite the fact that there is a lot of coverage on the issue of 1MDB, it will be difficult to separate the sources that will be categorised as facts, rumours, or even conspiracy.

1.5 Significance of Study

The study is important in order to understand the semiotics in the visual representation as well as the most prominent political cartoon elements used by Zunar in his illustrations in portraying the issue of 1MDB and learn how cartoons has the power to scarce a government to take action towards the creator or cartoonist by detaining them or taking a legal action against them. Ever since 1800s, cartoons have been used in order to deliver hidden messages to the audiences, not only it will include drawings of people or caricatures, but it could also include the use of signs that could be used in order to refer to the most controversial and prominent issue that the cartoonist want the audience to focus on.

Political cartoons are believed to be satirical and used to create a constructive debate on a political issue by any individuals or groups of people to advance their political interest against another political group as cartoons are considered as one of the powerful forms of communication due to the criticism done by the cartoonist against certain political issues or incidents within their drawings. Thus, it is important for us to understand if the cartoonist is trying to portray the truth about the political issue or just trying to controvert it for other political or just maybe as personal reasoning.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB)

According to 1MDB website, the Malaysian government established a strategic development company known as 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) in 2009 that was founded in regard to initiate long-term economic development for the country through the forge of global partnership and endorses foreign direct investment. 1MDB's vision is to be '*a strategic enabler for new ideas and sources of growth*' with mission '*to drive sustainable economic development by forging strategic global partnerships and promoting FDI.*' The focus of 1MDB is on development projects in the field of energy, real estate, tourism, as well as agribusiness.

The company then has been receiving a lot of controversies, that was made by certain newspapers that includes Wall Street Journal that alleged the Prime Minister, Najib Razak and some people associated with him to tap the state funds into their accounts [12].

The issue became controversial in Malaysia due to its financing aspects that include 1MDB's debt size and nature as well as the way they utilize its funds [13]. The allegation made towards 1MDB in 2009 is that the company was involved in financial obscenity that involved the company's debt that cost about US\$700 million. When this issue became controversial, the media began to cover more on 1MDB especially on their maturity disparity between the company's assets and liabilities as well as high debts amount. The company seemed to have some liquidity issues that several people began to question its solvency that later leads to other issues like lack of transparency and reliability of the information in regards of the utilization of the borrowings. 1MDB then got caught in court controversies due to the recent sale of one of the 1MDB land to Lembaga Tabung Haji (LTH). It is now appearing that 1MDB has become the political liability for Najib Administration as there have been allegations and attempt to connect 1MDB's financial distresses to corruption and fraud that was followed by the media recent revelation of the ruling-party politicians and their family's lavish lifestyle. The issue then intensifies with the increment of living cost and frustration towards the execution of Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 2015 as well [13].

In 2016, the timeline of 1MDB state fund controversy from which the Prime Minister Najib Razak ratify the fund in 2009, up to when the Malaysian Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) pinpoint an unauthorized transaction in 1MDB of at least the total of \$4.2 billion was published [14]. The Sydney Morning Herald (2016) released a timeline from the beginning of the establishment of 1MDB in 2009 up until when the US prosecutors decided to seize an amount of more than US\$1 billion of assets that is connected to the Malaysian state fund [15].

2.2 Cartoons and Politics

Cartoons was classified into five groups namely; *illustrative* - explain stories, part of teaching materials and advertisements; *comic strips* - funny and purposely to make the readers laugh, found in newspaper and magazine; *gag strips* - single picture that contained one or more sentences to produce laughter; *animated* - created using hand and computer that involve medium of movement; and *political* - carry viewpoint in regards with timely societal issue [16]. Speaking of political cartoons, it was believed that due to the nature of cartoons that could be easily absorbed and disseminate, it was considered as an influential weapon [17]. It was opionated that political cartoons could accumulate and formulate information as well as public opinion due to the humorous mediation that brought people equally regardless the ethnicity, class or gender. The cartoons are considered as a major medium in society and represent the interests of media ownership. Editorial cartoons were justified as an add-up to a constructive normative agenda or better known as agenda-setting [17].

However, cartoons were then categorised as structured works derived from hyperbole or twist of a subject with the intention of it to be satirical and entertaining [9]. Moreover, cartoons were frequently use as a tool to comment or criticise on any issues, events, or personalities. Cartoons mostly developed within society to represent or resemble it that includes a variety of cultural aspects. Cartoonists today will add humorous elements in their illustrations which provide joy as well as functioning as weapon to express a specific viewpoint. It was mentioned that critical humour in Malaysia today is loosely interpret based on the economic and socio-political condition of the country. The critical humour in cartoons today are used by cartoonists generally to critique, mock, or revealing the mistakes that can be obtain from contemporary issues domestically or globally in order to improve the attitude of Malays [9].

But then, cartoon and caricature was not seen as the same thing [11]. Cartoon as defined by The English Oxford Living Dictionaries is “*a simple drawing the features of its subjects in a humorously exaggerated way, especially a satirical one*”. As comparison to caricature, it is the cartoonist

attempt to portray an individual in an extricate characteristics that has been exaggerate for ludicrous and comic effect. It was narrated a political satire and father of English caricature art, William Hogarth (1697-1764) for developing a variety of satire-based style of narrative, as a result of his ability and skill in communication in making images to speak of morals, manners, corruption of politics, as well as social hypocrisy. Caricature on its own should be able to express its idea without the use of wordings and considered as an ever more flourishing awareness in society [11].

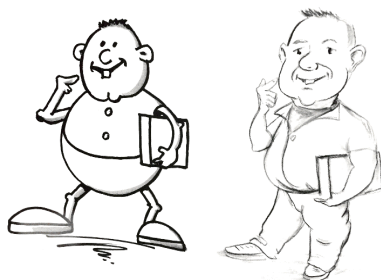


Figure 2.1 Comparison between Cartoon Figure and Caricatured Figure

Ever since 1930s, critical humour in Malay editorial cartoons were largely influenced by cultural and political factors that leads to the emerging of three types of editorial cartoons in Malaysia that illustrate local and foreign issues [9]. The first type to start with is cartoons that generally portray the political landscape by mocking the politicians as well as the political parties with no direct intent to particular individuals as target but instead most politicians are being criticised as a group by cartoonists for hypocrisy and corrupt political schemes. Next in the cartoons' type is the general depiction of Malay's social affairs that includes immoral activities such as gambling, adultery, loitering, road crashes, abortion and babies abandoning, environment issues, smoking and corruption. The last on the cartoon's type is the portrayal of global issues like Islamic world crises that cartoonists choose to tackle due to their Islamic background and the government's stance [9].

