EXPRESSION OF POLITICAL IDENTITY THROUGH THE USE OF MEMES

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this humble effort to my mother, father, and teacher and to all of my well-wishers whose guidance, love, care, and prayers for my prosperous future helped me to reach such an eminent place in my life.

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ABSTRACT

The study titled “Expression of Political Identity through the Use of Memes” delves into the captivating intersection of political identity and meme expression within the Pakistani context. The study has three main objectives and this study aims to shed light on the transformative power of memes. Firstly, it seeks to unveil the role of memes as influential tools in shaping the complex narratives that surround political discourse. Secondly, it explores the dynamic influence of memes on enhancing political engagement and driving active political participation. Lastly, the study undertakes a thorough content analysis of political memes in Pakistan. In addition, a mixed methodology has been utilized for present study. For the first two objectives, questionnaires and hybrid interviews were administered to 30 participants selected from PMAS Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi. Simultaneously, a digital content analysis involving Facebook and Instagram platforms was conducted to dissect 25 memes spanning from January 2020 to July 2023. Thus, this comprehensive approach sheds light on the interplay between political memes, identity articulation, and the changing nature of modern political discourse in Pakistan.

Keywords: Political Identity, Political Participation, Narrative Building, Political Discourse, Political Engagement, Meme

ACRONYMS

PTI: Pakistan People Party

PMLN: Pakistan Muslim League Noon

PPP: Pakistan People Party

JUIF: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F)

IMF: International Monetary Fund

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INTRODUCTION

MEME

Meme

British evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins popularised the term "meme" (from the Greek mimema, meaning "imitated") to describe ideas that spread from person to person through imitation and imitation from others and are subject to random mutation and natural selection regardless of their effect on human fitness (reproduction and survival) (Dawkins, 1999). Memes are the fundamental building blocks of human cognition and communication and can take the form of any concept, phrase, word, image, symbol, metaphor, or brand name. In the strictest sense, a meme is anything cultural that spreads from person to person. Anything from videos going viral to animated gifs to catchphrases of the moment to content mash-ups

At the turn of the 21st century, Internet memes brought the cultural phenomenon of memes into the spotlight once again. E-mail, social media, and other kinds of electronic communication facilitate the rapid spread and replication of Internet memes. Like genes, online trends can be passed on from person to person. Beside, microevolution is the means by which memes spread; they do this by causing changes in the behavior of their hosts. Media recycles these messages until they catch on with the public. Eventually, the internet's most popular memes will be the ones that have the most lasting power. They are the ones who ultimately gain the most support from a community. This could be the end for memes

with a poor potential for replication. While others may persist, multiply, and eventually evolve. Memes that catch on quickly on the Internet tend to be the most successful. However, some may thrive and multiply despite being harmful to their hosts. Furthermore, people are not perfect at re-creating memes. It is possible that some people will try to improve upon preexisting memes by mixing them with others or making other modifications.

In contrast to the pre-digital era, when consumers relied on traditional media for information, today's audiences get increasingly involved in the communicative process by producing and consuming material simultaneously. Users in the pre-digital era had to rely on equivalent channels to get their news but now they have social media. In addition, the other scholars define memes as a "units of popular culture that circulate, imitate, and modify through the use of the internet, thereby generating a shared cultural experience" (Shifman, 2013). It is the message, not the form that is most important in a digital meme (Borzsei, 2013).

According to Shifman, a digital meme is a moving picture (movie, photo, audio composition, or GIF) with accompanying text that overlaps the image. For instance, in 2008, during the American election cycle, the potential impact of social media on politics began to emerge. Democratic nominee Barack Obama made innovative use of various internet media during his campaign (Shifman, 2013). The Hope Poster's transformation into a meme is a striking example of the strategies Obama used during the campaign. During the Arab Spring uprisings of 2011, protesters relied heavily on social media and online memes to organize and propagate their movements to neighboring countries

(Shifman, 2013). These instances show that in the past, memes have inspired covert political activism.

According to Nee & De Maio (2019) political image based macro memes are effective tools for political propaganda and efforts to influence public opinion. Images are easily conveyed than text-based interactions, which may account for their popularity. Denisova's (2019) analysis of Russian political memes on Twitter suggests that memes are powerful tools for influencing the public's thoughts and attitudes.

Use of Expression

The definition of the expression according to the Cambridge dictionary is "a word or collection of words with a specific meaning or employed in a particular way." The definition of expression in another dictionary is "things that individuals say, write, or do to express their thoughts, opinions, and ideas." This dissertation will deal with the expression of ideas not only through words but also with photos as it explains how memes are visual means of communication.

The usage of digital visuals known as memes has made self-expression on social media more common. The utilization of these digital graphics in an online discussion has produced an entertaining interactive communication experience. This has developed into a powerful method of expressing ideas and sentiments that have had a big impact on young people in the twenty-first century. Memes have shown to be a superb tool for stimulating dialogue, particularly when it comes to feelings that are difficult to explain in words alone.

Teenagers express themselves through images rather than words when discussing topics that are challenging to explain verbally. Social media has a positive impact, especially on those who struggle to express themselves, by allowing them to communicate their thoughts or feelings through photographs. Adolescent's today struggle to express their thoughts and feelings, so they turn to social media as a platform to be themselves. Lise Koldsen-Zederkof, a counselor with Cyberhus and a participant in the arts, pointed out in 2013 how excellent images are as a medium for discussion with kids and teenagers.

People are drawn to images, and this sparks a discussion about what they find appealing about the image and how well it sticks in their memory. It has always been the best topic of conversation, especially with kids and teenagers. To this purpose, Cyberhus stated that social media, in particular, has benefited young people who have trouble expressing their feelings in words (Vinther, 2013).

In the ever-evolving landscape of communication, the emergence of memes has proven to be a remarkable phenomenon. These concise and often humorous images have transcended their initial role as digital jokes to become a canvas for the expression of diverse emotions, opinions, and identities, especially in the realm of politics. This transformative power of memes is not confined to any particular region, as their impact resonates on a global scale. In Pakistan, a country where digital engagement is fervent, the use of memes to articulate political identities and affiliations has gained considerable traction.

In Pakistan's sociopolitical context, memes have become an innovative mode of political expression, granting individuals the means to voice their stances on pressing

issues. With a growing number of citizens actively participating in digital spaces, political memes have emerged as a platform to communicate opinions that may not find immediate outlets through traditional means. These memes offer a unique blend of satire, irony, and relatability, making them a relatable and accessible medium for citizens to contribute to discussions about the political landscape.

Furthermore, the proliferation of memes allows individuals to align themselves with specific political ideologies or social movements. As Pakistan continues to navigate complex challenges, such as governance, social justice, and international relations, memes provide a space for citizens to showcase their political identities and affiliations. These digital expressions of sentiment can evoke shared understandings, foster discussions, and even contribute to shaping public discourse. In this exploration, we will focus into the role of memes as a tool for expressing political identity in Pakistan's context. By examining and explaining real-world examples in this dissertation and considering their impact, we can gain insight into how this unconventional form of communication has transformed into a vibrant and dynamic means of political expression.

A picture that becomes a meme is one that is shared by society both directly and indirectly. Memes and DNA are similar in that both underwent the processes of replication and reproduction. A new meme is created by copying an existing meme and then inserting a fresh concept. A meme follows the principle of "survival of the fittest," meaning that in order for it to be spread and used, it needs to stand out from the competition. This is necessary because if a meme fails to draw in enough followers, it won't be shared or used and won't stay long. Memes can also be interpreted differently. People can be upset by memes because memes can reflect perspectives that are different from those of one

generation and those of another. In the context of one's ideas that plays a crucial part in propagating data and how everyone views these data differs, how individuals feel about these memes is important to engage with information (Anderson, Burgchardt, Long, & McIvor, 2017). On the other side, someone who expresses themselves online uses technology as a medium to interact and communicate with others. Through virtual means, people have been able to communicate themselves more easily, and they now use it as the primary tool for online engagement. (Hall, 2008). With reference to real-life and digital interactions, online self-expression among young teenagers who have been exposed to social media became and had an impact on a widely used practice. This has popularized the use of developing technical breakthroughs as a medium.

Memes utilized collectively can be a kind of social media self-expression. It involves the use of an image to convey one's emotions via new tech and comprised of a meme that reflects one's experiences and thinking that a person wants to share with others for others to interpret with, which has paved the way for improved communication and interaction between people, especially teenagers in today's generation. Memes utilized collectively can be a kind of social media self-expression.

Identity

The Latin term for "the same" (idem) is where we get the word "identity," which itself is troubled with some of the uncertainties that fuel anthropological debates (Golubovi, 2010). One way it does this is by outlining characteristics that are similar to one's own, or what makes up one's identity. Still, it suggests differences from certain others while suggesting similarities to others. Despite its centrality in the field of anthropology, the concept of "identity" is fraught with debate because of the profound issues it begs about

our place in the world and our connections to one another. It has to do with how we categorize people, both individually and collectively. It is both a way of organizing thoughts and doing things (Jenkins, 2004). Although adaptable and ubiquitous, for others to recognize a group's members as belonging to that group, there needs to be some uniformity in their expressions of belonging. In addition, it is a topic of widespread discussion and an undeniable fact of life, making it a legitimate research topic at the very least. The most obvious part of our identities is our ethnicity, which is based on a system of indicators that allow us to distinguish ourselves based on our assumed cultural backgrounds; however, these distinctions are always wrapped in power games that seek to obtain political support and loyalty (Jenkins, 2004).

Political Identity

There are many ways in which our identities shape our experiences, including our perspectives and behaviors. A person's political identity might be thought of as the backstory they tell themselves regarding who they are politically. Our identity is the story we tell ourselves and others about who we were, who we are, and who we could be. But how does this concept work when attempting to grasp identity in a political setting? It is challenging to pin down exactly what it is that constitutes a political identity, as was noted at the outset. According to the literature on identities. measuring anything as political identity is difficult.

Establishing one's identity and developing it over time are the bedrock of political success. Identity development is the process through which an individual discovers his or her origins and the influences that have shaped their personality. Throughout the process of self-discovery, people fall into one of four categories: diffusers, explorers, middle

ground, and fully formed. A person with a strong political ego identity cares deeply about and is knowledgeable about many different aspects of politics, has strong opinions about how the government should operate, and acts in ways that reflect those beliefs. The importance of politics to a person is also taken into account by this word. People who place a high importance on politics are more likely to have a well-developed sense of self.

Our political identities are what set us apart as unique political persons. When we speak of someone's "political identity," we are referring only to those aspects of their personhood that have to do with politics, such as their beliefs about what makes a "good society" or the appropriate amount of governmental control. Political engagement can take many forms, from formal lobbying for resources to grassroots organizing for everyday citizens. Understanding politics requires familiarity with the mindset of the average citizen and familiarity with how they engage with public affairs. Since politics is essentially an issue of identity, it is important to discuss the many paths to political self-expression (Plutzer & Zipp, 1996).

Creating a political identity requires a sense of competence, self-awareness, and the conviction that politics matters. When people allude to their "self-competence," they mean that they have faith in their own ability to take part in political life. In the political science literature, there is a widespread belief that asking oneself questions like "Do politicians listen to me?" is a reliable approach to assess one's own ability. (Niemi 1991). Second, It is vital that individuals have convictions and clarity about those convictions. For this reason, self-knowledge is a topic of particular importance, as most discussions of political knowledge focus on objective measures of knowledge, such as factual knowledge and political sophistication, rather than an individual's opinions about politics. An individual's

worldview and political beliefs provide the foundation from which one must gain an understanding of oneself. Knowing oneself can be difficult for anyone, but it can be especially difficult for young people who are rarely encouraged to reflect on their own values and beliefs in relation to politics and the political environment. Part of the self-examination required to build a solid sense of identity is considering what factors in one's life are most significant. The idea that politics matter is grounded in the psychology concept of salience, or the prominence of the political identity relative to other aspects of one's identity.

When people emphasize the value of making voting a habit, they often mean it in terms of material gain rather than the development of a personal political philosophy. The identities of those who participate in the voting practice and those who do not may influence the results. The questions of what one believes politically, how one develops a political identity, and how often one thinks about these things are crucial to one's sense of self. Do today's youth have a political identity? Thoughtful introspection and active self-questioning, especially at the more advanced stages of this process, may do a lot of good for one's voting habits and the construction of one's political identity, in my opinion. Is it implausible for a highly advanced person to choose not to vote, or is it feasible for a highly evolved person to choose not to cast a ballot? All of these scenarios are possible in theory, but they are far from likely. Voting rates are higher among persons who have a strong sense of political identity, especially among young people.

When a person has a strong political identity, they are better able to make rapid decisions, analyze and adjust to new information, and express their thoughts and feelings on a wide range of issues. The ability to openly discuss one's political beliefs is indicative

of a robust political identity. However, the most important factor in developing one's political identity is the individual's sense of self. What do I answer if someone asks me where I stand politically? What does my political identity mean? It can seem that "at first" most people will pick one of the two major political parties to affiliate with, but this is really simply the individual caving in to peer pressure.

Narrative Building by Memes

It is not always the case, as Benaim (2018) explained, that memes are meant to be amusing or naively humorous. Not only becomes that, but the intellectual context in which they are repeated more politically polarized as a result. Subjective interpretations of current events, sometimes known as "frames," have a polarizing role by allowing assaults on opposition political leaders who are held responsible for the country's problems. Instead than just making fun of people, they insult them, lending credence to prejudiced viewpoints that have previously been exposed. Furthermore, the online community becomes more divided, and a highly charged political narrative emerges because of memes.

Some of the most fundamental features of current digital society are exemplified by online memes. The virality, parody, and remixability of memes foster many forms of intertextuality. To "underline the social dynamics" of our offline and online communities, they merge "popular culture" and "politics" (Shifman, 2014; Humphries, 2018). Memes, have the power to "assemble publics" that "are defined not merely by their humor but by their leaning towards the colloquial, the vernacular, and the anecdotal" (Aimee Morrison's, 2019). Memes, according to Humphrey's research, are a form of digital communication that is both connective and contextual. Memes are a fun way to share our thoughts and feelings with others outside of work. Memes are so successful because they can be relied

upon to be shared across people. The content of most memes is either normal or absurd, as in the case of the pandemic meme.

According to MacDonald's study (2022), memes are pervasive forms of expression that shape political and social identities. People are more likely to interact with and talk about them after reading them, as they provide context for discussions and give voice to people's feelings. When ideas gain momentum in people's daily social media feeds and proliferate via those feeds, they begin to affect how those people see the world. These funny and sarcastic memes might actually be making fun of old-fashioned ideas that older people still believe. The creators of these memes think that if lots of people share them, it could start a better conversation about politics.

Meme as Cornerstone of Political Satire

Memes have long served as a cornerstone of political satire. Satire, parody, and comedy have contributed to upholding a democratic public culture by illuminating the hypocrisy of those in authority and testing the boundaries of free expression (Chen et al., 2017; Hariman, 2008). Memes are distinct from other forms of political humor in that their meaning and context can shift at any time. Memes are distinct from traditional forms of political satire in that they are created collectively by unknown individuals as part of a more egalitarian and democratic online community. Ross & Rivers (2017), Shifman (2013), and Wiggins & Bowers (2015) all agree that the vast majority of these concepts had an ad hoc beginning and cannot be traced back to a single author. As a result of the collaborative nature of the internet's long-recognized process of creation and creative expression, the content included inside them is likewise dynamic (Jenkins, 2006).

Memes provide a powerful new way of mixing components like originality, art, message, and fun in the culture of the internet. Public relations, advertising, and marketing experts have effectively used Internet memes as a form of viral marketing to generate "hype" for a product. Viral internet content like memes can go viral while still being a bargain to make. Memetic marketing is the practise of advertising a product or service using internet memes.

Cultural ideas, or "memes," transmit from one person to another by imitation of social cues such as words, gestures, and rituals. Cultural memes are thought to function similarly to genetic genes in that they can spread from person to person and adapt to new circumstances through a process known as "memetics."

Internet memes travel from user to user through channels such as email, blogs, and social networking sites. Images, movies, texts, and even jokes can all function as memes. Thus, memes are works of art that can be used to spread awareness of a cause, ridicule a person or group, advertise a product, or even just make people laugh. They can be gone in a few days or stick around for a while.

Social Media and Meme

In today's world memes are really popular as they have been archived on a large number of websites and social media networks. Memes are now being creatively used by many professions, such as those in public relations and advertising, to spread their messages and draw viewers in. Memes used in political campaigns serve as a tool for propaganda and public opinion formation (Bauckhage, 2011).

According to Nowak (2016), more people are using websites, social media platforms, and the internet for political purposes. As a result, more people are being exposed to this new form of communication, particularly as the popularity of contemporary texts and writings declines. People no longer want to read, but they would rather spend a moment to examine a meme, add a quick comment or change it, and then transmit it to another location. People today would rather get their news from political memes than the traditional media. However, due to recent technological advances, the world has moved away from traditional trends.

Utilization of Memes in Political Elections

Political elections have benefited greatly from the use of social media. Voters were able to observe and share debates, interviews, commercials, and statements on-demand for the first time during the 2008 U.S. presidential election, sometimes known as the "Facebook Election." Barack Obama continued the trend in 2012 by using social media tools to interact with his supporters rather than just disseminate his message. Since social media sites like Instagram and Pinterest were still in their infancy and Twitter had not yet fully included images, visuals didn't play a significant role at this time. However, in recent years, these platforms have become enormously popular as a result of people's need to connect visually.

Another example is of 2016 American election, which was also known as the meme election. The Washington Post referred to the presidential primaries as "the most mememed election in American history" in February 2016. It is stressed that both President Donald Trump and his main rival Hillary Clinton turned to memes as a counterbalance to traditional media. According to mainstream American newspapers, memes have a

surprising capacity to interest those who would not often participate in partisan political processes.

Political Participation

Political engagement refers, in a broad sense, to any activity taken by a citizen that has an effect on politics. Politicians and scholars alike have, ever since Pericles' famous funeral oration (431 BCE), stressed the unique characteristics of democracies by emphasising the role performed by ordinary citizens in political concerns. Voting, protesting, contacting public officials, boycotting, attending party rallies, guerrilla landscaping, blogging, helping others, participating in flash mobs, purchasing fair-trade goods, and even demonstrating by committing suicide are just some examples of the practically endless list of participatory activities that are now possible. Participation in the political process is beneficial to any political system, but essential to a democratic one. When people have little to no say in making decisions, democracies struggle; when people have a lot of say, they thrive. Therefore, the depth and breadth of political participation are crucial indicators of a country's degree of democracy.

There are numerous, unmistakable features of political participation. The first is that participation is understood to be an act; merely being interested in politics or watching the news does not count. Second, unlike what the establishment and the law would have you believe, participating in politics is a voluntary act. Third, participation can be made by an ordinary citizen or by a person working in an official role, such as a lobbyist or government employee. Furthermore, political participation is not restricted to specific times or places (such as general elections or meetings with party officials) or levels or processes (such as legislative decision-making procedures or enforcement of

laws). Instead, the focus is on politics and the state in a broader sense. Therefore, any voluntary work done for the state, its administration, or politics counts as political engagement, even if it is unpaid.

As representative democracies matured and the campaign for universal suffrage was waged in many democracies, a very narrow definition of political involvement as election-related activities arose by the middle of the 20th century. Therefore, the primary studies on voting in the 1940s and 1950s focused on voting, campaigning, and party membership. By the early 1960s, voting and other citizen activities within the context of constitutional political institutions were widely accepted as definitions of political involvement. The repertory was expanded to cover interactions between citizens and public servants. As the importance of community politics grew, the range of opportunities for political participation widened to include not only voting but also "community activities," such as face-to-face meetings between citizens and their elected representatives or government officials.

As the importance of community politics grew, the range of opportunities for political participation widened to include not only voting but also "community activities," such as face-to-face meetings between citizens and their elected representatives or government officials. These methods of participation eventually became known as the norm or official procedures.

Citizen participation skyrocketed during the era of rapid social and political upheaval in the late 1960s and early 1970s, proving that engagement in politics may take many forms. An integral component of the toolset of any democratic political participant is the ability to express dissatisfaction, disagreement, rejection, and provocative

behaviour as these are all transparent expressions of the interests and opinions of the people. The emergence of pacifist, environmental, squatter, and women's groups, among others, as "New Social Movements" also ushered in a slew of planned protests. Because they deviated from the norms of the time, these ways of being involved were labelled as "unconventional." Citizens' civil participation was established as an alternate routes to state action when the hazards of continually expanding government spending became obvious in the 1980s, and terms like "elite-challenging kinds of involvement" have become commonplace since then. Civic engagement, volunteer work, and social engagement in all kinds of voluntary associations are the next logical step in the political participation repertoire, spurred on by the blurring of lines between the political and nonpolitical spheres and the resurgence of Tocquevillean and communitarian ideologies. In particular, the application of these practises at the level of the community was seen earlier as a form of engagement.

Nonetheless, Tocquevillean and communitarian arguments emphasise that the vitality of civil society is intrinsically linked to the robustness of democracy (Putnam, 1993). The concept clearly contradicts the use of simple definitions of the term, and the discussion over whether or not political participation includes activities like volunteering and socialising persists. The line separating politics and the rest of society has become more porous, making room for new forms of civic engagement that explicitly deny the necessity for organisations or coordinated actions. The expression of moral and ethical ideas through citizen-led acts is emphasised instead. Boycotts are an example of people using their purchasing power for political ends in an individualistic type of collective action or creative participation. The widespread availability of internet-based technology

bolsters these individual activities by facilitating the instantaneous, nearly cost-free communication of opinions, requests, and frustrations. As a result of technological advancements, traditional political alliances are becoming less crucial. "Connective action" (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013) means using the internet as a means of participation in and of itself, rather than simply as a modern means of mobilising participants. Media coverage of political events, which often includes long lists of protests, demonstrations, pranks, and street activities, can be analysed to better detect the rise and appearance of new kinds of participation.

Traditional political participation includes voting, taking part in demonstrations, and endorsing politicians, to name a few examples. Nonpolitical acts that can be used for political purposes include things like a boycott of a particular brand of coffee, volunteering at a hospital, joining a sports team, or creating a blog about whales. These measures can be taken independently of one another and need not be coordinated. Although each individual's actions are motivated by their own values and priorities, the success of any endeavour requires the coordinated efforts of a large group of people. The internet also eliminates or greatly reduces the cost of organising participation, allowing for the mobilisation of many issues and aims that would not have been voiced otherwise.

Studies have shown that the non-political nature of newer forms of participation like street parties and political participation renders them undefinable; the political, social, and societal developments in democratic societies have rendered the search for a single comprehensive definition of political participation as obsolete. To that end, it is possible to formulate a conceptual definition of political engagement that might serve as a compass for the study. Participation in politics, then, refers to the wide range of actions

by which people form and influence the decisions that affect their lives, as well as the means by which they express and develop their opinions.

Memes have quickly evolved to remark on a variety of political concerns in many different countries, but there is still significant disagreement over how they work as a channel for political discourse. It has been suggested by Shifman (2014) that there are three distinct sorts of memes used in politics: those that persuade, those that mobilize the public, and those that serve as aesthetic expression. As an illustration of memes being used for political persuasion, Shifman (2014) cites the "Obama Girl" video, which was made by a young girl singing about her crush on Barack Obama during the 2008 campaign. She contends that peer and friend influence over mainstream media advertising is what affects voters the most (Shifman, 2014). Simple, inexpensive video editing and production can be used to reach a big audience with a persuading message, like in the case of the "Obama Girl" meme. The "Obama Girl" video is an illustration of people generating a meme as a method to participate in and remark on the media framing of Barack Obama as a young, beautiful, and trendy politician and it contend that visual candidate framing can be very crucial to a campaign.

Meme as a Form of Communication

A meme is a form of communication with cultural connotations that travels from one person to another. Jingles, catchphrases, and adorable or humorous images posted online are examples of lighthearted memes. Others are more serious, including political or religious views. The Internet, literature, television, and other forms of media can all be used to spread memes. Memes, which mean to imitate, are the origin of the word meme. Online memes are signs of something greater than what they initially appear to be because

they represent processes of individualization, which are the ways in which people in a society distinguish one another from one another. Memes have developed into a fascinating mode of intercultural communication because of their ability to convey complex meanings across languages and cultures. They function as contemporary folklore from an anthropological viewpoint, reflecting societal values, beliefs, and attitudes. Memes incorporate modern insights and criticisms, such as folktales were used to impart wisdom and societal standards in the past. These online morsels frequently use wit, irony, or satire to communicate ideas that would be awkward or impossible to state plainly. People connect with memes because they can relate to them and they encapsulate the essence of a certain time and place. They can be used to take the pulse of the public opinion on everything from current events to popular culture.

Memes, for instance, arose as a technique of coping with and commenting on the global COVID-19 outbreak. In Pakistan, a common meme depicted a politician cleaning up a dirty scene with a can of sanitizing spray. The funny graphic pointedly illustrated the gap between political posturing and actual results. In addition, a meme depicting famous movie characters before a national election provided a humorous take on the complicated political environment by representing the many political parties and their respective goals. These examples demonstrate how memes have evolved into a powerful form of political and cultural expression, serving as a medium for the dissemination of ideas, criticisms, and observations. Expression

In the ever-evolving landscape of communication, the emergence of memes has proven to be a remarkable phenomenon. These concise and often humorous images have transcended their initial role as digital jokes to become a canvas for the expression of

diverse emotions, opinions, and identities, especially in the realm of politics. This transformative power of memes is not confined to any particular region, as their impact resonates on a global scale. In Pakistan, a country where digital engagement is fervent, the use of memes to articulate political identities and affiliations has gained considerable traction.

