The 'War on Terror' in Western Media: A Case Study of Depicting President George W. Bush in Editorial Cartoons

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ABSTRACT: This study examines editorial political cartoons outside the United States that featured U.S. former President George W. Bush. It plans to assess how the U.S. President was depicted in editorial cartoons in Western media and whether he was identified as a stereotypical threat during his US-led war on terrorism and the invasion of the Iraq war in 2003. Editorial cartoons chosen for this analysis is based on a case study of editorial cartoons selected from a paper in New Zealand, a country whose government did not support the Iraq War in principle and a country that enjoys higher press freedom than the United States (Sheffield, 2013). Generally editorial cartoons are political in nature, making them quite significant during times of great controversy. New Zealand, a Western nation with close historic, cultural and linguistic ties with the United States, had its Labor Party-led refuse to be a part of the US-led war on terrorism. The *Otago Daily Times* (*ODT*), the newspaper selected as the case study for the current analysis, is the only major newspaper in New Zealand that is locally owned with a significant impact on public opinion (See Kabir&Bourk, 2012). This makes the exploration of its editorial cartoons and their potential influences significant in making generalizations about similar content made available in other free Western media that held parallel views toward the former U.S. President and his led war on terrorism. Despite the appearance of political cartoons in all major newspapers worldwide, researchers are yet to show increased interest in researching this format of media representation. This study therefore is an attempt to cover this deficiency.

Keywords: Anti-Americanism; President Bush; editorial cartoon; New Zealand

Introduction

This analysis examines the representation of US President George W. Bush in editorial cartoons published in a New Zealand newspaper, the *Otago Daily Times* (*ODT*) to determine what images of Bush appeared in editorial cartoons; and to what extent his policies and politics were identified in the context of national (the US) and world affairs. In addition, this study examines how a series of cartoons constructed a theme in creating a specific issue and how the newspaper interlinks one issue with others. The *ODT* is a local broadsheet published in Dunedin (New Zealand), and is the oldest daily newspaper in the

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country. New Zealand is a Western nation with close historic, cultural and linguistic ties with the United States. However, in 2003 the Labor Party-led New Zealand Government refused to be a part of the US-led war on terror. The *ODT* is the only major newspaper (Kabir and Bourk, 2012) in New Zealand that is locally owned and plays an influential role in constructing public opinion. In respect to domestic political view this newspaper maintains an anti-Labor Party policy in its coverage (Hayward and Rudd 2002).

While considerable research has been done on editorial cartoons in Western and non-Western media focusing on political leadership, there has been little research on how world leaders are portrayed in editorial cartoons in any newspaper published in New Zealand. Editorial cartoons represent an untapped lode for academia, especially in New Zealand. Despite the appearance of political cartoons in all major newspapers published in New Zealand, researchers are yet to show interest in researching this mode of media representation. In addition, while research on the image of a contemporary world leader such as George W. Bush is not rare inside and outside the West, a study on the portrayal of a world leader, such as Bush, in a New Zealand newspaper has yet to be done.

Theoretical Framework: Editorial Cartoons and Meaning

Editorial cartoons represent in visual depictions that have become increasingly central to people's understanding of news and in evoking emotional responses (See Barnhurst and Nerone, 2011). Further, these visual representations represent an ideal medium for creating new forms of understanding (Bryant, 1996) and for expressing what cannot be mediated using the printed word. Pictorial imagery of cartoons goes beyond mere representation and denotation and therefore cartoons are structures that are shaped through the ways their graphics are communicated to their viewers (See Mendelson, 2007). As according to Blair, 2004, the unique visual power of imagery derives largely from their ability to evoke immediate response from the viewers. Because of this, visual representations of cartoons that are frequently used, while less direct (Alkazemi and Wanta, 2015) are specifically powerful when used to criticize politicians and their controversial policies. In other words, cartoons while protected by a maximum amount of freedom of speech often convey contentious opinions. The opinions they might layers of broader concepts and meanings that represent signs

(Hall, 1973). And central to the semiotic process is the concept of signs they represent. The concept of a signs that are the representationsof a concept are composed of both the signifier (the *form* which the sign takes) and the signified (the concept it represents) (See Fiske, 1990).

These types of cartoons convey concepts and events to readers and eventually have the potential to organize understandings of present events by aligning and uniting groups into communities and presenting contemporary issues. For example a cartoon can urge people or a group of people in a critical period to unite and fight against a perceived common opponent in a highly ideological context. In this sense, editorial cartoons do "emphasize differences, increase political temperatures" and are frequently used as a propaganda weapon (See Kemnitz, 1973, p. 84 & 90). While a sign, a cartoon's message further goes well beyond mere representation and is "a satirical comment, usually humorous ... about a political person, event, institution or idea" that can fluctuate to promote the general interpretation of the cartoonist (Mazid, 2008, p. 435).

Further elements that accompany a cartoon, its compact quality of meaning-making activity lends itself to stereotyping (See Gilmartin, 2001), as cartoons are typically extensions of the cartoonists' interpretation that lead audiences to a preferred meaning. In doing so, much of the power of the cartoons lies in their ability to alleviate great amount of linguistic nuances and according to (Greenberg 2002), provide a meta-language for interpreting social contemporary debates contemporary pictorially.

Controversial cartoons and cartoonists in New Zealand

Cartoonists enjoy formidable rights to freedom of expression in New Zealand, where cartoonists have comparatively greater freedom than their counterparts in the United States. While controversial cartoons have appeared in the United States over the years, there has been a relatively general opposing trend. For example, in the early 20th century in the United States, cartoonist Art Young's caricature got him and his periodical, *The Masses*, into considerable trouble and "raised the hackles of the authorities" (Tunç, 2002, p. 48). Similarly, adherence to political correctness has weakened cartoons in the United States (Lamb, 1996). In more recent years, Mike Marland's cartoon, which depicted President Bush piloting a plane into the Twin Towers, invited huge criticism and the cartoonist had to apologize (Hoffman and Howard, 2007).

