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Funny Business: Public Opinion of Outsourcing and Offshoring as Reflected in U.S. and Indian Political Cartoons

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Abstract:

In this paper, we studied the public's opinion of outsourcing and offshoring as reflected in political cartoons. Researchers in many fields have used political cartoons to track public opinion, yet we are unaware of any such research in the field of IS. We analyzed the content of 165 political cartoons from the U.S. and India that depict offshoring and outsourcing. Overall, U.S./Western political cartoons portray outsourcing and offshoring negatively, causing lost jobs for workers and poorer customer service for consumers. Indian political cartoons focus on jobs gained and the labor and infrastructure constraints caused by the rapid growth of ITO and BPO industries. We also compared the content of political cartoons to IS academic research. We found both similarities and differences. One similarity is that lower costs were found to be the most common reason depicted/cited for outsourcing/offshoring in political cartoons and IS academic research. One difference is that political cartoonists primarily empathize and thus promote the interests of the workers, direct supervisors, and customers most affected by outsourcing/offshoring whereas IS researchers primarily promote the interests of the firm. We also discuss the use of political cartoons as an effective pedagogical device in global outsourcing courses.

Keywords: offshore outsourcing, public opinion, political cartoons, political cartoon theory

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I. INTRODUCTION

"What does the public think about offshoring and outsourcing?" "Does public opinion vary across countries?" These research questions are important because outsourcing and offshoring—particularly the offshoring of white collar jobs like information technology (IT)—are major political issues. Public opinion of outsourcing/offshoring is also vital because public opinion likely contributes to the decline in IS enrollments in Western countries. For example, Hirschheim et al. [2007] write: "The crisis (in IS enrollments) seems at least partially driven by the consequences of and the late reaction to IS offshoring and the perception that there are no jobs for our IS graduates*" (p. 825).

To get a more systematic understanding of the public's view on offshoring and outsourcing of IT work, we analyzed the content of political cartoons from the U.S. and India. Scholars of mass media argue that the public must interpret the discourse espoused by politicians. One powerful way in which the public forms opinions is through opinion discourse [van Dijk 1998], of which political cartoons are one form. We analyzed the content of 165 political cartoons from the U.S. and India that depict offshoring and outsourcing. Overall, the analysis of political cartoons from these two countries supports the conjecture that the public negatively views outsourcing and offshoring in the U.S. and favorably views outsourcing and offshoring in India. But deeper nuances are also evident in the rhetoric of political cartoons, as discussed in this paper.

We believe that our paper offers four contributions to the IS literature. First, researchers in many other fields have used political cartoons to track public opinion [Edwards 1997], yet we are unaware of any such research in the field of IS. We demonstrate that public perceptions of IT can be examined by using political cartoons. We anticipate that political cartoons can be used to track public perceptions of other IT issues. Researchers could also examine how public perceptions of IT change over time.

Second, we confirmed—using the political cartoons—that public views on outsourcing and offshoring are different in the U.S. and India. Mankiw and Swagel [2006, p. 1041] purport: "According to the public's worldview, exports are good, because they create jobs, and imports are bad, because they allow foreigners to steal our jobs." We know that according to the Organization for Economic and Co-operation Development (OECD) that the U.S. is currently experiencing IT service trade deficits of nearly $1 billion[1] annually. According to the World Bank, India is experiencing IT software service trade surpluses of nearly $6 billion annually.[2] Thus, our findings confirm that in the U.S. and India, trade deficits were associated with negative public opinion and trade surpluses were associated with positive public opinion. Researchers could extend the study to other countries with significant IT surpluses or deficits like Japan, China, Ireland, or the United Kingdom.

Third, we compare and contrast how political cartoon artists and IS academics express normative values in their works. Political cartoonists make strong normative judgments about the victims of outsourcing and offshoring. They personify the actual people most directly affected by outsourcing and offshoring: the workers, direct supervisors, and customers. In contrast, we argue that IS researchers depersonalize outsourcing by writing at the level of the firm. When the unit of analysis is the client firm, IS researchers primarily promote the values of cost efficiency (transaction cost economics), risk mitigation (agency theory), and competitiveness (resource based view). When the unit of analysis is the supplier firm, IS researchers primarily promote the values of market share, profitability, and capabilities. When both firms are included within a study, IS researchers primarily promote the values of trust and partnership quality.

Finally, political cartoons are offered as an effective pedagogical device [Einbeck 2001]. The lead author uses political cartoons in a course called, "Global Sourcing of Business and IT Services" to stimulate classroom discussion. Increasingly, university courses comprise a rich set of both international and domestic students. Political cartoons provide a safe way to discuss politically sensitive issues associated with global sourcing.

The paper proceeds with a discussion of political cartoon theory and how scholars have used political cartoons to examine public opinion on contemporary social and political phenomena. We then briefly describe the tradition of

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[1] http://stats.oecd.org/wbos/index.aspx

[2] http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTRANETTRADE/Resources/Topics/Services/IndiaSerRep-Appendix.pdf

political cartoons in the U.S. and India. Next, we describe our research method and present the results of the content analysis of 165 political cartoons. We discuss public views on offshore outsourcing as compared to scholarly views and explain how political cartoons can be used in curricula. We conclude with suggestions for future IS research.

II. POLITICAL CARTOON THEORY

Political cartoons are illustrations that convey a political or social message that relates to current events. Political cartoons "seize upon and reinforce common sense and thus enable the public to actively classify, organize, and interpret in meaningful ways what they see or experience about the world in a given moment" [Greenberg 2002, p. 181].

Theories of political cartoons address two major issues: the *effects* of political cartoons and the *means*[3] of graphic persuasion. For this paper, we are concerned with the effects of political cartoons as a form of opinion discourse. In its most modest role, political cartoons are presumed to *reflect* public attitudes [Thibodeau 1989; Wheeler and Reed 1975]. Because political cartoons *reflect* public attitudes, researchers from many fields have studied the content of political cartoons to understand public attitudes about current events [Edwards 1997; Edwards and Ware 2005]. For example, Long [2007] tracked anti-Americanism after September 11 as reflected in over 900 editorial cartoons in the U.S. and Spain. (Surprisingly, U.S. cartoons were equally as anti-American as Spanish cartoons.) Gilmartin and Brunn [1998] looked at the representation of women in political cartoons. Benoit et al. [2001] analyzed 2,000 political cartoons on the Clinton-Lewinsky-Starr Affair.[4] Researchers also study political cartoons to understand public opinion in the past. For example, Thibodeau [1989] examined how the depiction of African Americans in political cartoons changed over time. Caswell [2004] examined a convenience sample of political cartoons about war spanning 200 years.

More aggressive theories argue that political cartoons *persuade* public attitudes, intentions, and behaviors [Brinkman 1968; Benoit et al. 2001; Caswell 2004; Medhurst and Desousa 1981], the so called "the performative aspect" of political cartoons [Chatterjee 2007]. Tom Engelhardt, Editorial Cartoonist for the St. Louis Post Dispatch for 35 years (1962-1997), described how an accumulation of cartoons may persuade public opinion:

> One cartoon is not going to change a lot of people's positions. I think there is a cumulative effect. If one cartoon can get another editor or cartoonist thinking about a problem then they might say 'I ought to say something about that.' A cartoon is like a pebble before the avalanche starts"[5]

The UNICEF sponsored "The Sara Initiative" is one example of political cartoons purposefully used to persuade attitudes and behaviors. UNICEF sponsored the creation of a cartoon character named Sara aimed at African girls to help them become "positively defiant" against sexually aggressive men. UNICEF was trying to bridge the disconnect between the fact that 95 percent of Africans between the ages of 15 and 45 can articulate how HIV is transmitted and how to prevent HIV, yet HIV infection rates have not dropped. The Sara series was distributed in 23 African countries, with tailored versions for each country including changes to Sara's name, skin color, and language [Beck 2006]. Russon [2000] found the Sara Initiative to be successful as measured by the percentage of African girls who could identify Sara (32 percent) and through qualitative assessments of Sara's impact on attitude and behavior.

Sometimes political cartoons trigger widespread and unintentional effects on attitudes and behaviors. Consider the unintended effects prompted by the publication of 12 cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad in the Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten,* on September 30, 2005. The Saudi Arabian and Kuwait governments boycotted Danish products because of those cartoons and the artist required police protection [Jensen 2008; Mȕller and Ȫzcan 2007].

