



### The Discourse of Satire in Indonesia Political Cartoons At “Poliklitik.com”

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#### Abstract

A specific cartoon is commonly used to lead public opinion to a particular phenomenon. It is created to realize or to ask people opinions or thought on political issues. This study analyzed the satire of political cartoons selected in the themes of “ Rancangan Undang-Undang Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana ” (RUU KUHP) or The Draft of the Book of Criminal Law relating three articles on human right, livestock, and land in Indonesia in September 2019. This study identified the satirical messages delivered by cartoonists based on the verbal and visual as text analysis, discourse practices analysis on the netizens’ comments in cartoon column, and sociocultural analysis becoming the backdrop of these political cartoons. This study employed a descriptive qualitative method using a framework by Fairclough (2000). The findings showed that these political cartoons were used to satire the government and the House of Representatives to reject several drafts considered detrimental to society. This research is expected to be a useful input for the community to understand that cartoons can be used to convey social criticism. Also, people will realize that political cartoons are not only just fun for the humour, but also understand the message expressed by cartoonists in their work. For related media, cartoons can be used to convey social criticism by promoting its benefits for all levels of society.

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## INTRODUCTION

If we hear the word cartoon, we will immediately associate it with a funny and interesting picture that can make people smile. Especially for children, the word cartoon is undoubtedly familiar in their mind (Sultana, 2014) since cartoons can be easily found and watched on television. A study concluded that children consume 18,000 hours during their child lifetime until senior high school watches cartoons on TV (Habib & Soliman, 2015). Cartoons have become very interesting since they have evolved into the film media, such as *Sponge Bob*, *Tom and Jerry*, *Doraemon* movies. Children can consume it without reading the text as it has been adapted into a comic or is usually found in children's magazines.

The function of cartoons is not just entertainment; cartoons also have the meaning as images that have symbolic representations, which usually contain elements of jokes or humour and even satire to convey meaning (Brown et al., 2016). In newspapers and cyberspace, cartoons are more often published periodically, highlighting political issues or public issues. They are intended to entertain and reinforce the sense of reasoning to specific issues (Onakpa, 2014). Furthermore, in social matters, they mostly target raising people's living habits, sporting events, or particular personalities. In political issues, the cartoons evoke the political situation that is usually made as a joke heavily laden with sharp criticisms of the character's behaviour and policies for the current situation concerned by people (Sani et al., 2012).

Cartoons are usually considered harmless. However, in the hands of cartoonists who think sharply to criticize, cartoons turn into media to express opinions and inspire people to realize a situation more closely then affect their perception, for an instant, in political issues. Thus, cartoons can turn into a tool to influence people to catch some cartoons' messages. As Ward said, "When political cartoonists are at their best, they are like

switchblades...simple and to the point; they cut deeply and leave an impression" (Lamb, 1996). The cartoonist uses creative and humorous caricature symbols in conveying his news or thoughts to cleverly diverts the piercing power from the intense dialogue in the political cartoon (Ashfaq & Shami, 2016). In this way, the messages can be conveyed as mere oddities. In a cartoonist's hands, a cartoon can lead public opinion to a particular phenomenon using a sentence or term that is dabbled to maintain the impression of humour as a medium used by cartoonists to capture and interpret various concerns that live in society.

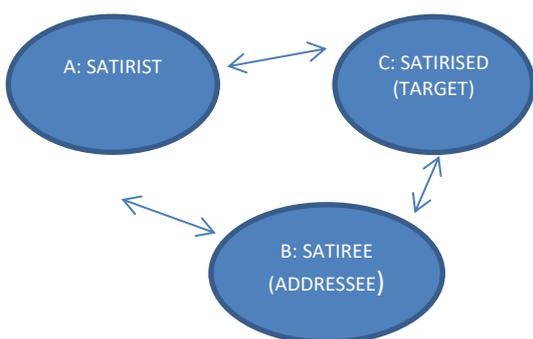
Concerning the usage of cartoons in society, some research studies employed political cartoons as discourse analysis sources. A study often examined or analyzed the natural language, in written and likewise orally, to users as a component of society (Ponton & Larina, 2017). This study can be done structurally by connecting between texts or contexts and functionally by analyzing the actions taken by someone for a particular purpose to give meaning to participants involved. Thus, Norman Fairclough analysis is often used to investigate the discourse analysis. He divides three text analysis dimensions, discourse practice, and sociocultural analysis (Fairclough, 2000). Then, he seeks to assemble a discourse analysis model that contributes to the social and cultural evaluation, thus combining a textual observe analysis in a confined area with a broader group context (Fairclough, 2000). Fairclough's focal point is to see how language users carry certain ideological values.