Meanwhile, in New Zealand cartoonists have rarely been subjected to state authority and/or had their work banned[1]. In fact there is no record of cartoonists being barred by their editors and there is no record of a New Zealand cartoonist having to apologize to the state or to the people.[2] In this way, New Zealand cartoonists predominantly are free to depict controversial representations of contemporary issues and events of interest to the community including nudity. For example, in the context of boob-bike celebration, New Zealand newspapers have published cartoons depicting naked bodies. While, political leaning might have some influence in depicting caricatures, as it provides the cartoonist's or the newspaper's opinion, nonetheless, there is no information available regarding the political leaning of any New Zealand cartoonist and there is no literature that could not identify the political leaning of the *ODT* cartoonist (Garrick Tremain).

The U. S. Presidential Setting

During U.S. President George Bush's term, he became the subject of general and scholarly discussions particularly because of his foreign policy. Scholars including Gurtov and Ness (2005) have argued that there was "no real precedent for the kind of gambler he [President Bush] was". He transformed the U.S. foreign policy and reshaped international relations extensively, with his unilateral pursuits and doctrine (Gurtov& Ness 2005; Gurtov 2005). Other scholars (e.g. Reus-Smit 2004) have indicated that under the Bush administration, the US "crudely chipped away" from its liberal identity in international politics and lost social capital because of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan (p. iv). For example, after the 9/11 attacks in 2001, the activities of the Bush administration appeared to be aiming at establishing democracy by force (Lieven, 2008). In addition, some scholars argue that the U.S. President injected religion into his foreign policy. For example, Wallis (2004) points out that his

policies were "connected to a religiously inspired 'mission'" as he maintained a divinely sanctioned position as U.S. president (p. 62). Wallis (2004) argues that Bush's proclamation of religion was very dangerous since he used it for political purposes. However, Bush's religiosity (imagined or real) was a popular subject for cartoonists. For example, during the Iraq invasion and the war against terrorism, a cartoon depicted the US President declaring, "It is God who prompted me to go to war and He has my full confidence" (Mazid, 2008, p. 441). In contrast, many viewed him as a political realist (e.g. Burke 2004), and a natural talent in politics with all the good values that a leader should possess (Moens, 2004).

Anti-Americanism Discourse

One of the primary ways to present 'Anti-Americanism' is that it promotes the sense of "attitude towards the United States" (See O'Conner and Griffiths, 2006, p.1). This attitude could be identified through "hostile action or expression" in connection to the "foreign policy, society, culture and values of the United States" (Rubinstein & Smith, 1988, p. 35) and symbolized as "a response to the hegemonic world" (Long et. al, 2009, p. 652). The attitudes towards anti-Americanism appear and spread significantly throughout the former USSR or the communist political history. During the Cold War era, the Soviet Union then engaged in anti-American discourse and was successful in spreading this concept across the world that this (America) dominating imperialist military power needed to be opposed (See O'Cronnor, 2006), and so the phrase 'American imperialism' became prominent in literary discourse and rhetoric. Anti-Americanism, further, has a long history, with historical roots in "native genocide and plantation slavery" (Ross and Ross, 2004, p. 2).

However, in other parts of the world, primarily in the Middle East, the concept is identifiable inside and outside of communist ideology, with many recent terrorist activities aimed at U.S. targets (which do not have links with communism).

Indeed the international response to the United States after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, was predominantly positive, and nations across the world heavily sympathized with US citizens (Rubin & Rubin, 2004). Many media constructed George W. Bush as the right person for the United States (Entman, 2003; Coe *et al.*, 2014) and he "became unchallenged leading voice" of the nation (Coe *et al.*, 2014: 234).This attitude though, changed in the context of the subsequent US-led war on terrorism, and especially from the outset of the

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[1] Cartoonist Tom Scott of the *Dominion Post* [then it was the *Dominion*] was banned from the parliamentary press contingent for a considerable time when Prime Minister Robert Muldoon was in power.

[2] While the controversy over the caricature of the Prophet Muhammad might be considered relevant in this regard, as *The Press* apologized to the Muslim community in New Zealand. However it is important to note that the cartoon was not drawn by a New Zealand cartoonist. *The Press* reproduced and/or reprinted these cartoons from a Danish newspaper.

Afghan and Iraq invasions. But, the "mass publics concept of America is neither uniform nor always well informed" and to many people America is imaginary, and even the American media provide only a partial image of what the country represents. (Singh, 2006, p. 28).

Editorial Cartoons and Politics

The editorial cartoon is an ideal medium for expressing what cannot be said in the printed word and these images are frequently used to criticize politicians and their controversial policies. In other words, the cartoon guarantees a maximum of freedom of speech and political opinions. Editorial cartoons also unite groups through their pictorial messages – a cartoon can urge people or a group of people in a critical period to be united and fight against the 'enemy'. Editorial cartoons also "emphasise differences, increase political temperatures" and are frequently used as a propaganda weapon (Kemnitz, 1973, p. 84 & 90). The cartoon's message is "a satirical comment, usually humorous ... about a political person, event, institution or idea" that promotes the free expression of the cartoonist (School Programs Section, National Museum of Australia, 2002, cited in Mazid, 2008, p. 435). The cartoonist does not need to depend on any source, there is no question of factuality and objectivity, and the images of people conveyed are usually negative (Conners, 1998, p. 100). The cartoon is based on stereotyping (Gilmartin, 2001, p. 63) and cartoons are typically extensions of the cartoonists' beliefs and opinions. Finally, editorial cartoons provide a meta-language for social debates concerned with contemporary events (Greenberg 2002, p. 182).