In Pakistan's sociopolitical context, memes have become an innovative mode of political expression, granting individuals the means to voice their stances on pressing issues. With a growing number of citizens actively participating in digital spaces, political memes have emerged as a platform to communicate opinions that may not find immediate outlets through traditional means. These memes offer a unique blend of satire, irony, and relatability, making them a relatable and accessible medium for citizens to contribute to discussions about the political landscape.

Additionally, people can more easily identify with particular political views or social movements thanks to the widespread use of memes. Memes allow Pakistani residents to express their political views while the country struggles with issues of governance, social justice, and international relations. These virtual displays of emotion can stimulate mutual comprehension, spark debate, and even help shape public conversation. Our investigation here will centre on how memes are used to convey political ideology in Pakistan. This dissertation examines and explains real-world instances and considers their impact to provide light on how this nontraditional mode of communication has evolved into a lively and dynamic form of political expression.

A picture that becomes a meme is one that is shared by society both directly and indirectly. Memes and DNA are similar in that both underwent the processes of replication

and reproduction. A new meme is created by copying an existing meme and then inserting a fresh concept. A meme follows the principle of "survival of the fittest," meaning that in order for it to be spread and used, it needs to stand out from the competition. This is necessary because if a meme fails to draw in enough followers, it won't be shared or used and won't stay long. Memes can also be interpreted differently. People can be upset by memes because memes can reflect perspectives that are different from those of one generation and those of another. In the context of one's ideas that plays a crucial part in propagating data and how everyone views these data differs, how individuals feel about these memes is important to engage with information (Anderson, Burgchardt, Long, & McIvor, 2017). On the other side, someone who expresses themselves online uses technology as a medium to interact and communicate with others. Through virtual means, people have been able to communicate themselves more easily, and they now use it as the primary tool for online engagement. (Hall, 2008). With reference to real-life and digital interactions, online self-expression among young teenagers who have been exposed to social media became and had an impact on a widely used practice. This has popularized the use of developing technical breakthroughs as a medium.

Memes utilized collectively can be a kind of social media self-expression. It involves the use of an image to convey one's emotions via new tech and comprised of a meme that reflects one's experiences and thinking that a person wants to share with others for others to interpret with, which has paved the way for improved communication and interaction between people, especially teenagers in today's generation. Memes utilized collectively can be a kind of social media self-expression.

Research objectives

1. Exploring the Utilization of Memes as Tools for Shaping Political Narratives

2. Investigating the Significance of Memes in Facilitating Political Engagement and Participation

3. To analyze the content of political memes in Pakistan

Problem Statement

In today's fast-paced digital culture, it's clear that memes have risen in popularity as a way of spreading cultural and political ideas. These visual elements, which are frequently hilarious and easy to share, have established a solid grip in online communication, changing how people think about and engage in various parts of public life, including politics. Though their impact cannot be denied, researchers still have a long way to go in unravelling the intricate web of connections between meme exposure and the formation of political identities. To address this knowledge gap, this study will examine the multifaceted mechanisms at work in the correlation between political meme consumption and the development of political identities.

Significance of Study

In this day and age of constant internet connectivity and visual communication, the study of how political memes influence political identity is more relevant than ever. Memes, cultural artefacts propagated by imitation and remix, have evolved into powerful communicators of ideas, barometers of cultural mores, and even swayers of voters' preferences. Outside of media anthropology and political science, the study of how memes influence the creation of political identities has crucial implications for

community engagement and individual self-expression. If politicians, strategists, and communicators want to use memes to energise and involve voters, they need to understand the power of political memes to influence opinions.

Positionality of Researcher

In this study, the researcher acknowledges the possibility that biases and assumptions may affect the results. This research attempts to maintain objectivity and critical distance by emphasising the significance of each individual's unique background, experiences, and worldviews. The study makes an effort to be objective by embracing reflective analysis and using empirical evidence to draw conclusions that are more likely to be supported by the data than by the researcher's prejudices.

Limitations of Study

Understanding the scope and limitations of the study is crucial. Due to the ever-changing nature of the internet, meme culture and its effects may have changed even as this research is being conducted. In addition, the study's unique cultural or political context may limit the transferability of its findings to other areas or populations. In addition, the scope of this research cannot encompass the intricate procedure of forming a political identity, and factors other than memes will invariably contribute to the overall image.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Dawkins, a meme is a unit of cultural transmission that undergoes mutation as a result of its exposure to evolutionary processes. This term might apply to a wide variety of things, not just online memes, such as songs, styles, design features, and even new abilities. Since a meme can be defined in so many different ways, it is nearly impossible to experimentally study as a discrete cultural unit. This means that the study of memes is a relatively new topic, currently restricted to philosophical discourse.

Biological evolution serves as a useful lens through which to evaluate and interpret cultural evolution. When humans copy a meme, for instance, it is rarely replicated verbatim and often undergoes subtle but significant changes. Dawkins hypothesized that, like biological evolution, memes evolve through a process of natural selection. Cultural evolution, like natural selection, promotes replicating successful memes while discouraging replicating unsuccessful memes.

Memes have an opposing structural process to genes when it comes to replication. Think of the method through which genes are copied as vertical; that is, from parent to kid, with mutation requiring numerous generations to manifest. Although memes can replicate vertically, they typically spread horizontally within a single generation. When a meme is passed from one person to another over the course of one generation, there is bound to be considerable diversity in the replicated versions. As a crude approximation, infectious diseases spread laterally from person to person, whereas inherited characteristics like eye

color move up the family tree. Something has "gone viral" if it has experienced rapid distribution and reproduction, much like a virus.

Memes primarily spread and reproduce themselves over the internet. We'll stop talking about culture in general and start talking about online memes. Internet memes have become ubiquitous in today's online communities. Memes typically consist of a single image or a series of images with a maximum of twenty words. Informational and entertaining digital content is almost exclusively produced in this style. This easily consumable content can be leveraged by skilled users for financial benefit and social capital. As a culture, we've now reached the stage where online memes are embedded in every social media platform, although this transition to digital media only occurred recently. It is difficult, if not impossible, to pinpoint the origin of the first internet meme. The earliest internet memes probably originated in the late 1970s, when people started posting them on online bulletin boards. Memes that appeared on message boards back then didn't tend to spread endlessly or undergo significant change because internet usage was low.

The evolution of early internet memes mirrored the evolution of what Dawkins would have classified as pre-Internet comic memes. Examples include the widespread use of bunny ears in the second part of the 20th century, which were created by having people in photographs place two fingers behind the heads of other people. Like slapstick and other forms of theatrical humor, the prank worked across cultural boundaries. In the early days of the internet, jokes like "rickrolling," in which one person tricks another into listening to Rick Astley's "Never Gonna Give You Up," were commonplace. At the same time that channel was producing viral content, several other popular online memes emerged. Using Microsoft Paint and a cast of dozens, Rage Comics were a popular form of online

expression on message boards. While production of new Rage Comics has slowed, characters from the series occasionally pop up in unrelated jokes. Pepe the Frog was also born in this manner; he first appeared in a comic strip, but his expressionless frog face has since been used to mock Nazis and even Donald Trump. Anti-Defamation League, a global Jewish organization fighting anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance, has designated the character as a hate symbol. Some people on online message boards were eager to keep updating the Pepe the Frog meme to make it relevant to the times, and eventually to utilize it as a political tool.

For a while, message boards were the only place where new memes could be shared, but then Facebook took over. The site's more than a billion users made it a perfect breeding ground for an almost infinite variety of memes. Facebook not only allows users to join groups to share specific content, but it also offers thousands of meme pages to which users can subscribe. Meme authors can reach their intended audience more easily using Facebook-hosted meme pages. Facebook groups facilitate meme adaptation by bringing together people who share a certain interest to spread that meme outside of the mainstream meme ecosystem. These two factors compliment one another, making the internet a fertile breeding ground for new memes. Facebook's huge user base and feature set mean it easily outclasses the competition when it comes to memes.

For some progressive millennials, Clinton became a meme target as the Democratic race heated up because they felt she was trying to appeal to their values and lifestyles too much. This disdain paved the way for the "Bernie or Hillary?" campaign.” meme. Sanders's platform is consistent with the actual values and convictions of progressives, whereas Clinton's attempts to appeal to millennials are ridiculed.

As was previously established, Donald Trump was a popular target for both conservative and liberal meme makers. Short video clips, catchphrases, and proposed policies quickly became viral online. Later, a series of memes lampooned the seriousness of the possibility of a romantic relationship between Trump and Vladimir Putin.

Like many memes, political memes have a murky beginning. However, when politicians use their own social media accounts to participate in meme activities, the origin of the memes becomes much clearer. This gives them a chance to "debate" with the other candidates and gets people excited to vote for them. In 2016, when Trump tweeted directly at Clinton, she merely retweeted the message with the words "delete your account" above it. The two kept at it mercilessly, with Trump's Twitter spreading words like "Crooked Hillary" and other iconoclastic twists of phrase like closing messages with the exclamation "sad!"Memes were created to make fun of the various campaign strategies each contender employed.

In the economic sphere, meme activity, also known as hijacking, is fast growing. Businesses are wise to the audience-building potential of humour content and tailor their strategies accordingly. Some businesses successfully market their wares via their social media channels by capitalising on the widespread appeal of internet memes. To help people get to know Pete and feel connected to Pete's message, lighter content can be generated and spread through social media, which plays a big part in political debate. It is Rachel's contention that "memes across generations are a way to bridge cultural and understanding gaps."

Political campaigning often makes use of dank and otherwise hilarious memes as a weapon for both supporters and opponents. In politics, memes are nothing new. For as long

as newspapers have been published, illustrators have been drawing political cartoons. However, they have gained more attention in recent years due to the proliferation of social media and Russia's interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Memes are expected to play an even more significant role in the 2020 election, according to experts. Please explain the concept of a political meme to me. This is a subjective issue. Rachel, the Facebook page administrator for Pete Buttigieg's Dank Meme Stash, claims that internet memes are mostly images, but that they may also be a "cultural unit," like the MAGA hat. Her Buttigieg group has a "looser definition" than the ones she coordinates because of the greater diversity in age. She explains that the visual material is not memes but rather graphics.

Zac Moffatt, CEO of a marketing business called Targeted Victory, drew parallels between memes and Trump's tendency to give individuals nicknames and the practise of sending emails from years ago. "They're shorthand to a bigger point," Moffatt says of metaphors. A meme is a piece of information that has been repackaged in a humorous and easily shareable way. Campaigns can't stop the spread of memes, so it's up to them to figure out how to deal with them. Rob Shepardson, co-founder of the marketing agency SS+K and a veteran of both of Barack Obama's presidential campaigns (2008 and 2012), says that candidates can use memes wisely.

Memes are a sort of online humour that circulate often and make use of established media conventions to communicate new meaning. They give us something to do when we're bored during the day and provide ambience for our social media feeds.

Researchers looking at modern forms of communication have discovered that memes might have a darker side. They could facilitate cross-border communication and

the development of shared identities. These easily shareable pieces of visual humour have the potential to serve as powerful means of expression, connection, social influence, and even political subversion.

Because they capture the collective experiences of internet users, memes can be thought of as a type of digital folklore (or "Netlore"). "We can see not just the new ways people do things or the new ways they express themselves in public," adds Gerbaudo. "Memes are a reflection of all these complicated issues." However, for an idea to become a meme, it must first be extensively disseminated. The most popular, widely-disseminated internet memes share a number of common traits.

According to Galip, viral content is more often associated with recent news stories or other current events. It usually also involves "something that was important to many people," as she puts it. You don't have to be an expert on internet culture to get the point of a popular meme. "The most basic thing," he says in conclusion, "but It is very hard to replicate," is that it should be enjoyable to look at and share.

One study found that memes with strong emotional content spread faster online. Similarly, people were more likely to recommend comedies to their friends than dramatic or angry films. When we all needed a good laugh during the pandemic, we turned to memes. A professor of language and literature at the University of Cadiz named Luca-Pilar Cancelas-Ouvia noted that many WhatsApp memes during the Spanish blackout of 2020 contained hilarious content. It helped reduce the global fear that occurred during the height of the Covid-19 outbreak, according to both the Cancelas-Ouviana study and other studies.

In the buildup to the upcoming war with Russia, the Ukrainian government has started to posting memes on its official Twitter account. Russia's denial of attacking Ukraine was publicly challenged through humour in a November 2021 meme. Another user summed up the stress of being so close to Russia with a meme about a funny headache. These simple yet humorous memes caused thousands of people to discuss the dire consequences of the looming battle.

The impact of Facebook memes on the 2016 US Presidential Election was studied by Mia Moody-Ramirez and Andrew Church. They discovered that Facebook meme pages on Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton had a generally unfavourable tone. Clinton's memes tended to centre on her email issue and personal ties, while Trump's were more focused on his hair and facial expressions. The authors contend that the mainstream media has traditionally served as the "gatekeeper" of political ideas and speech during presidential campaigns, but that grassroots meme-culture has allowed ordinary people to sidestep this role. Creators of memes (both average citizens and political candidates) now have a platform from which to influence public discourse and ultimately the outcomes of elections.

We are more likely to spread memes that agree with our political views, and we give political memes a closer look than those that don't involve politics. In spite of this, political memes offer a subversive instrument to challenge the popular discourses of authoritarian governments, which only serves to increase the amount of noise we are already subjected to on social media.

Use of memes "as a means of partisan contestation," as Gerbaudo and puts it, "is coloured by the prevalence of sarcasm and irony, which is very common to memes," he

continues, "exposing the fragility, or vileness, or stupidity of the enemy, poking fun at excess pomposity, and arrogance of the powerful." However, they can also be used as vehicles for expressing anger and disgust with the political system. Memes have become a form of digital activism for those living in repressive regimes where outspoken criticism of the government is not accepted in the media.

Researchers in Morocco discovered that satirical memes posted on Facebook sites and pretentiously labelled as "just for fun" or "entertainment" provoked subversive political debates about the monarchy and ultimately prompted people to get involved in politics.

Some subversive political memes may be censored in authoritarian political regimes. For example, a Winnie the Pooh meme mocking Chinese President Xi Jinping may have contributed to the banning of Disney's Christopher Robin, the live-action version of the Winnie the Pooh books. Author and technologist An Xiao Mina writes in the journal of Contemporary Visual Culture that Chinese political memes are deliberately subtle in their subversion so as to avoid detection by state censors, whether they be human or automated. She argues that activist memes won't be reported and censored if they properly incorporate activist messages into otherwise innocent visuals like cute cats or llamas.

From "Memes to Movements," by Xiao Mina, we learn that "memes are the seeds from which social movements grow" in the modern world. But "for them to bloom, they must locate themselves in the rich soil of thought and culture." In some areas, such as Bangladesh and the 2017 Female March on Washington in the USA, protesters are reviving internet meme culture in an effort to use the wit and imagery they've perfected online to win over onlookers and sway public opinion. University of Westminster journalism lecturer and meme expert Anastasia Denisova has found that both pro- and anti-

government activists used memes during Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea. She claims they were a major break from the "restricted Russian media ecology" by allowing for diverse viewpoints to be expressed.

Shifman stresses that memes are used as political instruments by both sides of a debate. Because they provide regular people a voice and a place to air their grievances, she says, memes have destabilised traditional power systems.However..." "memes" could represent governmental forces, "major firms" are already employing them, and "extremists of all stripes" are exploiting them as well. The Covid-19 pandemic, however, demonstrated the other side of memes, namely the dissemination of false information and conspiracy theories with potentially dire repercussions. Memes have been criticised for giving "bite-sized" conspiracies that can be quickly duplicated, tweaked, and distributed throughout social media platforms, as opposed to more in-depth concepts.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, many people sought to make sense of their surroundings by adopting various conspiracy theories. The spread of the Covid-19 conspiracy narrative was studied by forensic psychologist Alexander Jack of the Birmingham and Solihull Behavioural Health Foundation Trust. Because "if you aren't knowledgeable enough, you will fill the holes with whatever information you can find," he explains. Reena Panchal, a forensic psychiatrist and co-author on the study, notes that conspiratorial memes may exacerbate the difficulties already experienced by those with mental illness. She argues that "insecure" people, in particular, can benefit by discovering a group of others who share their values. Will memes still be widely used as a form of communication if they evolve and spread so rapidly? According to Shifman, "this format for interaction is likely to stay" since it offers a "very stable way of communicating oneself

and the communal." Gerbaudo notes that as memes evolve and spread, they are increasingly being shared as videos on social media platforms. He thinks the term "Memestic character" sums well the tone of most TikTok uploads. "They respond to challenges with a format, where individuals are tasked with playing with a predetermined set of interactions."

But whether or not we utilise them responsibly decides whether or not they have a "good" or "bad" influence. According to Galip, these forms of interaction are "neutral." The power of the seemingly insignificant meme is undeniable: "you can make significance out of memes by choosing what you desire to express." Their seeming simplicity belies a deep cultural heritage. Memes may unite people or put a gap between them, making them a potent tool for online connection, community development, and digital activism.

The vast majority of Internet memes are used to convey humorous but harmless content. Their format is minimal, consisting of just an image and few words to convey meaning. It is likely that the simplicity of memes' designs is what has contributed to their widespread success. Groups with political and ideological agendas have been increasingly using them as weapons in recent years. It is not unexpected that in this age of social media, online memes have become vehicles for spreading particular types of views, given the importance of humor as a tactic in politics.

In fact, as recent events like the 2016 US election have demonstrated, it is now crucial to learn the art of memetic warfare if you want to influence public opinion. A carefully produced propaganda meme can go unnoticed among the vast majority of harmless memes shared online. The alt-right utilized the Pepe the Frog template to push pro-Trump messages into the mainstream during the 2016 US election. Taking over popular meme formats by force is an effective strategy because the target audience is

already familiar with the meme format and is more likely to make an effort to comprehend the message being spread. It is a cunning strategy for spreading political propaganda to an unwary audience.

Conventional propaganda aims to persuade as many people as possible. For the following reasons, the political usage of online memes is revolutionary. A meme is characterized by its brevity and lack of context. The onus of decipherment rests squarely on the observer, who must draw upon his own insights and observations. As a result, there is typically some sort of prerequisite for entry and comprehension. When a meme is so complex that no one can understand it, it might create a sense of isolation because of the high barrier to entry that such a concept represents. This may pique the viewer's interest in what's being said, opening his mind to new political concepts.

When one member of a group grasps a meme, all members of that group are more likely to feel a sense of camaraderie and acceptance. This works best with marginalized and defenseless individuals. An extreme view could be that political memes are the new face of propaganda. Nonetheless, the situation is handled extremely seriously. In fact, NATO wrote an article titled "It is time to embrace memetic warfare." Memetic warfare is "the war over narrative, aggressively delivered via guerilla online communications," as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary. It is a war for supremacy in story, ideology, and online popularity.

During its confrontation with Ukraine and to influence domestic events in the United States, the Russian government allegedly used online memes in an unpleasant manner, as claimed by the report. That's why, in addition to traditional military operations, NATO must also adopt a memetic approach, it says. Memetic warfare is a form of

information conflict that aims to win by all means necessary, including dishonest ones. It is been shown to be a powerful tool for influencing and even controlling public debate on political issues. Meme creation will certainly get more complex and nuanced as memetic warfare heats up.

How Meme Draw Attention to Political Issues

Attempts by politicians to join the mainstreaming of memes are therefore dangerous. By trying to appeal to an audience to which they do not naturally belong, they may come across as insincere. The tweet "How does your student loan debt make you feel?" that Hillary Clinton sent out in an effort to connect with young voters backfired. How about no more than three emoji? Many people found this tone demeaning and a diversion from her genuine policy plan to lower tuition costs. It is possible for politicians to be mocked and accused of being "inauthentic" if they partake in this new style of political performance. Politicians that employ the usage of memes do so at their own risk, as they have no say in how those memes will be used or perceived in the future. First Minister Horgan didn't argue that "pro rep is lit" because he thought it would win people over; he said it because he thought it would go viral.

Politicians should reach out to young voters and provide them messages through memes if they want their votes. Youth are more likely to be in favor of proportional representation, therefore proponents of pro rep in British Columbia decided to host a meme contest to reach out to them. The impact of political memes on the caliber of political discourse is not yet fully understood, and more study is warranted.

It's strange to believe that social media sites like Twitter, which were designed for staying in touch with friends, can have such a profound impact on our political views.

Sixty-two percent of adults in the United States, according to the Pew Research Centre, get their news from social media. The news that young people do see is not presented to them in a vacuum: The American Press Institute reports that 86 percent of young people who consume news online do so alongside a range of perspectives. In their quest to stay informed, young adults may stumble across humorous memes that combine political updates, which they may then easily spread by tagging their friends or retweeting the post. Political memes could revolutionize how people get their news, but the hazards are just as great as the benefits. Memes simplify incomprehensible news articles into humorous messages, allowing people who aren't interested in politics to participate. However, they have the potential to distort serious issues into farce or muddy up reliable information with sensationalized rubbish. To be sure, "this is very new," as Towner points out. Scholars of political communication are only now beginning to consider how to investigate the phenomenon.

With the help of social media, people all over the world can now share and learn about news and events in record time. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, SnapChat, LinkedIn, etc., and others like them have quickly become indispensable to modern society. For a variety of reasons, including the speed with which messages may be spread across the aforementioned digital channels, social media has also become a potent force in political life. Recent developments in Pakistan serve as a stark reminder of this. There have been a number of unexpected and noteworthy changes in the country's political arena in recent weeks. With its meteoric surge in popularity, social media is now being used for everything from political debate to the unfiltered airing of raw emotions. Also, it is worth noting that there are currently 144.4 million individuals in Pakistan who do not have access to the

internet, or 63.5% of the total population. It is likely that this figure will go down as time goes on.

The power of social media lies in its ability to break down knowledge barriers about current events, but its misuse can have severe repercussions. The destabilizing effects of internet fake news necessitate vigilance in vetting information sources and a commitment to making decisions based on evidence, rather than speculation or what happens to be "trending" at the time. To investigate how politicians are represented visually and textually on social media (Facebook), researchers looked at memes based on prominent Pakistani politicians and analyzed their visual and textual frameworks. According to the findings of previous studies, contemporary media technologies have the potential to act as a driving force in Pakistan's political evolution and democratic development by introducing novel channels for public discourse and participation in democratic processes. After a thorough literature study and the establishment of a firm theoretical framework, it was determined that political-themed Facebook memes played a significant influence in the formation of these frameworks. Facebook memes have been used as a platform for commentary by every major political figure. From this, we can deduce that the practice of framing is crucial to the development of political memes. Cyberculture "memes" are defined as "discourse" (Milner, 2012).

Due to online communities, the concept of the meme has gone viral. Many fields, including PR and advertising, have experimented using memes as a means of spreading ideas and attracting attention. Memes on the internet serve more of a propaganda function than an informational one, helping to spread ideas and opinions rather than facts (Bauckhage, 2011). Memes have become more than just a tool of online banter; they've

been used in political campaigns (Seiffert-Brockmann 2018), campaigns to get people involved in social issues (Williams 2000), and even to manipulate people online (Frisch & Agur 2019). It explains how memes have a powerful impact on their audiences and how they may be used to gain insight into particular perspectives on the internet (Shifman, 2013).

The term "negative frame" (Xenos, Hess, & Moy, 2006) describes how most people could interpret the way political satire frames an issue. But this could be a way to pique the interest of people who normally wouldn't find politics all that fascinating (Jones, 2010; Baum, 2003). The narrative and text at the heart of a whole artifact, including textual and semiotic elements, is what we call the "Framing" in internet memes. Supporters and detractors of various political leaders often use internet memes to express their opinions on such leaders and their policies. Infotainment was shown off in a lighthearted manner (Nicolle Lamerichs, 2018).

Though the question of how to incorporate online memes into material and stories has been raised, Blackmore (1997, 2000) claims that they have a significant impact on people's attitudes, beliefs, and actions. In order to be useful, these stories must be used repeatedly throughout time and "imitated" or transferred from one person to another with little change (Blackmore, 2000). Compared to text, images are less intimidating and can be disseminated to a large audience quickly and easily, making them a powerful instrument for spreading political propaganda (Milkman & Berger, 2012). Internet memes also use the power of visual frames, which have been shown to significantly impact the way people feel over time (Joffe, 2008). Emotional appeals are more effective than logical arguments in getting your point over to others (Bem, Manstead, & Frijda, 2000).

D'Ambrosio & Gross (2004) and Gross (2008) argue that emotional framing is also a powerful factor in shaping people's political views. The term "visual gatekeeping," proposed by Shahira Fahmy (Fahmay, 2005), refers to the process of regulating a subset of visuals that have been culled from a large pool of data on the basis of how well they convey an engaging story. In addition, Resse argues that a community and its system are built on the backs of the shared beliefs that are consistently handed from generation to generation; this is what is meant by it. Sharia Fahmy discusses the study of visuals, in which she lays an emphasis on a number of powerful visual methods, such as "Social semiotics," "indexicality," and "iconicity," which are utilised for framing. You may be able to effectively promote a custom-made ideology by using these technologies, which is something that would only attract attention to a controversial subject if it were written about (Fahmy, 2010).

Facebook is one of the largest and most effective online channels that is currently available to use if one's objective is to spread the word. According to one interpretation of a quote attributed to Abraham Lincoln, "of the people, by the people, and for the people" (Shifman, 2014).Most meme studies are based on the concept of memetic dispersion and adaptability (Shifman & Thelwall, 2009; Bauckhage, 2011) and the meme's involvement in the changing of the discourse (Jantke et al., 2012; Bowers & Wiggins, 2014). However, the importance of framing effects has not yet been described. Because there is a paucity of research in this field and because of the relevance of having a comprehensive knowledge of the interaction tools that the modern electronic world has to offer, the purpose of this study is to conduct a visual investigation of Facebook memes based on prominent Pakistani politicians. The research investigates the overall picture of Pakistani political personalities

and aims to determine the frames that are linked with these images by utilising a dual-modal approach to evaluate both visual and text Facebook memes. This approach was chosen since it allows the researcher to examine both types of memes.