One of the ideological values of the political cartoon is satire. Davis and Foyle (2017) define that the word satire comes from a traditional literary of "*serio ludero*" that has the meaning "to play in earnest" dated back from Lucian Samosata. Satire is a language style used to insinuate someone or a situation that can be in the form of irony, sarcasm, and parody (Simpson, 2003). There is a close connection between the satirist (speaker/writer/A), "satiree"

(listener/reader/B), and insinuated person or situation (C), so the satirical messages can be understood (Simpson, 2003). The satirist will convey their abusive message to the insinuated person.

### The Concept of Satire

(Orders of discourse in the social, cultural and political organization by Simpson)



**Figure 1.** Adapted from *On the Discourse of Satire*

Satire can be divided based on how the satire has been persuaded into Horatian and Juvenalian satire (Holbert et al., 2011). Horatian satire is less harsh, more gentle, makes smiling and sympathetic. However, the Juvenalian satire is harder and bitter rather than the Horatian. The Juvenalian is used to attack and overcome ignorance and crime in society through scorn and ridicule (Olaniyan, 2015).

The usage of cartoons as a medium of criticism, including the satirical content, have long been used in Indonesia. During the Soekarno era, cartoons were used as a propaganda tool, both domestically and internationally. Meanwhile, during the Soeharto era, cartoon publications were closely monitored (Cahyadi, 2010). Even though they are pictures, they contain messages that also contain satirical messages. After the Soeharto era ended, a new generation of cartoonists emerged to employ cartoon politics sharper exploring political issues and social scandals by using satirical styles, such as cartoonists Benny and Mice (Hasyim, 2013).

As media for criticism related to satirical content, cartoons have long been used by Affandi, Sudjojono, and senior painters in Indonesia. For example, Sudjojono gave a social critique of the lives of the people he saw around him about dirty slums, gamblers, and cockfighters. He presented pathetic artistic to all of them (Cahyadi, 2010). In contrast, political cartoons can be found easily in social media and many sites on the internet. People can find Beritagar.id, RMOL.id, Poliklitik.com, and other sites. Citizens also use them on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, others.

Poliklitik.com is one of the social media that subsidiary of the media under the auspices of GeoMedia (Affandi & Abdullah, 2018). This main objective in education with the central market among young people to be politically insightful in a fun way. It is also expected to increase public awareness of politics. They use editorial cartoons as daily headlines containing satire and sarcasm with an additional caption.

The attracting content of cartoons that are displayed in political cartoons leads to some investigations. The political cartoons' investigations on their nature and function and the visual power of the political cartoon to touch the political and social issues have been conducted. Among others is the role of political cartoons used to struggle AIDS that occurred in Africa (Wingston, 2002), political cartoon related to public representation (Baldry & Tribault, 2006), the metaphor used in a political cartoon in the Australian newspaper (Refaie, 2003), the satire on political cartoons of Japan cartoon journalism compared to its statement on Korea (Han, 2006), and digital literacy through memes (Listiyarningsih et al., 2020). The results showed that the satirical message used to complain and insinuate his services.

Thus, the present study focuses on the satire used in political cartoons in Indonesia. Using Norman Fairclough investigation, this research intends to reveal the messages conveyed by cartoonist using satirical concept through political cartoons in the themes about "Rancangan Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum

Pidana (RKUHP)" or the Draft of the Book Criminal Law. The cartoons posted at "Poliklitik.com" were viral and controversial in Indonesia during September 2019.

## METHODS

The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach as the method with the analysis using Norman Fairclough's (2000) framework used to analyze 3 political cartoons selected in the themes of "Rancangan Undang-Undang Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana" (RUU KUHP) or The Draft of the Book of Criminal Law relating on human right, livestock, and land in Indonesia that got amount comments and becoming viral due to the controversial content during September 2019. Fairclough's approach analyzes text to seek three dimensions: a) textual or textual analysis (micro-level), that is a description of the text, b) analysis of discourse, c) analysis of sociocultural practice (macro-level), i.e., explanation of social processes hidden in the discourse. Based on the analysis above, this study identified the satirical messages delivered by cartoonists on these political cartoons to a) the verbal and visual as text analysis (micro-level), b) discourse practices analysis on the netizens' comments in cartoon column (meso-level), and c) sociocultural analysis becoming the backdrop of this political cartoon (macro-level). The subject of this study focused on the satirical concept through political cartoons about "Rancangan Undang-Undang Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana" (RUU KUHP) or The Draft of the Book Criminal Law relating three articles on ratification of human right, livestock, and land. All data were taken from "Poliklitik.com" on Instagram.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study intended to answer the question in analyzing three cartoons about The Draft of the Book Criminal Law that become controversial in Indonesia released in September 2019.