Cartoons constitute an exemplary lens for focusing on a current issue. These texts communicate or propagate an idea through recognizable symbols and slogans. They also convey messages and influence citizens who are unable to read, and "can get away with more extreme or mean-spirited observations than editorial writers" than editorial columns (Gilmartine, 2001, p. 53). Cartoonists providing commentary on social and political events in the contemporary world date back to the Renaissance (Press, 1981; Sheppard, 1994). The graphics they use are highly selective and can be generated by any issue, targeting readers with satire, exaggeration, symbol, and metaphor, in a combination of humor and irony. Cartoons also play a vital role in a newspaper, where using an image in the form of a cartoon can have "a greater impact on readers than mere words" (Day, 2000, p. 98), because through this visual image, cartoonists can change public opinion,

especially if it is supported by the newspaper's editorial (Brinkman 1968). Editorial cartoons provide a social discourse that is more influential and stronger than verbal communication (Gilmartin and Brunn (1998. P. 536) and have the highest readership on editorial pages and play an important role in shaping readers' perception (Abel and Filak, 2005, p. 161).

During peacetime, cartoonists play the role of a watchdog and help keeping politicians honest and accountable (Press, 1981, pp. 56-57 [Mazid, 2008, p. 256]). Cartoon is "one of the purest artifacts of popular culture" (Fischer, 1996, p. 122), which can influence public opinion but what a cartoonist does is an "exaggeration and distortion" (Maus, 1988 [Mazid, 2008, p. 437]). The open expression that a cartoonist produces on current events might not be possible to produce in general news stories, editorials or through other forms of expression. In fact, cartoons are "naturally harder than news reporting or opinion writing to hold to an editorial line" (Manning and Phiddian, 2004, p. 15). Thus, it needs to be acknowledged that the political cartoon is not simply for entertainment.

Framing the Issue

Framing analysis can help us to understand priorities of a particular media outlet on an issue, individual, group or a nation. It appears to simplify and stereotype an issue; and promote a particular way of interpretation (Norris, 1995; Entman, 1991; 1993; Smith, 2013) that sidelines and excludes an individual through overshadowing reality (Poole, 2002). Entman (1993: 52) argues: "To frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text* [...]" (original italic). The selected aspects may be repeated so that the message will be "more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable" (Entman, 1993: 53) to the reader of the text— editorial cartoons, for example. The salience of the message usually appears under a particular theme or episode. The theme that appears within a frame promotes schemata to prioritize some facts yet overshadowing many other facts (Norris, 1992: Cohen and Gadi Wolfsfeld, 1992). The schemata of a particular media outlet in framing an issue can be understood through the lexical choice, selection of visual images and the interpretation of the episodic event (Entman, 1993; 1991). In framing the reality, media construct the image that shape "picture in our head" (Lippmann, 1922) through which one perceives the world (Gamson et al.,

1992). The readers, however, may perceive the images of the world through generalization. For example, while framing the US President George W. Bush many US media framed him contradictorily through generalization (Kuypers, Cooper and Althouse (2012: 89). After the incident of the September 11, 2001 many media constructed George W. Bush as the right person for the US (Entman, 2003; Coe *et al.*, 2004) and he "became unchallenged leading voice" of the nation (Coe *et al.*, 2014: 234). Therefore, in this study we aim to identify how the *ODT*, one of the leading new media in New Zealand, framed President Bush through the editorial cartoons.

Study Objective

This study hopes to add to the body of literature by examining how editorial cartoons in a foreign country, that did not support the U.S. President's efforts from the outset to go to war in Iraq, used editorial cartoons to depict the U.S. leader. It aims to examine whether the U.S. President was portrayed in these cartoons in a stereotypical role representing him as a global threat during the 4-year timeframe of the study. In other words, it plans to look at the ways in which these depictions might have prescribed specific generalizations about the former U.S. President and his led war on terrorism.

Methodology

Researchers will use semiotic analysis in this study as a tool for our investigation, Semiotic analysis attempts to qualitatively place content in a larger cultural context (See Hall, 1973). Our analysis will consist of examining the leadership images of President Bush referring to his representation in editorial cartoons that appeared in the *ODT*. Specifically, we will examine his depiction as a world leader and as a policy maker inside and outside the United States during the period between March 17, 2003 and March 28, 2007.

The time frame of this analysis was chosen for good reasons. The United States invaded Iraq in 2003 and the first cartoon appeared in the *ODT* newspaper on March 17, 2003. President Bush also expressed his interest in working toward promoting democracy in the Pacific region in March 2007 and a cartoon on this interest appeared in the *ODT* on March 28 of the same year. No more cartoons about the president were published after this date in the newspaper. Thus the time frame of this study was chosen to examine the

representation of George Bush in a relevant time during which when the United States invaded Iraq, generating a stream of global consequences.

During that timeframe 77 cartoons were published and this corpus consisted of 62 cartoons in which President Bush was the main signifier in the visual context, and 15 cartoons where he was the main signifier in the verbal text.

In our analysis we will use semiotic analysis as a tool for our investigation, Semiotic analysis attempts to qualitatively place content in a larger cultural context (See Hall, 1973). We plan to examine whether these cartoons identified President Bush as a threat promoted in a stereotypical role that potentially communicated anti-Americanism. The following four themes will be used to assess our technique of how we plan to analyze these editorial cartoons to help us develop an understanding of the broader stereotyping theme of creating meaning. These results might reveal specific rhetorical generalizations about how the former U.S. President and his led war on terrorism were depicted in editorial cartoons in a media of a Western country, one that enjoys much press freedom and whose government did not support the Iraq War from the get-go.

- **The Hawkish Bush theme:** This theme would be identified when President Bush is depicted invading a nation (i.e. Iran/Iraq).

- **The Bush's God theme:** This theme would be identified when President Bush is depicted surrendering himself to God (for example, saying God is his last stop).

- **The Middle East Road Map theme:** This theme would be identified when President Bush is depicted actively involved positively abroad in the Middle East democratic process [i.e. Israel-Palestine peace imitative].

- **The Policy and democracy inside the US theme:** This theme would be identified when President Bush is

actively involved in resolving national issues

Findings and Discussion

The time frame provided 77 cartoons and this corpus consisted of 62 cartoons where Bush was the main signifier in visual text, and 15 cartoons where Bush was a main signifier in verbal text but was not represented in visual text as can be seen in the Table below:

Bush appearing in editorial cartoon

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Bush in image	62	80.5	80.5	80.5
Bush in words only	15	19.5	19.5	100.0
Total	77	100.0	100.0	

The Table shows that as a leader or as a policy maker Bush's images were a more prominent signifier than "Bush in words only" in editorial cartoons published in the *ODT*. The analysis of these cartoons determines the textual and visual dimensions and implies the perceptions that these cartoons represented. The cartoons also depicted some themes, which were interlinked with others.