There is no way to ignore the impact that social media platforms have had on the discussion of public policy. According to Doris (2014), a large number of empirical studies have demonstrated the usefulness of social media platforms for political communication. One example of the extensive use of social media for the purpose of spreading propaganda in Pakistan is the creation of online political memes. This research aims to address a gap in the field of visual evaluation of current technological instruments by conducting an analysis of the visual and linguistic representations of political personalities found on Facebook memes. The research uses a dual-modal approach to accomplish this goal. This article investigates the frames which are related with the portrayal of Pakistani politicians on Fb memes. The research for this article is an extension of the study of political satire. Entman (2007) provides the following definition of the concept of "Framing," which serves as the foundation for this research: "a technique in which a particular feature of the reality has been chosen and given greater prominence or focus in order to explain the problem, detect its causes, draw moral inferences, and indicate the best way to carry out and actions."

Martinez argues, with support from the research of Knobel and Lankshear (2007), that an understanding of political memes can be a valuable tool to learn more about the principles, principles, and tactics of political organisations and those who follow them (Martnez-Rolán, 2015). Martinez bases his argument on the findings of Knobel and Lankshear. There are many ways to interpret a meme, each with its own set of captions and goals. It is clear that human civilization has evolved into a network of localized groups. If

only one of these communities is studied in isolation, researchers will get only a partial view of how the political discourse in Pakistan is being manipulated (Cristofaro, 2018).

Both "born-digital" people and those who entered the digital world later migrated to social media from other platforms. The public and politicians use memes in the same way they use semantics and semiotics to convey meaning in their statements to one another. Along with its positive political orientation, memes can also have elements of harassment, wrath, and dissatisfaction. Innocent animal animations like the one starring Pepe the frog are often altered rather than exploited. According to Fatima (2020), several social groups can be traced back to Alt-right movements; these people may support or oppose the government, respectively.

Because of the popularity of social media, conspiracy theories have the potential to disseminate quickly and reach a large number of individuals this way (Brunben, 2019). As a result, memes that circulate on social media are additionally focused on the concerns that have been stated above, but they also play a significant part in the operation of political campaigns. According to Bowyer (2018a), online platforms like social media and the internet as a whole have developed into powerful tools that may be used for investing and raising money for political campaigns.

Agendas of political memes amid the "No-confidence motion" Coleman defines online memes as "viral videos, pictures, and catchphrases constantly in flux in reaction to user input and travelling as fast as the Internet may carry them" (2012: 109). Memes can travel as quickly as the internet can transport them. In the meme, Nawaz Sharif, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, and Imran Khan are seen to be sitting together on the aeroplane. Predictive meme that links his presence aboard the jet to the unhappiness of former Prime Ministers

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan. Another advantage of social media is that it allows people's minds to become infected with conspiracy ideas (Brunben, 2019). As a result, this was taken as evidence that Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan was going to be unable to complete his full time in office. In addition to that, they made an effort to give off the impression that the Military was the party responsible for getting all of these prime ministers removed from office.

Figure 08 is a parody of a dialogue that took place between Shehbaz Sharif and an interviewer. The line of conversation goes as follows: "we are beggars, and beggars are no choosers." That conversation served as the impetus for creating this meme. Internet users took advantage of the fact that the vote of no confidence took place during the holy month of Ramadan to generate memes in which fasting Muslims were encouraged to combine their religious obligation to abstain from food and drink with the practise of rising up early for sehri. After hearing the words "We are beggars," a sizeable percentage of the population of the Internet made the facetious assumption that the entire nation was a "Bhikari." They have a saying that goes, "Beggars are not choosers," which is an allusion to the adage that goes, "Jo mily Kha lo Q k bhikari farmaish Nhi Kr skty." The sarcastic message that this meme is trying to convey is that the people of this country are powerless plebeians who are incapable of making our own judgements. Figure 03 illustrates how the conflict between the MQM and Shahbaz Sharif has been converted into a meme by utilising a picture of Paresh Rawal portrayed as Babu Bhaiya from the movie "Hera Pheri," in which he is heard famously saying, "Maine aisa kab Kaha."

In order for the "no-confidence vote" to be successful, the PDM attempted to form a coalition with the MQM, which they were successful in doing. Asif Ali Zardari has stated

that the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) will be taken into consideration when assigning ministries. Shehbaz Sharif, on the other hand, rejected each and every guarantee that the MQM had provided while he was in power. After ministry slots had been given, the MQM's conduit, Khalid Maqbool Siddique, addressed the media and stated, "No cabinet can be formed and maintained without MQM-P." The only thing that Shehbaz Sharif did in answer to their demand, as this meme demonstrates, was to insist that he had not made any commitments of this kind.

2.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework investigates how political identity might be expressed through memes in the age of digital politics and communication. It takes as its starting point Erving Goffman's dramaturgical concept of online interactions as performances, with participants using memes as instruments in their performance of their political identities. People's political ideas and affiliations can be conveyed quickly and concisely through the use of memes, which are dynamic visual and textual artifacts that function as performative acts on this digital stage. This framework applies Goffman's concepts of presentation of self and dramaturgy to examine how memes act as agents of political

identity expression, thus illuminating the relationship between online discourse and the formation of political identities.

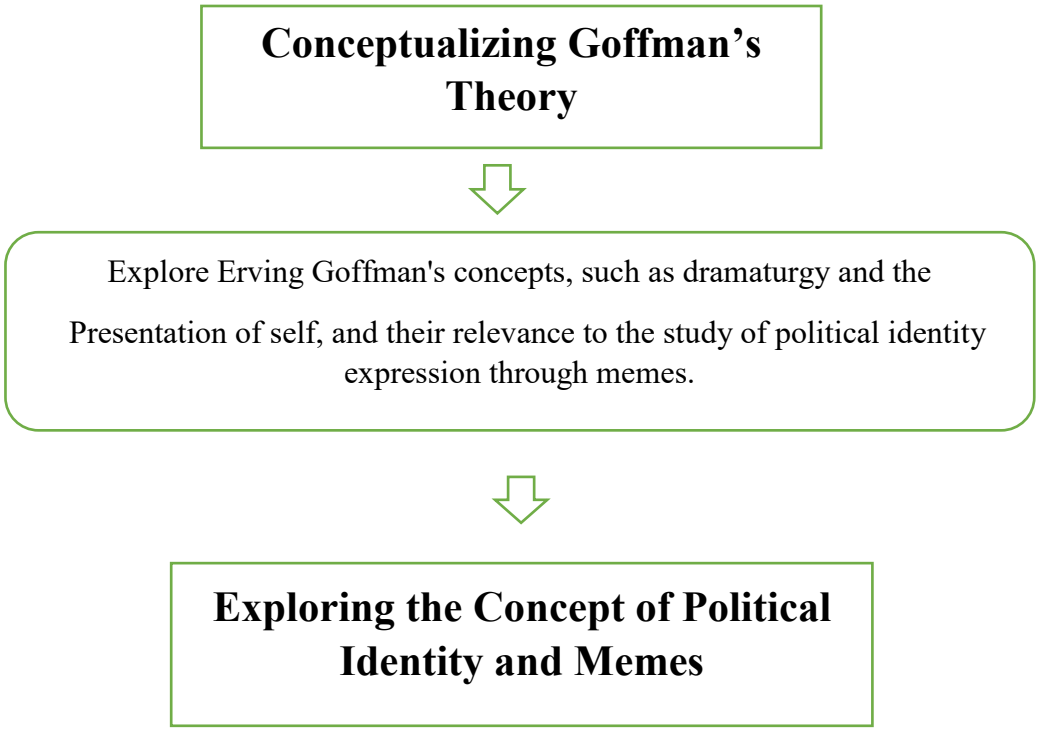
2.3 Erving Goffman Concept of Dramaturgy and the Presentation of Self

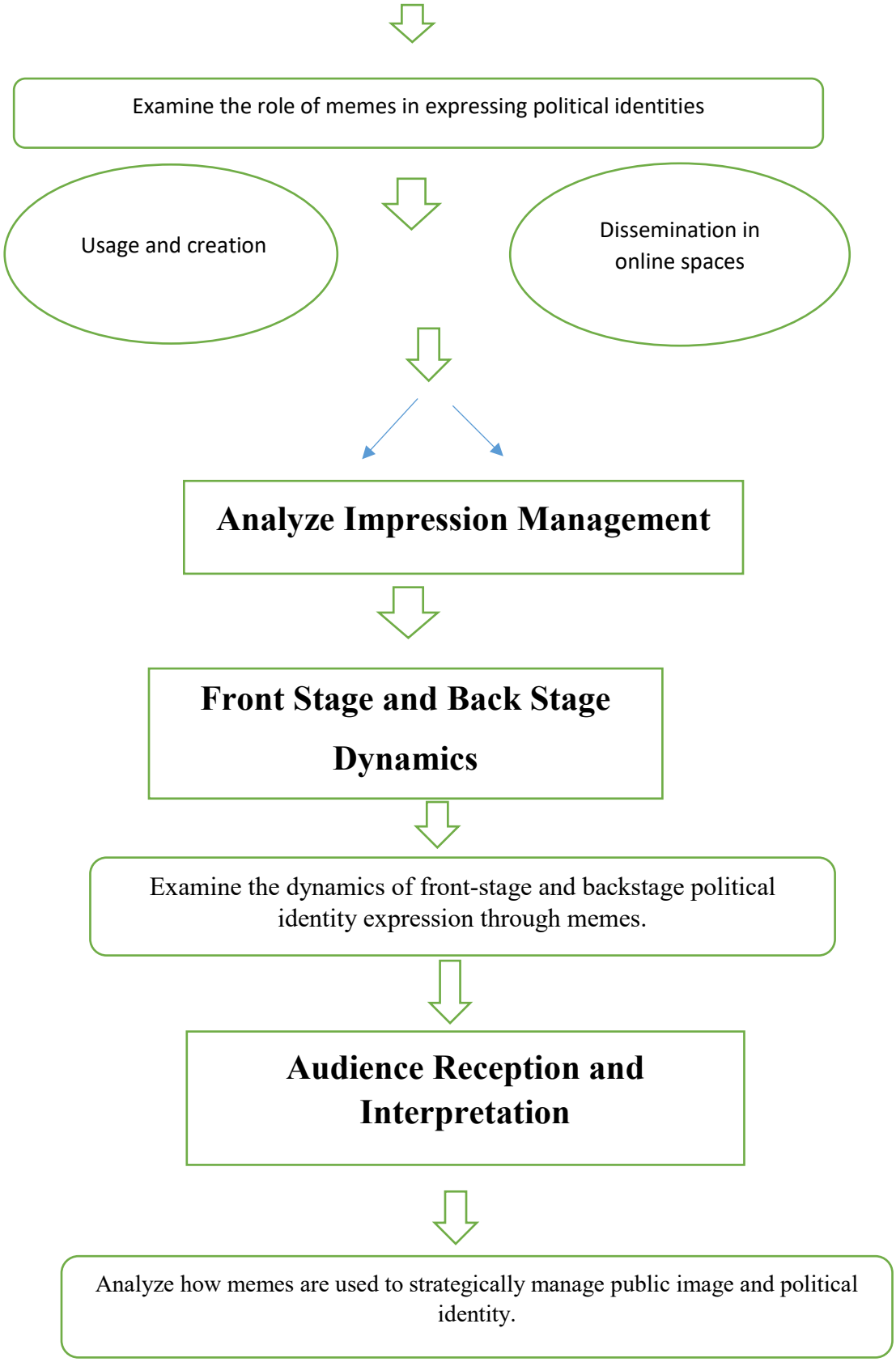
The expression of political identity through memes has emerged as a significant and timely area of research in the field of digital politics and communication. Memes, as visual and textual artifacts that quickly circulate on social media platforms, offer a unique avenue for individuals to convey their political beliefs, affiliations, and values in a succinct and engaging manner. This literature review aims to explore the relevance of political identity expression through memes, drawing on Erving Goffman's concepts of dramaturgy and presentation of self as a theoretical framework. By examining existing studies on memes, political identity formation, and online communication, this review seeks to understand how memes function as performative acts, allowing individuals to strategically construct and perform their political personas.

Understanding the expression of political identity through memes is crucial in the current digital landscape, where political discourse and activism increasingly unfold online. Memes have gained substantial traction as a mode of communication and expression, particularly among younger generations who are digitally engaged and politically active. By leveraging humor, satire, cultural references, and visual elements, memes have the potential to engage and resonate with broad audiences, shaping political narratives and mobilizing social movements. Therefore, exploring the role of memes in

political identity expression provides valuable insights into contemporary political communication and the dynamics of online participation.

The relevance of this topic to the present thesis lies in its potential to shed light on how individuals strategically manage their political identities through the use of memes. By applying Goffman's conceptual framework, the thesis aims to unravel the performative nature of meme usage, the dynamics between front stage and back stage in online spaces, and the influence of audience reception on the construction and negotiation of political identities. This literature review will critically examine existing studies that investigate the connection between memes and political identity expression, identify gaps in the literature, and highlight avenues for future research. Ultimately, this research endeavor will contribute to a deeper understanding of the intersection between digital culture, political expression, and identity performance, making important theoretical and practical contributions to the field of digital politics and communication.




Examine the role of memes in expressing political identities
Usage and creation
Dissemination in online spaces
Analyze Impression Management
Front Stage and Back Stage Dynamics
Examine the dynamics of front-stage and backstage political identity expression through memes.
Audience Reception and Interpretation
Analyze how memes are used to strategically manage public image and political identity.

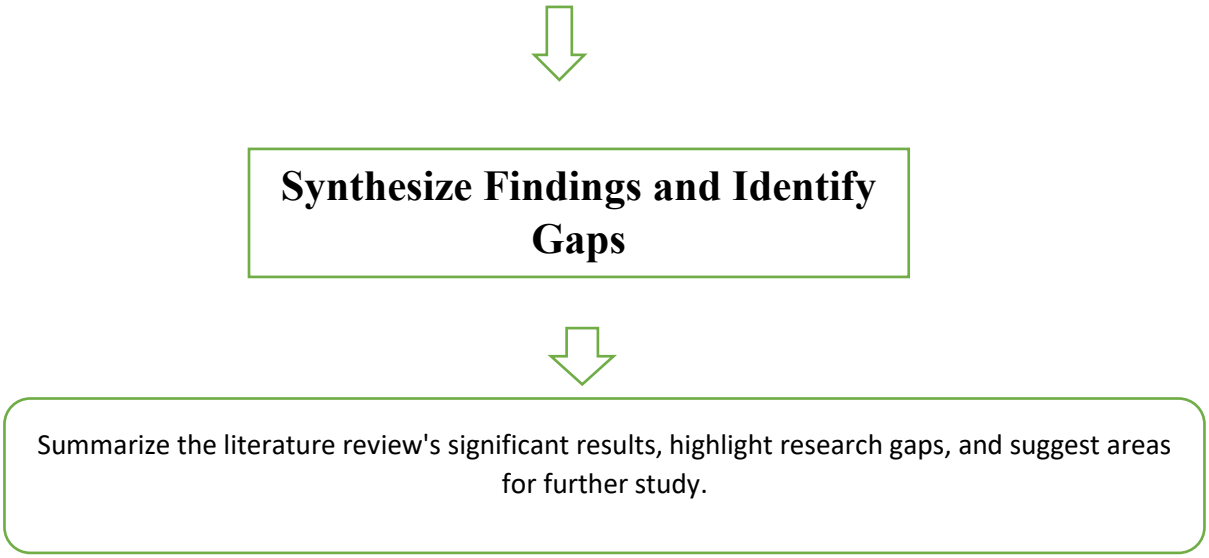


Figure: The Dramaturgy of Memes: Exploring the Expression of Political Identity through Goffman's Lens

This flowchart outlines a research process that explores the relationship between political identity expression and memes. It begins by conceptualizing Erving Goffman's theory of dramaturgy and the presentation of self as a theoretical foundation. The research then moves into studying the role of memes in expressing political identities, including their creation, usage, and dissemination in online spaces. It analyzes how individuals strategically manage their public image and political identity through memes, considering both the front stage (public presentation) and back stage (preparation) dynamics. The research also investigates how audiences perceive and interpret political memes and how these interpretations shape the expression of political identity. Finally, the findings are synthesized, potential gaps in the literature are identified, and recommendations for further research are proposed.

Application of Goffman's Theory to Current Study

Erving Goffman's framework suggests that memes function as performative acts by allowing individuals to present and express their political identity in a theatrical manner. Here's an explanation of how memes operate as performative acts within Goffman's perspective:

1. **Front Stage Performance:** Memes serve as a front stage performance where individuals strategically choose and share memes that align with their political beliefs and desired identity. Through the selection and dissemination of memes, individuals actively construct a public image and communicate their political viewpoints to others.

2. **Impression Management:** Just as actors manage their impressions on stage, individuals use memes to manage their online impressions. They carefully curate and share memes that reflect their political stance, values, and affiliations. By doing so, they seek to influence how others perceive and interpret their political identity.

3. Symbolic Interaction: Memes engage in symbolic interaction, where shared meanings and symbols are created and exchanged. Political memes often employ humor, satire, or irony to convey messages and provoke reactions. By participating in the creation and circulation of memes, individuals engage in a symbolic dialogue, expressing their political identity and engaging with others in online spaces.

4. **Audience Reception**: Goffman's framework emphasizes the importance of audience reception and interpretation. Memes act as communicative tools, evoking various responses from different audiences. The audience's understanding and reaction to memes

contribute to the performative act. Their reception and interpretation of political memes shape the ongoing construction of political identities and can influence further meme creation and dissemination.

5. Back Stage Preparation: Behind the scenes, individuals engage in back stage preparation to craft memes that align with their political identity. This includes selecting images, creating captions, and employing various rhetorical devices to convey their intended message. The back stage preparation contributes to the performative act, as individuals carefully construct memes that support their desired political identity.

Memes function as performative acts within Goffman's framework by enabling individuals to actively present, manage impressions, engage in symbolic interaction, and interact with audiences to shape their political identity. By analyzing the performative aspects of memes, researchers can gain insights into the dynamics of political expression in the digital era.

The influence of audience reception on the construction and negotiation of political identities is a crucial aspect to consider within the context of meme-based expression. Here's a discussion on this topic:

Audience reception plays a significant role in the construction and negotiation of political identities through memes. When individuals share political memes, they are seeking to engage with their intended audience and elicit specific reactions or responses. The way audiences interpret and react to these memes can shape and influence the ongoing construction of political identities in several ways.

1. Validation and Reinforcement: Positive reception from an audience can validate and reinforce an individual's political identity. When memes are well-received and resonate

with the intended audience, it affirms the individual's beliefs and values. This validation can strengthen their commitment to their political identity and encourage them to further engage in expressing and sharing similar content.

2. Counter-Arguments and Challenges: Audience reception may also involve counter-arguments and challenges to the presented political identity. When memes receive critical or opposing responses, it prompts individuals to engage in discussions, debates, or even create counter-memes to defend their political stance. This process of negotiation and response can lead to a deeper exploration and refinement of their political identity.

3. Community Building and Affiliation: Audience reception can facilitate the formation of communities and online networks centered around shared political identities. When memes resonate with a specific audience, it fosters a sense of belonging and solidarity. This can lead to the formation of online communities that strengthen and reinforce particular political identities, creating spaces for further identity negotiation and expression.

4. Identity Adaptation and Evolution: Audience reception can also prompt individuals to adapt or evolve their political identities over time. When exposed to different perspectives, critiques, or alternative interpretations of memes, individuals may reevaluate their beliefs and engage in identity negotiations. This process allows for the potential growth and development of political identities as individuals reflect on and incorporate new insights into their self-presentation.

5. Backlash and Polarization: Negative audience reception can lead to backlash and polarization. When memes receive strong opposition or criticism, individuals may become

defensive and entrench themselves further in their existing political identity. This can contribute to the widening of ideological divisions and the reinforcement of echo chambers, hindering the potential for nuanced discussions and identity negotiation.

Audience reception influences the construction and negotiation of political identities through memes by validating or challenging beliefs, facilitating community building and affiliation, prompting adaptation and evolution, and potentially leading to polarization. The interplay between individuals and their audiences in the context of meme-based expression significantly shapes the ongoing construction, negotiation, and refinement of political identities in online spaces

Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual framework is based on the writings of anthropologists Arjun Appadurai, Benedict Anderson, Clifford Geertz, Michel Foucault, Michael Wesch, and Sarah Pink, who together present a multifaceted method of analysis for the phenomenon of political memes. To further understand the worldwide impact of digital artefacts like political memes and their ability to cross cultural boundaries, we might look to Arjun Appadurai's theory of globalisation. Using Benedict Anderson's "imagined communities" as a lens, we can see how memes help people feel like they belong in their respective online political communities. Using Clifford Geertz's "thick description" technique, we can better understand the cultural and political ramifications of political memes by deconstructing their multiple layers of meaning. How memes subvert established narratives and power dynamics is investigated through the lens of Michel Foucault's theories on power and discourse. The research methodology combines Michael Wesch's digital ethnography approach with Sarah Pink's visual ethnography insights to

examine the production, distribution, and visual language of memes. This multifaceted framework uses various anthropological points of view to investigate the impact of political memes on narratives, political participation, and online personas.

CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGY

3. Research Philosophy

The interpretivist method is well suited to the study of how political identities are depicted in memes. This approach is congruent with the difficulty of understanding political memes within their cultural contexts, which includes the subjective and symbolic components of these memes. Taking an interpretivist attitude, which recognises the diversity of meanings ascribed by different people to digital objects, allows researchers to probe the nuanced ways in which memes' creators and consumers impart political overtones. Along with acknowledging the influence of political events, viewpoints, and societal norms on the memes' function as mirrors and responses to the political environment, this method also encourages an investigation of the cultural and historical factors that influence the production and consumption of memes.The dramaturgical theory of self-presentation developed by Erving Goffman provides a convincing starting point for this inquiry. When added to the research of other anthropologists like Clifford Geertz, Michael Wesch, and Sarah Pink, this perspective is strengthened. The interpretivist approach to study here is a wonderful match for Erving Goffman's theory of social interactions as performances. This paradigm emphasises the significance of understanding subjective meaning within social contexts by giving a perspective through which to interpret memes as symbolic performances. These imaginings in cyberspace enable users to present public demonstrations of their political identities.

Geertz's "thick description" style works well with interpretivism, enhancing Goffman's perspective and facilitating a more thorough exploration of the several layers of meaning embedded in memes and the cultural and political contexts they reflect. Wesch's research on online participation and digital culture offers a similar lens for observing the widespread alteration of political personae in the virtual world. In addition, Sarah Pink's interest in sensory ethnography guides research into the emotions elicited by memes, shedding light on the role of feelings in the expression of political identity. By combining methods, the research gets a whole picture of how political identity is communicated and experienced through memes in the enormous landscape of digital culture.

Exploratory Research

Exploratory research seeks to learn more about a topic with no clear boundaries. It's being done to gain a better picture of things, but the results won't have any legal weight. A researcher utilises a broad hypothesis to guide the study and identify suitable research subjects. The researcher must be adaptable enough to make course corrections as new data or insights become available. Exploratory research seeks to answer questions about the world that have not yet been adequately investigated.

First, the investigator has a lot of room to manoeuvre and can quickly adapt to changing conditions as they arise during the course of the study. The low cost is a further advantage. Third, it creates a firm foundation upon which further research might be built. In addition, it aids in the researcher's early determination of whether or not the issue is worthwhile and worth pursuing, saving both time and money; it can aid in the

identification of potential explanations for the problem, which can then be studied in further depth to establish which is the most likely.

Methods and Materials

This research analysed the content of memes shared on Facebook and Instagram and questioned students and professors at PMAS-AAUR. The interviews were also conducted with a hybrid strategy, which allowed for both in-person and remote participation.

Method	Materials	Area profile
Content analysis	Memes	Facebook and Instagram
Questionnaire	Participants	Students and faculty members at PMAS-AAUR
Interview schedule	Participants	Students and faculty members at PMAS-AAUR
Hybrid interview methodology	Participants	Participants who were able to travel to the study site and participants who were not able to travel to the study site

Demographic Profile of the Questionnaire

Gender	Political Affiliat	Profession	Count
Male	PTI	Student	6
Male	PTI	Anthropologist	1
Male	PTI	Software Devel	1
Male	Apolitical	Entrepreneur	1
Male	Apolitical	Research Inter	1
Female	PTI	Student	2
Female	PPP	Student	3
Female	PMLN	Student	4
Female	Apolitical	Anthropologist	1
Female	Apolitical	Software Devel	1
Female	Apolitical	Entrepreneur	1
Female	Apolitical	Research Inter	1

A total of 25 people (14 men and 11 women) filled out the survey; 60% (10/25) either said they were "Apolitical" or didn't want to say. A total of 15 people answered the survey; 9 of them said they were affiliated with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, 3 with the Pakistan People's Party, and 4 with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz. The survey sample comprised people from a wide variety of occupations, although students made up the largest group. Two business owners and two research assistants rounded out the group of anthropologists and software engineers who made up the rest of the sample. This data shows the fact that the population of interest spans a wide age range, gender distribution, ethnicity spectrum, sexual orientation spectrum, religious spectrum, and political spectrum.

Questionnaire

This study benefited significantly from the insights on political identity and meme propagation provided by the open-ended questionnaire responses of 30 people with varying levels of political knowledge.

Interview Schedule

Hybrid Interview Methodology

The 17 participants will be interviewed to better understand the interplay between political identity expression and meme usage. Semi-structured interviews probe their meme savvy, online political engagement, and political self-identity. The influence of memes on political attitudes and participation are frequently discussed subjects. The agenda also focuses into questions like how people's political identities may shift as a result of memes and how memes influence public debate. We anticipate that the qualitative information gathered from these interviews will enrich the quantitative data gleaned from the questionnaires and further our understanding of how memes and political identity connect in the online world.