## The Cancellation of Ratification Several Draft of the Book of Criminal Law



**Figure 2.** The cancellation of the Draft the Book Criminal Law on Human Rights ratification

### Text Analysis

Figure 1 is inspired by the cancellation of the Draft the Book Criminal Law on Human Rights ratification. This draft relates to the existence of a criminal offense for adultery, and LGBT are considered violating human rights. In visual text, the cartoonist describes a situation experienced by an important government official who is taking a phenomenal quiz in Indonesia, namely "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" where he was confronted by a host who offered a question and given 4 options with 3 assistance is "50:50, call a friend, and ask the audience". Then, the visual text is supported by verbal text as an image reinforcement. The verbal text gives a statement accompanying the last question to be a quiz winner. Having distinguished to the real quiz, 3 tools helping the participant to answer the question are "50:50, phone a minister, and ask the netizens" to answer the question "what will you do about the RUU KUHP which is being protested a lot because of problematic articles?" with the option of further answer ratifying, rejecting, delaying and dissolving the House of Representatives. Then, the employee

asks for help by answering “ask to netizens”. The pull-quote at the bottom of the cartoon states that “He said postponed-Hopefully not only postponed-Want to be optimistic, but I am hesitant.” From these analyses, it can be concluded that the cartoonist wants to convey abusive content that the government can not decide the right action without worrying about the bad netizen reaction and the untrusted people on the government's capabilities in saying his doubt.

### Discourse practice

Figure 2 was released on the 21st of September 2019, attracting 4,010 likes and 260 comments. From the comments, 75% of netizen give a strong reaction by choosing the option D (dissolving the House of Representatives). They argue that DPR does not represent the citizens. The comments of this cartoon direct to satire the House of Representative capabilities in conducting their functions.

### Sociocultural discourse

The issues concerning adultery and LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) in the Draft of the Book Criminal Law have been discussing since 2018. These issues emerge due to the anti-homosexual that proclamation in Yogyakarta (Polymenopoulou, 2018). Several articles relating to the criminalization of sex outside marriage and homosexuals, including LGBT, the broader area in this draft, become pro and contra. The pro-people consider that LGBT and adultery are unsuitable and break up the religious norms and social norms. Not only Muslims as a majority religion, but also all religions forbid this behavior. The contra-side is voiced out by Human Rights activists as a mushroom LGBT community to protect their sexual and identity. They argue that personal identity is basic of the sexual human right protected by international laws (Muthmainnah, 2016). Then, the controversy and tug of war in the House of Representatives and the public related the issues lasted until September 2019.

### The Draft of the Book Criminal Law on Livestock



Figure 3. livestock inspires Poliklitik.com cartoonist to create

### Text analysis

The viral and controversial article on the Draft of the Book Criminal Law talking about livestock inspires Poliklitik.com cartoonist to create this figure 3. Based on the Article 278, it is mentioned that *every person who allows farmed poultry entering a garden or land sprinkled with seeds or plants belonging to someone else is liable to a maximum fine of Category II (Rp. 10 million) as Article 278. Worse, Article 279, Paragraph 2 states that the state can forcibly seize livestock involved in violating this article.* The visual text then shows that a person is mad due to a man standing his motorcycle on his land by saying his objection. He is pointing his hand while mentioning the content of 278 articles. The cartoonist asks the reader to think deeply by giving illustrations supported the verbal language that adapts

the use of polysemy to the word "bebek" means "duck" in kind of farm animal changing to "bebek" to motorcycle, providing humor that sharpens the impression of being satire and sarcastic. In Indonesia, the word "bebek" is commonly used to refer to a kind of motorcycle. Hence, the cartoonist mentions in his *pull-quote* that farmers must start educating livestock to read and write in order to avoid article 278. He uses slang or non-standard language words to pierce the sense of humor using "peternaque," not "peternak" to refer the farmer. The slang or non-standard language is famously used in jest, humor, or sarcasm (Keraf, 2002)

**Discourse practice**

Figure 3 was released on the 24th of September 2019, attracting 11,540 likes and 227 comments. Concluding the comments, netizens mostly use LOL (laugh at loud) or its emoticon (😂) to laugh at the interpretation of the draft of the Book Criminal Law on livestock. This draft is considered funny and one of the fooltest drafts. The netizens ask farmers to send their animals to school to satire the draft composer. Sharpen their opinions; they would catch livestock that entered the yard and get 10 million in fines. They also think they will get rich quickly because many animals enter their yard if it happens every day.