All cartoons came from the same and never-ending story – politics – world and internal. It is, however, very difficult to determine whether a single cartoon promotes only internal issue or only international issue as most of the time both (internal and external) issues were linked with each other. Nonetheless, Bush is accorded the image of a leading warrior. The main themes of the cartoons were the war on terror and the Middle East crisis. All themes began with the invasion

of Iraq in 2003 and the consequent world issues, such as casualties in Iraq (both Iraqi citizens and the US troops in Iraq), the trial of Saddam Hussein, a possible attack on Iran in the context of its nuclear program.

Hawkish Bush: "liar", "greedy" and "warrior"

As mentioned, a series of cartoons represented Bush, and provided more or less the same messages. In other words, some cartoons depicted a series of one theme. In the context of the invasion of Iraq in 2003, for example, (up to May 1, 2003 [Bush declared mission accomplishment on the 1ˢᵗ of May, 2003]), the *ODT* published eight cartoons. Before the invasion of Iraq (March 17, 2003 to March 21, 2003), the *ODT* published three cartoons. These cartoons imply that Bush is in a hawkish position with regard to Iraq and the possible war in Iraq is eyewash to the world and what Bush actually wanted is Iraqi oil. Cartoons appearing after 21ˢᵗ of March 2003 suggest that Bush is misleading on weapons of mass destruction. Bush is also represented as a 'warrior', 'a liar' and 'greedy'.

The cartoon that appeared on March 17, 2003 (Image 1), depicts the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, standing at a fuel depot, holding an oil pipe (looks like holding a rifle) saying: "I understand Mister Bush is coming to disarm me".

Image 1: Saddam Hussein prior to Bush's invasion of Iraq

The cartoon clearly conveys the message that it is not Saddam or his weapons of mass destruction that President Bush was interested in when invading Iraq; rather it was the Iraqi oil. Bush's position is made very clear (he is ready with his weapons [Cartoon: March 19, 2003]). This cartoon reinforces the perception that before the invasion of Iraq, in Bush's thought, the only

way open was using weapons against Iraq (and there was no way of negotiation). The other rhetoric, which Bush expressed frequently – that Osama bin Laden and Saddam were against democracy and civility and were a threat to the world – becomes false in the representation. This perception becomes clear when an innocent Iraqi woman appreciates the American invasion, as they vowed to topple Saddam Hussein (cartoon: March 21, 2003 [Images 2]). The woman says: "Praise Allah!! Someone has pledged to remove Saddam!" In response, an Iraqi man says, "Don't get too excited woman! The same guy pledged to capture Osama!" This perceives that President Bush helps to remove Saddam Hussein but his ultimate aim was not establishing democracy in the region but to use terrorism for political purpose.
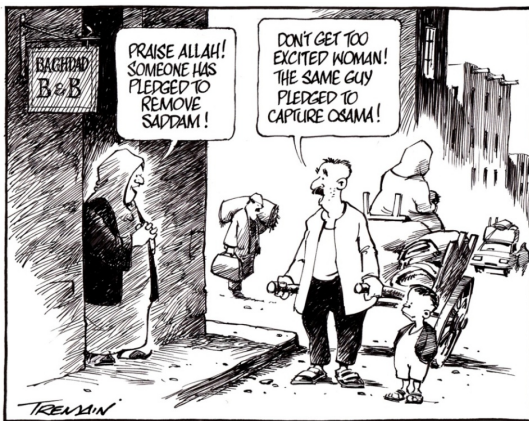

Image 3: Bush wants to capture everything by threat

Image 2: Bush's ultimate aim is not consulting democracy

In this regard, another cartoon is relevant (cartoon: April 17, 2003 [Image 3]). The cartoon image suggests that Bush actually has no aim to capture bin Laden, Saddam or so. However, he threats others pretending that he is aiming to save the world. In it, one of Bush's officials says to Bush: "Mr President, the WHO says the SARS epidemic will vanish if you declare you'll catch it" and Bush responds: "Howzat?" and the official replies "It worked when you declared you'd catch Saddam and Osama, Sir!"
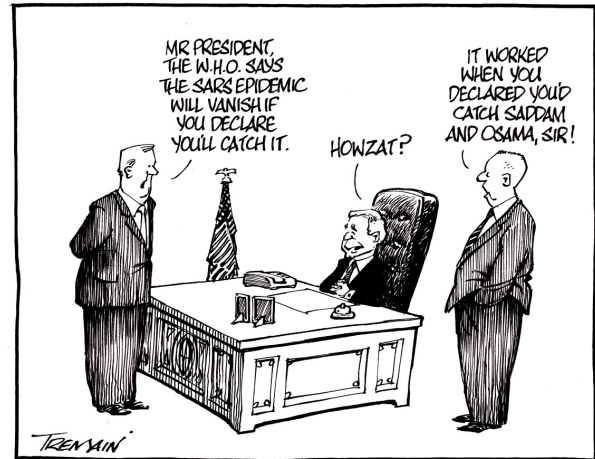
Both of these cartoons suggest the pledge to capture Saddam and Bin Laden has failed and that the pledge by Bush is empty and pretentious. The weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, on which ground the President invaded Iraq, became a vague or false proposition because, the cupboard— symbolized as an Iraqi storeroom for weapons of mass destruction— is empty (cartoon: April 26-27, 2003) and Bush seems to be happy in front of the empty cupboard. Therefore, President Bush is represented as a 'fraud', 'liar', and 'warmongering leader' who is greedy for Iraqi oil, and only pretends to capture a dictator (Saddam) and a world terrorist (Osama bin Laden).

Bush's God and the Middle East's Road Map to Peace

This section first examines two cartoons, which focused on Bush's internal and external policies.