Sampling

Convenience sampling was utilized in the present investigation. In this non-random selection method, participants are selected based on their own availability and interest in taking part in the research (Bernard, 2013). Candidates were chosen from a vast pool of people who expressed an interest in and knowledge of politics. This approach allowed for more efficient data collection from willing participants, which in turn allowed for a more in-depth analysis of how political identity is conveyed through memes.

b

Meme Sampling

Memes that are representative of the variety and depth of political discussion on social media were identified using a systematic sampling process. To ensure a diverse range of political perspectives, attitudes, and modes of expression, 25 memes were selected from Facebook and Instagram. Through this strategy, we may examine the interplay of images, words, and humour as they relate to the presentation of a political identity. By analysing memes from numerous user profiles and accounts, this study hopes to shed light on the nuanced nature of political identity representation online.

Sample Size

Thirty people were selected for this study in order to ensure a broad range of political expertise was represented. To learn more about their perspectives on political identity expression through memes, interviews were then conducted with 17 of these people. In addition, 25 memes were handpicked from various web resources in order to investigate the visual and textual characteristics of political memes in depth. Participants will be interviewed, and memes will be analysed, such that the connection between political identity and communication will be thoroughly explored.

Unit of Analysis

The 30 participants who were interviewed serve as the primary unit of analysis since the information gleaned from their reactions and perspectives is crucial to deducing how political identity is communicated via memes. The second unit of analysis consists of the 25 selected memes, which are dissected in order to identify commonalities and

differences that provide insight into the visual and textual communication of political ideas online. Together, these two levels of analysis help to provide a thorough examination of the study question.

Area profile 1

Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi

Located in the city of Rawalpindi, Pakistan, the Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University (PMAS-AAUR) is a highly regarded academic institution. Agricultural and environmental sciences were once the centre of attention at the university, but the school has since widened its academic offerings. The campus is an exciting place to study and explore new frontiers in research. The mission of PMAS-AAUR, which is to promote education and research, is aligned with its stated goals of producing well-rounded graduates and contributing to the growth of knowledge. PMAS-AAUR served as the hub for participant recruiting, in-person interviews, and questionnaire dissemination. The university's commitment to scholarship and respect for human subjects means that it is open to exploring how political identity is conveyed through memes. The study's diverse sample reflects PMAS-AAUR's dedication to inclusion and broad learning opportunities, yielding more nuanced results than would otherwise be feasible. In light of this, the current study entailed conducting interviews with and research on 30 individuals affiliated with the PMAS-AAUR institute. This decision was made to ensure a comprehensive exploration of viewpoints on the manifestation of political identity through memes, and it underscores the university's dedication to building a varied and inclusive academic community.

Rapport Establishment for Research at PMAS-AAUR

The effectiveness of every study conducted at the Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University (PMAS-AAUR) depends on the researchers' ability to earn the trust of their study participants. Both scientific and ethical considerations stress the need for researchers to earn the confidence of their subjects. The researchers at PMAS-AAUR appreciate the importance of providing a platform for open dialogue.

Researchers and participants need to talk to each other in an open and honest manner to establish trust. This involves providing participants with information about the study's purpose, methodology, and expected outcomes while also assuring them of their anonymity and confidentiality. Researchers make an attempt to familiarise themselves with participant perspectives and backgrounds to ensure that their experiences are acknowledged and valued. Building and keeping rapport with study participants calls for regular communication, active listening, and speedy issue solving. Consistent with the institution's commitment to responsible research practises, PMAS-AAUR makes an attempt to develop relationships with its participants in order to generate richer and deeper data.

Area Profile 2

Digital Space

The advent of conducting research in virtual environments represents a paradigm shift in the discipline of anthropology. Digital platforms like social media networks and online communities are increasingly being used by anthropologists as a means of gaining insight into modern people and their customs, cultural practises, and social interactions. Researchers can observe and gain insight into people's use of digital spaces, interactions with others, and identity formation in today's rapidly evolving technological landscape by

employing this digital ethnography method. Online communities provide anthropologists with a unique opportunity to research hybrid identities, communicate with people from all over the world, and get insight into newly unexplored forms of cultural expression. This fresh viewpoint not only enhances the disciplinary technique but also highlights the connection of the digital and physical worlds, allowing for a deeper appreciation of the complex tapestry that is human culture and society. The final goal of the study was to examine the meat of memes shared on social media sites like Facebook and Instagram. This required a thorough examination of the visual and textual aspects of memes to reveal recurring thoughts, emotions, and styles of communication in the online social media infrastructure.

Facebook and Instagram

I used Facebook and Instagram to collect 25 political memes for analysis. Our study of how political identities are conveyed online relies heavily on the data we've gathered from the memes that have been posted on these platforms. Since its inception in 2004, when it was founded by Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook has grown to become the greatest social networking site in the world, linking together billions of people and facilitating communication and the spread of knowledge. Instagram, a photo and video sharing app, was released in 2010. The platform places a premium on visual content.

This study sheds light on the various strengths of various media in fostering political discourse. Because of Facebook's massive user base and adaptable sharing options, memes that appeal to a wide range of audiences can spread quickly and widely. However, because Instagram is primarily a visual platform, politically significant photos and visual narratives may travel more swiftly than they otherwise would. By delving into the

curation of these 25 memes from Facebook and Instagram, we can gain a better understanding of the platform-specific aspects that determine the manifestation of political identity. New insights into the dynamic between social media platforms, political memes, and the online manifestation of political identity will be revealed by the analysis, which will factor in content types, engagement trends, and user interactions with memes.

CHAPTER 4:

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter's findings and discussion highlight the three basic aims of the study. First, research on the power of memes to influence political discourse uncovered their essential role in posing new questions to long-held beliefs and giving a voice to those who disagree. Memes, which often include satire, humour, and alternative narratives, have become powerful tools for broadening the scope of political debate. Second, research into the role of memes in encouraging civic participation highlighted how they can break down difficult political topics so that they can be understood and appreciated by a wider audience. Memes' malleability, as evidenced by their ability to coincide with real-world events, demonstrated their significance in attracting the attention of people who might not otherwise participate in political discussions. Finally, the content study of political memes in Pakistan shed light on the varied range of political meme tones, audiences, and communication strategies in use. Memes were thought to be powerful agents in moulding public opinion because of the humour or satire with which they might target the general public or specific political opponents. The virality of these memes on social media demonstrated their power to shape the conversation about politics in the present day.

4.1 Memes Shaping Political Narratives

The primary goal of this objective is to analyzes the effectiveness of memes as instruments for constructing political narratives. By investigating how memes are used to influence and mold people's opinions about politics, I hoped to learn how these seemingly

simple digital creations have become effective instruments for molding public opinion and debate. Thirty people were recruited to take part in the study, and the researchers wanted to learn more about the participants' experiences with political memes and the stories they told online. Material was gathered and I was able to see how our study participants interpreted the political memes they viewed on different social media platforms through in-depth interviews and participant observation. Meme analysis in various online communities bolstered these conclusions by illuminating how specific narratives were understood and disseminated among members (Shenhav, 2005). Using a comprehensive approach with anthropological underpinnings, this study sought to delve deeper than a surface level analysis of memes by exploring the social and cultural contexts that both influenced and were influenced by them. Engaging with the participants' life experiences, perceptions, and relationships led to a deep knowledge of the numerous ways in which political memes are woven into the development of current narratives (Shenhav, 2005)

4.1.1 Memes Shaping Political Opinion

Research findings indicate that opinions on the influence of memes on public opinion about political issues are divided. Only around a tenth of respondents (10.3%) believed memes to be very important in molding political attitudes, while nearly four in ten (41.4%) found them to be fairly important. However, 19.3% of the population does not see the value in memes. The results are consistent with earlier studies that have found that memes have a significant impact on altering public discourse and political attitudes, especially among younger generations. A third of persons under the age of 30 said they were better informed about politics and current events thanks to social media, namely political memes (Perrin, 2019). As a result, the findings indicate that political memes do

have an effect on public opinion. Their influence on public opinion and the mechanisms by which this is accomplished require additional study (Bimber, Flanagin, & Stohl, 2012). The subject of the function of memes in molding public opinion is highly contentious in the context of Pakistan's complex sociopolitical fabric (Situngkir, 2004) A respondent told me something that can be summarized as Memes hold a certain power in our political conversations, during an interview. They are more than just funny pictures; they include meanings that are relevant to our lives right now. The many differing viewpoints in our culture are reflected in the fact that some people perceive memes as a moderate influencer.

4.1.2 A more respondent summed up the general feeling:

Memes wield a distinctive influence here. Memes are of minor significance to many people, reflecting the variety of our culture. Some people give them a passing thought, acknowledging their existence in the conversation.

Memes have a complex influence on people's political beliefs, and a surprising number of people give them a high importance rating. On the other hand, some people don't believe in the power of memes, perhaps highlighting skepticism about their actual influence on political narratives.

Participants' age, gender, political leanings, and socioeconomic status could all play a role in shaping their responses. Those with higher levels of education and income are more likely to participate in political memes, according to studies.

4.1.3 Memes Shaping Public Perception

I examine political speech from multiple perspectives and ideologies to show how memes impact popular opinion. Out of the total sample, 9 people place a moderate emphasis on memes, 6 people place a somewhat more importance on them, 5 people completely discount their relevance, and 2 people place a much greater importance on them. Memes are seen as moderately important, especially by PTI supporters, demonstrating the complicated interplay between politics and the impact of internet memes on public discourse. The findings highlight a sizable proportion of respondents who place memes at the center of their explanations for how public opinion is shaped on political topics. Consistent with other studies (Suh, Hong, & Park, 2015; Bimber, Flanagin, & Stohl, 2012), this pattern highlights the importance of social media as a platform for political discourse and knowledge dissemination. Memes in particular emerge as powerful instruments, influencing political discourse and galvanizing public opinions through the artful weaving of emotions and political messages into a style that is easy to understand, widely shared, and often amusing (Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral, 2018).

These findings are supported by another respondent's comment that highlights the power of memes to influence public opinion.

Memes capture emotions and issues effectively, “he said. Especially among social media-savvy young people, their widespread distribution could have a significant impact on public opinion.

Memes have shown to be extremely effective in Pakistan. During election seasons, memes that poke fun at or satirize political personalities went viral and influenced people's

thoughts and conversations. The cultural significance of these occurrences is emphasized by anthropological research. From virality and relevance to audience receptivity, several elements influence a meme's ability to sway beliefs (Patterson & Monroe, 1998).

4.1.4 Usage and Role of Memes in Political Campaigns

Memes have a huge impact on political campaigns because they are effective rallying tools that effectively combine humor, symbolism, and political messaging. The public's opinion on memes is split, with about 55.2 percent taking a neutral stance, 24.1 percent responding positively, and 20.7 percent responding negatively, according to current research. While their ability to quickly spread across social networks makes them useful for conveying political narratives and swaying sentiments, some worry that they can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and false information. Despite its flaws, memes continue to be an effective form of online communication, generating both laughter and interest in social and political issues. Memes, reflecting the merging of the digital, cultural, and political spheres, have matured into powerful tools in the modern online environment. In order to grasp how these seemingly frivolous images shape the complex sociopolitical terrain of our times, it is essential to examine their impact.

While An insider's perspective on the power of memes in political campaigns is shared in the context of a discussion about their use. In particular, he recalled a meme from the 2018 elections in which Imran Khan was shown Riding a broom, a funny allegory for his promise to eliminate corruption.

The respondent expressed it like way:

Us meme ne asal mein Imran Khan ke waaday ko aik zabardast tareeqay se chhapa tha. Sweep the corrupt away with a broom, and they'll be fine. A single hansi mazak's worth is worth a sachai's izhar.

Translation: the promise of Imran Khan was brilliantly portrayed in that meme. His promise to sweep out corruption was represented by a broom on the poster. It was funny, but it also made a serious point.

He also mentioned another meme that was part of the "FixIt" campaign that featured a renowned politician standing next to a pile of problems in the neighborhood. These examples beautifully illustrated how memes simplified complex political storylines into understandable and humorous images, highlighting their dual role as entertaining and thought-provoking instruments in molding political discourse.

4.1.5 Role of Memes in Shaping Political Campaigns in Pakistan

4.1.5.1 Imran Khan's PTI: Social Media Revolution

Using the power of memes, Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party ushered in a new era in electoral politics in 2018. As part of this digital approach, hashtags like #NayaPakistan (which translates to "New Pakistan") and other catchy slogans were widely used across social media. Successfully managing the crossroads of entertainment and political communication, PTI used memes to effectively engage the public with messages of reform and anti-corruption.

4.1.5.2 Bilawal Bhutto's Youth Engagement

For Bilawal Bhutto and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), reaching out to the younger generation is a top priority. In order to reach young people, they incorporated memes and other types of internet material into their campaign, paying special attention to social media sites. PPP created a channel of contact with the youth by using aesthetically appealing and easily understood memes, which increased youth participation in politics and helped solidify their sense of political identity.

4.1.5.3 Maryam Nawaz's Narrative Crafting’s

Maryam Nawaz, leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), made effective use of social media to promote positive party narratives. PML-N successfully engaged their supporters and influenced public conversation by using aesthetically captivating memes to buttress their ideas. The party's ideals and goals were reflected in the visual narrative that was constructed with the help of these memes.

4.1.5.4 TLP's Religious Mobilization

The religious political organization Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) used memes and other forms of social media to spread its message and rally its members during times of protest and advocacy. Memes played a special role in getting their message across to their religiously inclined audience, especially on contentious matters like blasphemy laws.

#FixIt Campaign: Highlighting Civic Issues

Scores Facebook

Memes were used as a potent form of protest in the grassroots #FixIt campaign, which was launched by activist Alamgir Khan. The campaign successfully transcended typical political language by using memes to spark debates about civic duty and the urgent need for improved infrastructure and services, such as the juxtaposition of photos of politicians alongside problems like potholes and rubbish.

In recent years, memes have become an integral part of political campaigns in Pakistan. These instances demonstrate how political organizations and activists have successfully utilized the informational power of memes to negotiate the complexities of the Internet era. Memes have redefined the parameters of political involvement and perception in modern Pakistan by masterfully merging humor, visual appeal, and political messaging.

4.1.6 Impact of Memes on Shifting Political Views

I interviewed a participant to learn more about the impact memes have on people's political beliefs. The respondent provided a refreshingly nuanced analysis of how memes

function as a tool for political manipulation. They recalled one individual meme that comically displayed a politician's evasiveness on a key issue. This humorous yet introspective meme prompted the respondent to reevaluate their own position by making them doubt the veracity and coherence of the politician's arguments.

The interviewee's observation is consistent with real-world evidence of memes' influential influence in molding political viewpoints.

Scores Facebook

An excellent example of this is the "Distracted Boyfriend" meme, which was cleverly repurposed to make a statement on political loyalty and unfulfilled promises.

Two Buttons

Scores Facebook

It is worth noting that the "Two Buttons" meme also got people talking about the relative merits of various political parties' policies by encouraging them to weigh in on the merits of various options. The meme explains about the complains of public about the real world and other side of meme explains that to do nothing. Memes, by their inventive and frequently hilarious approach, can encourage critical thinking and, in some cases, lead to changes in political ideas, as these instances show. Note that just 20.7% of respondents in this poll admit that they have changed their minds because of a meme, while the vast majority (79.3%) have not been influenced by memes. This statistical understanding complements the qualitative interview findings by providing a quantitative measure, drawing attention to the different ways in which memes might impact political beliefs.

The power of memes as a form of communication is demonstrated by the phenomena of memes influencing political ideas. When extensively disseminated, a meme

can quickly alter public opinion because it simplifies abstract concepts into something everyone can understand and relate to. In the same way that the respondent's own experience parallels these examples, it demonstrates how memes have developed into a digital media that influences the public's knowledge of political concerns, so demonstrating their capacity to influence dialogues and shape the geopolitical landscape.

4.1.7 Political Memes and Political Discourse

The data supplied shows how respondents' opinions on the influence of political memes on political discourse vary. Of those polled, 24.1% saw the influence of political memes to be beneficial, 17.2% found it to be bad, and 58.6% found themselves ambivalent. Pakistan is a good example of how political memes and speech have gotten increasingly intertwined in recent years. These cartoonish, simplified depictions of political leaders and events can change the way people think about those events and those people in them. Examining pertinent instances from Pakistan and delving into potential repercussions on political discourse are essential for a thorough analysis of this dynamic.

The proliferation of political memes has served a twofold purpose in molding public debate in Pakistan. Memes, on the one hand, have been used to criticize political institutions and spread information. During the 2018 midterm elections, for instance, memes mocking several politicians went popular and sparked debate over their legitimacy and policy platforms. Satirical memes that criticized the influence of the military in politics are another example of how political memes have been used to question power. Citizens have been entertained and engaged by this meme-driven political discussion, which has encouraged them to evaluate political developments critically.

There are risks associated with using political memes. Memes' propensity for simplification can make it harder to have meaningful political discussions. Though they may pique your curiosity at first, they may not give the information you need to fully grasp complex policy issues (Roberts, 2004). Furthermore, these memes reflect the highly polarized nature of Pakistani politics, where information mocking rival parties or people can reinforce existing differences rather than encouraging productive debate.

A respondent reviews is sum up as I was curious as to your thoughts on the role that political memes play in the political debate in Pakistan.

'Well, I think political memes have both positive and harmful effects,' he said. Consider the recent Panama Papers affair. Politicians like Nawaz Sharif, who were embroiled in the scandal, became the subject of popular memes. These memes were effective in drawing attention to the problem, but they also oversimplified the underlying financial complexities.

On the other hand, there were memes that poked fun at the influence of the military in politics. These memes not only exacerbated the divide that already existed, but they also prompted fruitful conversations about power dynamics and the function of institutions. So, I agree that memes might pique people's interest, but we need to watch out that they don't water down serious political debate.

As a result, political memes have clearly altered the tone of debate in Pakistan. Though they can do all those things, they also have the potential to simplify, mislead, and further inflame already-tense tensions. The trick is to use memes not just for laughs, but also to promote thoughtful debate about political issues (Groth, 2019)

4.1.8 Political Memes and Similar Political Beliefs

In the current discussion about the use of memes as tools for shaping political narratives, the question of whether political memes are more likely to be transmitted by people who have the same political ideas is relevant. The fact that 75.9% of respondents share this view is in line with the theory that memes can reveal and shape individuals' political leanings. Memes about politics play a significant role in Pakistan, reflecting the country's diverse public discourse and shaping the country's national narrative.

It's remarkable how well memes in Pakistan can encapsulate political ideas within a cultural and social context. These online forms of expression broaden the audience for political debate and discussion (Groth, 2019). The viral spread of political memes among people who share the same views is evidence of their power to inspire action. Memes offer a lighthearted and easily accessible means to disseminate ideas, comments, and endorsements as political parties in Pakistan compete for public support.

However, this same data-driven comprehension creates a fascinating problem when applied to Pakistan. Although political memes are typically circulated among those who already hold similar views, they can reach a wider audience and provide a platform for dissenting opinions (Groth, 2019). In Pakistan's convoluted political climate, memes have a dual purpose: they assist rally supporters for one side or the other inside their ideological communities, and they provide light on the contrasting viewpoints held by those communities. The data illustrates the persuasive character of commonly held beliefs, demonstrating the dual role that memes play in shaping and reflecting public opinion in Pakistan.

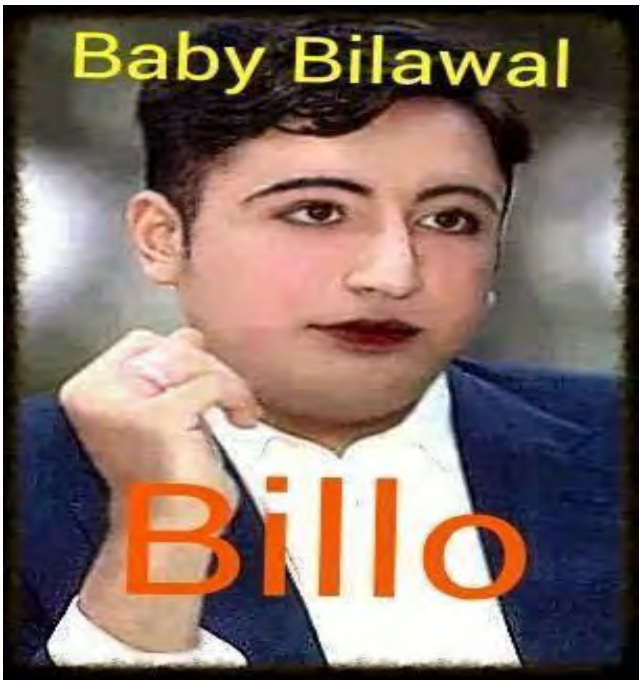
4.1.9 Political Memes and Young Audience

The capacity of political memes to captivate viewers of all ages is intrinsically tied to the concept of narrative building. Political memes are powerful instruments in the online storytelling arsenal. Memes can construct narratives that are relevant to specific subgroups of people, and the fact that 65.5% of respondents thought political memes are better at reaching a younger audience is evidence of this.

Memes, she said, are terrific for attracting her attention and sparking dialogues with others who share her views. This lines up with the narrative-building method used to engage and mobilize young people, and with data showing that memes are more influential among this demographic than any other.

Memes are more than just pictures of funny things; they also have meaningful messages that are picked up by the people who see them. Their success with younger audiences is indicative of a broader trend towards greater online media consumption among people born in the digital age. From this, we might infer that memes are a potent medium for telling stories that reflect the beliefs and concerns of today's young. Political narratives may focus on issues and perspectives that resonate with this demographic to frame debates in a way that wins over voters.

Billo Rani Meme and Family Legacy Narrative



Source: Facebook

The meme depicts a made-up, feminized version of Pakistani politician Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. This depiction is set against the well-known, catchy phrase "Billo Rani," which is both playful and humorous.

The "Billo Rani" meme is influential because it simplifies difficult political ideas and presents them in a way that appeals to young people. The meme successfully crafted a narrative that drew into the familiarity of the song and the Bhutto family's reputation among young Pakistanis, who are often well-versed in pop culture references. By making this connection, the meme got young people thinking about political dynasties in a way that spoke to their interests and worldview.

A respondent explains that *Yh meme hamara lia joke that mgr isna hmy siyasat k bara ma b btya ha or shd hi hmny socha hu k mems hmy siyast ka st zyda relatable or kam sanjeeda bnata ha*

Translation: it was funny, but it also prompted some interesting new interpretations of past events. Who knew memes could lighten the mood and humanise the world of politics

Tabdeeli Meme and Promise of Change Narrative

Source: Newspaper

This image illustrates how the "*Tabdeeli aa gayi hai*[1]*"* meme appeals to its target demographic of young people by playing on their hopes for a more prosperous Pakistan.

[1] *Tabdeeli aa gayi hai :* Change has come

The narrative of a political transition is complex, but the before-and-after format condenses everything into a single, visually compelling image. This chimes with the youth expectation that political leaders can effect positive change and improvement. Thus, the transformational story of the meme merges with the hopes of the youth of today.

4.1.10 In response, one person said,

Yh Tabdeeli agi ha ik slogan ha or mujy yh hamesha tabdeli ki soch deta h mgr ab ma sochti hu ka waqai ma tabdeli ky thi or yah b funny bt ha kay h kse mujy sochna ma majbor krti ha.

The phrase "Tabdeeli aa gayi hai"? A catchphrase for a fresh start, if you will. It was seeing Imran Khan with it that got me thinking seriously about the need for a shift in perspective. The meme went viral, but it prompted a discussion about the meaning of the term "tabdeeli" and whether or not it is actually occurring.It ishilarious how memes can prompt deep thought.

Chaiwala Meme and Unconventional Leadership Narrative

Scores Instagram

The "Chaiwala" meme, which began with a photo of Islamabad tea vendor Arshad Khan, reflects the possibility that unexpected individuals, like Khan, can break into the political scene, challenging traditional notions of leadership and stimulating discussions about representation and the role of unconventional figures. The "Chaiwala" meme is popular among young people because it challenges canonical accounts of authoritative figureheads. The meme appeals to the hopes of young Pakistanis who are open to new ideas and seeking change by making the absurd suggestion that leaders can come from anywhere. This story gives young people a sense of agency and encourages them to challenge their own assumptions about who can lead and make a difference in politics.

These examples show how political memes have been used effectively by young people in Pakistan to build narratives and exert influence. Memes like these use accessible content and cultural allusions to both reinforce established narratives and inspire and develop new narratives that are in line with the hopes and values of today's youth (Bielig et al., 2022).

Memes' style and vocabulary also facilitate the quick spread of ideas, resulting in a shared narrative that resonates across communities. However, it is not simple to guarantee that these narratives are instructive, balanced, and conducive to fruitful discussion. While political memes can influence narratives, it is vital to keep in mind that they may oversimplify contentious issues. The dynamic relationship between meme efficacy and narrative construction across age groups demonstrates the significance that memes play in generating political communication tactics. Memes were offered by respondents during interviews, providing insight into how the phenomenon constructs narratives and revitalises today's youth (Bielig et al., 2022)

4.1.11 Meme Power in Influencing Political Outcomes

Based on the results of the questionnaire, it seems that a substantial percentage of people (58.6%) hold the opinion that political memes can have an effect on political outcomes. In line with the growing body of research showing that memes may shape public opinion and political behavior, this makes sense. But a significant portion (27.6%) remains skeptical, maybe out of concern that humor could trivialize serious issues or that memes are created without any form of moderation.

Through an analysis of the intersection between online culture and political participation, I inquire as to whether or not political memes can influence electoral outcomes. Interestingly, while 58% of respondents agree that political memes may affect election outcomes, only 276% of respondents disagree. This disagreement is illustrative of the larger argument about how the internet has altered political discourse and the capacity to mobilize public opinion. Furthermore, this incongruity illustrates the ongoing battle between the humor and accessibility of memes as tools for political engagement and the skepticism coming from the sometimes-shallow themes they convey (Pidkuĭmukha & Kiss, 2020).