Political cartoon and communication work in the same line that was in order to deliver meaning and achieve an objective by using it as medium of disseminating political information [4]. Political cartoons are meant to deliver stories regarding societal issues in the political ground. Decoding the meaning of cartoons is difficult as it has obscure meanings, and only insiders can understand the message of the insiders' cartoon. The subjects in the cartoon are considered to be in terms of syntactic interpretation instead of semantic. Cartoons also have the power to be an alternative means of political communication. Cartoons are used to convey and encode meanings as it is formed from cartoonists' mental and emotional images of politics that was created in form of humorous drawings that goes straight into the readers' mind. The cartoons are able to stimulate the mind of audience regardless if they are less or well educated, politicians or governments. Cartoon art communication that includes angles of innuendos will help retaining propaganda objectives [4].

2.3 Semiotics – Signs, Signified, Signifier

In 1966, Ferdinand de Saussure initiates semiology and linguistic as a science that studies the function of signs in social life in the early 20th century [18]. Semiotics was associated to structuralism; an analysis method that attempt to investigate and disclose the complicated structure behind the phenomena presence known as the hidden rules that plan everything from the way people interact within any social contexts to the way stories are told and written. Saussure primary insight towards sign is that it was defined as the link between a *signifier* and the *signified*; and the relationship between them is considered as subjective. *Signifier* is the individual bear or create the meaning while *signified* is the meaning itself. The French conceptualise signal in which *signified* as “to judge” while *signifier* as *juger* which symbolises signification [18].

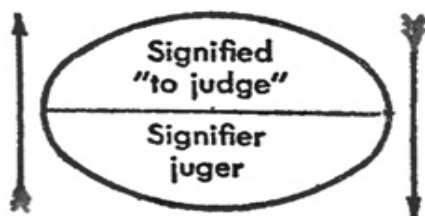


Figure 2.2 Diagram of Signal

Symbol was promptly eradicated with *sign* by Saussure that he considered as a combination of both signifier and signified or as sound-image as well as a concept. Saussure has left the *double articulation* principle in the theory of linguistic sign by distinguishing two different units namely; *significant unit* – enriched with a single meaning; and *distinctive unit* – do not provide blunt meaning but part of the form in constituting the second articulation [19]. The compound for signifier and signified constitutes as the plane of expression and plane of content respectively. The system of semiology contains expression substances that fundamentally not to sign, but to signify something (i.e. any objects or gestures that was used in daily life by society to imitate something).

Signified was observed by Barthes (1967) through several observations. First concern is the actualisation mode of semiological signifieds which can either happen *isologically* (a scientific study of reference) or not, without the implementation of the analyst's own metalanguages. In the end, the metalanguages and the system are most likely to be expected causing the signified analysis to be problematic. Another concern is towards the extension of semiological signifieds in which the function of signified as a system might be partly overlap further than to communicate. This brings us to the final concern that we need to consider each signifier's system will relate to the plane of signifieds that imply partly on consumer's system (taking into consideration the audience degrees of knowledge) in which they will decipher things in a different way accordingly to the individuals

concerned. As for *signifier*, it is considered as purely *relatum* (related to one concept and cannot be separated) to signified. Signifier can also communicate through a particular matter like words. It is befitting to gather all the signs within the concept of *typical sign* - verbal sign, graphic sign, iconic sign, and gestural sign [19].

Semiotics is involved with meaning on how language, images, or objects (representation) are being used to generate meanings [20]. It was also referring to the process when one apprehends or feature meanings in the representation. It was believed that semiotics is wider than just symbolism study and the adoption of semiotic analysis somewhat dispute several concepts like naturalism and realism, as well as intentionality. The significance of images is inferred as the result from complex inter-relationships between individuals, images or objects as well as other factors (like society and culture). Sign could be defined as things that refer to something else known as entity like words, images, objects, etc. The essence of representation has been perceived as resemblance and imitation making visual images to be frequently speculating as more direct and straightforward in its meaning and causes the relationship between the notion of expression and visual arts making arts to be regarded as instinctive, subliminal and vital than language [20].

2.4 Zunar Cartoonist

Zunar (or Zulkiflee Anwar Haque) is a Malaysian political cartoonist that has been drawing editorial cartoons for the past two decades. Zunar lived through his slogan '*How Can I Be Neutral, Even My Pen Has a Stand*' through his art in exposing corruption and violation of power committed by the Malaysian government which caused him to be banned from travelling abroad. Due to an attack by pro-government thugs, his exhibition in Penang was forced to cancel on November 2016. He was later arrested, detained and investigated on two different laws namely the Sedition Act and the Penal Code. Zunar is facing nine different charges on the obsolete Sedition Act (he has been behind bars under this act twice – two days on September 2010; and three days on February 2015) which if found guilty, he will face 43 years of imprisonment. The Malaysian government have banned

five of his cartoon books as the contents was referred as '*detrimental to public order*' which has causes his office to be raided and thousands of his cartoon books has been confiscated. Those associated with his books (printers, vendors, and bookstores) have been harassed and they have been warned to not print or carry the books or their premises and businesses will be harassed, raided or revoking of the license [21].

Zunar's earliest works were published in the magazine *Bambino* back in 1973 as well as in other newspapers and magazines like *Gila-Gila* (a publication owned by Creative Enterprise Sdn Bhd) and *Kisah Cinta* magazine. Due to the cynical and political nature of his cartoons, it began to attract the readers and publisher's attention that made his name to be so well-known by others when he joined the movement of Reformasi in 1998 (resulting from the sacking of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim who was then the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia). His participation with the movement has caused him to be detained along with the other activists. Zunar have been facing with several issues and controversies namely the banning of books, arrest for sedition, travel ban, book ban, detention, charges, office and printer raided, as well as arrestment of webmaster. His books and cartoons were believed to be containing sensitive issues such as the murder of Altantuya; Anwar Ibrahim's conspiracy; wife of Prime Minister Rosmah Mansor; corruption; racism; misuse of public funds; and many more [21].

Zunar took the Malaysian political arena by storm after he was being arrested time after times. Zunar was arrested by the police as early in 2010 under Section 4 (1) of the Sedition Act 1948 [22]. His premises and office was invaded by police officers, and he himself has been detained by the authorities due to his artworks, '*Cartoon-o-phobia*' was believed to be intimidating the government with reasons it could be threatening to public's order and influence others to cause riot against the previous ruling government.

Based on news report earlier in November 2016, Zunar was again detained by police due to him being suspected to be related to his paintings – believed to exhibits featured paintings that humiliates and insults previous government and its leaders which was considered as provocative and jeopardising public order – at a three-storey building of Kompleks Tun Abdul Razak (Komtar) under Section 4 (1) (C) of the Sedition Act 1948, while the investigation was conducted under Section 504 of the Penal Code [23].