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[3] Concerning the means of persuasion, researchers have developed a number of frameworks to categorize the specific techniques artists use in political cartoons [McCloud 1993]. For example, Medhurst and DeSousa [1981] analyzed 749 political cartoons and found that artists use six techniques of persuasion: (1) the use of line and form to create mood and tone, (2) the relative size of objects within a frame, (3) the amplification of physionomical features, (4) placement within the frame, (5) relation of text to visual imagery, and (6) rhythmic montage that arises from the interaction of these techniques. Semiotic analysis is a tool used to analyze the specific techniques of meaning and persuasion of political cartoons [Lee and Goguen 2003].

[4] Benoit [et al. 2001] found that the rhetorical visions changed during the course of the Clinton-Lewinsky-Starr Affair. At first, President Bill Clinton's rhetorical vision was depicted as: "I am wrongly accused by politically motivated villains." However, after his grand jury testimony, his rhetorical vision was depicted as, "My private life may be flawed, but Starr is a puritanical sex cop who has hurt those around me."

[5] Feature TV news story by Producer Patrick Murphy for KETC, *Living St. Louis,* about Tom Engelhardt on June 19, 2008. Available on: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBaHCw4kp3I

Beyond the discussion of effects on public opinion, political cartoon theory asserts that political cartoons represent a *normative judgment* [Greenberg 2002; Rubens 1987]. Cartoons frame a contemporary political or social issue by defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments and suggesting remedies [Entman 1993; Greenberg 2002]. Whereas hard news is supposed to be objective, political cartoons blend normative prescriptions and factual beliefs [Greenberg 2002]. Political cartoons have such a strong normative component, that some have described political cartoons as "sermonic" in its preaching of values [Benoit et al. 2001].

Thus far, we have established that political cartoons, in their most unassuming role, *reflect* public opinion and that political cartoons make a normative judgment. However, political cartoons can only function in this capacity in free societies [Benoit et al. 2001]. In the next section, we briefly discuss that both the United States and India have a political cartoon tradition, thus enabling a content analysis of political cartoons in these countries.

III. POLITICAL CARTOONS IN U.S. AND INDIA

Political cartoons have existed for thousands of years. The first recognized political cartoon occurred in Egypt in 1360 B.C. by the father-in-law of Tutankhamen [Danjoux 2007]. The Ancient Greeks and Romans frequently lampooned their political leaders, as evidenced on pottery, walls, and other ancient artifacts. The invention of the printing press brought wide-scale distribution of political cartoons through broadsheets [Press 1981]. Political cartoons were extremely popular in Georgian England and Western Europe [Caswell 2004].

Within the United States, Benjamin Franklin published what is considered to be the first U.S. political cartoon in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on May 9, 1754 [Hess and Northrop 1996]. His famous "Join or Die" cartoon depicts the colonies as parts of a snake (see Figure 1). Divided, the snake (colonies) will die; united, the snake (colonies) will survive. When the colonies gained independence from Great Britain, editorial cartoons proliferated. During the 1800s, more than 2,000 "editorial cartoonists"—commissioned artists—worked for American dailies or weeklies [Hess and Northrop 1996]. Today, those numbers have dwindled to less than 150 full-time newspaper cartoonists working in the United States [Hess and Northrop 1996].

Figure 1. First published U.S. Political Cartoon by Benjamin Franklin

Figure 2. Laxman's Common Man
Copyright permission granted by the artist, R.K. Laxman

Ironically, political cartooning in the U.S. has been "outsourced." Newspapers and magazines now routinely purchase political cartoons from syndicated artists rather than hire their own editorial cartoonists. The Association of American Editorial Cartoonists (AAEC) attribute the shift from full-time artists to syndicated artists to money (syndicated cartoons can cost as little as a few dollars), editors' and owners' fear of retribution from irritated readers, and political pressure to remain "politically balanced" in the age of the one-paper town [Davies 2004; Pett 2004].

In India, political cartoons were introduced from England about 100 years ago. When Britain ruled India, freedom of the press was still limited, and the content of political cartoons was confined to generic social issues rather than specific political figures [Laxman 2000]. According to Rasipuram Krishnaswamy Laxman—India's most famous editorial cartoonist and contributor to the *Times of India* for over 40 years: "Within a decade of independence [from Britain], the tribe of cartoonists proliferated" [Laxman 2000 p. viii]. Laxman is best known for portraying the common Indian man[6]—a mute, bewildered, and perplexed spectator of public events (see Figure 2).

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[6] Laxman stated that he had more trouble than Western cartoonists in portraying the common man because in India, individuals are not easily classified by dress. He writes, "A textile tycoon may be dressed exactly like a retail fruit seller." He settled on a man in a checked coat, bald head, bulbous nose, and bristly mustache [Laxman 2000, p. ix].

As former colonies of the British empire, both the U.S. and India enjoy the liberties of democracy, a free press, and a society that accepts political cartoons.   The next section explains how we gathered and analyzed the political cartoons on outsourcing and offshoring in these countries.

IV.. RESEARCH METHOD

Cartoon Sources for This Study.   Because few editorial cartoonists exist today, we used major Web sites of *syndicated* cartoonists to gather a sample of U.S. and Indian political cartoons on outsourcing and offshoring. We searched cartoonstock.com,[7] cartoonistgroup.com, and cartoonindia.com, as well as broad internet searches (google.com, yahoo.com, google.co.in, and yahoo.co.in). On syndicated cartoon sites, we used the search terms "offshoring," "outsourcing," "offshore outsourcing," "IT services exports," and "IT services imports."   On broader search engines, we appended these keywords with "cartoons" and "comic strips," such as "outsourcing cartoons."

While the Internet provided a sufficient sample of U.S. cartoons, internet searches only resulted in 23 Indian cartoons. To increase the number of Indian cartoons, we also contacted three Indian newspapers (*The Times of India, Deccan Herald,* and *The Hindu)* and one Indian magazine (*India Today)* for the names of Indian political cartoonists. These leads guided us to 20 Indian political cartoonists. We contacted each by email or phone to ask if they had any cartoons on outsourcing or offshoring. The second author also contacted three friends in India to search for Indian cartoons on outsourcing or offshoring that may be published in a language other than English.

In total, our final sample includes 165 images (see Table 1) comprising 133 cartoons and 32 comic strips. Seventy-nine percent of our sample is U.S./Western cartoons. Among the 35 Indian cartoons, 33 are written in English and two are written in Kannada, a local language in Bangalore.

Table 1. Number of Images for the Content Analysis			
	U.S./Western	**Indian**	**Total**
Cartoon	109	24	133 (81%)
Comic Strip	21	11	32 (19%)
Total	130 (79%)	35 (21%)	165

To see if some artists dominated the results, we also tracked each cartoon, where possible, to an original source. For example, when a Dilbert cartoon appeared in the results of a Google search, we traced that image back to www.dilbert.com and identified the artist as Scott Adams. We identified 70 unique artists among 155 of the cartoons. We relabeled the pool of "U.S. cartoons" and strips to "U.S./Western cartoons" because a few images are by British (Fran Orford) and Australian (Pat Oliphant who worked for *The Denver Post*) artists.

We listed the artists who have five or more cartoons in our sample (see Table 2). Among the 130 U.S./Western cartoons, we identified 63 unique artists. Five U.S./Western artists have five or more cartoons in our sample. Harley Schwadron is most notable, representing 17% of the U.S./Western cartoons. Among the 35 Indian cartoons, we

Table 2. Artists with Five or More Cartoons in Sample			
Artist	**WebSite URL**	**Number of U.S./Western Cartoons/ Strips**	**Number of Indian Cartoons/ Strips**
Harley Schwadron	http://www.schwadroncartoons.com/	22 (17%)	0
Randy Glasbergen	www.glasbergen.com	11 (8%)	0
Scott Adams	http://www.dilbert.com	6 (5%)	0
Chris Wildt, penname "Wilot"	http://www.cartoonstock.com	6 (5%)	0
Fran Orford	http://www.francartoons.com/	5 (4%)	
Sandeep Sood	http://www.doubtsourcing.com	0	9 (26%)
Harsho Mohan Chattoraj	http://www.geocities.com/harshomohan/	0	6 (17%)
Atul Kumar, penname "Tulal"	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tulal http://www.cartoonindia.com	0	5 (14%)
Total		50	20

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[7] Users are allowed to download for educational purposes for free, although the free versions have low resolution and a large copyright stamp. Images reproduced for this article were licensed through the Web site or artist.

identified seven artists. Sandeep Sood's cartoons represent 26 percent of the Indian cartoons. Later in the discussion, we address the effects of this dominant artist on the findings.