According to young Pakistani girl named Amina who says that,

She went on to say that Memes are the secret to understanding the current generation and how to communicate with them. When one person's Facebook feed is flooded with a single meme, everyone on the Internet chimes in with a collective

"*Han, yeh ahem hai!" To be honest, if you want to know if that hansi mazak is any good, you have to ask me if my awaz uthane ka tareeqa is any good.*

Translation: Yes, this is important!" To be honest, if you want to assess the quality of that laughter and jest, you need to inquire whether my way of raising my voice is effective.

This outlook is in line with "slacktivism" or "clicktivism," movements in which people engage in meaningless internet activities (such as sharing memes) to show their support for larger causes. Although the easy spread of memes may not necessarily result in concrete political change, it does provide an outlet for expression and a stage for

individuals in the public sphere. The comment's focus on the importance of hearing and being recognised is in line with the anthropological understanding of language's role in the formation of personas and affiliations.

This is especially true given the role that social media has played in political mobilisation in Pakistan. In Pakistan, memes have been used extensively in political campaigns and movements to disseminate information, criticize policies, and parody politicians and their administrations. The capacity of memes to make usually important subjects look humorous has made them popular among viewers, especially among young people who might not otherwise be interested in politics. The impact memes can have on public opinion and debate calls for careful analysis, but they are a terrific conversation starter anyway.

Studies show that memes are multifaceted, serving as both mobilizing tools and sources of misinformation. Memes are cultural artefacts that successfully catch the zeitgeist by appealing to their intended audiences through humor and satire. Politicians use them to convey their messages to the public by tapping into common experiences and emotions. Memes were used to Ridicule the results of certain policies, highlight problematic societal issues, and criticize politicians in Pakistan's general election of 2018. Consistent with the findings of a study by Alhabash et al., (2017) who concluded that political memes offer a means for young people to get involved in politics and express their political beliefs, this is an example of how memes may be used to further political discourse.

Skepticism of data, on the other hand, is in line with the concerns of academics like Lim (2022), who thinks that memes, despite being potent vehicles for mobilisation, can also build echo chambers and reinforce established ideas, leading to polarization. As a

reminder to situate debates on political memes in a broader sociocultural framework, anthropology can be useful. Given that memes can function as both empowering tools and vectors of misinformation, this seeming contradiction is emblematic of the complex fabric of digital speech, which merits ongoing anthropological research.

4.1.12 Unmasking Anonymity: The Impact of Internet Meme Anonymity on Accountability

This study's data reveals how responders to a question concerning the effect of internet meme anonymity on the responsibility of writers and sharers responded. About a third (n=31) of the sample group believes anonymity lessens accountability, whereas nearly half (n=48) find no difference. Insights into the complex interplay between meme creation, virality, and online anonymity are provided by this study.

This study uses information from Pakistan to show how anonymity in online memes can have far-reaching negative consequences. Anthropologists claim that the risk associated with voicing disapproval in public contributes to anonymity's allure. The ability to remain anonymous online can facilitate both open discussion and critical analysis of political issues, but it can also facilitate the dissemination of misinformation and hate speech. Anonymity's dual ability to strengthen and decrease accountability calls to mind sociologist Arjun Appadurai's "cultural apparatuses" theory for the production of contemporary ideas (1996).

Insights from the academic literature on the triangle of anonymity, memes, and accountability deepen our understanding of these topics. The revolutionary potential of online interactions is highlighted in the scholarly writings of Gabriella Coleman and Jenna

Burrell, two of the leading scholars in the field of digital cultures. Coleman's study of the Anonymous online activist group ("Coding Freedom," 2012) demonstrates how anonymity facilitates collective mobilization, often spurred by ethical concerns. Studying the impact of technical access on digital involvement, Burrell's "Invisible Users" gives a prism through which to comprehend the varying concepts of accountability in Pakistani meme culture. Anthropological studies can illuminate the complex dynamics of anonymity and its consequences on accountability, and memes continue to be an effective means of political expression.

4.1.13 Misleading and Inaccurate Political Memes

Data showing that the vast majority of respondents (75.9%) had seen incorrect or erroneous political memes highlights the potential issues in the realm of digital political communication. There is a growing corpus of research that supports this conclusion, demonstrating the peril of spreading misinformation online. Memes are a powerful tool for spreading misinformation and influencing public opinion because of their viral nature and ease of distribution. This demonstrates the need of teaching individuals to critically analyze the information they find online through media literacy education in developing an informed and discerning digital citizenry.

The prevalence of false memes is an anthropological reflection of the fluidity and complexity of cultural contexts. Academics like Danah Boyd have devoted a lot of time and energy to studying "echo chambers," situations in which people only see or hear things that reinforce their own prejudices, as a result of the widespread usage of digital platforms. This can aid in the dissemination of misinformation and the promotion of ideological strife. When viewed through this lens, memes are consistent with anthropological evaluations of

online spaces as potential places for social reproduction, where preconceived notions and biases can fester and propagate.

Another commenter expresses concern over "the proliferation of false memes and the power of memes to influence people's thoughts and opinions." Anthropological research on the cultural and sociological effects of new kinds of electronic communication has found this to be true (Jones et al., 2023). Memes that transmit inaccurate or misleading information widely raise ethical questions for those who create and consume content for the internet. This discovery highlights the pressing need for platforms to develop detection and prevention capabilities for disinformation. Anthropology contributes to this discussion by exploring the intricate web of links between digital media, cultural practices, and the memetic construction of reality.

4.1.14 Memes appealing Emotions, and Logic

Examining how memes are used as tools to shape political narratives naturally includes a discussion of whether or not political memes appeal more to emotions or logic. Memes have the potential to integrate both emotional triggers and logical aspects within a single image-text composition due to their condensed and visually compelling nature. Because of their dual nature, they are able to contribute significantly to the development and transmission of political narratives.

The fact that memes are being used to influence political narratives is more evidence of the merging of cultural expression and electronic communication. Memes' combination of emotional resonance and logical coherence is reflective of the ways in which societies have traditionally communicated epic tales. As a result of the emotional appeal of memes, people are more likely to discuss serious political topics openly and in

depth. According to anthropological theory, cultural symbols and forms like memes serve as vehicles for meaning-making and social and political discourse.

When investigating the role of memes in forming political narratives, It is useful to think about how various memes manage to appeal to both emotions and reason. Emotionally charged memes can serve as powerful story frames because of the universal feelings they provoke. Conversely, memes that use rational reasoning help spread evidence for a certain point of view, which in turn strengthens that narrative. One example is the use of memes in political campaigns, where one type of meme can address policy concerns while another type might appeal to people's emotions (such as amusement or empathy) through depictions of common situations. Comprehensive political narratives that can affect public perception and conversation benefit from this blend of emotional appeal and logical argumentation.

Memes' ability to influence political narratives by appealing to opposing sensibilities exemplifies the interconnectivity of digital culture, communication methods, and cultural anthropology. Since the advent of the information age, anthropologists have been interested in learning how traditional means of cultural expression have adapted to the proliferation of new media.

4.1.15 Memes Affecting Critical Thinking

The complex character of these digital artefacts is explored in the debate over political memes' influence on citizens' ability to think critically and analytically. The table's data displays a range of perspectives. A majority of respondents (51.7%) agree that political memes help people think more critically and analytically. One possible explanation for this view is that people are more likely to examine and reconsider political narratives after

being exposed to the brief and frequently hilarious comments found in memes. By deftly contrasting seemingly incompatible concepts or drawing attention to contradictions in political discourse, memes can pique interest and prompt in-depth thought.

However, 24.1% of respondents are worried that exposure to political memes may lead to a decline in analytical thinking. This perspective highlights a potential drawback of meme culture, in which intricate political topics are simplified into soundbites that are easy to understand but may overlook important nuances. Memes that rely on humor or exaggeration risk being distracting from serious discussion since they draw too much attention to themselves. While memes can certainly provoke some reflection, they also run the risk of encouraging only superficial participation with political issues.

The many different perspectives on this issue highlight the complex interplay between digital culture and mental operations. It is important to keep in mind that political memes have different effects in different situations, depending on things like the exact meme, the target audience, and the prevailing cultural and political climate. A meme that pokes fun at a policy choice, for instance, could encourage people to learn more about the topic, which would improve their critical thinking. On the other hand, a sensationalist meme may impede analytical rigor by presenting a problem in an oversimplified or exaggerated fashion (Wu & Fitzgerald, 2023).

Anthropological research should be used to learn more about the dynamics of meme consumption in various cultural settings. Anthropologists can get insight into the manner in which political memes impact public discourse and cognitive involvement by studying the reactions of various demographics to these digital artefacts. Understanding when and why political memes encourage or discourage critical thinking and analysis requires an

examination that goes beyond broad assumptions. Meme makers and users alike can benefit from this insight into the cultural phenomenon's place in today's political discourse.

4.1.16 Voter Suppression and Manipulation through Memes

The dispute over whether political memes can be used to restrict or influence voters centers on the complex link between technology, politics, and public discourse. The very nature of memes—their rapid spread and ability to evoke strong feelings—raises this concern. These traits could be exploited in political campaigns to sway voters through the dissemination of false information and the exploitation of social divisions. Memes, with their ability to arouse strong emotions, could be used to deliberately alienate or sway voters. Fact-checking mechanisms and media literacy in the digital age are crucial to maintaining trustworthiness in political discourse.

Through an anthropological lens, this debate reveals the fundamental power dynamics in our modes of interaction. Memes are current cultural symbols with the potential to spread established social narratives and biases. They have a deeper impact on their listeners because of their relatability and general applicability. Meme-based voter manipulation and suppression can be understood as a contemporary expression of time-honored social processes such as the development of identities and the forming of social groups. Memes being used to influence elections are only the latest example of cultural dynamics that anthropologists have long noted have a major impact on social norms, habits, and power structures.

Using political memes as tools for voter suppression or manipulation raises serious ethical questions that further underscore the dichotomy between free speech and responsible communication. Memes allow for clever political critique and satire, with the border

between the two sometimes blurry. Due to a lack of accountability and traceability, the creation and spread of memes might exacerbate this issue. As digital anthropology investigates emerging modes of communication, it becomes ever more vital to comprehend the cultural, social, and political aspects of digital technologies. Because of the intersection of technology, culture, and the robustness of our democratic institutions, political memes have the potential to be exploited as instruments for voter suppression or manipulation.

The vast range of reactions is indicative of the nuanced relationship between political memes and the larger narrative-building process that characterizes political discourse. These differing points of view illustrate the multifaceted nature of the public's reaction to memes and the digital space's capacity to accommodate both emotion and reason. The argument over whether or not memes improve critical thinking is a reflection of the nuanced nature of memetic influence. While some welcome the lighter approach memes take to serious political matters, others worry that this will just serve to further trivialize them. This contrast encourages anthropological study of how modern cultural symbols navigate the tension between superficiality and relevance in the information age. The issue about anonymity in the context of meme development and distribution sheds light on a crucial aspect of digital ethnography.

Besides, the tension between free speech and personal responsibility raises questions about online participation's ethical obligations, echoing broader discussions about digital culture. Due to the anonymity of the internet, issues regarding the nature of authority, trustworthiness, and trust are needed in light of the prevalence of incorrect information. Anthropologists like Gabriella Coleman provide helpful frameworks for understanding the complex interplay of online identity, anonymity, and power. In essence,

these concepts align well with the anthropological aim of understanding how memes function as tools for shaping narratives in the digital era, shedding light on the intricate interplay between tradition, innovation, and social and political change.

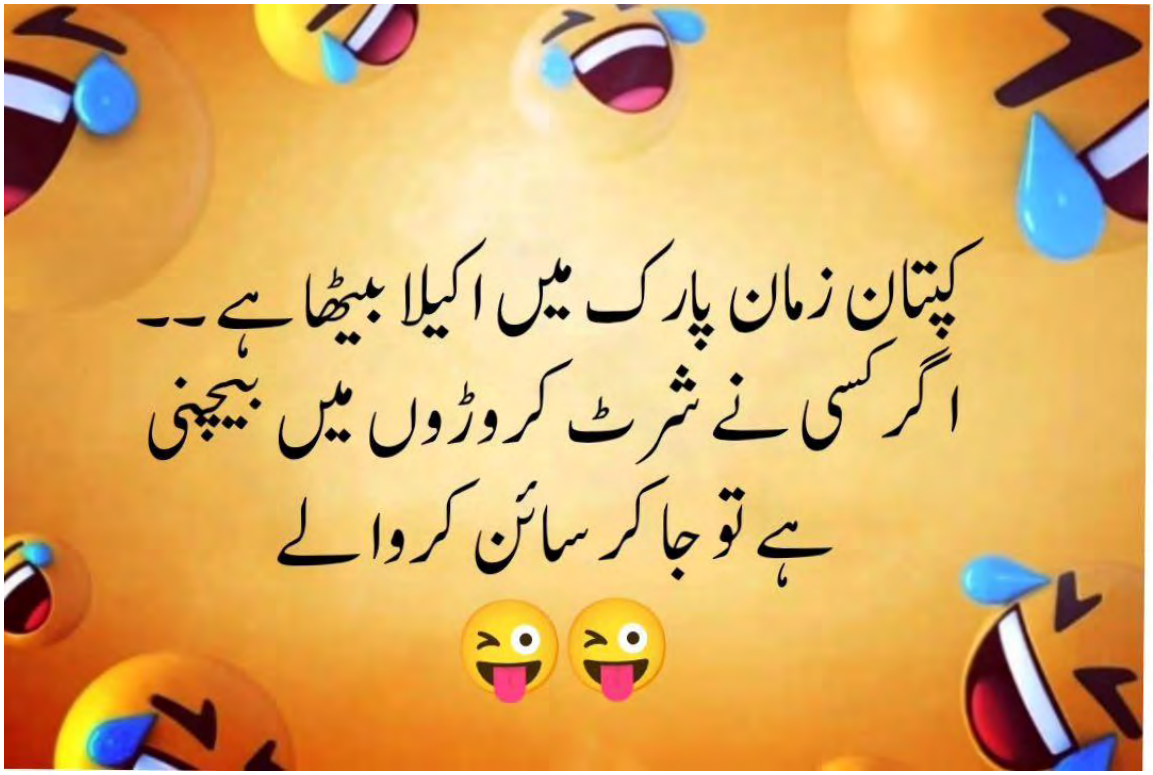
Decoding Political Memes: A Content Analysis

Political memes are effective tools for influencing public discourse and political narratives, and they have emerged in the ever-changing world of digital communication. The influence of political memes on the public's perception of political people, beliefs, and issues is growing as social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram play a

larger role in political involvement. Instagram accounts like "Meme of Pakistan," "Pak Political Memes," and "Pakistan in Memes" as well as popular Facebook sites like "Sayasi Memes," "NOON Memes," and "Pakistan Political Memes" have been searched for material. In this section, I analyze the substance of political memes in Pakistan, focusing on those pertaining to the three major parties there: the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

Memes with political messages condense complex ideas into a form that can be easily consumed and shared across social media platforms. Because of their universal appeal, memes may effectively convey political messages even across linguistic and cultural divides. The purpose of this investigation is to shed light on the nature, content, and online reception of political memes related to the three major American political parties.

The process followed in this chapter to select and analyze political memes is described. Twenty memes, representative of the range of online discussion about PML-N, PTI, and PPP, were randomly selected from Facebook and Instagram. Meme popularity, as measured by such factors as likes, comments, and shares, is also offered as a criterion for determining which memes have achieved widespread acceptance. The purpose of this research is to improve our understanding of the relationship between digital media and political communication in Pakistan by analyzing the information posted by Pakistan's most important political parties.



Category	**Code**	**Description**
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Target audience	Political party opponents	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of humor	No	The meme does not use humor to convey its message.

Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Use of text	No	The meme does not use text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Facebook	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Widespread	The meme has been widely shared.

This table provides a concise summary of the literature on a politically charged internet meme that has been exploited to smear the PTI political party and the general people. The meme's aim is to disseminate a negative political message, but it does it in a satirical and humorous way. The meme effectively employs comedy as a form of communication by making use of a wide variety of comedic tropes. An integral part of connecting with the intended audience is through the use of text within the meme itself. The meme, which originated on Facebook, has spread globally because to the interconnectivity provided by many social media platforms. We can gain a more nuanced understanding of the meme's impact and importance within the political discourse if we look into its background and how it spread, as well as its target demographic, political message, tone, humorous content, and text.

The meme's depiction of a solitary Imran Khan could be interpreted as a jab at the politician's introversion. It could be a symptom of the responsibilities of leadership, or it could be a reflection of how others see him as disconnected from them. The suggestion that Imran Khan would sign a jersey as an endorsement is not without merit. This could be taken as a metaphor for his propensity to waste time on activities that are pleasant but

ultimately unimportant in comparison to his political responsibilities. The sale of an Imran Khan autographed T-shirt is used in the meme to poke fun at the seriousness of the matter. This could be interpreted as a comment on our fascination with famous people and the exaggerated value we assign to their possessions. The meme may be a rebuke of the notion that public service should be the first priority for elected officials. It casts doubt on the efficacy of such actions and suggests that the emphasis on merchandise could deflect from more pressing political issues. The meme accurately depicts the social climate in Pakistan, where the people and media constantly analyse and comment on the actions of the country's leaders. When analysed from an anthropological perspective, this meme prompts inquiries into such topics as the public's role in governance, the influence of celebrities, and the media's impact on public opinion. It's humorous, but it also conveys an important message about the constraints politicians face and the social dynamics that shape the choices they make. The responses to these memes are both clever and entertaining. Have a look at the comment written below

The language of this remark appears to be Urdu. An examination of the comment's contents follows:

Ek Youthia Hijam ki dukhan pa gya cutting krwana nayi na remote to hath lgya to youthia ghabra ka bola ka yar khabran na layen

In context, the message seems to describe a comedic scene in which a young client at a barbershop feels anxious after the barber accidentally touches a remote control and pleads that no bad news be conveyed. This seems like an anecdote or joke about a crazy experience at the barbershop. Interesting further comment includes

Bar bra khatab krana ki khawaish rakhny wala hazrat rabta kren jald ez jald zaman park phnchien or apna kaptan ka faida uthya

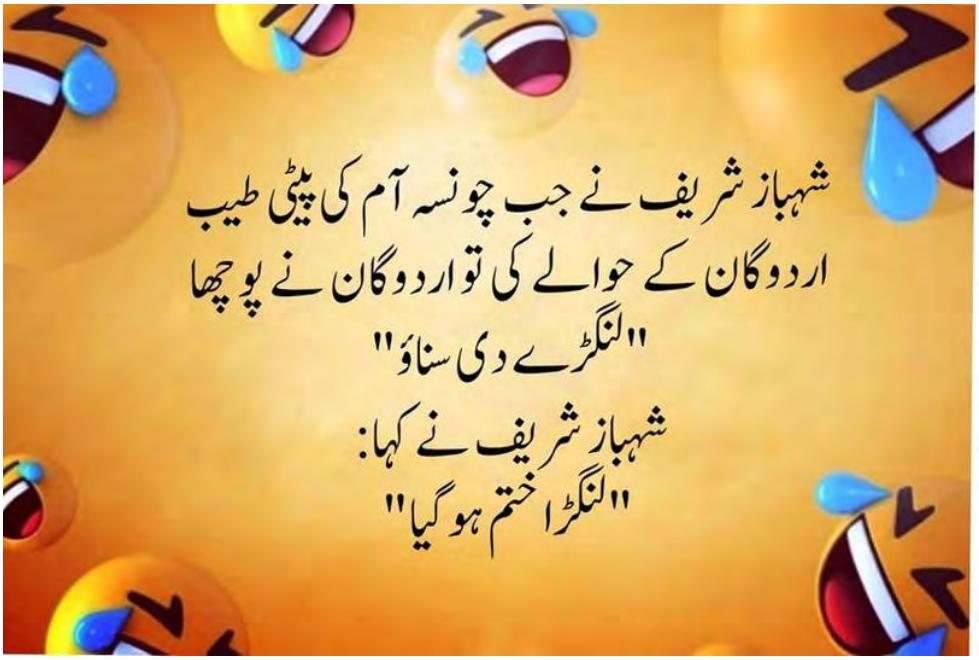
This picture appears with a comment that seems to be an appeal to people who have a strong need to get in touch with or interact with a specific person on a regular basis, inviting them to come to Zaman Park in Lahore to take advantage of their captain. However, this captain and his or her duties remain unknown. This Facebook comment elaborates on how PMLN supporters are mocking Imran khan in the article linked above. They're going for the effect that he's completely isolated, with nobody around to hear him speak, and inviting anyone who wants to join him. The remark has been passed along to the chair and table that Imran khan utilized during his public conversation.

Category	**Code**	**Description**
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Target audience	Political party opponents	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Political message	Positive	The meme has a positive message about a political party or candidate.
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.

Use of images	Yes	The meme uses images to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Facebook	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Widespread	The meme has been widely shared.

The table below presents an in-depth analysis of a particular meme, shedding light on its various dimensions and the intricate interplay between online speech and social context. Through an anthropological lens, this study examines the meme's significance as a cultural artefact, shedding light on the myriad ways in which it both reflects and affects the intricate web of social interactions, identity constructions, and political allegiances that defines life in the digital age.The meme, which originated on Facebook, perfectly illustrates the malleability of today's interconnected digital world. The fact that it has spread so far across several platforms since then suggests that it has resonated with the online community and is being used as a platform for a common sociopolitical discourse. This meme is digital folklore from an anthropological point of view since it encapsulates the wisdom and humour of a specific subculture. In this meme, "youthia" is used to mock Imran Khan's most ardent supporters. Followers. Although this slang phrase may be foreign to many from outside the culture, it is a powerful symbol of not only political identity but also social identity and principles. The meme's humour and satire harken back to the tradition of folk humour, in which wit was used as a tool for social criticism and as a means for individuals to better understand and discuss complex social and political issues within

their communities.The meme also serves as a cultural barometer, expressing public sentiment on the quality of political leadership and the results achieved by the government. Google is shown as a broomstick, impeding the "Youthia's" pursuit of meaningful endeavours in a funny way that goes beyond words and into the realm of visual semiotics. This visual symbolism within the meme contains anthropological evaluations of symbolism and iconography, and it serves as an example of how visuals within memes can encapsulate complicated narratives in a single frame. In addition, as part of an anthropological inquiry, the research can provide more insight into how this meme is disseminated, received, and adapted by various online communities. By following this meme's journey across platforms, identifying the comments, discussions, and remixes it creates, and positioning it within broader digital culture, anthropologists can get insight into the role that digital artefacts like this play in the construction of virtual identities and shared cultural narratives. Finally, inside this anthropological framework, the meme evolves into a microcosm, reflecting the intricacies of modern social discourse and shedding light on the interplay between culture, politics, and digital expression.

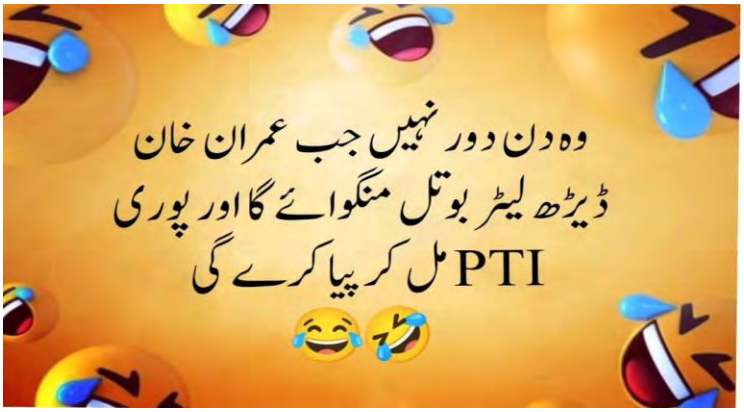


Category	**Code**	**Description**
Target audience	Political party opponents	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of images	No	The meme does not use images to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.

Source of the meme	Instagram	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Widespread	The meme has been widely shared.

The information in the table demonstrates that the contentious meme in question is a form of political satire that targets members of the opposing political party. Being text-based rather than image-based, having its origins on Instagram, and having widespread distribution all contribute to its potential impact and reach among the target population. The meme shows a mock dialogue between Shehbaz Sharif and Tayyip Erdogan, in which the two leaders' names and puns on mango-related terms (such as "chaunsa aam") play a central role. Shehbaz Sharif and Tayyip Erdogan are having a talk about mangoes when Erdogan makes a joke about a specific type of mango called "langra," which can also mean a crippled or limping person. Shehbaz Sharif responds with a humorous quip on the demise of the "langra" mango.Shehbaz Sharif and Tayyip Erdogan appear to be the targets of ridicule in this meme's mock conversation. Mangoes (chaunsa aam) and the politicians' last names are used in a pun. The anthropological perspective reveals this meme to be a form of political satire unique to the internet age, complete with linguistic humor and cultural allusions. The conversation's wordplay and nuanced meaning shifts accurately depict the complexity of political argument. The meme's linguistic foundations highlight the significance of setting and connotation in comedic and interpretive endeavors. To what extent the language employed in memes facilitates the creation of identities and the negotiation of power hierarchies, anthropologists like Susan Gal, who have examined the

relationship between language and identity, may be able to throw light on this question. The meme also reflects the value of social media platforms like Instagram as spaces for political debate and cultural analysis. Memes like these aid in the dissemination of cultural and political ideas; scholars who study online activism and the formation of virtual communities, like Gabriella Coleman, could offer light on this phenomenon. By illuminating the relevance of hidden meanings and circumstances in seemingly innocuous exchanges, anthropological research enhances our understanding of digital culture and political discourse, as demonstrated by this meme.



Category	**Code**	**Description**
Target audience	Political party opponents	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.