According to one news report published in 2018, Zunar was once faced a situation on December 2016 when his assistant and two other civilians was arrested while attending his dinner event in KL & Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (KLSCAH) without any valid reasons for the arrest [24]. Later he was informed by the police that the investigation was conducted under Section 124 (C) of the Penal Code with attempt to perform activities that will affect the parliamentary democracy.

However, in 2014, Zunar has spoken in a news report saying that when he draws political cartoon, he will be held responsible for all the facts and not troubled by any leaders who felt to be defamed by his cartoons. He ought to face the law under a reasonable punishment instead of using criminal law to stop him from drawing any more cartoons. Zunar believes that political cartoonist could help in country development specifically in reminding the leaders on several issues as well as nurturing democracy. However so, he now believes that Malaysia see political cartoonists as the enemy of the state [25].

2.4 Operational Definition

Cartoons

The concept of cartoons were defined by English Oxford Living Dictionaries as a drawing that is simple through the presentation of its subjects' features in a humorous exaggerated means, particularly satirical. Derived from late 16th century of Italian word '*cartone*', and 19th century of Latin word '*carta*', cartoons can be defined as imitation or pictorial parody [27]. Operationally, through the use of caricatures, analogy and

juxtaposition in it enhance the public's point of view regarding contemporary or topical issues, events, political or even social trend. Cartoons usually include types of illustration that is in non-realistic or semi-realistic style [28].

Caricatures

According to English Oxford Living Dictionaries, caricature's concept was defined as description, picture, or imitation of an individual or person in which several striking features are exaggerated to create a comic or grotesque effect. Caricature was operationally defined as a form of visual communication that delivers messages in exaggerated drawings [29]. Caricatures was categorised in four modes namely; portrait (definition), satiric, comic or humorous (comedy), and grotesque [30]. Caricature in literature was considered as individual using exaggeration on a number of characteristics as well as oversimplification of others [31].

Semiotics

Semiotics could be easily defined as the study of sign that includes sign processes, designation, likeness, analogy, metaphor, symbolism and many more. The study of signs or semiology was first introduced by Saussure in 1966 to study the relationship between signs, its signifier and what it signified. Semiotics as a whole concerned with the meanings, how representation (i.e. language, images, and objects) generates meanings [20]. As for analysing the meaning of cartoons, U.S. National Archives and Record Administration constructed a cartoon analysis worksheet that requires the works to be analysed according to its visual, words and colour used in it through three level of analysis; (i) Level 1 – Signifier, (ii) Level 2 – Signified, and (iii) Level 3 – Description [32].

Political Cartoons

Political cartoons are considered as visuals that critique political events or issues with humour intended to make the audiences entertained from it [33]. Political cartoons explained in general provide specific frames on particular issues within specific time or place [34]. The cartoon with political theme in it will make a point on political issue or event that can

be funny with purpose of making audiences think upon it [35]. Political cartoons include elements of exaggeration, symbolism, analogy, irony and labelling to make up a drawing to be considered as political cartoons [36].

The operational definition of these terms was defined accordingly to the research interest or objectives namely the main variables in this study which are the cartoons, semiotics, and political cartoons. In general, operational definition specifies a clear-cut statement of how conceptual variables were used into measured the variables [37]. Operational definitions will facilitate a lesser misunderstanding by others on the collected data and allowing future researcher to replicate the study based on the specific definition provided by the previous researcher.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Framework

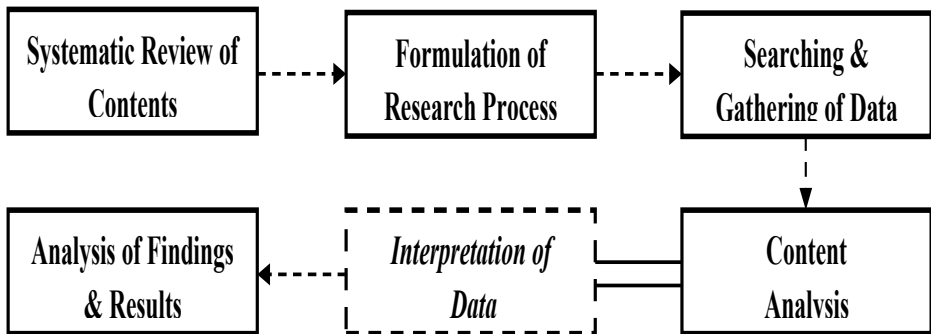


Figure 3.1 Research Framework

In order to conduct the study, a systematic review of contents was conducted in studying the contents as well as the context of the study itself. In this step, the elements of learning about the issue of 1MDB was discovered; additional information from literature review in regard to semiotics and political cartoons was reviewed in associate to the contents of Zunar’s cartoon drawings on the issue of 1MDB.

The main objective of the study is analysing the semiotics behind the cartoons as portrayed by Zunar in persuading the audiences on the issue of 1MDB and to identify the most prominent political cartoon elements used by Zunar in his illustrations in portraying the issue of 1MDB, thus the elements of those variables was identified during this process. A comprehensive analysis was conducted in order to find and identified the elements of political and how it is being used by cartoonist to convey messages.

A formulation of research process has been done in order to improve the understandings of the research itself. A well-formulated research process has enabled the study to be conducted in a systematic way without having to meet any limitations or researcher's difficulties due to lack of context and groundwork.

The next step is crucial as it involves the searching and gathering of data by which the research conducted should be able to analyse the semiotics in the visual representation as well as the political cartoon elements that has been employed by Zunar in his cartoons to portray the issue of 1MDB. A thorough semiotic analysis has become the main essential aspects that are required to be look into in Zunar's cartoons specifically on the issue of 1MDB. Other data has been put into disputes as a parameter of the study was set out in order to avoid the research from becoming too extensive it could have spoiled the specific aim as intended.

The stage of analysing the content requires only the specific cartoons made by Zunar containing the issue of 1MDB but limited within the period of which the issue hit its controversial peak. The content analysis process required a specialised coding sheet in order to help the qualitative analysis of contents and next the interpretation of the data carefully as according to the content of Zunar's cartoon on 1MDB issue in order to analyse the semiotics behind it as well as determining the controversy posed in the cartoon on 1MDB issue.

In the final process, a thorough analysis of the findings and results was collected from the sample and has been linked closely to the reviews

of literatures in order to formulate significantly crucial findings for the research to be discussed.