In one cartoon (June 15, 2006 [Image 4]), Bush says: "Just checking, Lord, that you, at least, are still with me?" Bush is in a formal dress, seated on his (office) chair talking to God. There are two trays on the table: trays for "good news" and for "bad news". There is nothing in the *good news* tray but the other tray (the *bad news* tray) is a mountain of paper.

Image 4: President Bush's so-called religiosity

The second cartoon (August 4, 2006), where he says, "The Lord said to me 'George, I want you to supply the Jews with more warheads... Now the other crowd [has] got Mel Gibson'", conveys a similar impression. Both cartoons give the impression that Bush is religious. The first cartoon (June 15, 2006) suggests that what Bush is doing inside and outside his country only resulted in failure. He is lonely and God is his last resort. The direct speech mode of the cartoon and his approach— body language etc.— to God identify him as extremely humble and obedient to God. The other cartoon also symbolizes his direct contact with God and eventually God becomes another weapon to hoodwink people in the context of his (false) policies. The depiction implies that Bush presents his policies to the world under the pretense that all that he did in the context of the Israel-Palestine crisis or in the Middle East, he did with the appreciation or at least the approval of God. Both these depictions provide another perception: that Bush exploited religion in the context of world policies— e.g. in invading Iraq, and in supplying weapons and other support to Israel – that is also suggested in Wallis (2004) – e.g. Bush exploited religion. The issue of the 'war on terror' and his position against 'terrorist' become falsification, exaggeration, brouhaha, and a dramatization of attack against other nations. His position in bringing peace, which he insisted under the "road map to the peace" in the Middle East, is a pretension. In a cartoon (May 21, 2003), in the context of Palestine-Israel crisis, Bush says: "It's a rocky road to peace", and it is, because, both Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and President Bush have different perception of peace (cartoon: May 31-June 1, 2003). In this cartoon, Bush and Sharon hold the 'road map to peace idea' from opposite sides. Peace cannot be established in the

region, as Bush, in the name of establishing peace, supports Israel blindly (cartoon: March 25, 2004), and both leaders eventually created a lasting barrier to peace between Palestine and Israel (cartoon: July 13, 2004). In this cartoon, both leaders are depicted concreting the Israel-Palestine barrier (symbolized as a wall) with bricks, cement etc.

The cartoon's representation also promotes that Bush does not believe that democracy should be allowed to all and the group that does not follow the policy of the US or Bush should be rejected. Therefore, in the context of democratic elections in Gaza (Palestine), Bush was not happy, because Hamas won a majority in the Gazan parliament. However, he does not recognize Hamas's victory and even stopped funding for the Palestinian people. Hamas, symbolized in the cartoon as a car, however, has negotiated the democratic road successfully and Bush, who positions himself against Hamas, is stranded off the road with his broken car (cartoon: January 30, 2006 [Image 5]).
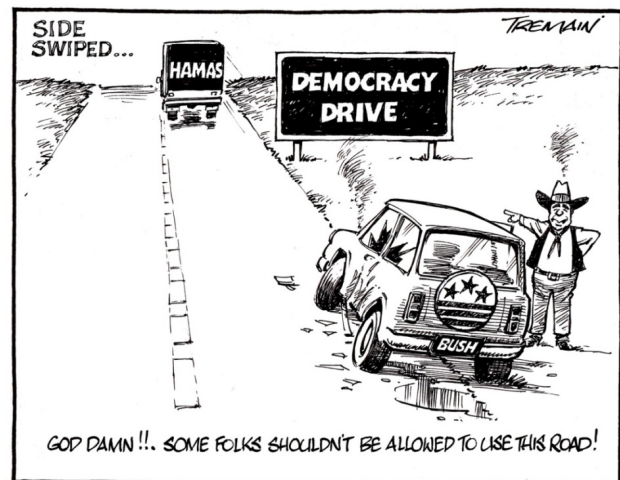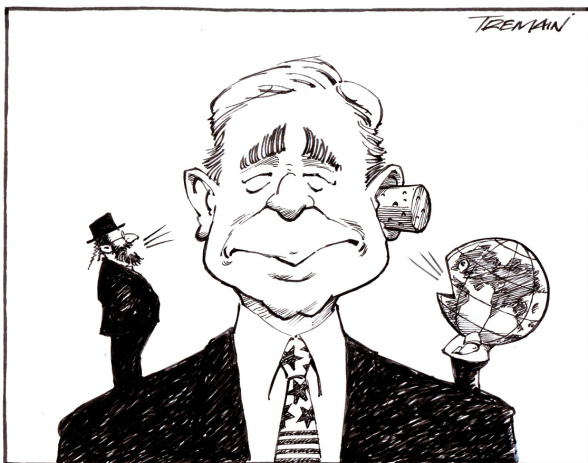

Image 5: Bush is failed but Hamas is successful in democracy drive!

This cartoon portrays him as a hotheaded and angry leader— symbolized as vapor issuing from his head and pointing his finger at Hamas. In this cartoon, Bush says: "God Damn!!. Some folks shouldn't be allowed to use this road" indicating the "democracy drive" way of Hamas. There is the other side to Bush's policies in the Middle East, where he and his administration generously supported Israel. Thus, a cartoon on March 25, 2006 depicts Israel fighting against Palestine inside a boxing ring. In this caricature, Palestine is symbolized

as a very weak opponent of Israel inside the boxing ring. Israel is (depicted as) mightier than the US. This cartoon shows Bush putting something made of iron (symbolizing blind support for Israel) inside the boxing glove of Israel (so that Israel can hit Palestine successfully) with Bush, in this instance, depicted as Israel's coach.