**Figure 4.** Sociocultural discourse

### Sociocultural discourse

Indonesia is a pluralistic country with 13,677 islands, 250 regional languages, and more than 300 tribes (Rahmi, 2016). This condition makes Indonesian people live in diversity. The slogan "Bhineka Tunggal Ika" becomes a tie all of the Indonesian people united and accustomed to living together without distinguishing between ethnicities, languages, and others. It is common in Indonesia to chit chat and even eat on a banana leaf together or in Bahasa Indonesia, "ngaliwet". Furthermore, the house in the village and suburban areas mostly do not has a fence; thus, livestock can go everywhere. Surprisingly, the government launches the Draft of the Book Criminal Law that contrary to culture and customs in Indonesia. This draft makes the community increasingly underestimate the House of Representatives' ability by giving satirical statements due to their actions.

### The Draft of the Book Criminal Law on Land



**Figure 5.** The Draft of the Book Criminal Law on Land

### Text analysis

The satirical in figure 3 is created to deal with the situation in society about the article on the Draft of the Book Criminal Law on land and become controversial because it is

considered very detrimental to the community as landowners. The statement on the Article 91 Number 10 RUU KUHP stated that *anyone who obstructs law enforcement officers and/or apparatuses carrying out their duties in the area of their land as referred to in Article 10 Paragraph (4) Letter "c" or their person, is sentenced to a maximum imprisonment of 2 (two) years and/or a maximum fine a lot of Rp. 500,000,000 (five hundred million rupiahs)*. This cartoon's visual shows a man sitting down on the jail who looks like an Indonesian farmer with the appearance of wearing T-shirts, shorts, and a hood "hat" with a hoe lying beside him. His face looks angry with bulging eyes, eyebrows go up, and opened mouth as if screaming. His hands are raised and clenched as if preparing to fight caused by utterances from outside the prison.

Moreover, verbal text that exists in the cartoon presents a conversation between the farmer with someone outside of the cell who satirized him for not complying to sell his land to the state. The use of the local language "ndasmu" for the farmer's answer accentuates the humorous side and reinforces the visual text that he is just an ordinary farmer. The humor reinforces the visual text and sharpens the satire of the government by the *pull-quote*. The cartoonist uses irony and the sad statement "*Manteb and emang top*" or "Steady and the best" to express that the landowners are evicted even imprisoned. They are considered against the government.

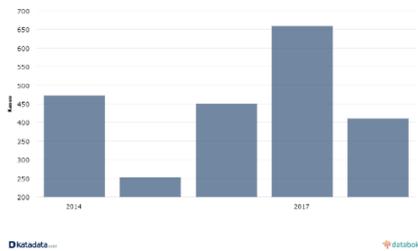
### Discourse Practice

Figure 5 was released on the 20th of September 2019 that gets 6,109 likes and 121 comments. This comment generally laughed at the silliness of the conditions experienced by the lower class. The use of emoticons applause (👏) rated joined strengthen innuendo with congratulations on the condition, although not all pro to the cartoon's contents. Some netizens are pro with government

policies that are considered firm and appropriate for eviction rated highly needed for road widening and the people's interest.

**Sociocultural practice**

Construction of public facilities such as toll roads, road widening, MRT, etc. made the government displace community land. This sometimes becomes a dispute in society. Based on Data.com survey results, the increase of inland disputes is significant during 2014-2019.



**Figure 6.** Land Conflict Total Land Conflict (2014-2019)

Source: Agrarian Reform Consortium, 2019

From the data on Figure 6, land conflict cases have fluctuated years to years. Citizens consider that the Draft of Book Criminal Law in land detrimental to the community because evicted landowners will be jailed if they do not comply with the government's wants.