3.2 Research Design

Qualitative Research Method

In general, the study was conducted using a qualitative research approach that allows researcher to capture and determine the meanings within the data based on the research concepts [38]. Qualitative research data are mainly found in the forms of words and images that can be found from documents, observation, and transcripts. Adopting the case study of Zunar's political cartoon as its method, content analysis on its meanings was used to analyse parts of its content based on the context of this study.

Case Study Research Design

The study of semiotic analysis focusing on political cartoons by Zunar is considered as a case study research method in which it allows a complex issue to be explored and understand [39]. The controversy of the illustrations made by Zunar on Malaysia's political events causes the researcher to explore and investigate this issue based on a comprehensive contextual analysis of its cartoons, meanings, and their relationship. Typical case study research will use a wide range of evidence from different sources [40] and for this study, the evidence collected to be analysed are Zunar's political cartoons on 1MDB as well as newspaper's sources that was used for cross-referencing on his published works.

Content Analysis

Following the use of case study as research method, the study was conducted using content analysis as its research design as such method will be suitable with purpose of analysing the contents of the sample. This method is in favour for this study for its ability in becoming a mixed method that could reach the research standards. This approach selected for this study is considered secure, suitable and adequate to any research standards that are commonly employed throughout the world. This method has allowed the researcher to formulate a content-analytical rule that was

specifically designed for this study thus enabling the study to be conducted in its own specific framework.

3.3 Research Sampling

The research focused on the cartoons created by Zunar that used 1MDB as its theme. Zunar's cartoons were selected under the circumstance of purposive non-probability sampling in which the researcher uses its own judgment to make the selection of the sampling. Zunar is a Malaysian political cartoonist that has been drawing editorial cartoons for the past 20 years in aim to expose corruption and violation of power committed by the Malaysian government. Seven cartoons drawn by Zunar was selected accordingly to several real-life events that occurred in relation to 1MDB scandal namely, 1MDB GST, 1MDB Hole, 1MDB Grill, 1MDB Investigation, 1MDB FBI, 1MDB IPIC, and 1MDB Game. Cartoons will mainly attract the readers through its visual representation of a particular issue that will highlights the interest of the public which deemed important to the policy makers, thus making the research to focus on the semiotics of the cartoons as well as the most prominent political cartoon elements used by Zunar in his illustrations in portraying the issue of 1MDB. Political cartoons will normally attract the attention of the readers based on the visual representation (caricatures, symbols, etc.) used within the drawings to persuade the readers to focus on the issue.

3.4 Research Instrument

This study adopted the use of coding sheet as research instrument designed by the Education Staff, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington. The coding sheet was produced by U.S. National Archives and Record Administration as a standardised document analysis worksheet to analyse primary source documents in order to understand the context and extract information in order to make judgments. The worksheet could be used in the process of document analysis for any types of document that includes written documents, photos, artefacts, cartoons, videos, as well as sound recordings.

The worksheet allows the researcher to analyse parts of the cartoons according to its *visual*, *words*, and *colours* used in the illustrations. In order to full understand these parts, three-levels of analysis is required to be conducted following such accordance; (i) Level 1 (*Signifier*), (ii) Level 2 (*Signified*), and (iii) Level 3 (*Description*).

Visual Analysis

This section will analyse the visual representation of the cartoons that require three level of analysis. The first level will require the analysis of the signifier in which researcher will have to list the objects or people they see within the cartoon. Second level will require the analysis of the signified in which researcher need to identify which objects that has been listed are considered as symbols and explain what the symbol means. Third level of analysis will require the researcher to described the action in the cartoon and explain the message of the cartoon as well as identifying if the cartoons have any elements that may controvert the issue or not.

Word Analysis

This part will analyse the cartoons' words representation that also require three level of analysis. The first level will analyse the signifier in which researcher will identify the cartoon's caption or title and locate three words or phrases used by the cartoonist in order to identify objects or people within the cartoon as well as record any important dates or numbers that appear in the cartoon. On the next level of analysing the signified, researcher will identify which words or phrases that appear most significantly and explain the emotion portrayed within the cartoon. The final level of word analysis is to describe how the words in the cartoon clarify the symbols as well as identifying if it has any elements to controvert the issue.

Colour Analysis

This section will analyse the colour representation of the cartoons that also require three level of analysis. First level of analysis will analyse the signifier by listing out the colours that the researcher sees in the cartoon

and on the second level, researcher will analyse the signified by identifying which of the colours in the list are symbols and what the researcher think each symbol means. On the final level of analysis, the researcher will describe how the colours in the cartoon clarify the symbols and recognise if it is considered as an element to controvert the issue.

Table 1

Adopted from standardised cartoon analysis worksheet by U.S. National Archives and Record Administration

Cartoon Analysis Worksheet (Title: _____ Date: _____)

Visual Analysis of Cartoon		
Level 1 (Signifier)	Level 2 (Signified)	Level 3 (Description)
List the objects or people you see in the cartoon.	Which of the objects on your list are symbols? What do you think each symbol means?	Describe the action-taking place in the cartoon. Explain how the words in the cartoon clarify the symbols.
Words Analysis of Cartoon		
Level 1 (Signifier)	Level 2 (Signified)	
Identify the cartoon caption or title. Locate three words or phrases used by the cartoonist to identify objects or people within the cartoon. Record any important dates or numbers that appear in the cartoon.	Which words or phrases appear to be the most significant? Explain the emotion portrayed in the cartoon.	Explain how the colours in the cartoon clarify the symbols. Explain the message of the cartoon. Explain the controversy posed in the cartoon.

Colour Analysis of Cartoon	
Level 1 (Signifier)	Level 2 (Signified)
List the colours you see in the cartoon.	Which of the colours on your list are symbols? What do you think each symbol mean?

Once the semiotics behind the illustrations have been determined and explained, it will be analysed based on the FIVE (5) main persuasive techniques used by most cartoonists in creating political cartoons. The elements has been used widely especially in analysing political cartoons and has been adopted by many namely like Library of Congress as well as the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation. The elements are listed and explained as follow:

Symbolism

Any objects used by cartoonist to represent concepts, ideas, or meanings. The way the audience understand and infer from its meaning will determine the symbol’s effectiveness. How the symbols are used in an illustration determine the view of the cartoonist or public perceived the object – as it is being used to represent certain events, issues, problems, or personage.

Exaggeration

Cartoonists tend to overdo physical feature of individual or things to point out their views through the use of magnifying or overstating an issue, event, problem, or individuals as it will provide a powerful emotional impact to the audience in signifying power or weakness.