We also dated the cartoons, where possible. Among the 165 cartoons, 42 (25 percent) have a copyright date (see Table 3). The earliest copyright date is 1997. This cartoon captured the practice used by some Indian suppliers to inflate human resources by listing potential employees still in the recruiting process as available employees for outsourcing projects. Beyond that 1997 cartoon, the next dated cartoon is 2002. The most recent cartoons are dated 2008. Thus, outsourcing and offshoring cartoons are recent phenomena with 41 of the 42 dated cartoons copyrighted between 2002 and 2008.

Coding the Sample. We adapted Greenberg's framework [2002] on political cartoons to develop an initial set of questions for the coding sheet:

Narrative: *What is the essential story line of the cartoon?* Cartoonists depict a coherent story comprising subjects and events within an encapsulated frame (in the case of a cartoon) or frames (in the case of a strip). For example, one general narrative depicts a manager or senior official outsourcing to avoid accountability for unethical actions. A cartoon by Aaron Bacall provides a particular example of this narrative. Two affluent, smiling men in suits are talking and the caption says, "The company is doing much better since we outsourced our ethics division to tribal warlords."

Table 3. Copyright Dates of Cartoons			
	U.S./Western	**Indian**	**Total**
1997	0	1	1
2002	0	2	2
2003	5	0	5
2004	11	0	11
2005	1	0	1
2006	7	0	7
2007	4	9	13
2008	2	0	2
Total	30	12	42

Domestication: *How does the image bring distant events closer to everyday life?* Cartoonists also use familiar locations and signs to bring distant events closer to everyday life. Cartoonists locate remote events in homes, streets, stores and other places familiar to people's everyday life, such as one U.S./Western cartoon depicting the offshore outsourcing of a child's lemonade stand. Cartoonists use familiar signs such as business suits and ties to indicate white collar workers and cows, snake charmers, dhoti and saris (typical Indian dress), and bindi (traditional mark on forehead) to indicate Indians.

Binary Struggle: *Which countries are depicted in a binary struggle?* Cartoons often treat a political/social issue as a binary struggle between two social factions. Blame is usually assigned to one of the social factions, the other is the victim. As Tom Engelhardt said, "A cartoon is always a weapon of attack."[8] In the context of offshoring, we operationalized this as the two countries depicted in the cartoon, such as a U.S. job being sent to India.

Normative Transference: *Who is depicted as the "loser" because of offshoring and outsourcing?* As noted previously, one of the main functions of a political cartoon is to make a normative judgment by assigning blame and depicting victims.

To compare the content of political cartoons with academic research on outsourcing and offshoring, we also coded the following constructs:

Reasons: What are the reasons or justification given for outsourcing/offshoring?
Consequences: What are the consequences of outsourcing/offshoring?

Using these high level questions, the first author then examined all images and began creating categories of codes. Patterns soon emerged and an initial coding sheet was created. Each author then independently coded five randomly selected cartoons using the coding sheet. We found we needed to make the narratives more generic. For example, on the initial coding sheet, one narrative was "U.S./Western manager lays off U.S./Western worker

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[8] Ibid.

because job is outsourced/offshored." After the practice coding, this narrative became, "worker loses job because of outsourcing/offshoring."

Each coauthor independently coded the remainder of the images. When we compared codes, we had identical codes for the countries (binary struggle) and locations (domestication) for all the cartoons. These cues were quite unambiguous. For the narrative, normative transference, reasons, and consequences, we had shared codes for the main issues depicted for 150 of the cartoons. However, one of us tended to infer more information than the other. We decided to use the smaller set of shared codes. We also tweaked the wording of a few codes. The final coding sheet and an example of a how a cartoon was coded using this sheet is found in Appendix A.

The fifteen cartoons that we initially interpreted differently provided some interesting insights as well. In all cases, a lack of familiarity with the context and cultural signs explained the different interpretations. The American author initially misinterpreted two cartoons because she failed to recognize the Indian Prime Minister and his cabinet in one cartoon and the Indian's cartoonist's use of "Umreekans" to express the Indian accent for "Americans" in the other. She could not code the two cartoons published in Kannada. The Indian author was unaware of some U.S./Western cultural signs needed to interpret 11 U.S./Western cartoons. These cultural cues included Davy Crockett, Keebler Brand cookies that use elves in commercials, Franciscan monks, the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* book series, U.S. President George Bush's "No Child Left Behind" educational reform, the practice of reading labels on others people's clothes, and the island of Sark in the English Channel. Once we explained the cultural phenomena to each other, we interpreted the cartoon through this new understanding and agreed upon the coding of the cartoons.

V. FINDINGS

In this section, we present the findings of the content analyzes for the U.S./Western and Indian cartoons by comparing the narratives, domestication, binary struggle, normative transference, reasons, and consequences depicted in each set.

Findings on Narrative

In U.S./Western cartoons and comic strips, job loss is the most common storyline, representing 39 percent of the cartoons. Table 4 shows the number of cartoons mapped to the essential story line of the cartoon or comic strip. From the U.S./Western perspective, the major narrative is lost jobs, the theme of 51 cartoons. In particular, workers lost their jobs (n=44) more frequently than senior managers or officials (n=7). The cartoon in Appendix A provides a typical example of the "worker loses job" narrative.

From the U.S./Western perspective, the next most frequent narrative is "the consumer bears the negative consequence of offshoring/outsourcing." These cartoons depict consumers experiencing poorer service after outsourcing or offshoring. Figure 3 provides a typical example of a consumer negatively affected by offshore outsourcing. The Western female character in the cartoon cannot get technical support from India because of an Indian holiday that is not recognized in Western culture.

From the U.S./Western perspective, the next most frequent narrative is "worker sent to or seeks job in offshore country". This narrative entails a Western worker seeking their lost job offshore, implying that their home country has no equivalent employment opportunities. An example of this is depicted in Figure 4. A man rows a boat across the ocean to follow his lost job overseas. He is clearly distressed and frantic as indicated by his facial expression, his sweat, and the lines of motion around his arms and oars.

In Indian cartoons, the most frequent narrative is "India gains jobs, opportunities, bargaining power, and/or prosperity because of outsourcing." Cartoons by Indian artists depict the benefits of India's vibrant outsourcing industry in 26 percent of the cartoons. These cartoons show the enormous opportunities that the IT and other white collar services are affording India. The example in Figure 5 shows a monthly new employee induction for an outsourcing supplier that is so crowded that it is mistaken for a rock concert.

The second most frequent Indian narrative from the Indian perspective depicts a conflict between Indian workers and their managers. These conflicts center on deadlines, wages, and job duties. Figure 6, a comic strip from the Doubtsourcing series by Sandeep Sood, provides an example. The Indian manager and Indian staff person disagree about a deadline. This comic strip also depicts the narrative that offshore suppliers make promises to a client that they cannot keep.