Another cartoon (July 31, 2006) depicts Palestine as weak, demoralized, defeated and thrown out off the boxing ring. It (i.e. Palestine) had a manager and a coach, and they were weak, too. Bush, once again, comes to the support of Israel. Condoleezza Rice also comes to join Bush in supporting Israel. Israel once again is depicted as a giant opponent of Palestine and Condoleezza Rice and George Bush are caricatured as the coach and manager, respectively, of Israel. Israel is depicted as being mightier than the US (as it was in the March 25, 2003, cartoon). In both cartoons, Bush is represented as being irrational, someone who supported and assisted the stronger combatant in hitting the weaker. Another meaning is also implicit in the cartoon: that Israel is stronger and mightier than the US. As a result, the US does not have any choice but to support Israel. The situation becomes more complicated for Bush and he has no option but to listen to and care about Israel (cartoon: August 10, 2006 [Image 6]).

a Jewish person talking on Bush's shoulder with Bush listening intently) and seemed to be happy to be listening to Israel.

Bush is also depicted as being silly. This was borne out by the fact that nobody trusted him or relied on his policies (cartoon: December 16, 2005). The cartoon shows people and leaders laughing out loud, when they heard Bush say, "I invaded Iraq because of defective intelligence". This statement is the focus under an over-line (from the cartoonist): "The world reacts to Bush's best ever one-liner..."

As mentioned, Bush is represented as isolated and devoid of good news, internationally or domestically. On the whole, the representation in these cartoons suggests that the religious adherence claimed by Bush is false, and he is a liar, greedy for oil and against the resolution of the Israel-Palestine crisis and a peaceful solution to the Middle East conflict.

Bush the Imposter: a Mastermind for Mass Killing

To initiate discussion in this section, a cartoon published on the October 14, 2006 (Image 7), can be presented first, as it is the essence of all themes depicted in the cartoon published in the *ODT*.
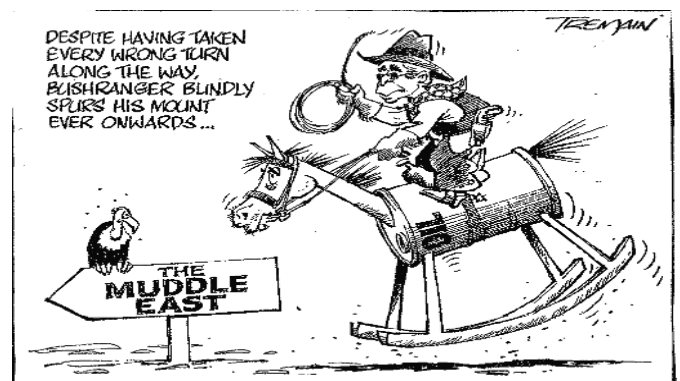

Images 6: Bush does not care the world but Israel

Image 7: Bush and the 'Muddle East'

The cartoon depicts that while the whole world is asking for a solution to the crisis and peace in the Middle East, Bush does not care (he has a cork in his ear to the world), but he cares about Israel (depicted as

The caricature promotes that Bush is a warmonger who wants to take hold of Middle East's oil and all his efforts (policies) towards Iraq are to capture nothing but oil. However, the only problem is, the horse (symbolizing his policies) that Bush is riding, is not real— it is made of an oil barrel, wooden frame etc. and therefore, the policies do not work. One thing is clearly understandable (to the world) that Bush is a warmonger

and is ready with pistol, knives, and whip. He, nevertheless, is heading to the Middle East for oil, where a vulture, a symbol for death and horror is waiting. This symbolization also implies that there is horror already in the Middle East and more pathos and horror is awaiting there suggesting that Bush and his administration are solely responsible for the unfortunate situation in the Middle East. Finally, the sign pointing the way to the Middle East reads: "The Muddle East". This is quite understandable considering what Bush had already done in the region with all his efforts. His policies for the region simply made all things more complicated. In another cartoon, Bush's horse is almost drowned in mud (cartoon: November 1, 2005), implying that he is almost lost with his policies. This also asserts that his policies are not applicable to the world (and to the Middle East in particular), as they are inappropriate and based on vague propositions – position match with the argument of Dyer (2007) – i.e. that Bush pretended in invading Iraq but he is defeated. For Bush, however, killing is the main policy in Iraq (cartoon: March 11-12, 2006 [Image 8]).
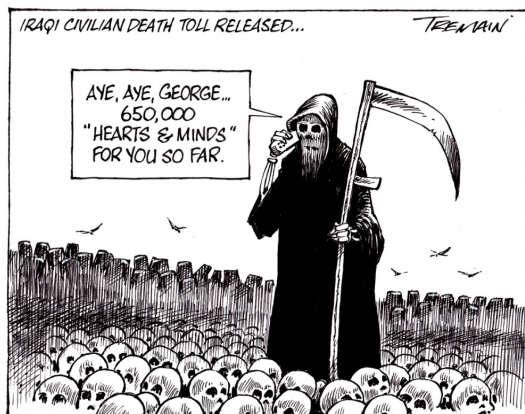
second 'trick' – that is Iran (cartoon: April, 22-23, 2005 [Image 9]).

Image 9: The next target of Bush is Iran

In this cartoon, Bush is depicted as a magician who says (indicating Iran): "And now for my next trick!..." This 'trick' (Iran) is symbolized as the end result of his continuous failure and especially his moral and political failure in Iraq. Consequently, Bush is drowned in the sands of Iraq because his policies not only killed many Iraqis, but were also the cause of his own people's (soldiers) deaths in Iraq (cartoon: November 2, 2006 [Image: 10]). The cartoon provides the message: "US deaths mounting in Iraq..." and Bush was reciting lines of poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley: "...Near them, on the sand,/Half sunk, a shattered/ visage lies, whose frown,/and wrinkled lip and/sneer of cold command..." The cartoon shows that because of Bush America is destroyed— symbolized as huge coffins.

Image 8: Bush's main policy is killing!