Labelling

Labelling – also known as captioning – is the act of labelling objects or individuals in order to clarify or emphasis the meaning behind the non-

verbal features with the purpose of pointing out the entire idea or concept. On the other hand, captions tend to exploit the use of famous quotes or phrases, lyrics, and slogans without drawing away the need of attention towards the cartoon’s visual elements.

Analogy

Analogy is the act of comparing two different or unlike things with the same features or characteristics. In the guise of metaphor, analogy allows the audience to draw an inference based on the relation of similarity with a complex issue, event, or situation that they had with the cartoons.

Irony

Irony is a statement that is a strongly and obviously contradicting the reality in which there is a difference between the way things should be and are, or expected to be. Irony is often implemented by cartoonist to enhance the expression of viewpoint on an issue.

Based on the standardised elements of political cartoons, a worksheet has been devised in order to determine the presence of which elements that appear most in Zunar’s illustrations. The worksheet includes the five elements of political cartoons and the description of each elements present within the cartoons.

Table 2 Political Cartoons Analysis Worksheet

Constructed based on standardised elements of political cartoons by Library of Congress and Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation

Political Cartoons Analysis Worksheet (Title: ____ Date: ____)

Elements of Political Cartoons	X	Description of Elements in Cartoons
Symbolism		
Exaggeration		
Labelling		
Analogy		
Irony		

3.5 Data Analysis

Coding Sheets

The results gathered from the analysis of the contents has been analysed in order to develop the findings for the study. Building on the premise of semiotic theory, coding sheets that will be used to determine the semiotics of the cartoons (visual, words, and colour) as well as analysing the most prominent political cartoon elements (symbolism, exaggeration, labelling, analogy, and irony) employed in the drawings. The semiotic theory has been employed in this study to enact as a fundamental guideline in order to understand and analyse the samples selected.

Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)

The cartoons have been analysed accordingly by using an approach known as Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). QCA is a method used in order to codify and summarise the data that will be organised accordingly to a coding frame that includes all measures of interests for this study allowing the researcher to search for a significant unpredicted things within each cartoons that includes its semiotics as well as political cartoons elements. The researcher will then interpret each corresponding elements for semiotics and political cartoons analysis, discuss the results and documented every crucial findings in this study.

Through the use of interpretive case study, researcher interpreted the data according to constructed conceptual categories that will either support or challenge the assumptions made related to the subject, while the technique of content analysis will allow its user to be the control factors due to the availability of the subject's contents are presence for measurement. Content analysis will only analyse the crucial parts of the content and comparisons can be conducted in the future with regards of the available data but with another scope not related to this study. Various researchers have come out with variety types of content analysis. However, this study will only require the main elements within the study namely the semiotics in the visual representation as well as the most prominent political cartoon elements used by Zunar in his illustrations in portraying the issue of 1MDB.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Semiotic Analysis of Cartoons

The cartoons has been analysed using a cartoon analysis worksheet that includes an analysis on the cartoons representation of visual, words, and colour used by the cartoonist (in this case Zunar) in their cartoons. However so, there are several symbols, objects, and characters that frequently appeared within his drawings and following this, Zunar has somewhat decode some of the symbols that keep on appeared in his illustrations [41]. The symbols are decoded as follows:

Diamond ring. The ring has become a prominent feature in Zunar's illustration when it frequently appeared as if it was plunging towards or away from Najib's caricature. The ring was included when Najib Razak's wife, Rosmah Mansor, face an allegation in 2011 saying that she purchased a RM73 million diamond ring which later became a metaphor for Rosmah's hidden existence.

Spender Saiful / S.S. Two letters "S" was drawn purposely on an underwear that frequently appeared in Zunar's illustrations near Najib's caricature. It makes its appearance during the Sodomy Trial of Anwar Ibrahim and Saiful Bukhari on November 2014 in which Saiful was believed to wear a different undergarment on the day he was allegedly being sodomised.

Twit Twit. The wording of Twit Twit will appear most of the time with a small caricature of a character of a policeman holding a mobile phone and began to be as one of the most recognisable symbols in Zunar's drawing. He will labelled the character as "KTN" which is an abbreviation for "Ketua Twitter Negara" (translated as National Twitter Chief) that stands as a reference to IGP Khalid Abu Bakar following his statement in February 2015 saying that he has been monitoring Twitter for any seditious comments made on Anwar's imprisonment issue.

RM1200 price tag. Zunar began to make a bold move in his drawing by including this symbol which is a direct mock towards Rosmah Mansor herself. The tag was drawn or placed on Rosmah's character's exaggerated

thicker and darker hair, as a reference to her statement in a speech that it required a sum of RM1200 only to do her hair.

Yellow balloon. The yellow balloon became a frequent feature that symbolises Malaysians persistency on demanding for a better change within the country as well as a sign of solidarity against Bilqis Hijjas (a dance activist) for being charged under Section 14 of Minor Offences Act 1995 after she was allegedly believed to dropped yellow balloons at a public event which was attended by both Najib Razak and Rosmah Mansor.

WCM. Stands as an abbreviation of “*Wa Cari Makan*” which translated as “I’m just making a living” which is a reference to Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Chairperson, Hasan Arifin after he made a statement saying “*Saya pun cari makan juga*” when being questioned on the committee’s probing towards Najib and 1MDB scandal. The abbreviation often appear next to a character that was illustrated with its jutting tongue, wide open mouth, and at times biting Najib’s clothes or shoes to symbolises a leech.

4.1.1 Summary of Visual Analysis

Table 3

Summary of Visual Analysis

Caricature \ Analysis	Visual Analysis (objects, people, things, etc.)
Caricature 1	A man, beam, balance, two blocks, papers of money, diamond ring
Caricature 2	A man, holes, shovel, policeman holding phone, diamond ring
Caricature 3	A man, a woman, two hands, sauce bottles, fire, griller, skeleton holding phone, diamond ring, SS underwear, price tag, a crying boy, yellow balloon
Caricature 4	Big boulder man, piranhas, dead boy, hand holding phone, SS underwear flag, big sofa, small balloon, ocean, yellow tag

Caricature 5	Four characters, giant hand, blocks of bind document, giant tray, underwear, running policeman holding a phone and a boy, small balloon, diamond ring, price tag
Caricature 6	A man, money bag, baskets, diamond ring, hand holding phone
Caricature 7	A briefcase, policeman, three suited individuals, diamond ring, 'I ♥ Bali' tag

The semiotic analyses of these cartoons were conducted accordingly to its visual, words and colours used within the illustrations. Table 4.8 shows the summary on visual analysis of the illustrations. It has been listed accordingly to the caricatures illustrated by Zunar, and it could be seen that several characters and objects had been repeatedly appeared in the drawings. Zunar have included several primary characters in his illustrations namely Najib Razak, IGP Khalid Abu Bakar, Hasan Arifin, Rosmah Mansor, all in forms of caricatures. While there is also several other objects that has been repeatedly featured in his illustrations such as diamond ring, S.S. underwear, yellow balloon, and mobile phone which stands as metaphors to depict several incidents or events in Malaysia's political arena.