Table 4. Cartoon Narratives: The Essential Storyline		
Narrative	**Number of U.S./Western Cartoons/ Strips**	**Number of Indian Cartoons/ Strips**
Worker **loses job** because of outsourcing/offshoring	44	0
Consumer bears the negative consequence of outsourcing/offshoring	19	1
Worker sent to or seeks job in offshore country	10	0
Reverse outsourcing: jobs outsourced/sent offshore then insourced/brought onshore	9	1
Worker has less satisfying job after outsourcing/offshoring	8	0
Childhood/domestic activity/role outsourced	8	1
Executive/senior official **loses job** because of outsourcing/offshoring	7	
Offshore supplier deals with unreasonable demands/poor treatment from customer/client	6	3
Manager outsources to avoid accountability for unethical actions	5	0
Extreme outsourcing: a business outsources everything	5	0
Outsourcing an unwanted activity	3	0
Search for even more outsourcing/offshoring opportunities	3	0
India gains because of outsourcing	3	9
Consumer bears positive consequences of outsourcing	2	0
Unqualified workers recruited to fill Indian outsourcing demand	1	5
Indian infrastructure/human resources not able to meet demand	1	4
Offshore supplier worker and manager conflict over wages, job duties	0	6
Offshore supplier makes promises to client they cannot keep	0	2
Indian politician focuses on outsourcing success to downplay other failures	0	5
Indian gains in offshoring do not benefit most Indian citizens	0	3
Other:	8	3
Total	139[9]	40[10]

Figure 3. U.S./Western Narrative: "Consumer bears the negative consequence of outsourcing/ offshoring"

Cartoon licensed from CartoonStock.com

Figure 4. U.S./Western Narrative: "Worker sent to or seeks job in offshore country"

Cartoon licensed from CartoonStock.com

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[9] Note: Total is greater than 130 because some US/Western cartoons had multiple narratives

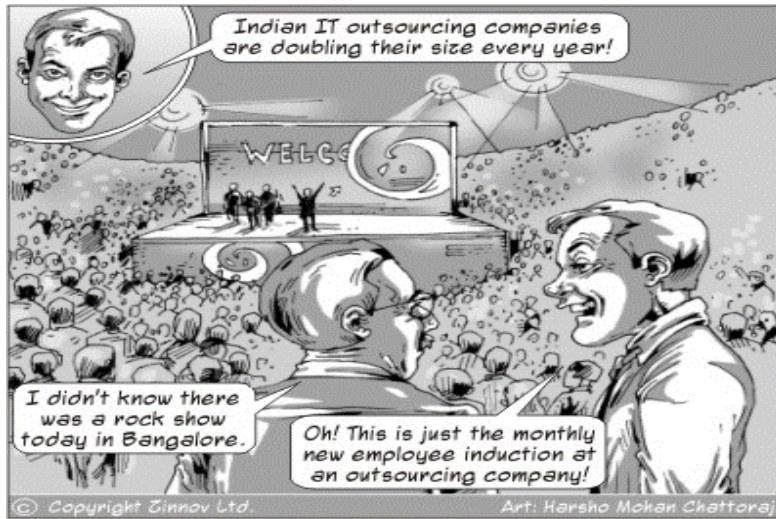[10] Note: Total is greater than 35 because some Indian cartoons had multiple narratives

Figure 5. Indian Narrative:
"India gains because of outsourcing."
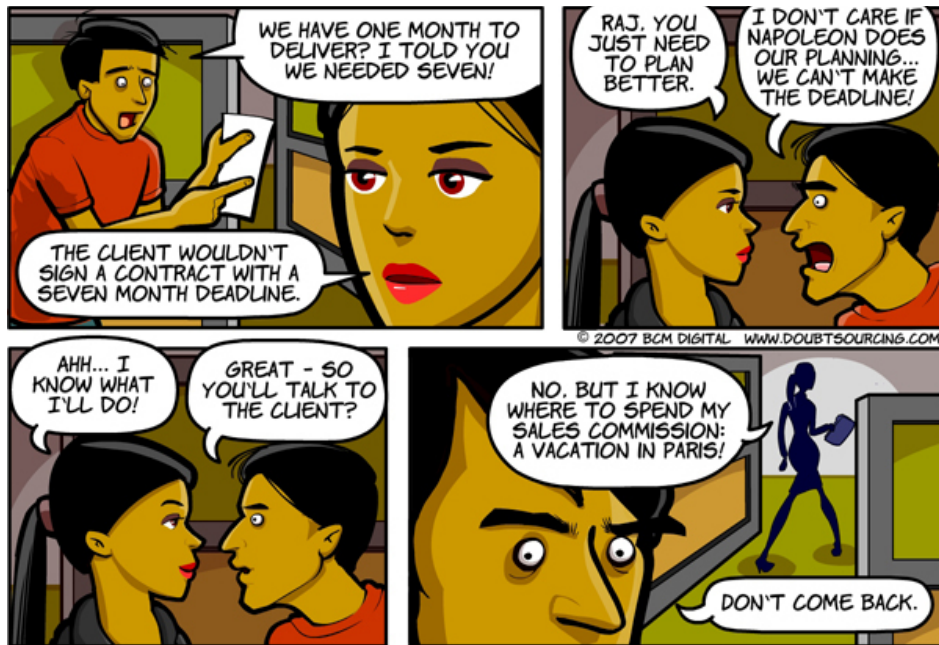
Cartoon licensed from Zinnov Ltd.

Figure 6. Indian Narrative:
"Offshore supplier worker/manager conflict over wages, job duties"

Copyright permission granted by the artist, Mr. Sandeep Sood

Two Indian narratives tie for third most frequent narrative. One of these Indian narratives is "unqualified workers recruited to fill Indian outsourcing demand." In India, the IT and BPO boom has created a massive need for skilled white-collar workers. As these five cartoons depict, labor shortages force suppliers to recruit unqualified workers. Figure 7 provides an example. Here, three men come to study religion under the guidance of a hermit (or priest). Instead of spiritual training, the priest tells them, "I've replaced the syllabus folks! From next week we're learning C, C++, JAVA, XML ..." Other versions of this cartoon narrative recruit cardboard people, snake charmers, and bandits to fill ITO jobs.

The other Indian narrative that ties for third is "Indian politicians exploit outsourcing success to downplay failures." These five cartoons are all from the same Indian artist—Tulal. For example in Figure 8, an Indian politician is telling two citizens that India is making great strides in Science and Technology to downplay the electricity failures. In another cartoon, Tulal depicts a politician complaining to another politician that he's given the citizens the Internet and now they are complaining that they want food and shelter.

Figure 7: Indian Narrative: "Unqualified workers recruited to fill Indian IT demand"

Copyright permission granted by the artist,
Mr. Janardhana Swamy

Figure 8: Indian Narrative: "Indian politicians focuses on outsourcing success to downplay other failures"

Copyright permission granted by the artist,
Mr. Tulal

The other narratives from the Indian perspective focus on negative themes caused by rapid demand for Indian IT and BPO services: traffic jams, electricity outages, or dealing with unreasonable customer demands.

Findings on Domestication

In the outsourcing and offshoring context, domestication brings the remote notion of offshore outsourcing into the everyday lives of people using location and cultural signs. The most frequent location depicted in both U.S./Western and Indian cartoons is an office (see Table 5). Artists located 57 (44 percent) of U.S./Western cartoons and 17 (49 percent) of Indian cartoons in an office. This high frequency of an office location may be explained by the fact that political cartoonists are primarily commenting on the outsourcing and offshoring of white collar jobs. Other common locations were streets, homes, or retail establishments.

Table 5.: Domestication through Location and Signs		
DOMESTICATION	**Number of U.S./Western Cartoons/Strips**	**Number of Indian Cartoons/Strips**
Location: office	57	17
Location: street	17	5
Location: other (airport, stadium, IT exhibition, pier, clouds, park, harbor, outside, newsroom, castle, ocean, river, library)	14	9
Location: no background at all to indicate location	14	2
Location: home	13	1
Location: retail/commercial	7	1
Location: beach	5	0
Location: outer space, fantasy world	3	0
Total	*130*	*35*
Signs: business suites and neckties	56	19
Signs: fantasy creatures	7	0
Signs: Santa Claus	5	0
Signs: President George Bush	5	0
Signs: Indian signs of cows, snake charmers, dhoti, saris, bindi	5	8
Signs: house pets	4	0

Domestication may also happen through other common signs. Forty-three percent of U.S./Western cartoons and 54 percent of Indian cartoons use business suits and/or neckties to indicate the narrative involves white collar workers.

In U.S./Western cartoons, other familiar signs include Santa Claus (depicted in five cartoons), U.S. President George Bush (depicted in five cartoons), fantasized creatures (depicted in seven cartoons), or house pets (depicted in four cartoons). To signal India, artists use familiar signs associated with India such as cows, snake charmers, dhoti (male garment), saris (female garment), and bindi (traditional mark on the forehead). Signs from each culture are familiar and nonthreatening and relate people to outsourcing through analogy. Figures 9 and 10 provide examples of domestication.