Tone	Serious	The meme is serious in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of images	Yes	The meme uses images to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Social media	The meme originated on social media.
Source of the meme	Unknown	The source of the meme is unknown.
Spread of the meme	Widespread	The meme has been widely shared.
Spread of the meme	Limited	The meme has been shared to a limited extent.

The table summarises the numerous classifications, arranging the most prominent characteristics of the studied memes. The meme's target audience (here, the political party's opponents), the meme's political message (typically an attack on the targeted party or candidate), the meme's tone (which can be humorous, serious, or satirical), the meme's use of humour, images, and text to convey its message, the meme's original source (whether social media, traditional media, or elsewhere), and so on are all included.The following table provides a thorough analysis of this meme, including its political context, underlying humour, intended recipients, and mode of dissemination. The

meme immortalises a satirical remark that one day Imran Khan will order a liter-sized bottle for the entire Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to share. This looks to be a satirical idea making light of PTI's very small fan base by saying that its adherents might fit around a single bottle.Understanding the power of satire in public policy debate requires understanding the anthropological setting in which the meme operates. In this case, it serves as a forum for the heated political discussion taking place between supporters of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN) and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The anthropological perspective of humour as social critique is used here to illustrate the complex interplay of individual and social identities and ideologies with various forms of authority. Mary Douglas, an eminent anthropologist who has studied the use of symbols in society, explains how humour can be used as a tool for social criticism.The PMLN supporters in the meme are all seen together at a political or social gathering, and thus shows the cooperative nature of current political participation captured in a concrete digital artefact. Anthropologists like Brian Moeran, who examine the dynamics of ritual and performance in daily life, can help us understand how these digital interactions reflect and shape collective identities in the digital age. How this meme is a microcosm of bigger social and political issues, and how its meaning may shift across populations, is explained by anthropologists in light of the present political climate and online discussions. The anthropological context of an apparently harmless humorous term reveals its richness in cultural symbols, power dynamics, and group identities.

Category	**Code**	**Description**
Target audience	Political party opponents	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.
Tone	Serious	The meme is serious in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.

Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Use of text	No	The meme does not use text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Facebook	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Limited	The meme has been shared to a limited extent.

An in-depth analysis of a meme designed to mock those who don't support the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party. The audience is kept interested in the meme despite its awful political message because of its mixture of humour, seriousness, and sarcasm. The meme originated on Facebook, where it has been widely distributed to a lesser extent. In an effort to reach people of all political stripes, the meme mixes humour with a serious message. The meme's emphasis on visuals is striking, but so is the way in which it uses both humour and seriousness to drive home its point. The fact that it originated on Facebook gives an idea of its reach, but the low levels of sharing suggest that its impact may be restricted. However, the meme's continued relevance in political discourse in the modern digital era can be seen in its ability to spark discussions and debates concerning the criticised political party or candidate.

The meme parodies a news story about an incident in Faisalabad in which an unidentified person dropped off a PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) ticket and then vanished. This item has anthropological value as a digital artefact that illustrates the transformation of political discourse in the Internet age. Commenting on contemporary political events and persons

through satire and humour, it highlights the overlapping nature of politics, technology, and the arts. The anthropological significance of memes as a form of contemporary cultural expression and political critique is illustrated by this meme. The sudden disappearance of a voter after casting a ballot provides satirical commentary on the seeming inconsistencies and mysteries of political activity. The meme, when evaluated via an anthropological lens, demonstrates how online groups employ humour and satire to navigate complex political terrain and disseminate social and political concerns.

The comments section adds a new dimension to anthropological research since it shows how people's involvement in online interactions gives them a say in bigger social and political discussions. Such comments foster the development of online groups wherein individuals unite over commonality of view and carry on dialogues beyond geographic borders, as demonstrated by the work of anthropologist Jan Blommaert on online discourse communities, which may be illuminating here. Cultural anthropologists like Paul Manning, who study the role of irony in political and social contexts, can help us understand how irony and exaggeration in the meme create space for critical thought. The intersection of humour, satire, and internet communication in a social-political context presents an intriguing opportunity for anthropological inquiry into the evolving dynamics of political expression and identity negotiation in the digital age.

Category	**Code**	**Description**
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Target audience	Political party opponents	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.
Tone	Serious	The meme is serious in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.

Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of images	Yes	The meme uses images to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Facebook	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Widespread	The meme has been widely shared.

The table provides a detailed analysis of the most salient features of the meme under consideration. It compiles data to create a comprehensive picture of the characteristics of the meme. The categories include both the general population and members of opposing political parties, indicating that the meme has widespread appeal. The meme's ability to switch between humorous, serious, and satirical tones is key to its success in conveying its negative political message. It uses wit in both the written and visual forms to keep things light and interesting. Crediting Facebook as the source of the meme draws attention to the fact that it originated on the most widely used social networking platform. The meme's quick spread over the internet is evidence of its success and widespread acceptance. This in-depth investigation of the many identifying aspects of the meme may help us understand its genesis and dissemination, its intended audience, its political message, tone, humour, graphics, and text."Don't break my heart," "Mujy chor k na ja," and other variations of this refrain are often attributed to Imran Khan, the current Prime Minister of Pakistan and a significant political figure. According to the

information presented, these sentences portray Imran Khan pleading with members of his party or his opponents not to betray his confidence or desert him. This statement, which reflects the emotional and relational dynamics inherent in political leadership, might be read as a call for loyalty and support. The meme that mocks these sentences capitalises on their emotive power by pointing out the irony of the statement's seriousness in light of its context. The meme may be making fun of the idea that political officials are vulnerable or overly emotional by attributing the emotional phrases to Imran Khan in a sarcastic way. This meme serves as an example of the anthropological principle that cultural and emotional elements can be recycled for humour and satire when removed from their original context. Memes use familiar cultural references to communicate nuanced ideas, reflecting the role they play in changing and managing public discourse and opinion. Anthropologically speaking, this meme is illustrative of how political discourse, cultural symbols, and internet-age humour interact. It demonstrates how people interact with politicians on a personal level, not just in terms of their policies or leadership. It also fits in with anthropological analyses of how digital spaces have emerged as places for humour, critique, and community building in contrast to more traditional forms of political communication. The meme's use of emotional language in a satirical setting is illustrative of how internet culture has made it possible for people to playfully engage with power structures and symbols, capturing the wit and satire that characterise contemporary political discourse.

Category	**Code**	**Description**
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Target audience	Political party opponents (PTI)	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Facebook	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Widespread	The meme has been shared widespread

The target audience for the examined meme is broad, and it is designed to win over a huge number of individuals. The target audience is also obvious: Pakistan People's Party (PTI) opponents. The political message conveyed by the meme is one of disapproval or hostility towards the political group or individual being lampooned. The meme is ironic and sarcastic, and its argument is driven home through humour. In order to convince people to pay attention to the meme, it uses humour skillfully throughout. The language used in the meme's message undoubtedly plays a significant impact in conveying the meme's meaning. Because the meme started on Facebook and then expanded to other social media and internet platforms, its vast circulation is indicative of its popularity and reach.

Imran Khan's now-viral meme, "Ab apna ghabrana nahi hai kyunke ab main PM nahi hoon," which translates to "There is no reason to fear now that I am no longer the Prime Minister," captures a historic shift in political power and begs to be studied from an anthropological perspective. Memes, like the rise and fall of Imran Khan's popularity, encapsulate a short moment in time that highlights the complexities of leadership, authority, and public image.

Anthropologists have used this meme as an example of how cultural symbols like political statements may be taken and distributed to convey social commentary and humour. The performative nature of this meme can be better understood via the lens of Erving Goffman's dramaturgical theory of social interaction. The meme takes Imran Khan's political statement and turns it into a joke. This parallels Goffman's theory that individuals shape others' perceptions of them by strategic use of their presentation in social encounters. The "thick description" proposed by Clifford Geertz is another tool

that can be used to decode the meme's multiple meanings. Underneath the meme's amusing surface, however, lies an accurate depiction of the complex political terrain and shifting ideas of authority in modern society.

Additionally, the focus on sensory ethnography by Sarah Pink provides a lens through which to analyse the emotions elicited by this meme. The success and widespread adoption of the meme can be ascribed to the positive feelings that its humour and sarcasm inspire. This is in line with Pink's emphasis on the need of understanding the emotional context of both sending and receiving messages. The meme's widespread spread across social media platforms is consistent with studies of online communities and user engagement conducted by Michael Wesch. It's a representation of how the internet as a whole functions as a community where individuals can freely exchange jokes and constructive criticism. This meme has great anthropological importance as a cultural artefact that captures the transformation of political discussion into humorous and digestible content. It exemplifies the connection between power, identity, and comedy in the internet arena, and it also reflects how individuals learn about political players and their responsibilities. Consider the transformation of the meme from political statement to digital meme as an illustration of the ways in which cultural symbols are appropriated,

altered, and disseminated to reflect sophisticated socio-political concepts.

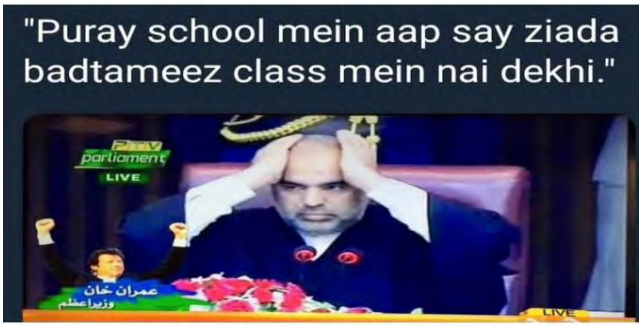
Category	**Code**	**Description**
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Target audience	PTI	The meme is targeted to all PTI
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.

Source of the meme	Facebook	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Widespread	The meme has been shared to a limited extent

The above table provides an analysis of a meme that was shared online and directed at members of the PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) political party and the general public in Pakistan. The meme has a dark political undercurrent that is conveyed with sarcasm and irony. The wording and humour work together to convey the point. Despite its initial success on Facebook, the meme's spread has been much lower than anticipated. Below is a table that summarises the meme's most important characteristics, including its target demographic, political message, tone, comedic and literary features, original source, and virality. This meme makes a cultural reference to comment on Imran Khan's symbolic imprisonment. The meme fuses political satire with popular culture to form a group with a common viewpoint.The described memes use a scene from a Bollywood film to poke fun of Imran Khan's detention. This meme uses a cultural cliche that is instantly recognisable to its audience in order to make a political statement, making it an excellent illustration of the intersection of popular culture and politics. Cultural symbols and practises in a culture are often studied by anthropologists because of the political messages they carry. The anthropological theory of "imagined communities" by Benedict Anderson is applicable here. Those who have seen the same Bollywood movie can relate to one another on a deeper level thanks to this trend. Meme fans often connect over their mutual love of the trend, which often features biting political commentary. People's

political identities are strengthened by this meme, too. It speaks to the predisposed, whether they be for or against Imran Khan's detention. When people share the meme or respond to it, they are expressing their views.

Meme sharing is a form of political participation that can make individuals feel closer to one another. In addition to enjoying the meme for its comedic value, its viewers may also identify with its underlying cynicism and criticism of authority officials and the justice system. The meaning of the meme varies depending on the person and the society. Cultural symbols can have different meanings and emotional impacts in different cultures, as anthropologists like Arjun Appadurai have studied. The reader's political leanings, cultural background, and familiarity with the Bollywood reference all influence how they interpret this meme. This meme exemplifies the convergence of culture and politics since it invites participants to engage with a shared cultural icon in order to voice their views on a political topic. It's a form of political expression that brings together its satirists and listeners by highlighting the connections between the entertainment industry and public policy.



Category	Code	Description
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Target audience	All parties	The meme is targeted to all political parties.
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Instagram	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Limited	The meme has been shared to a limited extent

The general public and all major political factions are the targeted targets of this meme. Its purpose is humour and satire, and it succeeds at both. In this photo, former Speaker Asad Qaiser appears downcast after his time spent working with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and the Pakistan Peoples Party. The context provided by the text adds depth to the meme's meaning. The meme's comedic tone is an attempt to endear itself to its intended audience while simultaneously deflecting any negative feedback. The meme originated on Instagram, a popular social networking tool for sharing visual content,

although it has not gained widespread popularity there. In general, the meme combines elements of humour, satire, and political commentary to voice criticism and draw in an audience in a snappy, interesting way.The former speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly, Asad Qaiser, stars in a meme that offers insight into the complexities of political processes and human emotions. Qaiser's lowered head in the shot conveys a sense of stress and strain, creating an atmosphere of vulnerability. The photo's caption adds levity by mockingly attributing his apparent sorrow to his dealings with the PML-N and PPP, two of the opposition parties included in the photo. This comic turn is bolstered by a relevant anecdote from the author's time in school, in which they joke that they've never seen so much outward depression in all their years of schooling.

The intersection of humour, politics, and culture is explored in this meme from an anthropological perspective. It exemplifies the use of humour as a form of social commentary by providing a platform for the expression of ideas and viewpoints through a humorous medium. Memes mediate between individual experiences and political narratives, as shown by the juxtaposition of an image expressing the emotional state of a political figure with a hilarious memory from one's school days. It makes us think about how the strength of a meme might be amplified through the use of common cultural references and shared experiences. Anthropological research on humour, which has been shown to play a significant influence in influencing speech and creating social bonds, is consistent with this occurrence. Additionally, the meme's succinct yet successful use of visual and linguistic features necessitates an investigation into the ways in which symbols and words combine to express meaning in a cultural setting. This meme demonstrates the

power of the internet as a tool for political expression, cross-cultural understanding, and the expression of human emotions.

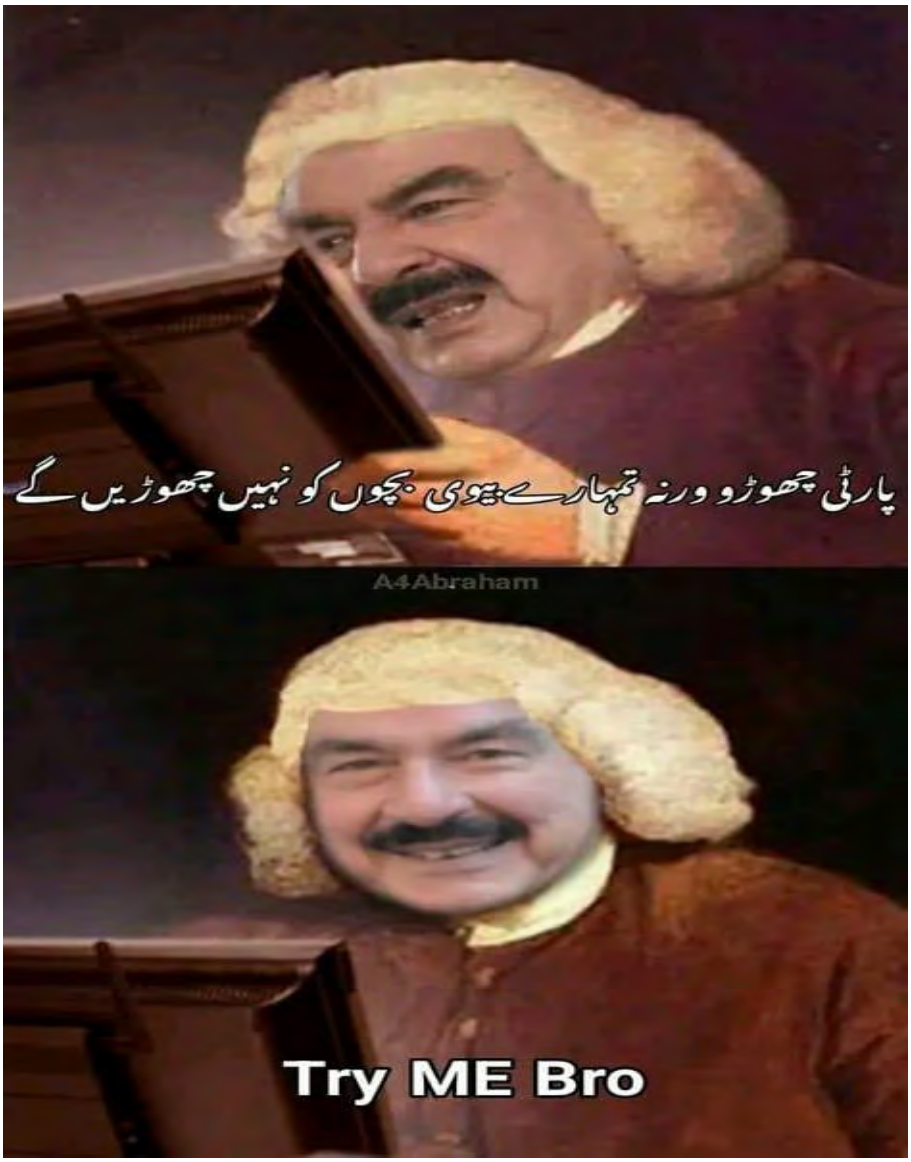
Category	**Code**	**Description**
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Tone	Serious	The meme is serious in tone.
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.

Use of humor	No	The meme donot uses humor to convey its message.
Use of images	Yes	The meme uses images to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Facebook	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Widespread	The meme has been shared widely

The following table details a meme that is intended to convey a serious, albeit humorous, political message to the general public. Because it may be taken seriously or as humorous commentary, anthropologists would still want to know how the meme was aimed to make its intended audience feel. Because the meme promotes an unfavourable political message about a certain political party or politician, it can be seen as a kind of political criticism or critique. Due of the situational and personal character of humour, the table's assertion that the meme doesn't use comedy requires further scrutiny. Anthropologists can figure out what the meme's about by breaking it down into its visual and verbal parts and looking for clues in the cultural allusions, symbols, and visual metaphors that inform it. Since the viral meme was initially shared on Facebook, social scientists may investigate the role the platform plays in the dissemination of ideas. An in-depth ethnographic study of the community and an analysis of the meme's impact on public discourse and the broader political dynamics of the country in question would be necessary for anthropologists to properly understand the meme's relevance within its cultural and social context.Pakistani

politician Jahangir Tareen is shown chatting with another person in this internet meme. The humour stems from the fact that this individual wants to join Tareen's party and justifies doing so by noting that their name is "Azad," which means "free" in Urdu. It would appear that this text-based meme is making a scathing comment on the political circumstances surrounding Tareen and his newly founded party against the backdrop of political shifts within the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party.The dramaturgical approach of anthropology-influenced theorist Erving Goffman may help us understand how people put on a show of political affiliation in everyday life. The meme's satirical aspect is in line with Goffman's idea of strategic self-presentation, where the humorous exchange may represent a satirical depiction of political allegiances as theatrical acts. The work of anthropologist Michael Wesch, who studied the effects of digital culture on political discourse, is essential reading for anybody interested in how memes like this shape public opinion and discussion. Memes, as digital artefacts, contribute to the cultural landscape in the digital age; Wesch's perspective draws attention to the dynamic nature of online culture and its influence on modern forms of expression like satire.Through an anthropological lens, the meme becomes a multifaceted artefact that not only captures humour and satire but also sums up the social dynamics, cultural meanings, and public opinions inside Pakistan's digital environment. The sense of humour of the meme can be better understood through anthropological studies of satire and politics, which demonstrate how satire is used to negotiate social power hierarchies and challenge authority. The "Nasty Woman" meme during the 2016 US presidential election is an example of how humorous political memes may spark discussions about gender, power, and cultural norms, much like the "Nasty Woman" meme did in the Pakistani context. This in-depth analysis sheds light on how the

meme serves as a kind of digital cultural expression, influencing and being influenced by public discourse regarding a wide range of political figures and their policies.



Category	Code	Description
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.

Target audience	Political party opponents	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of images	Yes	The meme uses images to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Instagram	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Widespread	The meme has been widely shared.

This table summarises the main aspects of the studied meme that contribute to its meaning and popularity. The meme's effect is not limited to those who agree with its message on one level; it is also directed towards people who disagree with a particular political party. The meme's comedic elements and sarcastic underpinnings make for an entertaining and thought-provoking whole. The depth of its impact is amplified by the use of both visual and linguistic aspects to convey the message. Digital dispersion is evidenced by the meme's initial appearance on Twitter, a popular social media platform, and the rapid rate at which it has been shared, suggesting that it has reached and may continue to reach a large audience. When taken as a whole, this method elucidates the nature and role of the meme in the realm of digital discourse.The shown meme provides fascinating

anthropological insight into the dynamic between humour, power, and political identity in Pakistani society. If you look at the research of digital anthropologist Michael Wesch, you'll see that this meme emerged from people working together online. Wesch studies the manner in which the Internet encourages the creation of cultural expressions like political memes through the involvement of many different people. The internet's growing role in shaping contemporary political debate and expanding access to new audiences is evidenced by the meme's initial appearance on Twitter and its viral spread. In addition, Sarah Pink offers a fresh perspective by emphasising sensory ethnography. While Pink's approach has little to do with the meme itself, it has gotten us wondering about the psychological and physiological implications of our online experiences. To that end, we could study the mental and physical responses of viewers to the meme's caustic and comical overtones. In turn, this helps with the construction of digital identities and the naming of political factions. By including these anthropological concepts into the research, we gain a deeper understanding of the importance of the meme in contemporary political communication, the formation of collective identities, and the intricate interplay between technology and society.

Category	Code	Description
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Target audience	Political party opponents (PMLN)	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.
Tone	Serious	The meme is serious in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of images	Yes	The meme uses images to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.

Source of the meme	Instagram	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Limited	The meme has been shared to a limited extent

The table below provides a comprehensive analysis of the meme in its current context. First, it highlights the meme's widespread popularity and its aim to resonate with the general public. But it's also meant for PMLN's political opponents. This demonstrates a willingness to engage with others who hold opposing views in the aim of persuading them. A definition of the meme's humorous and satirical tone states that it employs irony and sarcasm to make its point. This blending of tones improves the meme's overall impact. This meme, which links the ancient Egyptian pharaoh Pharaoh Fir'aun to the present Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif, uses text and imagery to express its message. Including comedy in a meme increases the likelihood that its message will be shared widely. Since the meme's debut on Instagram, it is most closely associated with photo-sharing platforms known for their viral nature. The meme may not have gone viral because of its restricted spread. But there's no denying that the meme encourages discussion and feedback within its target demographic.

The meme shows a humorous combination of historical personalities with contemporary politicians. A large screen displays a digital likeness of an ancient Egyptian ruler, and the room is dimly lit by state-of-the-art gear. In the centre of the room, a scientist in a lab coat stands over a computer screen where a face is still being designed. The meme's protagonist is Pharaoh Fir'aun, whose reign was notable for its level of power and the abundance of luxury at its highest echelons. The scientist's challenge of reproducing Fir'aun's face after

3200 years piques our curiosity in archaeology and the intriguing allure of historical puzzles. The shot itself lacks the comical twist, though; instead, it relies on the wit of a creative description. This article's title: "First Pharaoh Fir'aun's Face Reconstructed in 3200 Years... Oh, Wait, Is That Nawaz?" Fir'aun is an ancient symbol of power, while Nawaz is a contemporary political figure; the contrast between them is what makes the joke. The hilarity of this remark depends on the reader's acquaintance with both the past and the present, as it combines sarcasm and clever wordplay with the meme.

The meme investigates why history is so compelling to humans, how power is distributed, and how the past shapes the present. Our inherent curiosity for the past and the methods we employ to piece together stories about the past are emphasised. Moreover, the meme makes a veiled reference to the idea of temporal continuity, according to which kings and leaders from different eras are connected by the same dynamics of power and influence. The meme's witty tone and skillful blending of historical and present components finally demonstrate how wit and humour can link seemingly diverse issues into a unified cultural commentary, encouraging viewers to engage with history in a new and engaging way.

Category	Code	Description
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Target audience	Political party opponents (PMLN)	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.
Tone	Serious	The meme is serious in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of images	No	The meme uses images to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Instagram	The meme originated on social media.

Spread of the meme	Limited	The meme has been shared to a limited extent

The target audience for this meme is clearly those who do not support the PMLN. The tone is satirical and humorous, and the message is serious. As a means of persuasion, humour can be used to captivate listeners, hold their attention, and even sway their opinions.

The mentioned meme provides an interesting case study for anthropologists interested in content analysis of how humour, language, and culture come together to convey social criticism and critique. Memes that translate the abbreviation PMLN as "Pakistan ma light ni" (meaning "there is no light in Pakistan") effectively tap into a widespread sense of anger about the country's power outages. This linguistic trick shows how wit can be used to question received knowledge and find solutions to difficult challenges. According to anthropologists, this meme is an example of a versatile form of political comedy.

One form of subversion is to humorously link a major political party to a widespread social problem, thus undermining the credibility of the targeted party. The text is written in two languages, highlighting the value of shared cultural standards in conveying nuanced meaning. The meme functions as both a sort of subversive political criticism and a means of collective catharsis, allowing people to laugh off their problems. The study of how such memes are created, disseminated, and consumed can teach anthropologists a great deal about the dynamics of public discourse and the interplay between language, culture, and political expression.

Category	Code	Description
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Target audience	Political party opponents (PMLN)	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of images	Yes	The meme uses images to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Facebook	The meme originated on social media.

Spread of the meme	Widespread	The meme has been widely shared.

People with a general interest in or knowledge of current events are the target demographic for this meme. Some of the PMLN's potential voters are likely to be sceptics or detractors. The meme has a negative message since it highlights the discrepancy between PMLN's claims of power (the "lion") and the party's real skills (the "donkey").