4.1.2 Summary of Words Analysis

Table 4

Summary of Words Analysis

Caricature	Analysis	Words Analysis (caption, title, phrase, dates, numbers, etc.)
Caricature 1		GST, 1MDB
Caricature 2		Kang Kalikong PetroSaudi lost RM6 billion, Loan RM18 billion, Loan another RM10 billion, Debt RM42 billion, Suruh rakyat bayar, Twit Twit

Caricature 3	Luxemborg, Swiss, UK, US, RM1200, 1MDB, Sarawak Report Ketchup, WSJ Sauce, SS, Twit Twit, WCM
Caricature 4	Najib, Putar Jaya, SS, Laut Cincin Selatan, 1MDB Investigation, WCM, S'pore, Swiss, Luxembourg, USA, Twit Twit
Caricature 5	Riza, Jho Low, Najib, Rosmah, 1200, 1MDB, FBI, Calo, Twit Twit, WCM, Spender Saiful
Caricature 6	Sapu No 1 RM15 billion, Sapu No 2 RM 5.8 billion, Duit Rakyat, Poket, Pocketball, IPIC, Twit Twit, Jumlah Sapuan: RM20.8 billion
Caricature 7	Siasatan 1MDB, Polis, Twit ² Was Here, Bank Negara, SPRM, AG, 'I ♥ Bali', Sudah 3 TAHUN game ini berlangsung

The semiotic analysis of these cartoons were conducted accordingly to its visual, words and colours used within the illustrations. Table 4.9 shows the summary on words analysis of the illustrations. Through the analysis of words on the illustrations, it could be seen that Zunar used several captions and wordings to emphasis a statement or viewpoint on certain events or incidents depicted in the drawings. Some of it acts as label, dialogue, as well as caption.

4.1.3 Summary of Colour Analysis

Table 5

Summary of Colour Analysis

Caricature \ Analysis	Colour Analysis
Caricature 1	Red paper, black arrow
Caricature 2	Red shirt
Caricature 3	Blue shirt, brown shirt, yellow balloon
Caricature 4	Brown shirt, yellow tag
Caricature 5	Black shirt, blue tray, yellow tag

Caricature 6	Brown bag, red arrow
Caricature 7	Yellow briefcase, red arrow, blue uniform

The semiotic analysis of these cartoons were conducted accordingly to its visual, words and colours used within the illustrations. Table 4.10 shows the summary on words analysis of the illustrations. The semiotic analysis conducted on all selected illustrations of Zunar on 1MDB issue shows that Zunar used only several colours to compliment his illustrations. Some of it act as a label or statement (like brown shirt that represent official uniform worn by Malaysian Prime Minister), metaphor (like yellow balloon a reference to the incident involving Bilqis Hijjas), or to emphasis an object (like red arrow).

4.2 Analysis on Element of Political Cartoons

The cartoons has been analysed using a political cartoon analysis worksheet that was constructed based on the elements of political cartoons (symbolism, exaggeration, labelling, analogy, and irony) in order to determine the most common elements used by Zunar in his political illustrations. The political cartoon’s elements has been defined and standardised accordingly to the Library of Congress and Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

4.2.1 Most Prominent Elements of Political Cartoon Used

Based on the findings, only three elements of political cartoon were being implemented on all seven chosen illustrations of Zunar’s drawing on the issue of 1MDB namely *symbolism*, *labelling*, and *analogy*. Looking at the elements, there could be some reasoning to why Zunar decided to implement these three political cartoon elements on all of his illustrations regarding 1MDB.

Symbols are often used by cartoonists to represent certain issues, events, problems, or personage and the way audience infer and interpret it will determine the effectiveness of the symbols itself. In 2016, Cheema has recorded the symbols used by Zunar in most of his illustrations along with its meanings. Zunar somewhat included the symbols based on real-

life political events and incidents happening within Malaysia. The most prominent symbols used constantly as a feature in his illustrations included the diamond ring, S.S. underwear or ‘Spender Saiful’, Twit Twit, RM1200 price tag, yellow balloon, and WCM or ‘*Wa Cari Makan*’.

Labelling on the other hand serves as caption. Cartoonist often employed this in order to clarify the hidden meaning of the non-verbal features in the illustrations with aim of focusing their viewpoint on certain ideas or concepts as a whole. Across the illustrations created by Zunar, he implemented labelling as part of his artwork in order to deliver the messages without actually taking away the attention towards the visual elements of the cartoons itself.

As for analogy, it was used by cartoonists in most political cartoons in order to make the audience to compare the unlikely of two different things with the same features or characteristics. Often appear in the pretext of metaphor, it allows audiences to draw their own inference or reasoning based on the relation of similarity with any complex issue, event, or situation they had with the cartoons. For example, the diamond ring makes a very frequent appearance in Zunar’s drawing in regards of 1MDB issue. As explained by Zunar himself, the diamond ring stands as a reference to when Rosmah Mansor was alleged to purchase a RM73 million worth of diamond ring in 2011. As the diamond ring makes a constant appearance in Zunar’s illustration of 1MDB, it could only cause the audience to infer that if and only if Rosmah Mansor’s expensive and lavish expenses of her accessory had anything to do with the scandal her husband, Najib Razak is involved in.

4.2.1 *Least Prominent Elements of Political Cartoon Used*

Based on the findings, only two of the political cartoon elements were being implemented on several chosen illustrations of Zunar’s drawing on the issue of 1MDB namely *exaggeration* (present in Caricature 1, 2, 3, and 4) and *irony* (present in all caricatures except Caricature 1 and 2). Looking at the elements, there might be a justification to why Zunar only employ

these elements on some of his cartoons.

Exaggeration frequently employed by cartoonists in order to overdo any physical features or characteristics of an individual or thing with purpose of pointing out their views by amplifying or overstating the issue, event, incident, problem, or individual. Looking at the illustrations made by Zunar, it could be seen that he did not employ this element in all of his illustrations as evident that he chose not to overdo or overstress any incident or issue that he tries to deliver in his drawing. Instead, he created his drawings based on facts and information of a real-life incident of the scandal itself rather than overdoing it which could draw his real meanings to the illustrations away from the audience.