Figure 9: Domestication	**Figure 10: Domestication:**
Location: Street;	**Location: office**
Familiar Signs: snake charmer, turban	**Familiar signs: suit and tie, desk**
Copyright permission granted by the artist, Mr. Allen Forkum	Copyright permission granted by the artist, Mr. Ashok Dongre

Findings on Binary Struggle

The U.S./Western cartoons often depict where Western jobs are sent or from where services are being delivered (see Table 6). ***From the U.S./Western perspective, the most frequently named or explicitly depicted country is India (n=41 or 32 percent).*** This likely reflects that India is the largest offshore destination for ITO and BPO work, with an estimated 25 percent of the global ITO market in 2008.[11] Beyond ITO and BPO services, India is not even in the top 15 trading partners with the U.S. in 2008.[12] This suggests that the loss of white collar jobs to India is the main focus of Westerners. The second most frequently named country is ***China (n=13).*** Compared to India, China software development exports to the U.S. are small—an estimated $67 million in 2006 (Lacity and Rottman 2008). However, China is the second largest trading partner to the U.S. behind Canada. We conjecture that artists appeal to the average citizen's pervasive exposure to "made in China" to relate readers to outsourcing and offshoring. Western cartoons also frequently refer generically to "overseas" or "offshore" or "third world country".

The Indian cartoons rarely named a specific country, but depicted Western clients by skin color, dress, and other signs (n=8). Only five Indian cartoons specifically reference the United States. The majority of the Indian cartoons commented on the internal issues caused by India's success, such as bountiful jobs but lack of human resources or infrastructure to meet demand, or conflicts among offshore managers and workers. Thus, their binary struggles were less focused on specific countries compared to U.S./Western cartoons.

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[11] E-business Strategies, "Offshoring Statistics: Dollar Size, Job Loss, and Market Potential," http://www.ebstrategy.com/Outsourcing/trends/statistics.htm

[12] http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/highlights/top/top0810yr.html

Table 6. Other Country Depicted in Cartoon		
BINARY STRUGGLE	**Number of U.S./Western Cartoons/Strips Depicting Other County**	**Number of Indian Cartoons/Strips Depicting Other County**
India	41	n/a
Generic reference to overseas/offshore/outsourcing	28	0
China	13	1
Other: Korea, Pakistan, Borneo, Hong Kong, Bermuda, Egypt, Canada	5	1
Mexico	4	0
Generic reference to third world country	4	0
Island country	4	0
Canada	2	1
Outer space/heaven/fantasy world	1	0
Western country	0	8
United States	n/a	5
Not applicable/cannot code	31	20
Total	**133[13]**	**36[14]**

Findings on Normative Transference

Political cartoons have a normative component in that the blame is assigned to one of the social factions—there are perpetrators and victims, winners and losers. For example, in Figure 11, the artist assigns blame to U.S. President George Bush and implies American workers are his victims**. *In the context of outsourcing and offshoring cartoons, U.S./Western workers (n=58) and consumers (n=23) are the most frequently portrayed victims (see Table 7) in U.S./Western cartoons.* This finding is consistent with the two major narratives of "Worker loses job because of outsourcing/offshoring" and "Consumer bears the negative consequence of outsourcing/offshoring." What is most interesting about the U.S./Western cartoons is that the alleged "winners" from outsourcing are not usually portrayed. These presumably are the corporations that lay off workers and permit lower quality of services to consumers in order to reduce costs and thus increase their profits.

In India, 12 out of 35 cartoons (34 percent) do not depict any victim.   This is consistent with the most common narrative that India is gaining from outsourcing. When victims are depicted, the most commonly portrayed victims are offshore laborers (dealing with clients or bosses) and offshore managers (dealing with clients or staff). Figure 12 provides an example of an unreasonable Western client (the perpetrator) complaining to an Indian laborer (the victim) that the offshore worker is not agile enough to respond to the client's ridiculous demands.

Table 7. Outsourcing/Offshoring "Victims"		
NORMATIVE TRANSFERENCE	**Number of U.S./Western Cartoons/Strips**	**Number of Indian Cartoons/Strips**
U.S./Western worker(s)	58	1
U.S./Western consumer(s)	23	2
No victim portrayed	18	12
Offshore laborer	10	7
U.S./Western management/Senior official	9	4
U.S./Western citizen(s)	5	0
Offshore customer	3	1
Offshore citizen(s)	1	3
Offshore manager	1	6
Other (specify):	7	0
Total	**135[15]**	**36[16]**

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[13] Note: total is greater than 130 because some U.S./Western cartoons depicted multiple other countries

[14] Note: Total is greater than 35 because one Indian cartoon depicted two other countries.

[15] Note: total is greater than 130 because some U.S./Western cartoons depicted multiple victims

[16] Note: total is greater than 35 because some Indian cartoons depicted multiple victims

Figure 11: U.S./Western Normative Transference:
Blame assigned to President Bush and implied victims are
American workers.

Figure 12: Indian Normative Transference:
Indian worker portrayed as victim to unreasonable demands by Western
client

Copyright permission granted by the artist , Mr. Sandeep Sood

Findings on Reasons for Outsourcing/Offshoring

We were interested to understand how cartoonists depict the *reasons* for outsourcing/offshoring.   We only coded a reason if the cartoonist explicitly stated a reason or reasons. The cartoon in Appendix A identifies two explicit reasons for laying off a U.S. worker—lower costs and better quality of workers offshore. The cartoonist writes: "We are going to have to let you go, we've found someone in China who is 45% better at being you for 24% less." Table 8 presents the tallies.

For both the U.S./Western and Indian Cartoons, 70 percent of the cartoons did not identify any reason for outsourcing or offshoring. This finding is aligned with the claim that political "cartoons are not intended to tell why an event happened" [Caswell 2004] but rather to make a normative judgment about current political/social events.

Table 8. Reasons Given for Outsourcing or Offshoring		
REASONS	Number of U.S./Western Cartoons/Strips	Number of Indian Cartoons/Strips
Lower Costs	18	3
Technology enabled outsourcing	7	2
Quality of work is better offshore	6	3
Offshore workers work harder than U.S. workers	6	3
Offshore workers/citizens easier to manipulate	4	3
Transfer unethical behavior to offshore suppliers	3	1
Not applicable/cannot code	91	25
Other:	5	0
Total	**140[17]**	**40[18]**

As discussed in the next section, cartoonists more frequently focused on the consequences of outsourcing and offshoring rather than the reasons for outsourcing and offshoring. *From the U.S./Western perspective, when a reason is explicitly depicted, the most frequent reason given in U.S./Western cartoons is lower costs.* The second most frequent reason is technology enablement, including wireless technology, global positioning systems, video conferencing, YouTube and the Internet. Figure 13 provides an example. The cartoonist depicts Santa Claus replacing a reindeer with a Chinese worker enabled by a GPS.

**Figure 13. U.S./Western Reasons:
Technology Enablement**

Cartoon licensed from Cartoonstock.com

Findings on Consequences of Outsourcing/Offshoring

Consequences refer to what happens after outsourcing or offshoring. The cartoonists depict a rich set of consequences (see Table 9). *From the U.S./Western perspective, job loss is the number one consequence of outsourcing or offshoring, depicted in 56 percent of the cartoons (73/130).* The figures previously presented serve as examples—the laid off worker in Appendix A, the Western man rowing across the sea in search of his lost job, and the laid off reindeer. The second most frequent consequence is poorer quality of service, as previously depicted by the Western woman who cannot get technical support because of a Hindu holiday. The comic strip in Figure 14 provides another example. The man is frustrated by his long wait on a technical support line. The third most frequently depicted consequence is the loss of business control or lost capability. In Figure 15, for example,

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[17] Note: total is greater than 130 because some US/Western cartoons depicted multiple reasons

[18] Note: total is greater than 35 because some Indian cartoons depicted multiple reasons

the artist depicts that the only person still employed at the business is a janitor, and he is certainly unable to handle business operations.