Eventually, Bush is depicted as a killer and destroyer of the Iraqis. Thus, a cartoon on October 18, 2006, reads:: "Aye, aye, George... 650,000: hearts & minds for you so far". The depiction in this cartoon is in the context of a report being released providing information about the Iraqi death toll, evident in the words with the cartoon, which reads: "Iraqi civilian death toll released..." Due to his greed and wrong policies, Bush is lost in Iraq and no 'trick' regarding Iraq is successful. To cover up the failure in Iraq and to capture people's attention, he starts talking about a
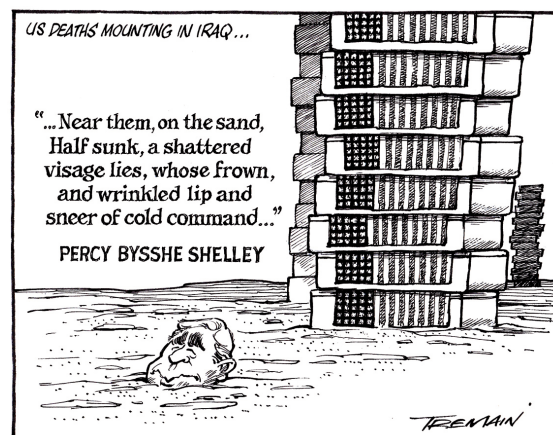
Image 10: Bush destroyed America with his policy in Iraq

All things being considered, the image of Bush is that of a philosophical failure and, he becomes psychologically weak in the context of the sentence of execution handed down at the trial of Saddam Hussein. Bush gets very upset and angry at the news of the sentence because Saddam would become a martyr (this 'martyr' is hanged and seated on a camel) and civil war (symbolized as a camel) will become more prominent in Iraq (cartoon: November 7, 2006). In this cartoon, Bush is angrily hitting Saddam, who is already hanged. Here Bush, once again is characterized as being an angry and intolerant man.

As Bush is depicted as a warrior, the representation also suggests that war and weapons occupied his thoughts, and while visiting India, in front of the Taj Mahal, Bush identifies the *Minar* of the Taj Mahal as missiles (March 3, 2006). The cartoon provides a message, which reads: "Meanwhile... Bush discovers India –", where Bush associates missiles with *Minars*, (Bush says: "Nice missiles") and an (Indian) host asks him: "Nice missiles?... What missiles Mr Bush?" In the context of international or bi-lateral talks, Bush prefers to discuss only one thing, and that is weapons, war and support for his 'war on terror'. Therefore, when New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark (cartoon: October 21, 2003) starts talking about "free trade", Bush simply ignores the topic, because he is driving the car symbolizing "war on terror".

The representation conveys that Bush's foreign policy is responsible for the critical situation inside the US. His (failed) policies made Bush worried in the context of the US Presidential election in 2006, as the people's support inside his country had fallen drastically. Thus, a cartoon (April 8-9, 2006) reads: "His temperature's up and his polls are down... It's not bird flu, it's his chickens coming to roost", indicating a "news: Bush Hurting..." In this cartoon the symbol of horror (a *vulture*) is presented twice: the first one is standing over his office chair, on which Bush is seated, and the second one is standing on his office table. Both vultures are also an indication that horror is omnipresent in his mind and surroundings, which once again implies that Bush is facing a critical moment with his internal and external policies.

The representation reinforces that because of Bush and his policies, the system of US democracy is seriously hampered (cartoon: November 11-12, 2006). In this cartoon, Bush is represented as a duck. This duck is sick and its legs, wings and other limbs are broken. The duck has cracked its egg (symbolizing broken democracy). Therefore, the winning of the election by Bush is represented as Bush violating US democratic values and that the US people elected a sick man (in this case a duck) as their president. This eventually reinforces anti-American attitudes – i.e. America and its people "could do – or at least would do – nothing right" (Rubin and Rubin, 2004, p. 128). However, this sick duck is simpering: "*@<! Democracy it drives me quackers..."[3] Nonetheless, the violation of democratic norms has another side – that Bush is using "terrorism" for his political future. The cartoon (March 1, 2007), suggests that Bush is using Osama bin Laden (in the name of war on terror) and Bush appears to be very relaxed with bin Laden's affairs. Bush (caricatured as seated in his office chair, his feet on the office table) really does not want to capture Osama bin Laden (depicted as a terrorist with a time bomb inside his briefcase). However, both of these characters (as represented in this cartoon) harmed the image of the US. Bush, in this cartoon, says to Osama bin Laden: "Me? Oh, not a dam thing, really – what have you been up to, Osama?" The US people, however, could understand his (Bush) intention as they (in the cartoon, behind from Bush's office-table) say: "Well, you've both trying to destroy us!" This cartoon seems to suggest a kind of secret deal between bin Laden and Bush. In regards to this cartoon and the above discussed cartoons: one might argue that (that is also argued in Mazid [2008, p. 451)], "In spite of the apparent differences in power each has, the two [Bush and bin Laden] have many things in common". For example, each has religion on his side, each has 'killing mission' that destroys world peace – that eventually means that there is no difference between these two.

The representation perceives that Bush is destroying the US economy— to maintain US imperialism, he has to spend a huge amount of money (cartoon: May 14, 2003). A giant sow (symbolizing US imperialism) quickly consumes all the money and all expenditure (symbolized as baby pigs) was sucking from the

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[3] Note: the first and the last signs are exact in figure, but the two signs appearing in the middle are not exact, as they were not found on the computer's keyboard.

imperialist US (the sow). Therefore, the US economy is being empty (symbolized as empty buckets), although Bush continues to feed this giant animal and her babies. It could be assumed that one of these possible costs (baby pigs) is Iraq. To continue Bush's promises in Iraq—e.g. not to give up the war on terror before victory in Iraq— the US needed to allocate a huge amount of money (cartoon: February 19, 2007). The cartoon says: "Bush asks Congress for another $700b... news..." This cartoon also implies that the US, depicted as a skinny goat, is losing its strength (the goat is outside of the "goat fence" suggesting the US went beyond its boundaries). The goat needs food, proper care and the means of 'civility' (to go back inside the boundary). The cartoon maintains that the US is suffering under a bad politician and bad policymaker that provokes the nation into engaging in the Iraq war. This cartoon also suggests that Bush only thinks about Iraq; but the US, which should be his first priority, does not get his attention.

Bush is depicted as an imposter who is against peace. For example, when Bush visits the British Queen and her family, Prince Charles and Prince Philip say: "Dear God!! An imposter has indeed infiltrated the palace!!" (Cartoon: November 21, 2003 [Image 11]).