As for irony, it acts as a statement which clearly against the reality that has a difference between the way things should be and are, or expected to be; and it is frequently employed by cartoonists in its drawings to enhance their expression of viewpoint of an issue. The irony in most of Zunar's illustrations only appears a few times to depict a real-life situation (in this case, the scandal of 1MDB involved by Najib Razak). For instance, in Caricature 7, Zunar drew the caricature in order to depict the irony behind the illustrations that shows a real-life situation in which the investigation of 1MDB scandal has been on-going for three years (beginning from 2014 until 2017) without having any resolution taking into account that a number of authorities in Malaysia are involved in the scandal's investigation.

The findings could be concluded to answer the questions raised for this study namely '*What is the semiotics behind the illustrations made by Zunar in portraying the issue of 1MDB?*' and '*What are the most prominent political cartoon elements used by Zunar in his illustration to portray the issue of 1MDB?*' accordingly. The findings managed to answer the questions by analysing the semiotic meanings of the symbols (objects), words, and colours used within the caricatures in order to deliver an intended message to the audiences that based on real-time political events involving the issue of 1MDB. Each caricatures managed to prove its legitimacy to avoid forms of sedition against the cartoonist based on the story that was backed-up by legitimate news channel. To answer the next question of this research, it was

found that several elements to create political cartoons has been used in the illustrations in order to portray the issue of 1MDB. Symbolism, labelling and analogy has been determined to be the most prominent political cartoon elements appeared in the illustrations in order to enhance the message delivering to the audience. The critical humour in the illustrations were used by Zunar generally to critique, mock, or revealing the mistakes that can be obtain from contemporary issues of 1MDB in order to improve the attitude of political individuals and its followers as according to Muliyadi [9].

5.0 DISCUSSION

RO1: To understand the semiotics meanings behind the illustrations made by Zunar in portraying the issue of 1MDB

RO2: To analyse the most prominent political cartoon elements used by Zunar in his illustrations to portray the issue of 1MDB

This study was conducted in accordance to the research objectives of understanding the semiotic meanings behind the illustrations portrayed by Zunar on the issue of 1MDB as well as to analyse the most prominent political cartoon elements employed by Zunar in his illustrations to portray the issue of 1MDB. Political cartoons were created on the basis of attracting the attention of the readers based on the visual representation (caricatures, symbols, etc.) used within the drawings to persuade the readers to focus on the issue.

Thus, interpreting the meanings or semiotics behind the cartoons is crucial in order to understand the real message that the cartoonist are trying to deliver through the portrayal of such illustrations. In order to do so, National Archives and Records Administration designed a cartoon analysis worksheet to comprehend the context and extract information as well as inferring to create judgments that includes visual, words, and colour. As for determining persuasive techniques used by cartoonist in creating political cartoons, Library of Congress and Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation has determined the elements as symbolism, exaggeration, labelling, analogy and irony, in which the cartoons will be

analysed accordingly to the presence of these elements in each drawings.

5.1 Semiotics of Cartoons

The cartoons has been analysed based on three main levels of visual representations in a cartoon namely, visual, words, and colours. The cartoons analysis was conducted through an observation of cartoon content analysis by each selected caricatures drawn by Zunar on the issue of 1MDB that includes the use of symbols, objects, words written, and colours applied within the illustrations. Looking at Zunar’s drawings, we could see several symbols in the depiction of objects, and characters appear frequently in his illustrations such as diamond ring, yellow balloon, S.S. underwear, RM1200 price tag, and characters like policeman holding mobile phone, tiny character captioning WCM, as well as characters that depict both Najib Razak and his wife, Rosmah Mansor. As for the words used in the drawings, it could be seen that Zunar is using it in order to enhance his idea and pointing the message he intended to deliver directly to be one and the same as audience interpretation. Zunar also used the elements of colours in his illustrations in making a ‘statement’ or standpoint to complement the entire caricature and deliver the story that brought the same meanings to audience interpretation.

Table 6

Summary of Semiotic Analysis of Zunar’s Selected Caricatures

Analysis Caricature	Visual	Words	Colour
Caricature 1	A man, beam balance, two blocks, papers of money, diamond ring	GST, 1MDB	Red paper, black arrow

Caricature 2	A man, holes, shovel, policeman holding phone, diamond ring	Kang Kalikong PetroSaudi lost RM6 billion, Loan RM18 billion, Loan another RM10 billion, Debt RM42 billion, Suruh rakyat bayar, Twit Twit	Red shirt
Caricature 3	A man, a woman, two hands, sauce bottles, fire, grill, skeleton holding phone, diamond ring, SS underwear, price tag, a crying boy, yellow balloon	Luxemborg, Swiss, UK, US, RM1200, 1MDB, Sarawak Report Ketchup, WSJ Sauce, SS, Twit Twit, WCM	Blue shirt, brown shirt, yellow balloon
Caricature 4	Big boulder man, piranhas, dead boy, hand holding phone, SS underwear flag, big sofa, small balloon, ocean, yellow tag	Najib, Putar Jaya, SS, Laut Cincin Selatan, 1MDB Investigation, WCM, S'pore, Swiss, Luxembourg, USA, Twit Twit	Brown shirt, Yellow tag

Caricature 5	Four characters, giant hand, blocks of bind document, giant tray, underwear, running policeman holding a phone and a boy, small balloon, diamond ring, price tag	Riza, Jho Low, Najib, Rosmah, 1200, 1MDB, FBI, Calo, Twit Twit, WCM, Spender Saiful	Black shirt, blue tray, yellow tag
Caricature 6	A man, money bag, baskets, diamond ring, hand holding phone	Sapu No 1 RM15 billion, Sapu No 2 RM 5.8 billion, Duit Rakyat, Poket, Pocketball, IPIC, Twit Twit, Jumlah Sapuan: RM20.8 billion	Brown bag, red arrow
Caricature 7	A briefcase, policeman, three suited individuals, diamond ring, 'I ♥ Bali' tag	Siasatan 1MDB, Polis, Twit2 Was Here, Bank Negara, SPRM, AG, 'I ♥ Bali', Sudah 3 TAHUN game ini berlangsung!	Yellow briefcase, red arrow, blue uniform

Looking at Table 6, it could be summarised that Zunar did repeatedly several objects and characters in all seven of his selected caricatures in portraying the issue of 1MDB. He often included the caricatures' main characters namely Najib Razak, IGP Khalid Abu Bakar, PAC Chairperson Hasan Arifin, and Rosmah Mansor, along with objects that act as a symbol to mock those involved in the scandal like a diamond ring, mobile phone, yellow balloon, and underwear. All of the objects are used as metaphor and direct mockery towards the individuals depicted in the caricature as drawn by Zunar. To even enhance the message behind his mockery towards them, Zunar decided to add words that includes catchphrases (i.e. Twit Twit, WCM), numbers (i.e. RM1200), and labels to indicate other parties

involvement in the scandal.