From the Indian perspective, jobs gained are the primary consequence of outsourcing. Nine cartoons (26 percent) depict every class of Indians gaining employment. Figure 5, previously presented, provides an example (the cartoon that depicts a monthly new employee induction that is so crowded, that it is mistaken for a rock concert). Figure 16 provides another example of the positive outcomes of India's place in the global market using the childhood activity of a spelling bee. Here, outsourcing to India is associated with higher productivity and competitiveness. The eight cartoons that depict "poorer service quality" actually follow from the narrative that India is prospering so well from outsourcing that there are not enough qualified people to fill all the positions or infrastructure to support demand.

Table 9. Consequences of Outsourcing or Offshoring		
CONSEQUENCES	Number of U.S./Western Cartoons/Strips	Number of Indian Cartoons/Strips
Lost U.S./Western jobs	73	3
Poorer service quality	23	8
Loss of control of business operation/lost capability	15	0
Relocated job	7	0
Jobs remaining in U.S./West are less satisfying	6	0
Increased efficiency/competitiveness	5	4
Better service	2	1
More Consumerism	2	0
Job wages in U.S. drop	1	0
Difficulty coordinating across time zones	1	0
Better quality of life	1	0
Poor working conditions offshore	1	4
Employee has more bargaining power	0	4
Jobs Gained	0	9
Lack of distributive justice	0	4
Not applicable/cannot code	16	4
Other (specify):	6	3
Total	**159[19]**	**44[20]**

Figure 14. U.S./Western Consequences:
Poorer Quality Service

Cartoon licensed from Cartoonistgroup.com

So far, we compared U.S. and Indian political cartoons across six dimensions: the main narrative, domestication, binary struggle, normative transference, reasons, and consequences. In the next section, we compare political cartoons with IS academic research.

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[19] Note: Total is greater than 130 because some U.S./Western cartoons depicted multiple consequences.

[20] Note: Total is greater than 35 because some Indian cartoons depicted multiple consequences.
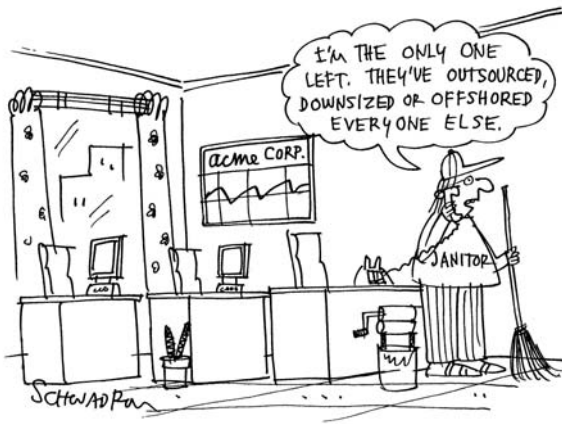
**Figure 15: U.S./Western Consequences:
Loss of control of business
operations/capabilities**

Cartoon licensed from CartoonStock.com

**Figure 16: Indian Consequences:
Increased efficiency/competitiveness**

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Dr. Thomas Kodenkandath

VI.. POLITICAL CARTOONS VERSUS IS RESEARCH: WHOSE AGENDA IS REPRESENTED?

Both political cartoon artists and academics express normative values in their works, whether these are implicitly or explicitly expressed. We know from political cartoon theory that political cartoons make a normative judgment and typically depict political/social issues as a binary struggle between two social factions. From the content analysis of the political cartoons on outsourcing and offshoring, we see strong normative judgments about the victims of outsourcing and offshoring. In the U.S./Western cartoons, the victims are workers and supervisors who lose their jobs because of outsourcing or offshoring, consumers who suffer lower quality service because of outsourcing or offshoring, and offshore laborers who are subject to abuse by unreasonable employers or customers. In India, when victims were portrayed, they were victims because of India's success. Offshore laborers are depicted as over-worked because of excessive demand for their services, and offshore managers were depicted as losing their ability to direct offshore workers because labor shortages have given offshore workers excessive bargaining power. Overall, we can say that political cartoons depict the actual people most directly affected by outsourcing and offshoring: the workers, direct supervisors, and customers. What is markedly absent from the political cartoons are the obvious beneficiaries of outsourcing and offshoring—the client firms that reduce their costs and the supplier firms who generate revenues.

If political cartoonists are representing the interests of workers and consumers, who are IS researchers representing? This question has been largely addressed in the IS and organizational literature under the rubric of paradigm debates, most notably the positivist versus the anti-positivist debates [Burrell and Morgan 1979; Deetz 1996]. In its purest form, positivism "posits that the study of organizations can occur through a *value-free* scientific approach" [Wicks and Freeman 1998, p. 125]. Positivism still dominates IS research. For example, Chen and Hirschheim [2004] examined 1,893 IS research articles published between 1991 and 2001 and found that 81 percent of articles assume a positivist position. In vehement protest against this assumption of value-free research, anti-positivists argue that all inquiry is value-laden. But rather than liberating researchers, anti-positivism results in multiple narratives and a quagmire of possible meanings [Deetz 1996; Wicks and Freeman 1998]. In two insightful papers by Wicks and Freeman [1998] and Hirschheim and Goles [2000], the authors argue that the positivist/anti-positivist debate is fruitless, and that researchers can best serve society by adopting "the new pragmatism." As pragmatists, researchers ask what research is useful "in the sense of helping people to better cope with the world or to create better organizations" [Wicks and Freeman 1998, p. 129]. The new pragmatism is knowingly normative and value-embracing.

We purport that IS researchers who study outsourcing and offshoring of IT work have already adopted "the new pragmatism" whether this is explicitly or implicitly declared. (After 20 years in the field, the first author has never met an IS researcher who claims to be "value-free," even if their writings are classified as positivist.) Normative values are found even in our most "positivist" theoretical work on outsourcing. Consider, for example, Transaction Cost

Economics. This theory is based on the normative assertion, from the perspective of the client firm, that the "best" governance choice is the most cost efficient. The normative components in IS research is more explicitly apparent in the vast academic research aimed at practitioners. In these writings, IS researchers prescribe best practices, decision-making frameworks, critical success factors, and modes of efficient governance [see, for example: Cullen et al. 2005; DiRomualdo and Gurbaxani 1998; Feeny and Willcocks 1998; Lacity and Hirschheim 1993; McFarlan and Nolan 1995; Rottman and Lacity 2006].

If we agree that IS research is normative, then we may ask "Whose agenda are we promoting?" Stakeholder Theory is one way to answer this question. Stakeholder Theory assumes that values are necessarily and explicitly a part of doing business [Freeman et al. 2004]. The theory is usually enacted from the perspective of the manager—whose interests should the manager represent?   Initially, we held managers accountable to one stakeholder group—the stockholder. Stockholder Theory asserts that managers should represent (and thus act in the best interests) of stockholders because they are the owners of the firm. Recall the words of Milton Friedman, "The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits" [Friedman 1962]. Stakeholder Theory broadens the landscape of managerial responsibility beyond stockholders to include employees, customers, suppliers, and the local community. Social Contract Theory further extends the manger's responsibility to all members of society [Smith and Hasnas 1999], such as the "green" environmental movement in business.

We argue that IS researchers, particularly those studying outsourcing and offshoring, have written on behalf of the firm. Consider the vast amount of IS research that assumes the perspective of *client firms* or *supplier firms* (see Table 10 for a representative sample)*.   When client or supplier firms are the unit of analysis, we study the determinants and outcomes of outsourcing/offshoring and make normative judgments as to whether or how these firms "reduced costs", "improved value", achieved "profit margins", or achieved "satisfaction" from their sourcing relationships. In promoting these firm agendas, academic research found or argues that offshore outsourcing generally benefits client firms provided they select good suppliers, transfer appropriate work, and have the internal capabilities to effectively manage risks and govern offshore relationships (see for example Carmel and Tjia 2005; Kotlarsky et al. 2008; Lacity and Rottman 2008). In contrast to political cartoons, we find very few studies that represent the cause of the outsourced worker or offshore laborer [exceptions include Ho et al. 2003; Lacity et al. 2008; Slaughter and Ang 1996].