Image 11: Imposter Bush

Bush is depicted as a mad-cow and, therefore, is not mentally sound (cartoon: December 27-18, 2003 [Image 12]).
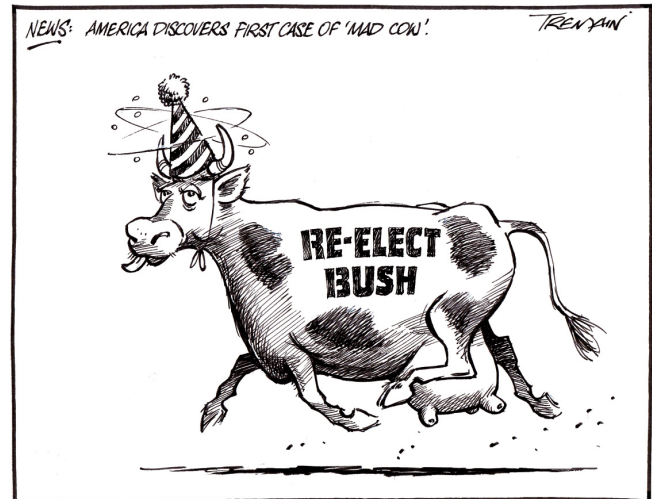

Image 12: Bush is similar to a mad cow

Nonetheless, the problem is not just with the mad cow (the president) but also with the American people because they are responsible for choosing the 'mad cow' as their president. The cartoon is critical of the American people. The cartoon's text reads: "America discovers first case of mad cow".

The South Pacific region, Iran and North Korea

Bush is depicted as being angry, an impostor, a liar, a warmonger and is responsible for killing people across the world, and his policies hinder the search for world peace. Thus, when Bush offers to help establish peace, harmony and democracy in the South Pacific, the people of the region do not trust him. This is depicted in a cartoon (March 28, 2007) that reinforces that the Pacific people are afraid of US intentions conveyed by Bush. This is because, while the US and its president pretend to believe in democracy and peace, they really do not mean it (or do not understand the meanings), and what they do is destroying peace and nations. The cartoon depicts a US soldier talking to a Pacific man resting, relaxing and reading a newspaper on a Pacific island beach. The cartoon provides the news: "Bush offers help in Pacific". The US soldier says to the man: "I have come to spread the word of peace, harmony and democracy..." – all these (including the above discussed cartoons), in fact, marginalize American culture, policies and politics identifying that this country "could do – or at least would do – nothing right" (Rubin and Rubin, 2004, p. 128). Eventually, the cartoon depiction promotes an anti-American perception – i.e. the US imperialist democratic experiment has failed in establishing proper political,

social and cultural values (Rubin and Rubin, 2004, p. 19). For example, the cartoon shows a (US) warship already in the region. The whole theme of the cartoon is that the US (and President Bush) does not know the exact meaning of peace, democracy, harmony etc., and by the (civil) words (those spoken by the soldier), they actually meant war, interference, invasion and ultimately the use of weapons for no reason.

As mentioned above, Bush failed in Iraq and looked for a "new trick" in invading Iran. To make Iran an issue, however, he needs some justification, and gets it (in the representation) by asserting that Iran has weapons of mass destruction (cartoon: June 24, 2003). Bush had made the same assertion in the context of the Iraq invasion. Thus, in talking to each other, one US official says: "Bush says Iran has weapons of mass destruction now!" and the other official replies: "Bush does ... Well that's one more country we don't have to worry about!" Therefore, Bush's policies are represented as hitting the 'enemy' even without a reasonable cause and war is the only solution in any context. In a cartoon published on July 17, 2006, Bush is depicted as expressing his position strongly against nuclear power— North Korea. In this caricature, while North Korean President Kim Il Sung wants to enter the nuclear world, President Bush says: "Over my dead body!". North Korea, however, successfully developed nuclear weapons without being bothered by the anger of Bush, in particular, and the outcry of the world in general. It suggests that Kim Il Sung, of North Korea, is not afraid of Bush (cartoon: July 7, 2006), and he (Kim) shows his middle finger (as a taboo sign) to the US and to the world with his nuclear bomb (October 11, 2006). In this cartoon, his middle finger is depicted as nuclear bomb.

Overall the caricatures make the US President's statements and position out to be little more than brouhaha and worthless. There was no change in the depiction of Bush as a leader or policymaker in the context of the Iraq invasion and its aftermath.

Conclusion

The cartoons appearing in the *ODT* are rhetorical images depicting President Bush as a global threat during this timeframe. It has been argued that editorial cartoons can propagate and exaggerate as these cartoons indicate that President Bush used his so-called religiosity, and war on terror policies and propaganda in relation to bin Laden for his political purposes. The

cartoons also depicted that American people were supportive of a person who is a warmonger and does not have any respect to democratic norms. Thus the cartoons can be identified as anti-American representation which was evident when the editorial cartoons suggested that the Americans elected an uncivilized person (*a mad cow*), and due to American imperialism, world peace was threatened. It needs to be pointed out like people from across the world, people in New Zealand protested against the Bush-led 'war on terror' policies, who found Bush's policies to other nations undemocratic and (the US policy is) supportive to Israel. Bush proposed a "road map for peace" in establishing durable and permanent peace between Palestine and Israel, but the depiction of editorial cartoons implied that it was pretentious since Bush did not act on it. However, the representation recognized that this newspaper's editorial cartoons were supportive to the (Labor Party-led) New Zealand Government in the context of Iraq invasion (e.g. opposing Bush policies in Iraq). This argues that the *ODT* political policy was not a problem to the cartoonist and the cartoonist is free to his open expression in depicting a satiric image.

It is also worth mentioning that under the theme of this study not all cartoons were discussed here. These cartoons were employed under the above-discussed specific themes. They bear almost the same thematic perception. Thus, not all cartoons are explained in this study to avoid repetition. It is also important to acknowledge that this analysis is not definitive, as explanations can change depending on one's perceptions and viewpoint. This study, therefore, should be recognized as one possible reading.

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