Satirical messages from the data above can be summarized in the following table:

**Table 1.** Satirical Messages

Data	Text	Discourse	Sociocultural
	Analyses	Practices	Practices
The Cancellation of Draft of the Book Criminal Law	Decision making is considered a game by the	The netizens underestimate the capabilities of the House of	LGBT considers break up religion and

Ratification	government	Representative	polite norm
The Draft of the Book Criminal Law on Livestock	The using of polysemy sharpen the satirical message conveyed by the cartoonist	The netizens consider that it is the fooliest draft made by the House of Representative	The draft infringes the cultural live in Indonesia a
The Draft of the Book Criminal Law on Land	The cartoonist uses the ironic situation to satirize the draft	The netizens laughed at the silliness of the conditions experienced by the lower class.	The content considers detrimental to society

From Table 1, we can conclude that the cartoonists use satire as an artistic weapon to knives the people's opinion and attack the prevalent social vices to sanitize them. They use the visual and verbal text to deliver their satirical messages with humor and situation familiar with Indonesian citizens, i.e., the handling of a quiz "Who Wants to be A Millionaire" to describe the decision making of the Draft Criminal Law that considered as a game by the government as the micro-level. Then, to sharpen the messages, they also use polysemy to get the humour sense to satire the government's decision. In the third political cartoon about the Draft of the Book criminal Law on Land, the cartoonist uses an ironic situation drawn using jail to abuse this draft. Furthermore, the netizens of political cartoons' comments can be seen as public reactions to

their particular current issues. It has purposed to catch their thought about those issues as the micro-level. After many drafts, the sociocultural that happened to citizens rolled out to them that related trust issues to government and DPR as the macro-level on the analysis.

For the last decades, Indonesia citizens have to encounter the public trust crisis to the House of Representative (DPR) in carrying out its legislative function based on its poor performance because it is considered detrimental to society. For example, several draft and revised laws have drawn controversy from the public. Student demonstrations and mass movements occurred on September 23-24, 2019, as an act of rejection of efforts to weaken the Corruption Eradication Commission and several draft criminal laws that were considered to favour the political elite (Kompas, 2019). The trust issues also strengthen many parliaments members cases and have been jailed by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) account for their corruption acts. People can monitor the news on TV that KPK catches 24 of the House of Representative members 2014-2019 period (Databoks, 2018). From many social media, netizens also can see many DPR members are sleeping during their meetings, and many chairs are empty in their conference.

The satirical content on the cartoons in figures 1, 2, and 3 is a part of the critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is defined as “a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text, and talk in the social and political context ” (Van Dijk, 2001). Then, in the modern CDA, it intends to discuss discourse and racism, discourse and ideology, and discourse and knowledge, including the integration of social and cognitive approaches (Al-Momani, 2017). Based on the Fairclough (1989) theory, this interdisciplinary theory argued, “language as a form of social practice ”.

Relating to the theory of language as a form of social practice, this CDA concerns using language to discuss the social and political issues and their imbalance in social life (Matin, 2017). Through the language, the CDA is used to analyze the spoken and written text in the part of their discursive source of power within specific social, political, and historical contexts (Bukhari, 2013). The existence of political cartoons is a media discourse that is used to manipulate language effectively and persuasively in evoking a particular response, which leads public opinion with a different point of view that is expected to bring the positive changes (Sani et al., 2012). Alongside the picture, the cartoonist also creates the bubbles text to harness the message conveyed (Paramita, 2018) based on what and how the events underlying the political cartoons (Sani et al., 2012). For instance, in this study, the irony between the condition of the majority of the lower-level society in Indonesia is against The Draft of the Book Criminal Law relating three articles on ratification of human rights, livestock, and land.

Generally, political cartoons' contribution enriches the media discourse that is creatively used as communicative means in conveying the message embedded in a broader context to the public (Willems, 2011). Therefore, it offers an interesting source of data for studying media discourse and its usage. Furthermore, it provides a research area relating to social relationships, linguistics, social experiences, and so on. Nevertheless, in studying political cartoons, it requires more supportive theories to encounter the problem in analyzing political cartoons (Sani et al., 2012). Moreover, in future studies, the political cartoons should be analyzed through several theories or other experts to harness the understanding of the particular social phenomenon and how they evoke public opinions.

## CONCLUSION

The media is usually used to transmit information and symbolic content. The media can capture social, political, and factual phenomena in society (Singh & Pandey, 2017). In the political area that is related to power, the media often implicitly package it. Disappointment or criticism of something or someone who has power is expressed openly and clearly without accusing directly and leading public opinion. One of them is political cartoons. Furthermore, the Draft of Book of Criminal Law's analysis needs more analysis from future researchers due to the personal perception analysis.

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