Table 10. Academic Outsourcing/Offshoring Research	
Stakeholder	**IS Research**
Client Firm	Ang and Cummings [1997]; Ang and Straub [1998]; Applegate and Montealegre [1991]; Apte et al. [1997]; Arnett and Jones [1994]; Barthélemy and Geyer [2004] Carmel and Agarwal [2002]; Choudhury and Sabherwal [2003]; Cross [1995] Cullen et al. [2005]; DiRomualdo and Gurbaxani [1998]; Earl [1996],Farag and Krishnan [2003]; Feeny and Willcocks [1998]; Gefen and Carmel [2008]; Grover et al. [1994]; Grover et al. [1996]; Hall and Liedtka [2005]; Hayes et al. [2000]; Hirschheim and Lacity [2000]; Kaiser and Hawk [2004]; Lacity and Rottman [2008]; Loh and Venkatraman [1992] ; Lee et al. [2004] ; Madison et al. [2006]; Oh et al. [2006]; Poppo and Zenger [1998]; Ranganathan and Balaji [2007]; Whitten and Leidner [2006]
Supplier Firm	Adler et al. [2005] ; Bruno et al. [2004]; Carmel [2006]; Gopal et al. [2003]; Kern et al. [2002ab]; Levina and Ross [2003]; Oshri et al. [2007]; Oza and Hall [2005]; Ramasubbu et al. [2008]; Vlaar et al. [2008]
Laborer	Ho et al. [2003]; Lacity et al. [2008]; Lacity and Rottman [2009]; Slaughter and Ang [1996]

To summarize, one main difference between political cartoons and IS research are whose agendas are represented. Political cartoons primarily empathize and thus promote the interests of the workers, direct supervisors, and customers most affected by outsourcing and offshoring. IS researchers primarily promote the interests of the firm.

Another main difference between political cartoons and IS research is how we represent the stakeholders. In political cartoons, subjects are personified. The victims in political cartoons are incarnated; individual workers, managers, consumers, or clients are depicted. In contrast to political cartoons which personalizes outsourcing and offshoring, IS academic and practitioner research depersonalizes it. We usually aggregate parties into broad stakeholder groups and impersonally speak of "client firms" or "supplier firms" rather than personifying individual managers, workers, or clients.

When comparing the content of outsourcing/offshoring political cartoons with academic and practitioner research, we also found similarities. One obvious similarity is that *lower costs* is the most common reason for

outsourcing/offshoring in political cartoons and academic research [for example, see Carmel and Tjia 2005; Lacity and Willcocks 1998; Lacity and Rottman 2008]. Some political cartoons and some academic research also address the *personal* or *political motives* of outsourcing and offshoring. For example, some political cartoons address the transfer of unethical or unwanted activities to suppliers. Some academic studies find personal agendas—such as wanting to outsource an IT burden—dominating large-scale outsourcing decisions [Hall and Liedtka 2005; Lacity and Hirschheim 1993].

Because political cartoons portray individuals, it is not surprising that the most frequent negative consequence of outsourcing is lost jobs of a visible worker. In contrast, the negative consequences in academic literature focus on the points of view of client and supplier firms. For example, the clients' failure to achieve cost savings [Lacity and Rottman 2008], the clients' encounters with strategic perils [Carmel and Tjia 2005], or the suppliers' failure to achieve profit margins [Kern at al. 2002b].

VII. THE POLITICAL CARTOON AS A PEDAGOGICAL TOOL

As noted in the introduction, political cartoons and other popular culture media can be used as a pedagogical tool to stimulate classroom debate and learning [Einbeck 2001]. For example, the U.S. Library of Congress hosts a Web site called "It's No Laughing Matter: Analyzing Political Cartoons."[21] The site uses political cartoons to address sensitive topics ranging from slavery to civil rights. The Web site also teaches the public about how artists use the techniques of graphic persuasion, including symbolism, exaggeration, labeling, analogy, and irony. The Web site is interactive and has activities that are both teacher-directed and self-taught.

In the context of IS outsourcing and offshoring, the American author of this paper uses political cartoons to stimulate classroom discussion and debate in a Global Sourcing of Business and IT services class that comprises both domestic and international business school students. Most U.S. students enter the course with limited experience of global sourcing of services, other than as end customers for overseas call centers. Much like the consumers depicted in the U.S. cartoons, their views on outsourcing are initially very negative. By showing images such as those depicted in Figure 3 (Western woman cannot get tech support on a Hindu holiday) and Figure 14 (Western man experiences long wait from an offshore call center), the domestic students have their views validated. By bringing in other perspectives, such as Figure 12 (Western client makes unreasonable demands to Indian supplier), we get the domestic students to empathize with the person across the world trying to earn a living by servicing American consumers. The lead author then asks each student to find and present a popular culture image of outsourcing and offshoring. Students bring in cartoons, comic strips, YouTube videos, magazine covers, and television clips from across the world. Many are presented in languages other than English and afford international students a safe forum to present their views of outsourcing. These exchanges provide an initial foray into the topic of the public view of outsourcing and offshoring.

The course progresses with deeper analysis of the normative aspects of global sourcing. Students have a module on general theories of ethics and justice. Students then watch a longer video[22] and compare and contrast the ethical and judicial attitudes and behaviors depicted by people in the video.[23] Theses modules, like political cartoons, address the public view of outsourcing. The course proceeds through the business view of outsourcing, covering both academic and practitioner research conducted on the subject.[24]

VIII. CONCLUSION

We have argued that political cartoons mirror public opinion. We analyzed the content of 165 political cartoons from the U.S. and India to get a better understanding of the public view on offshoring and outsourcing in these countries. Overall, U.S./Western political cartoons portray outsourcing and offshoring negatively, causing lost jobs for workers and poorer customer service for consumers. In India, the main story is jobs gained. Additional Indian narratives

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[21] http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/political_cartoon/index.html

[22] The lead author has used three videos that were all effective in applying theories of ethics and justice to global outsourcing: *Thomas L. Friedman Reporting: The Other Side of Outsourcing* (2003), *Thirty Days of Outsourcing* (2006), and *Outsourced* (2008).

[23] The following are examples of discussion questions used after watching *Thirty Days of Outsourcing* (2006). In that documentary, Christopher John, a 37-year-old American programmer with a newborn son, lost his job to the Tata Company in India. He travels to India to live with the Rajan family and to work in an Indian call center. This documentary provides an opportunity to see the affects of offshore outsourcing on both an American and Indian family. The discussion questions are: To what extent does the *industrialized culture* of offshore outsourcing clash, co-exist, and/or merge with the Rajan *family's classical culture?* Are different family members affected differently? Discuss Chris' moral reasoning about offshore outsourcing *before* his trip to Indian and how his reasoning changed *during* his trip to India.

[24] A sample syllabus is available on: http://www.umsl.edu/~lacitym/syllabus6846summer2009.htm

portray the labor and infrastructure constraints caused by the rapid growth of ITO and BPO industries. Figures 17 and 18 capture these differences using the same metaphor: the outsourcing of a student's homework. Whereas the U.S. student wants to outsource his homework, the Indian student seeks to be the supplier of homework for others. In Figure 17, the U.S. professor tells a business school student, "While outsourcing is a common business practice, you may not outsource your research and homework." In Figure 18, an Indian mother announces her child secured an outsourcing contract, and the child is obviously quite pleased. These views are highly consistent with the opening quote "According to the public's worldview, exports are good, because they create jobs, and imports are bad, because they allow foreigners to steal our jobs" [Mankiw and Swagel 2006, p. 1041].

Figure 17: U.S./Western version of the homework narrative

Cartoon licensed from CartoonStock.com

"He got an outsourcing contract for doing his classmates' homework!"

Figure 18: Indian version of the homework narrative

Cartoon licensed from The Hindu, BusinessLine

Although we are excited about our research, we recognize it does have several limitations, most obviously the small number of Indian cartoons in relation to U.S./Western cartoons. While we are confident that 63 unique artists among the U.S./Western sample is rich enough to claim the sample captures the public view on outsourcing and offshoring, we must recognize that the Indian cartoons are drawn by only seven identifiable artists. In particular, Sandeep Sood, the most prolific cartoonist on outsourcing we discovered, has nine comic strips in our sample. This artist focuses on the conflicts between Western clients and offshore workers and between offshore managers and offshore workers. If he is deleted from the sample, the main story line still remains that India is benefiting from outsourcing. However, the second most frequent Indian narrative "Offshore supplier worker and manager conflict" would drop from the top three. What we are confident in saying is that the three Indian artists with five or more strips each bring a different perspective to outsourcing and offshoring. Tulal's cartoons focus on Indian's internal politics and conflicts associated with outsourcing. Chattoraj is the most optimistic among the three artists—his cartoons tend to focus on the jobs gained and immense opportunities India is now experiencing.