"Memes" are humorous, often satirical images, videos, or text that quickly travel throughout the internet. Haikus are extensively shared and read because of their effectiveness at conveying cultural concepts, emotions, and social commentary. Memes are cultural objects that can be examined from an anthropological point of view to learn about the values, beliefs, and functioning of a community. Memes are one-of-a-kind because they capture the collective feeling of a whole culture in a joke, image, or phrase. The presented analysis takes an anthropological approach to the researched meme, dissecting its components in terms of meaning, symbolism, audience, and context, as well as its origin and impact. Humour, satire, and social critique are three of anthropology's primary foci, and all three are encapsulated in the concept of the meme. Humour is a powerful tool for social protest, stress relief, and political manoeuvring, all of which anthropologists investigate in detail.

Hidden meanings can be uncovered by dissecting the meme's language and visuals. The book is written in a witty and accessible manner that will appeal to readers in Pakistan. Feelings and frustrations of the people, as well as ideas about governmental priorities, leadership, and national identity, are revealed in these statements. The picture, which represents a prominent

Pakistani leader, conveys power, superiority, and a lack of emotion. Semiotics, the study of how signs, symbols, and images express meaning within a specific society, is featured here. The virality of the meme on Facebook and other social media shows how influential the Internet can be in shaping cultural discussions. Anthropologists have started studying online communities and how they emerge, interact, and affect one another in order to get a better grasp on the dynamics of modern civilizations.

If we look at this meme via the anthropological perspective, we see that it reflects a form of participatory culture in which individuals actively engage with, reinterpret, and alter cultural symbols to remark on pressing social issues. Anthropological research on the ways in which humour is used to question authority and express disapproval corroborate the meme's humorous and critical tone. It also demonstrates the value of shared cultural references and linguistic background in fostering mutual understanding and communication. The interesting relationship between culture, communication, and the dynamics of social groupings is the focus of meme anthropology. By breaking down memes into its textual and visual constituents, considering their intended audience, and following their dissemination across digital platforms, anthropologists might gain a deeper understanding of how memes represent modern culture.Meme 11

Category	Code	Description
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Target audience	Political party opponents (PMLN)	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of images	Yes	The meme uses images to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.

Source of the meme	Facebook	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Limited	The meme has been shared to a limited extent

The PMLN political party is being investigated for using the meme to defame its opponents and the general public. The author uses a sarcastic and humorous tone to keep the reader engaged. The goal of a meme is to spark joy and laughter among its audience. The images complement the text by adding a humorous touch and by serving as a visual representation of the message. That reminds me: language is also used in the meme to convey its message, either by laying out the meme's core principles or by providing context and captions for the images. Facebook is probably where the meme originally appeared on the internet, given how rapidly and broadly it spread. However, it hasn't spread far and, given its limited reach, it's probably not a viral phenomenon. More information can be gleaned about the meme's audience, tone, sense of humour, employment of images and text, original source, and virality by looking at the meme's actual content, which requires a more in-depth analysis.The meme discusses the PMLN political party in Pakistan, providing insight into the group's actions and aims as seen by the general public. The meme, both in text and image, expresses cultural attitudes and criticisms of the party's participation in national governance and the acts of its leaders. Anthropological research on political dynamics, power structures, and cultural symbols is consistent with this view. The meme plays a role in influencing the impression of the PMLN party's relationship with the nation within the context of imagined communities, as explored by anthropologist

Benedict Anderson. The party's emphasis on its leaders living abroad and returning primarily during election years is a nod to the idea that political parties are co-creators of the national mythology. This is consistent with anthropology's emphasis on the ways in which politics, identity, and the collective imagination all overlap.

In depicting politicians leaving Pakistan on an aeroplane, the meme echoes ideas about power and representation developed by anthropologists such as Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu. It emphasises the symbolic capital and strategic use of authority that political figures possess. The meme captures the general public's view of PMLN leaders, who are seen as strategic power players rather than hands-on change makers.

Anthropologists have long been interested in the cultural significance of symbols, and the field of symbolic anthropology has shed light on this question. In this scenario, politicians' departure from ground level concerns is represented by their presence on an aeroplane. The party's actions are encapsulated by the symbolic inclusion of Maryam Nawaz as a representational figure. This interpretation is in line with anthropological studies of how images and signs convey many meanings across cultures.

Anthropological studies on the function of humour in social critique and negotiation are consistent with the meme's lighthearted tone. The visual comedy of the meme is matched by the subtlety of the linguistic aspects, which is reminiscent of Clifford Geertz's "thick description" notion. Understanding broader cultural perspectives and societal issues can begin with an examination of the meme's substance and tone. Anthropology recognises that memes provide a lens into one perspective among many, stimulating greater examination of cultural, political, and social dynamics, but cautions that approaching meme research with this knowledge is vital.

An anthropological examination of the meme's content reveals a dynamic interplay between politics, power, symbolism, and humour. By delving into its written and visual content, we can learn about larger social trends in Pakistan. However, the anthropological viewpoint urges us to dig deeper than the surface of the meme, acknowledging the complexity of the concerns it raises.Meme 12

Category	**Code**	**Description**
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Target audience	Political party opponents (PMLN)	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.

Use of images	Yes	The meme uses images to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Facebook	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Limited	The meme has been shared to a limited extent

This satirical meme combines visual symbolism with verbal condemnation of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN), and it has been widely shared online by both supporters and detractors of the party. The image of a lion with a donkey's head and the phrases "Give me vote" were used to gain votes. The meme's "Trust me, I am a lion" challenge to the legitimacy of the party is meant to be humorous. Despite the meme's lack of popularity beyond Facebook, it successfully parodies PMLN claims and image by drawing on digital culture.The meme makes a caustic comment on the current political situation through the combination of images and text. The anthropological study of symbols and their cultural connotations served as inspiration for the meme, which features a lion with a donkey's head and the phrase "Give me vote." Do not doubt me; I am a lion. This juxtaposition is reminiscent of anthropological studies of symbols, where the lion stands for leadership and the donkey's head signifies ineptitude. This humorous graphic is a stinging indictment of the PMLN political party's attempts to present itself as authoritative and credible. In the semiotic tradition of Roland Barthes, the meme simplifies and spreads complex ideas through the use of a visual language. Some of the ways in which political memes shape and are shaped by public opinion in the modern era have been illuminated by the research of media and visual anthropologists like Arjun Appadurai. As

anthropologists like Clifford Geertz have proven by emphasising the role of context in the formation and comprehension of symbols, the meme can be interpreted in a variety of ways. The intricate mix of cultural, political, and individual elements will shape the impact of this meme, even if it is critical of the PMLN. The combination of anthropological symbols, humour, and context in this meme makes it a prime example of the successful use of these elements in conveying political commentary.

Meme 13

Category	Code	Description
Target audience	Political party opponents (PMLN AND PPP)	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.

Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.
Tone	Serious	The meme is serious in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Use of text	No	The meme does not use text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Facebook	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Widspread	The meme has been shared to a wider audience.

The table shows the intended audience for the meme, which consists of those who oppose the PML-N and the PPP. It's supposed to be derogatory towards a certain political faction or candidate; readers can view it as satire or seriously. The meme's comic elements are meant to mask its critical tone. It has been widely shared on Facebook since it originally appeared there, potentially expanding its reach and impact. Collectively, the meme serves as a sort of political commentary, attracting the attention of those who disagree with the targeted political party through the use of humour and words.

The meme deftly weaves together Zardari, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, and Shehbaz Sharif's respective political trajectories within Pakistan's complex political landscape. The disagreement began when Shehbaz Sharif, speaking for the PML-N, publicly challenged Zardari, of the PPP, to a

fight. More recently, though, the meme has gained currency due to the public unveiling of the coalition currently working under the PDM (Pakistan Democratic Movement) banner. We can gain a deeper understanding of the social and cultural dynamics at play in this meme by adopting an anthropological point of view.

Studying this meme from an anthropological perspective exposes its richness and nuance. To begin with, it faithfully depicts the fluid nature of political coalitions and the intricate network of political connections in Pakistan. All of this accords with findings from anthropological studies of political organisation, group dynamics, and decision-making processes. Second, this meme represents a symbolic alliance between Zardari, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, and Shehbaz Sharif. The significance of these people in Pakistani politics is symbolised here by this art. These visual clues' hidden meanings can be deciphered with the help of anthropological theories on symbolism and semiotics, including those proposed by Roland Barthes.

Furthermore, the meme relates to evolving power dynamics, such as the study of authority negotiation by anthropologist Michel Foucault. The apparent harmony between them belies subtle power struggles and political realignment. Because of this, we can see that political power is fluid through this meme.

By emphasising that, in the view of the general public, political pragmatics triumph over ideological disagreements, the meme offers a window into public opinion and satire. This is analogous to the findings of anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, who studied the impact of the media on public opinion and how it shapes debates about governmental processes. As a microcosm of Pakistani politics, this meme demands an anthropological analysis that delves under the surface to unravel the tangled web of power, symbolism, public opinion, and strategic

decision-making that it reflects. It is illustrative of the anthropologist's pursuit of a deeper understanding of the interplay between individuals and their social and political surroundings.

Meme 14

Category	**Code**	**Description**
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Target audience	Political party opponents (PPP)	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.
Tone	Serious	The meme is serious in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.

Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of images	Yes	The meme uses images to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Instagram	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Widespread	The meme has been widely shared.

This table briefly describes a meme that the PPP's supporters have circulated online in an effort to discredit the PPP's political opponents. The meme effectively uses both visuals and words to express a sarcastic and hilarious message unfavourable about a political party or candidate. Its popularity can be gauged from how far Instagram users have shared its original post.

An in-depth anthropological analysis of the viral "Brish Ati Ha To Pani Ata Ha" video featuring Biliwal Butto is provided in the following table. The meme's stated audience, "the general public," suggests a wide reach. But it's important to think about how this can affect people's lives and traditions. Usually, the political message that goes along with a meme is disparaging of some political group or individual. If we examine this message through the perspective of anthropology, we see how it reflects the many criticisms and points of view that emerge within each given society.The Bilawal Bhutto "Brish Ati Ha To Pani Ata Ha" meme provides a fascinating anthropological prism through which to examine the intricate interplay between language, culture, humour, and the

dynamics of the internet. Cultural phenomena such as this meme are fascinating to anthropologists because they shed light on the dynamics at play in contemporary forms of communication. From a linguistic and cultural perspective, this meme emphasises the value of Pakistan's many languages. It does this by emphasising the way in which linguistic diversity adds to the rich cultural tapestry that is the United States through the use of an exaggerated regional accent. Language anthropologists like Dell Hymes find this to be consistent with their findings. Further, it messes with people's assumptions about and identification with their region. Edward Said and other anthropologists have investigated how media portrayals and general stereotypes affect people's sense of self and the distribution of power in society. In light of the possibility that the meme's portrayal of a particular accent contributes to the persistence of regional stereotypes, an anthropological examination of the manner in which such depictions affect people's worldviews and the development of their sense of self is warranted.

Laughter's ability to bring people together has been examined by anthropologists like Mary Douglas. The humorous portrayal of the cultural difference in language has a dual purpose: it both entertains and brings people from different cultures closer together via their shared knowledge of the difference. Humour, as seen by anthropologists, is a cultural phenomenon that allows for questioning of established standards and promotes social relationships, and this finding accords with that idea. How quickly the meme spread online is indicative of how deeply embedded digital culture is in the learning process. Anthropologists like Arjun Appadurai have looked into the ways in which digital media have altered social interaction and creative output. The virality of the meme's propagation across many social media sites is evidence of the transformational potential of user-generated content and the collaborative

nature of online communities. Cultural appropriation and representation are complex issues that require an anthropological perspective. To avoid misrepresenting a culture, anthropologists like Franz Boas highlight the importance of studying it in its native setting. Memes' propensity to appropriate accents or spread prejudices raises ethical questions about cultural representation. When seen via an anthropological lens, this meme essentially becomes a microcosm of the complex relationship between language, culture, humour, and online relationships.

Category	**Code**	**Description**
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Target audience	Political party opponents	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.

Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of images	Yes	The meme uses images to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Facebook	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Widespread	The meme has been widely shared.

This table provides a concise summary of a meme directed at the general public and opposing political parties. Its use of humour and satire as tones is deft, and it makes good use of visuals and words to express its message. The virality of the Facebook-born meme is evidenced by its rapid dissemination to other mediums.

The image is politically contentious since it depicts a scene from a traditional Qawali night party, complete with discarded currency on the floor. Qawali night is a time of religious and cultural celebration in South Asian culture. Money on the floor, however, is a symbol of waste, corruption, and excess. The stark contrast between cultural standards and the theft of resources provides the basis for this criticism of the chasm between society norms and misuse of power. The meme also features a "IMF," or International Monetary Fund, character. The expression on IMF's face indicates complete disbelief at what they are witnessing. It's possible that the rest of the world is reacting negatively to the politicians' irresponsible spending and significant reliance on foreign loans, which has caught them off guard. Thus, the meme might be interpreted as a criticism of politicians' propensity to seek

aid from international organisations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) rather than addressing domestic economic challenges themselves. Concerns concerning dependency and the strategy's possible downsides are highlighted. However, more information and perspectives are required for a comprehensive analysis to account for the possibility that meme interpretations vary across cultural and political contexts.The political meme sheds light on the intricate interplay between mass media, public debate, and the economy from an anthropological point of view. The artwork represents a Qawali night, a cultural event rich in tradition and meaning, set against a floor piled with money, all of which are symbols of excess, wealth, and possibly corrupt practises. This remarkable contradiction between cultural standards and the abuse of power reflects anthropological research into how societies negotiate and challenge norms in the face of power dynamics.

The inclusion of an expressionless character named IMF within the meme gives it a more international flavour. Anthropologists take a look at the meme's potential to sum up global outrage over politicians' alleged mismanagement of funds and reliance on foreign loans. This is consistent with what anthropologists have learned about globalisation, the impact of MNCs on national economies, and the repercussions of a lack of control over one's own country.

The hidden political undertones of the meme are given more depth by the inclusion of a representation of the ruling class. Qawali Night, here, becomes a metaphor for the extravagant ways of the rich, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) stands in for the

international community's reaction to these tendencies. This reading connects with the anthropological study of social stratification, class dynamics, and the portrayal of elites within larger socio-political narratives.

Examining this meme is like conducting a miniature anthropological study of the interconnections among different social, political, and economic structures. A deeper meaning is conveyed through its visual and vocal components, delving into the complexities of human nature, political decision-making, and the dance of the past and present. Understanding that memes can be interpreted in a variety of ways based on cultural and political contexts is crucial for any in-depth study.

Category	Code	Description

Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.
Tone	Serious	The meme is serious in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	No	The meme does not use humor to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Use of text	No	The meme does not use text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Instagram	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Widespread	The meme has been widely shared.

This table provides a brief but informative summary of a selected meme. It has a harsh political message for the masses and uses a serious tone with satirical undertones. In contrast to most amusing memes, this one makes good use of verbal features in addition to pictures. The Instagram-born viral sensation has gone viral, a testament to the breadth and depth of its influence and popularity.

The aforementioned meme, which employs both serious and comedic tones to convey its negative political message, has attracted widespread attention. Without any blatant humour, the meme makes effective use of linguistic exchange by juxtaposing a statement attributed to "Shahbaz" with a retort attributed to "Sahbaz Sahreff." The fact that

it quickly went viral and reached beyond Instagram is proof of its broad impact, as it sparked discussions on political leadership, power dynamics, and empathy.The meme, which contains a conversation between two fictional characters named "Shahbaz" and "Sahbaz Sahreff," contributes to the formation of political identities by drawing attention to the complex interplay between language and authority. People's perceptions of authority, compassion, and the power structure are all influenced by the meme's interaction with political discourse in this anthropological context. Shahbaz's rhetoric is reminiscent to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital in that he employs language to express empathy and align with public concerns. This may be an important part of his political identity, which is to be a caring leader who understands the struggles of the average citizen. Yet, Sahbaz Sahreff's flippant attitude is reminiscent of Michel Foucault's ideas on discourse and power, which maintain norms through the trivialization of social upheaval. This dynamic, which may be seen as the attitude of the governing elite, may in turn contribute to the formation of political identities by influencing the masses' perceptions of their leaders and government. Because of these interconnected factors, the meme has evolved into a cultural product with the capacity to mould how individuals conceptualise

empathy, communication, and power in the context of shaping their political identities.

Category	**Code**	**Description**
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Target audience	Political party opponents (PTI)	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.

Source of the meme	Instagram	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Widespread	The meme has been widely shared.

This analysis of the meme aims at people who don't support the PTI political party as well as the general public. It blends visual and linguistic aspects to deliver a caustic and hilarious political message. The meme's virality and ability to shape public opinion and political debate may be traced back to its inception on Instagram, a popular social media platform. Memes, when viewed via an anthropological lens, reveal the intricate connections between a society's politics, popular culture, and the digital domain, serving as cultural artefacts that remark on and reflect the greater social milieu.The participation of Nawaz Sharif and Imran Khan in the meme described here is illuminating for understanding the formation of political identities in Pakistan's broader cultural context. Common symbols, narratives, and social contacts play an important part in the formation of political identities, and theorists like Benedict Anderson and Clifford Geertz have used anthropologists' discoveries to explain this. Like Anderson's "imagined political community," this meme captures the tensions between Nawaz Sharif and Imran Khan. The meme is understandable and relatable to supporters of both leaders since it expresses their feelings about the heated exchanges between them. The public's perception of Sharif and Khan as two separate political figures is strengthened by an aggressive remark from Sharif and a derogatory nickname for Khan.

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz's "thick description" concept can be useful for comprehending the numerous cultural meanings attached to a meme. Khan's derogatory use of the term "Langray" to describe his injury reflects a cultural symbol with connotations beyond its simple dictionary meaning. It's a figurative representation of the power and vulnerability of political leaders in relation to their separate bases of support. The meme's use of this image serves to highlight the differences between the political personas of Sharif and Khan. The views of anthropologist Stuart Hall regarding the formation and representation of identities are also relevant here. In the context of political identity, memes facilitate discussion and negotiation. The antagonistic tone of the meme reflects not only the rivalry between the leaders but also the more fundamental ideological differences that inform the political identities of their respective fan bases. Through their engagement with and interpretation of the meme, audiences shape their impressions of the political actors involved, contributing to the "politics of representation," which is helped by the meme's widespread transmission in the digital arena. Therefore, this meme is a cultural object that illustrates the construction, negotiation, and challenge of political identities in Pakistan. This meme representing the competition between Pakistani politicians Nawaz Sharif and Imran Khan can be analysed from an anthropological perspective by drawing on the notions of Benedict Anderson's imagined community, Clifford Geertz's dense description, and Stuart Hall's concepts of identification and representation.

Category	**Code**	**Description**
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Target audience	Political party opponents (PMLN)	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.

Source of the meme	Instagram	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Limited	The meme has been shared to a limited extent

This meme takes aim at the opponents of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN) using humour and irony. To emphasise the meme's humorous tone, the image of Nawaz Sharif giving a speech while being thrown a shoe (a gesture symbolising disrespect) is accompanied by text saying that respect should be earned and highlighting Nawaz Sharif's wealth. In the perspective of the public, the political party and its head have engaged in hypocrisy and scandal, and the meme, which originated on Instagram, mocks them for it. Its limited distribution demonstrates its more localised effect as a cultural item that serves to voice discontent and generate discourse within the context of Pakistan's political landscape.Within the larger sociocultural context of Pakistan, the meme depicting Nawaz Sharif being hit by a thrown sandal is a representation of political identity. Through an anthropological perspective, we may see how the use of visual symbols and gestures in political contexts helps to explain this phenomenon. Dissatisfaction with and opposition to Nawaz Sharif's leadership are effectively communicated through the culturally loaded act of sandal throwing. According to political anthropology, this meme is an example of symbolic resistance, in which people who feel the same way about something can unite in their opposition by engaging in a shared symbolic action. According to the meme's content, "Ezat honi chahiye, paisa to Nawaz Sharif ke paas bhi bahut hai," there is a strong correlation between financial success and political authority in Pakistan. This meme,

inspired by Benedict Anderson's "imagined communities," could gain traction among a group of people who are committed to bringing about a specific kind of political change. In the end, the meme serves as an anthropological artefact that sheds light on the ways in which political identities in Pakistan are formed and expressed through the interplay of visual symbols, cultural gestures, and textual commentary.

Category	**Code**	**Description**
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Target audience	Political party opponents (PMLN)	The meme is targeted at opponents of a particular political party.
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.
Tone	Humorous	The meme is humorous in tone.

Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	No	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Instagram	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Limited	The meme has been shared to a limited extent

This table gives an in-depth explanation of a meme that features Shehbaz Sharif and Bilawal Bhutto. The PMLN is the most likely target of this meme, which is directed at the general public with the intention of conveying a negative message about the party. The meme has a satirical and hilarious tone and successfully uses text to get its point through. Despite the meme's lighthearted tone, humour is not its primary mode of expression. The meme first appeared on Instagram, but unlike more viral content, it hasn't received a lot of attention or shares**.**

Two major Pakistani political figures, Shahbaz Sharif and Bilawal Bhutto, are included in the meme you described. There's a hypothetical scenario depicted here in which Shahbaz Sharif points at Bilawal Bhutto and asks, "If tomorrow on the Peshawar road, Bilawal's car runs out of petrol, who is responsible?" (Kal agar Peshawar mor pa iska (Bilawal) ki gari ka petrol khatam hujya, to kon zimadar hai?).

The meme accurately depicts the power dynamic between Shahbaz Sharif and Bilawal Bhutto. An image of Bilawal Bhutto, Chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), with his finger pointed at him by senior politician and member of the Pakistan Muslim

League-Nawaz (PML-N) Shahbaz Sharif. It's possible that Shahbaz Sharif is trying to convey some sort of authority or responsibility to Bilawal Bhutto with this gesture.

Including references to the city of Peshawar in Pakistan and the car's fuel level lends the meme a political undercurrent. This suggests a situation involving conveyance and accountability. Perhaps the meme is making a political statement about how Bilawal Bhutto and his party are being portrayed as incompetent or unaccountable. The implication is that he would bear responsibility for a stalled car due to a lack of gas.

The impact of the meme on the audience requires consideration of the many possible interpretations and responses. This meme could be funny to certain people because of the satirical tone and political commentary it contains. Some people can see it as an opportunity to make fun of or criticise the politicians involved. Because of the potential for variation in meme reception and interpretation across individuals and social groups, it is important to analyse the cultural and political climate in which a given meme is disseminated.The Shahbaz Sharif/Bilawal Bhutto meme you described is an example of a hypothetical situation that calls into question who should be held accountable in such a situation. There's political weight to the conversation about transit and leadership, and it reflects the relationship of power between the two politicians. The cultural significance of memes, however, necessitates taking into account more than one point of view, and there can be significant variation in how they are interpreted and what they mean.Meme 20

The table provides a thorough history and definition of the meme. This shows that

Category	**Code**	**Description**
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Tone	Serious	The meme is serious in tone.
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	No	The meme donot uses humor to convey its message.
Use of images	Yes	The meme uses images to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Instagram	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Limited	The meme has been shared to a limited extent

those who are supposed to get the meme's serious but humorous tone and unfavourable

political message are indeed getting it. The combination of visual and textual elements in the meme makes the message clear. There's evidence that it started on Instagram, but its reach has been limited. This research not only helps us comprehend the meme's potential influence and relevance, but also its audience, tone, message, humour, visual aspects, source, and reach.This meme accurately portrays the political climate of Pakistan at the time, which saw the JUIF (Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl) party, which is part of the opposition alliance known as the PDM (Pakistan Democratic Movement), fail to secure any seats in the government. Bilawal Bhutto, a member of the PPP (Pakistan Peoples Party), was also appointed foreign minister at the same time. According to public opinion, the PDM's partners, particularly the PPP, have deceived or abandoned the JUIF. Among the "awam" (general public), the meme has likely tapped into feelings of disappointment and scepticism since they may interpret these developments as indicating internal power dynamics and strategic choices inside the political alliance.

The meme can be analysed from various anthropological points of view. First, it illustrates how the public perceives the impact of political appointments and actions. Some people's opinions on politics are reflected in the meme; they see it as a game of shifting allegiances and clever plays that can leave you feeling misled or dissatisfied. Those who believe their preferred party or leader has underachieved inside the coalition may identify with the meme's sentiment. The second is that the meme exemplifies how symbols can be used to explain complex political situations. The meme sharply compares outcomes within the PDM by contrasting Bilawal Bhutto's appointment with the lack of representation for JUIF. The combination of visuals and text in political commentary serves to simplify otherwise difficult topics for a wider audience.

Finally, the meme exemplifies how memes can play a role in the formation of political identities. Those who relate to the meme's message of betrayal may feel a sense of community with those who share similar experiences. By taking part in and propagating the meme, people can express their dissatisfaction with the dominant political narrative while simultaneously showing solidarity with a shared identity. Therefore, the meme condenses a complex political issue into a few memorable images and well-chosen words. It emphasises the interconnected nature of governmental decisions, public opinion, and the formation of private identities. It also shows that in the online world, memes play a significant role in shaping people's identities and serving as a medium for public expression.

Category	Code	Description
Target audience	General public	The meme is targeted at the general public.
Political message	Negative	The meme has a negative message about a political party or candidate.
Tone	Satirical	The meme is satirical in tone.
Use of humor	Yes	The meme uses humor to convey its message.
Use of images	Yes	The meme uses images to convey its message.
Use of text	Yes	The meme uses text to convey its message.
Source of the meme	Instagram	The meme originated on social media.
Spread of the meme	Limited	The meme has been shared to a limited extent

The table summarises the most salient aspects of the meme. In stating its target audience as "the general public," the meme's accessibility is validated to a large demographic. The meme has a strong political message, although it is unclear which group or individual is the intended target. The meme's tone is sardonic, suggesting it mocks or ridicules its intended audience. The meme is humorous because of the clever way it makes its argument. The main focus is on a photo that had been altered to show Bilawal Bhutto and Sheikh Rasheed shaking hands. Adding words to a meme is an excellent way to strengthen its message, and the addition of "mera Bilawal meri marzi"

does just that. The meme is said to have originated on Instagram, a popular social media platform, but it hasn't gained a lot of traction, indicating that it hasn't gone viral.