Most of what included in Zunar's drawings are based on real-life events related to 1MDB scandal and findings upon its investigation. Taking Caricature 6 for instance, Zunar drew the caricature based on the event occurring in July 2017, when 1MDB was questioned on the disclosure of an amount of RM15 billion which was claimed to have been paid to IPIC (within 2012 to 2014) which was later denied by the company for not receiving any payment from 1MDB. This is because only RM5.8 billion has been confirmed to have been paid to IPIC on April 2017 by 1MDB itself, causing a total loss of RM20.8 billion of state fund only to settle debt dispute. Zunar created the caricature based on facts and information released by a number of reports and news organisations locally and internationally. Thus, proving that his drawings towards the scandal were not drawn purposely based on his personal reasoning towards any particular individuals.

5.2 Political Cartoons Elements

As for political cartoons analysis, the illustrations has been analysed under the pretext of the presence of political cartoons elements which are listed as symbolism, exaggeration, labelling, analogy, and irony. The findings showed that only three out of five of these political cartoon elements are being employed by Zunar in the selected illustrations to portray 1MDB scandal. Based on the findings of the analysis, the three elements are determined as *symbolism*, *labelling*, and *analogy*. Zunar seems to be including several symbols (that he had pre-interpreted for his audience understanding) within his illustrations on 1MDB scandal mainly as metaphor and mockery against several political individuals that includes Najib Razak and his accomplices. The element of analogy was employed in Zunar's illustrations with intention of letting his audience to draw their own conclusion based on the resemblance connection of the cartoons with them. Irony on the other hand was included in all of his illustrations for making a statement that is strongly contradicting the reality in which there is distinction of the way things should be, are, and expected.

Table 7

Summary of Political Cartoon Elements in Zunar’s Selected Caricatures

Caricature Elements	Caricature 1	Caricature 2	Caricature 3	Caricature 4	Caricature 5	Caricature 6	Caricature 7
Symbolism	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Exaggeration	√	√	√	√			
Labelling	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Analogy	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Irony			√	√	√	√	√

5.3 Summary of Discussion

Looking at the findings as discussed earlier, it was found that that cartoons created by Zunar war formed politically based on a theme that depicts a political issue occurring in Malaysia. Cartoons was explained to act as a medium of story-telling or to respond on issues of social or political regards [16]. What Zunar did with his works on 1MDB was analysed and found to be depicting a real-life events on the scandal and to tell stories of what is going on with the political controversy. What not, it did not contradict to a mentioned research saying that works of cartoons stand on hyperbole or subject twist with intend of being satire and entertaining [9].

The analysis results on Zunar’s works showed that he did used cartoons to critique, mock, and reveal the flaws that he gathered and gained from news and facts relating to the scandal. William Hogarth (1967-1764) was narrated to develop a concept that enables images to speak on morals, manners, political corruptions and hypocrisy [11]. This has been proven

from Zunar's works in which he mocked several political individuals and authorities through the stories he delivered within his works to disseminate political information based on the scandal of 1MDB itself without personal reason to attack the characters or exaggerating on the issue too much by using almost all of the political cartoon elements in all of his works.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

Based on the first objective of this study, the semiotics behind the illustrations as portrayed by Zunar in showcasing the issue of 1MDB tells a lot about the controversies that has taken a turf in the art and political industry. Political cartoons are rich in hyperbole and satire combined with artistic skills of a cartoonist. It could escalate the meanings of the cartoons as interpreted by the audience to question the authorities based on what the illustrations they see and causing a number of controversies to happen within the political industry (political individuals or political bodies) mainly on the course of corruption, abuse of political power, and much more [6]. Looking at how the charges have been pressed towards Zunar, it could be implied that the cartoons he created was not on the side of the current ruling government agenda of that time (Barisan Nasional).

Zunar decided to illustrate his caricatures that depict the situation of our political turf in a way that appears to be as if the drawings are being satire or criticism. He uses the cartoons to criticize the issue of 1MDB scandal, the former ruling government and its administrations. Zunar has included a number of symbols that stands as its own metaphor to depict other issues that might or might not be related to the scandal of 1MDB or the former political leader, Najib Razak himself. Zunar has included elements of contrast through images as part of critical humour within his cartoons that includes the use of trademark characters, caricatures, metaphorical scenes, and representation of symbols [9]. In a way, Zunar's illustrations somewhat reflects his own judgment and viewpoint towards

the particular political issue which in this case, the scandal of 1MDB. Based on the semiotic analysis conducted on seven (7) of his selected illustrations, it was found that Zunar did depict the real-life incident into his drawings with regards to the scandal of 1MDB itself, while analysis on the elements of political cartoons shows that Zunar did use most of the elements or persuasive techniques to make up those political cartoons accordingly. His drawings were published after news about 1MDB and its high-level officials as well as its associates.

This study managed to prove that cartoons depicting local political issues have its impact on influencing others which might or might not in any way threaten the position of the current ruling government. The audience could pick-up the meanings that the cartoonist tries to deliver through his artworks depending on the interpretation level and usage of the political cartoon by the audience itself in which the cartoons were used as a materials for reading, entertainment, or as method to develop ones attitudes, behaviours, or beliefs. When the right techniques of persuasion or elements on creating political cartoons are employed, it might persuade to believe in whatever they see and interpret based on the illustrations. Thus, it is important for others to stay cautious and on guard of what they see and received on a daily basis before deciding to accept, reject, or ignore it.

6.2 Recommendations

Following the study that has been conducted, the objectives only focuses on the meanings of the illustrations depicting the scandal of 1MDB as well as the political elements employed within the illustrations in showcasing the political scandal, in which it only focuses solely on the cartoons as the main subject. Future researchers could conduct a study on confirmation bias that focuses on the acceptance of the cartoons and its meanings in which one may believe in something, but they decided to separate everything that is contrary to their beliefs and only pick things that will prove what they already believe. Confirmation bias could be focused on many sides namely; side that is against the ruling government (*opposition*), side that is in favour of the ruling government (*pro-government*), as well as side that is neutral.

Moreover, future study could also focus on the political inclination of the cartoonists itself in order to ensure that the cartoonists are not being bias in delivering his message through the use of cartoons. Political cartoonists should solely depict political issues occurring locally or internationally instead of being personal and attacking any political individuals or groups. The cartoons should not be one-sided and inclined towards their favoured political beliefs. Thus, this study could prove if the cartoonists did illustrate their works in order to depict real life political situation, or just using it to attack any political individuals or groups.

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