A more interesting limitation is the assumption about the generalizability of our shared codes. Maybe our codes for cartoons overlapped so much because we share the same schemas as IS researchers working at the same university and living in the same city. We cannot be 100 percent certain we interpreted the images as intended by the artists, nor can we assume that every reader will interpret these images as we did. We included many cartoons so that readers may judge for themselves the validity of our coding (and thus our findings).

Beyond our static country comparisons, an analysis of public opinion on offshoring and outsourcing over time might be warranted in the next few years. Our dated cartoons were primarily from 2002 to 2008, a rather compact and consistent snapshot of the global ITO and BPO industries. In that time period, the U.S. consistently increased outsourcing and offshoring; India's ITO and BPO sectors consistently grew as well. But the economy has changed dramatically in the past few months. Many news stories in December 2008 focused on the impact of a global economic recession on India's ITO and BPO services. For example, Indian outsourcing giants such as InfoSys announced a hiring freeze on December 5, 2008 [Singh 2008] and Wipro reported contract cancellations on

December 1, 2008.[25] India's IT watchers are asking, "The Indian IT Industry: Are The Alarm Bells Ringing?"[26] We ask, "Will public opinion about outsourcing and offshoring in the U.S. and India change over time?"

Based on our experience with this paper, we recommend that other IS researchers consider that opinion discourse, such as political cartoons, be used to assess public opinion on important IT issues beyond outsourcing and offshoring. For example, one interesting question is "How do different cultures view information technology?" Back in 1986, Hirschheim asked this question about office automation technology. He examined three views: optimistic, pessimistic, and relativistic. The same categories could be applied to IT in general. Does opinion discourse portray information technology as leading to more jobs, higher productivity, and more interesting work? Or, does opinion discourse portray information technology as replacing workers, alienating craftsmen, and creating more boring, routine work? Given IT's longevity, the same question could also be asked over time: "How has the public opinion about IT changed over time?"

As researchers, we believe that an analysis of political cartoons is a valid way to learn about public perceptions. As teachers, we believe the incorporation of political cartoons in outsourcing curricula is a valuable pedagogical tool. As humans, we thoroughly enjoyed reading and analyzing the cartoons. We anticipate that readers will relate to the paper in at least one of these capacities.

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[25] http://www.tradethenews.com/stock-news/Technology/Wipro-Limited-(ADR)/WIT/501062

[26] http://itmagz.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=147&Itemid=53

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APPENDIX A: SAMPLE CODING SHEET
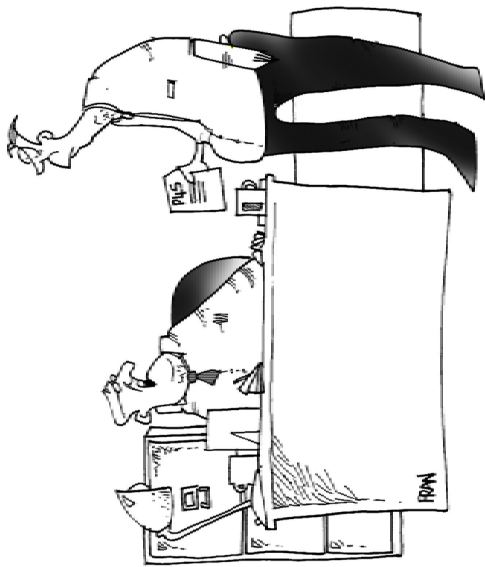
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO LET YOU GO...WE'VE FOUND SOMEONE IN CHINA WHO IS 45% BETTER AT BEING YOU FOR 34% LESS

Cartoon licensed from CartoonStock.com

Cartoon from X US/Western ☐ Indian artist/perspective

Narrative: What is the essential story line of the cartoon?

X Worker loses job because of outsourcing/offshoring
☐ Executive/senior official loses job because of outsourcing/offshoring
☐ Childhood/domestic activity outsourced
☐ Worker has less satisfying job after offshoring
☐ Consumer bears the negative consequence of outsourcing/offshoring
☐ Consumer enjoys the positive consequence of outsourcing/offshoring
☐ Worker sent to or seeks job in offshore country
☐ Manager outsources to avoid accountability for unethical actions
☐ Outsourcing an unwanted activity
☐ Reverse outsourcing; jobs outsourced/sent offshore then insourced/onshore
☐ Search for even more outsourcing/offshoring opportunities
☐ Extreme outsourcing; a business outsources everything
☐ Offshore supplier deals with unreasonable demands/poor treatment from customer/client
☐ Offshore supplier worker and manager conflict over wages, job duties
☐ Unqualified workers recruited to fill Indian outsourcing demand
☐ Indian infrastructure not able to meet demand
☐ India gains because of outsourcing
☐ Indian politician focuses on outsourcing success to downplay other failures
☐ Indian gains in offshoring do not benefit most Indian citizens
☐ Not applicable/cannot code   ☐ Other (specify)

Domestication: How does the cartoon bring distant events closer to the everyday reader?	**X** Location: office ☐ Location: street ☐ Location: home ☐ Location: Retail/Commercial ☐ Location: beach ☐ Location: Outer space/heaven/fantasy world ☐ Familiar Signs (specify): ☐ No background at all to indicate location ☐ Other (specify):			
Binary Struggle:: Which other country besides the US/Western country is involved?	☐ India **X** China ☐ Korea ☐ Pakistan ☐ Borneo ☐ Hong Kong ☐ Mexico ☐ Generic third world country ☐ Island country ☐ generic reference to overseas/offshore/outsourcing ☐ Not applicable/cannot code ☐ Other (specify):			
Normative Transference: Who is the loser because of outsourcing/offshoring?	☐ US/Western Management **X** US/Western Worker(s) ☐ US/Western Consumer(s) ☐ US/Western Citizen(s) ☐ Offshore Manager ☐ Offshore Laborer ☐ Offshore Consumers(s) ☐ Offshore Citizen(s) ☐ No Victim portrayed ☐ Other (specify):			
What are reason(s) for outsourcing/offshoring?	**X** Lower Costs **X** Quality of work is better offshore ☐ Offshore workers work harder than US ☐ Offshore workers/citizens easier to manipulate ☐ Transfer unethical behavior to offshore suppliers ☐ Technology enabled outsourcing ☐ Not applicable/cannot code ☐ Other (specify):			
What are the consequences of outsourcing/ offshoring?	**X** Lost US jobs ☐ Poor service quality ☐ Poor working conditions offshore ☐ Loss of control of business operation ☐ Lost capability ☐ Job wages in US drop ☐ More Consumerism ☐ Jobs remaining in US/West are less satisfying ☐ Difficulty coordinating across time zones ☐ Relocated job ☐ Increased efficiency ☐ Better service ☐ Better quality of life ☐ Lack of distributive justice ☐ Employee has more bargaining power ☐ Jobs gained ☐ Not applicable/cannot code ☐ Other			

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Mary Cecelia Lacity is a professor of Information Systems and International Business Fellow at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Her current research focuses on global outsourcing of business and IT services. She has written 10 books, most recently *Information Systems and Outsourcing: Studies in Theory and Practice* (Palgrave, 2009; coauthor Leslie Willcocks) and *Offshore Outsourcing of IT Work,* (Palgrave, 2008; coauthor Joe Rottman). More than 50 of her publications have appeared in the *Harvard Business Review*, *Sloan Management Review*, *MIS Quarterly, IEEE Computer, Communications of the ACM,* and many other academic and practitioner outlets. She is U.S. editor of the *Journal of Information Technology,* and Co-editor of the Palgrave Series: *Work, Technology, and Globalization* and on the Editorial Boards for *MIS Quarterly Executive, Journal of Strategic Information Systems, Strategic Outsourcing: An International Journal,* and *Journal of the Association for Information Systems* (JAIS).

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Caricatures of authors by Indian artist, Mr. Sajjive Balakrishnan