The cultural environment is profoundly affected by memes because of their role in the formation and maintenance of political identities. In the context of the described meme, the use of humour and satire to comment on Bilawal Bhutto and Sheikh Rasheed's relationship aids in the formation of political identities. People's political identities can be shaped in part by the stories and ideologies they publicly announce their support for through the use of memes. A person's engagement in the political process might be viewed via the lens of the meme's humorous interpretation of the dialogues between these two politicians. Those who find the meme's humour and satire appealing may find themselves more sympathetic to its cause. One's commitment to a certain political position or opinion can be bolstered through engaging with and learning more about that position or viewpoint. Those who use memes to ridicule or parody politicians also form a bond through the shared experience. Opposition to or criticism of another candidate or political party is just as integral to a political identity as support for one. People are more inclined to accept particular narratives and points of view after engaging with memes that offer criticism on political processes.

Memes have become a popular form of online communication and have entered mainstream culture across a wide range of topics, including politics. The authors and artists of these works use a variety of techniques to captivate their audiences and convey their messages, including cultural allusions, clever one-liners, and stinging sarcasm. The analysis of a number of examples has shown that memes are dynamic tools that aid in the construction of political identity and discourse. Examining political memes through an

anthropological lens demonstrates that they resonate with people of various backgrounds and reflect a wide range of perspectives on digital culture. Consistent with anthropological discoveries regarding the potential of humour to create communities and question authority, meme content frequently features humour, satire, and political commentary. Memes are utilised to challenge authority, strengthen cultural symbols, and bridge social boundaries, all of which are congruent with anthropological understandings of cultural expressions and identity negotiation.

The investigation highlights the manner in which memes generate iconic symbols and preconceived conceptions that impact public opinion, demonstrating the significance of memes in the formation of political identities. This fits with anthropological findings on how symbols within a community can encourage a sense of belonging and faith. Similar to anthropological discussion of globalisation, the topics discussed here show how memes can travel across borders and enrich cultures all around the world. Anthropologists can gain a deeper understanding of memes by analysing the ways in which they reflect societal ideals, power dynamics, and social interactions. The inquiry provides insight into the complex ways in which memes construct political identities, shape debates, and shift collective beliefs through consideration of factors such as target audiences, tones, and global diffusion. This exemplifies the significant role that memes play in moulding contemporary politics and popular culture and is compatible with the anthropological emphasis on multiple cultural forms.

CHAPTER 5:

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, I take a close look at the study's findings in light of its three primary objectives. Examining how public figures are woven into meme-driven discourses and the ways in which memes magnify political messaging is where the investigation into memes' involvement in influencing political narratives begins. Memes are shown to be malleable in their ability to represent shifting political environments as their relationship to real-world events is investigated. The role that memes have in getting people involved and interested is then examined, demonstrating how wit and irony can open up politics to everyone. The chapter continues with a content examination of political memes in Pakistan, showing a range of approaches from satirical humour to inflammatory rhetoric. Appadurai, Anderson, Geertz, and Foucault's anthropological theories provide a bedrock for the analysis and expand the interpretive framework of the study. The research is grounded in the work of Wesch and Pink and makes use of digital and visual ethnography to investigate the social and cultural settings in which memes flourish and their impact on their users. As such, this chapter lays the groundwork for the following chapter's conclusions and future research objectives.

Analysis and Discussion on Meme Shaping Political Narratives

Understanding how digital artefacts like memes can construct and influence public perceptions of political leaders and parties is illuminated by research into their use in crafting political narratives in Pakistan. Important patterns and implications can be gleaned from a thorough examination of both primary data collected from respondents

and secondary data pertaining to prominent political figures like Imran Khan, Sheikh Rasheed, Bilawal Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Asif Zardari, and Shehbaz Sharif, as well as a broader contextual analysis of Pakistan's political landscape.

Meme Use for Strategic Purposes: Reiterating Political Stories

The analysis of main and secondary data reveals a consistent theme: the strategic use of memes to contain specific qualities, behaviours, or disputes associated with political personalities. Imran Khan is a prime example of this trend because of the deliberate use of memes to bolster his image as a champion of justice, reform, and hope.

Respondents in the primary data use memes that persistently praise Imran Khan's leadership reputation. He is frequently shown in these memes as a metaphor for hope, development, and metamorphosis. One meme may compare and contrast photographs of a crumbling road during Khan's time in office with a newly paved road during his presidency to highlight his focus on infrastructure improvement. These memes represent the respondents' view of Imran Khan as a force for good, and are consistent with the narratives they shared with us.

Analysis of data supports this phenomena by highlighting a pattern of memes that repeatedly highlight the same characteristics of Imran Khan. Memes about him tend to focus on his likability, his fight against corruption, and his commitment to improving the country. His promises of reform and growth are reflected in the memes through the use of striking visual images, slogans, and phrases. Memes could capture Imran Khan's hope for a better future by showing him in a determined stance and captioning the image "Naya Pakistan" (New Pakistan).

These calculated moves provide new dimensions to the public conversation while simultaneously reinforcing preexisting narratives. Political figures like Imran Khan are depicted as champions of particular causes by highlighting their most notable qualities or accomplishments. Memes depicting Imran Khan delivering aid packages or promoting safety measures, for instance, during the COVID-19 outbreak, bolster his reputation as a capable leader. More than that, though, these memes help people remember important political personalities. The public's perception of important persons can be shaped by the memes that document their deeds, words, and pledges for posterity. Memes can solidify narratives, reinforcing particular characteristics connected with the political figure in issue through exposure to the image over and over again. Finally, as demonstrated by Imran Khan, memes are significant tools in the modern political scene because they may be used strategically to embody and reinforce specific traits, acts, or controversies associated with political individuals. These memes, which rely heavily on visual and rhetorical features to spread their messages, have the power to alter public opinion and add to the discussion of people's roles in shaping our democracy.

Narratives for Critical Discourse: Interrogating Established Narratives

Memes have transformed political discourse in the internet age by providing alternative narratives that question received knowledge. The opinions of Maryam Nawaz and Imran Khan are taken into account as we examine the impact they have had on molding dissent and critique. Memes have evolved into a potent instrument in contemporary political discourse, serving to both challenge conventional wisdom and empower marginalized perspectives.

Typical Narrative: Imran Khan's Anti-Corruption Crusade

Contra-Narrative: One-Sided Blame, Internet Trends, and partisan Bias

This alternative narrative may look at how memes have been used to draw attention to the perceived bias in holding politicians to account. It could go into detail on how Maryam Nawaz's followers have used memes to paint an inaccurate picture of the accountability process, suggesting that their leader is being singled out while others get off easy. This alternative story might show how the public's view of the accountability story is being shaped by visual and amusing content by utilising memes.

Imran Khan's "Naya Pakistan" and the Normative Narrative.

Narrative Rebuttal: Memes Can Be Used As A Satire Device To Make False Claims

This alternative storyline may investigate how memes have been used to mock both presidents' broken pledges if they included Maryam Nawaz. The "Naya Pakistan" vision could be compared to other visions provided by Maryam Nawaz using memes. This counter narrative could show how memes contribute to scepticism about political promises by providing humorous and accessible content.

The Typical Storyline: Using Religion and Nationalism

Memes, populism, and appealing to people's emotions: A counternarrative

This alternative narrative might explore how both Maryam Nawaz and Imran Khan have utilised memes to appeal to religious and nationalist sentiments in order to stir up emotional responses among their respective audiences. Memes that play on these emotions could be dissected, and their role in sustaining particular political narratives would be discussed. This would demonstrate the power of memes to convey nuanced messages and norms.

Imran Khan's Relationship with the Military, According to the Standard Story

Conflicting Stories: Memes, Public Opinion, and Military Operations

Memes could help with this alternative story by graphically depicting the differences between Maryam Nawaz's relationship with the military establishment and that of Imran Khan's. Memes could show how people's views on them as military supporters vary depending on their political leanings and family histories. Taking this tack may help to shed insight on the role that memes play in influencing these views.

Critique of Opposition Leaders According to the Standard Story

Memes, attacks on individuals, and discussion of public policy as a counternarrative

Memes could be used to challenge the narrative by showing how Maryam Nawaz and Imran Khan's assaults on one other are juxtaposed with more productive debates of policy. The point would be to demonstrate how memes may either contribute to a climate of personal attacks or redirect attention away from such attacks and towards more substantial conversations. This would highlight the power memes have over shaping public opinion on political issues. These alternative narratives, which would feature Maryam Nawaz and the concept of memes, would show how visual and shareable content plays a crucial role in moulding and opposing conventional political narratives.

Meme-based political communication goes far beyond simple mockery, acting as a powerful amplifier of political messages that can spark action and shift public opinion. Sheikh Rasheed, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, and Asif Zardari are just a few of the prominent Pakistani politicians that have been influenced by this ideology. Memes cleverly combine graphics and text to highlight specific traits or behaviours of these personalities, amplifying them and thereby reinforcing preexisting narratives and views.

Memes use a web of humour and sarcasm to capture the unique qualities of various leaders, crystallising their respective political agendas. A meme about Sheikh Rasheed, for instance, can mock his ostentatious dress to highlight his alleged preoccupation with appearances. The public criticism voiced by Maulana Fazlur Rehman could be emphasised by a meme that satirises the gestures he makes during his speeches. These condensed but vivid depictions strike a chord with viewers, spreading nuanced political commentary to people who might normally avoid lengthy political conversations.

Recognising memes as channels that connect traditional politics with the general public is crucial to grasping this dynamic. The complexity and inaccessibility of traditional political speech might make it difficult for it to reach and involve all members of a varied society. Memes, however, are able to break down these boundaries because of the visually appealing and easily digestible structure they present. In a society where people from different backgrounds have differing levels of political knowledge and engagement, this ease of access is essential.

Memes' responsiveness and adaptability are demonstrated through their interaction with real-world phenomena. When analysing the fallout from major events, like the trials of Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif, memes show an extraordinary capacity to encompass the developing narratives. Memes adapt quickly to new information while maintaining their innate contextual humour as events unfold. This demonstrates how memes can be dynamic agents in the ever-changing political scene, rather than static artefacts reflecting public emotion and political debate. Thus, the mutually beneficial connection between memes and political discourse is illuminating

regarding the current paradigm of social and political organisation. Memes have enormous effect because of their ability to rapidly adapt to new contexts and spread important messages. Their ability to spread political satire and commentary helps to solidify dominant narratives and open up political discourse to more people. Memes are dynamic phenomena, and the ways in which they shape public opinion and discourse are still open to investigation.

Memes serve as powerful instruments for influencing narratives in the complex world of contemporary political communication. Their ability to condense abstract concepts into memorable visual chunks is explored, as is their impact on the public and their relationship with famous political personalities. Memes form a symbiotic connection with public opinion, reflecting and reinforcing prevalent narratives while also functioning as vehicles for humour and satire. Because of their malleability, they may capture the shifting sociopolitical landscapes of the real world. Memes are effective vehicles promoting alternate ideas and counter narratives because they are accessible to a wide audience by lowering the threshold on political knowledge. However, they do require an informed audience because of the risks of simplicity and misunderstanding that they pose. Meme analysis as a political tool highlights their transformative power and shows how they have significantly influenced the present political narrative.

Analysis and Discussion on Memes Significance in Facilitating Political Engagement and Participation

Voting and other forms of political participation are vital to the development of democratic societies. Voting, addressing public problems, and taking part in other civic

activities are all examples of citizens actively engaging in political processes. This kind of participation is essential for a healthy democracy because it promotes well-informed decision-making, increases the accountability of political leaders, and keeps the debate going strong. However, political memes are a relatively new phenomenon that have evolved in this setting to influence public opinion and stimulate political debates. Memes, or hilarious and frequently sarcastic visual content, have exploded in popularity in the digital era, and this includes political memes. They are used as platforms for public discourse, policy critique, and community organisation. The simplicity and accessibility of memes like this provide people a new perspective through which to discuss political issues. As a result, there is a significant overlap between political memes and how people define themselves politically. The third purpose of this research is to explore the complex connection between political memes and political participation, with a particular emphasis on the role they play in the manifestation of political identity. To do this, we need to examine how people's interactions with memes shape their sense of political identity and their propensity to get involved in politics more generally. The study's overarching goal is to illuminate the changing nature of political communication in the digital age and its consequences for democratic debate and civic involvement by exploring this dynamic interplay.

Meme Analysis of Political Participation and Personal Identity

How Far Memes Can Take Your Sense of Political Identity

There is a wide range of opinions expressed in comments on whether or not interacting with political memes fosters a sense of political identity. Almost half of people polled (43.33%) said they used memes to help them reflect on and better

understand their own political beliefs. This hints that people are able to reflect on their own views and how they relate to the stuff they encounter because to the prevalence of memes. In addition, 28.89% of respondents think that memes help them connect with people who share their views, which highlights the power of memes in creating a political community.

Memes' Influence on Our Concept of Political Self-Identity

Interesting insights can be gleaned from studying the impact that political memes have on people's conceptions of their political selves. The fact that 8.33% of respondents admit that memes question their political convictions is remarkable. This highlights the power of memes to make people think critically and force them to reevaluate their beliefs. The fact that memes are so often used to reinforce an individual's preexisting political opinions (43.33%) demonstrates their importance as reinforcing agents.

Implications of Imaginary Response Data

Insightful conclusions can be drawn about the function of memes as a means of expressing political identity from the responder data. By highlighting the potential of memes as icebreakers in discussing complex political subjects, the respondent who places value on memes as a tool to launch dialogues about politics does so, for example. On the other hand, the respondent's concern that memes oversimplify complex matters emphasises the importance of responsible meme development in preventing the distortion of political information. These examples illustrate the range of possible outcomes when memes are used to shape political identity and highlight the value of deliberate design.

From an Anthropological Standpoint

Political memes can be understood as a new kind of symbolic communication among online groups from an anthropological perspective. Scholars like Clifford Geertz have suggested that rituals and symbols play an important role in the formation and maintenance of social identities. Memes serve as modern symbols in this setting, helping to negotiate and express political identity while also reflecting political viewpoints. When people with similar worldviews interpret and talk about memes in the same way, it strengthens their feeling of community and identity. Thus, the examination of replies demonstrates the complex nature of the role political memes play in the formation of political identities. They promote personal reflection, the formation of communities of like-minded people, the cultivation of analytical abilities, and the reinforcement of current worldviews. Our knowledge is expanded by the hypothetical responder data and the anthropological viewpoint, which indicate how memes can spark debate or raise worries about misrepresentation. Memes as a medium for political involvement and self-expression reveal a complex web of relationships among individual identity, group cohesion, and the ever-changing terrain of online political debate.

Symbols and Political Identity: Thick Description and Memes

Taking an anthropological view of the significance of memes as means of expressing political identity within the context of political involvement and participation adds a significant dimension of knowledge. The idea of "thick description," developed by anthropologist Clifford Geertz (Geertz, 1973), that highlights the many layers of cultural meaning inherent within symbols, has striking resonance with the function of political memes as transmitters of nuanced narratives.

The results of this study are consistent with Geertz's theoretical framework since respondents discussed how memes had an impact on their conception of their political identity. Memes about Pakistani politicians Imran Khan, Nawaz Sharif, and Maryam Nawaz illustrate how Geertz's theory that symbols embody complicated ideologies and beliefs through succinct visual representations is relevant in the era of the internet. Like symbols in more traditional societies, these memes have hidden meanings that reveal how people's political beliefs shape their worldview.

The method in which political memes help establish political communities also chimes with Geertz's emphasis on symbols as transmitters of communal significance. Memes concerning political leaders like Sheikh Rasheed serve as symbolic representations loaded with connotations and interpretations, much as Geertz's exploration of the symbolism of the Balinese cockfight. Memes become a cultural expression that brings together people with similar political views.

Symbols and expressions are said to be crucial in forming political identity and participation in anthropological literature. For instance, Benedict Anderson's "imagined communities" notion (Anderson, 1983) elucidates how commonalities in shared symbols and tales foster a sense of community among people who may never meet in person. Political memes are powerful symbols in the online world because they may connect people from all over the world who share a political perspective. This is consistent with the results of the study, in which participants described how memes helped them establish communities of others with similar interests.

Political memes have evolved into a modern form of symbolic expression in the internet age, empowering citizens to take part in political discourse through means that are both visually appealing and simple to spread. The study's results lend credence to the idea that memes might act as cultural and political messengers, enriching discussions on civic participation and individual id. Political memes serve a similar function in the modern environment as symbols did in the past, bringing together people who share common political beliefs and allowing them to convey those beliefs clearly and concisely.

Symbols, now in the form of memes, continue to play a crucial role in establishing political identity and encouraging engagement and involvement, as seen by the congruence between Geertz's anthropological observations, Anderson's concept of "imagined communities," and the findings of the study. This synthesis deepens our appreciation for the complex dynamics at play when individuals employ memes as means of articulating their political identities and adding to the social discourse in the digital era.

Benedict Anderson's idea of "memes" as catalysts for "imagined communities"

Memes play a significant role in moulding political involvement and participation, particularly in the digital domain, and Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1983) is highly relevant here. Anderson argues that nations are more than just geographically defined political entities; they are also the product of shared mythologies, symbols, and identities. Memes, as digital artefacts, play a catalytic role in the establishment of online political groups by bringing together people who share common political views.

This study's findings fit neatly within Anderson's framework. The respondents' political identities are strongly linked to political memes. This link represents the growth of online groups whose members bond through common interests such as humour, beliefs, or ideology. These online groups are fictitious since their members have never met in person but feel a strong bond due to their shared interest in political memes.

Memes have dramatically altered people's political participation and social networks in the Internet age. Anderson's idea of "imagined communities" is applicable to nations, and it also has resonance in the spaces that memes establish on the internet. Imran Khan, Nawaz Sharif, and Maryam Nawaz memes are used as rallying cries by supporters of various political agendas. People who find humour and connection in these memes feel a feeling of community as they are shared and reshared across various social media platforms.

In addition, the statistics provide credence to the theory that political memes inspire people to take action in the political sphere. Respondents who share and discuss Sheikh Rasheed and other political leaders' memes do more than just show their political identification; they also contribute to larger political debates. These debates take place within the fictional online groups based on memes, creating a sense of belonging and community.

Last but not least, Benedict Anderson's "imagined communities" concept provides a perspective through which to view the effect memes have on political participation and involvement. Memes are contemporary symbols that bring people together from far and wide, paving the way for the emergence of online political movements. The congruence between Anderson's observations, the results of the study, and the function of memes as

political identity expressions highlights the dynamic connection among digital culture, political participation, and the creation of imagined communities in the modern day.

Political Engagement via Online Communities

In recent years, anthropological research has focused more on how digital media affects modern identities and interactions (Pink, 2011). This kind of view is useful for considering how political memes affect people's participation in democratic processes. One way to examine the role that internet platforms play in creating political discourse is via the prism of political memes, a popular form of online expression. Hinton and Hjorth (2013) and Horst and Miller (2012) add depth to this point of view by highlighting the critical function of online interactions in moulding social identities. Miller's (2016) study is illustrative of the way in which ethnographic research highlights the revolutionary potential of digital platforms in encouraging online communities.

If we consider the importance of political memes in the context of citizens' engagement in democratic processes, their importance becomes even more clear. The centrality of digital media in the present day is emphasised by Pink's (2011) investigation of digital culture, which highlights the complex relationship between online networks and the development of individual identities. Miller's (2016) ethnographic research sheds light on the ways in which online spaces encourage interaction and friendship-building. Hinton and Hjorth (2013) and Horst and Miller (2012) found that online interactions can have a significant impact on individuals' and groups' identities and worldviews.

An in-depth comprehension of the dynamic interplay among social media sites, political memes, and users' participation in online political communities can be attained by integrating anthropological insights with empirical research. Individuals' interactions with political memes contribute to the establishment of a shared digital identity, just like anthropological studies highlight the process of collective identity building. The extensive use of political memes in Pakistani election campaigns is an example of these processes at work. It's not uncommon for memes depicting politicians, catchphrases, or ideas to go viral and spark lively online debate. These digital expressions go beyond physical borders, allowing for conversations to take place that help shape online political communities. Collective identity is formed inside digital spaces when citizens actively participate in online discourse through the sharing and discussion of memes.

For overall, this objective and debate here highlight the substantial and multifaceted significance of memes in encouraging political involvement and participation. Memes have evolved as potent means for transmitting ideas, opinions, and critiques with humour and concision as online culture becomes more linked with political discourse. Because of their visual character, they can be understood in a short amount of time and shared across numerous web channels, reaching people who might not otherwise be interested in or knowledgeable about politics. Memes inspire people to not only consume but also produce and spread political information due to their interactive and participatory nature. This research shows the value of critical media literacy, as the viral nature of memes can be exploited to distribute false information. The power of memes to galvanize public participation is growing as they continue to shape and reflect political views.

Analysis and Discussion on Content Analysis of Pakistani Memes

Political Identity and Humor in Memes

The theme explores how political identity is expressed through humor in memes, specifically focusing on the analysis of multiple memes. By examining the use of satire, irony, and sarcasm as tools for political commentary and identity construction, this theme highlights how individuals employ humor to engage with and critique political figures, parties, and ideologies (Allport & Postman, 1947; Benkler, Faris, & Roberts, 2018; Bennett & Livingston, 2020).

Erving Goffman, a renowned sociologist and anthropologist, developed the dramaturgical theory, which suggests that individuals strategically perform their identities in social interactions. Applying this theory to the analysis of memes, individuals can be seen as performing their political identities through humorous content. Goffman's framework helps understand how individuals utilize symbols, images, and text in memes to construct and present their desired political image and convey specific political messages (Goffman, 1959; Innes et al., 2021).

In the first meme, targeting opponents of the PMLN political party, humor is employed to engage in political satire and provoke conversations. The satirical elements and comedic tone can be seen as a symbolic form of resistance against the party, challenging prevailing narratives and ideologies. This aligns with Goffman's dramaturgical theory, where individuals strategically perform their political identities through the creation and sharing of humorous memes (Francois & Lin, 2021; Goffman, 1959).

Another meme creatively redefines the acronym PMLN, associating it with a humorous interpretation related to power outages or electricity shortages in Pakistan. By using wordplay and linguistic creativity, individuals deliver their satirical commentary on a social issue. This exemplifies how humor and language are employed as tools for social critique, aligning with anthropological perspectives on the role of symbols and meanings in shaping social order (Bittman, 1985; Douglas, Sutton, & Cichocka, 2017).

Furthermore, memes featuring symbolism and contrasting imagery, such as a lion with the head of a donkey, comment on the perceived contradictions between political representation and actual capabilities or trustworthiness. These memes critique the political party PMLN, highlighting a perceived discrepancy between their self-proclaimed strength ("lion") and their actual performance ("donkey"). This use of symbolism and imagery aligns with anthropologist Victor Turner's emphasis on symbols and rituals as forms of social performance (Gonzalez-Bailon, 2017; Goffman, 1959).

Examining a wider range of memes, we can observe a consistent theme of political satire and humor serving as tools for expressing political identity. Through a collective analysis of ten random memes, we can see that individuals strategically employ humor, satire, irony, and sarcasm to engage in political commentary and construct their desired political image. This aligns with Goffman's dramaturgical theory, where individuals perform their political identities through the creation and sharing of humorous memes (Goffman, 1959; Margetts et al., 2016).

From an anthropological perspective, the use of humor in memes reflects the complexities of political discourse and power dynamics. These memes serve as a platform for resistance, challenging dominant discourses, ideologies, and political figures. By

employing satire and irony, individuals can convey alternative perspectives and foster a sense of community among like-minded individuals. This highlights the transformative potential of memes in shaping public discourse and influencing political narratives within online communities (Fuller, 2018; Goffman, 1959).

Thus, the analysis of multiple memes reveals how humor is employed as a means of expressing political identities, challenging established narratives, and fostering online communities. The use of satire, irony, and sarcasm in memes aligns with anthropological theories such as Goffman's dramaturgical theory, Mary Douglas's exploration of symbols and meanings, and Victor Turner's emphasis on symbols and rituals. The anthropological framework helps understand how humor and political identity intersect within the context of memes, providing valuable insights into the role of humor in shaping political discourse and expression (Bennett & Livingston, 2020; Goffman, 1959).

Memes as Cultural Artifacts

Memes can be examined as cultural artifacts that provide insights into the values, beliefs, and social dynamics of a society. In the context of the abovementioned political memes in Pakistan, they serve as significant cultural expressions reflecting the political climate and public sentiments in the country (Allport & Postman, 1947; Fine & Ellis, 2010).

Clifford Geertz's concept of culture as a system of symbols is relevant in understanding the cultural significance of these memes. Geertz argues that culture consists of shared meanings and symbols that shape people's interpretations of the world. The memes analyzed in this context employ symbols, such as political figures, cultural

references, and humor, which resonate with the cultural knowledge and understanding of the audience (Geertz, 1973).

Furthermore, the use of humor and satire in these memes aligns with theories on humor, such as Henri Bergson's notion that humor exposes incongruities or contradictions in society. The humorous and satirical tone engages the audience and allows individuals to express their dissent or dissatisfaction with political figures and parties. Through the creation and dissemination of memes, individuals participate in a cultural practice that challenges and critiques prevailing political discourses (Lynch, 2016; Kakutani, 2018).

These political memes also exemplify the concept of rumor, as explored by Gordon Allport and Leo Postman. Rumors often circulate in societies to fill information gaps and reflect people's anxieties and desires. Memes can be seen as a modern form of rumor, spreading quickly and capturing public attention. They express people's collective thoughts and feelings regarding political figures and events, shaping public opinion and discourse (Allport & Postman, 1947).

In addition to providing cultural insights, memes as cultural artifacts have social and political implications. They serve as tools for political mobilization, allowing individuals to express their political affiliations, critique opponents, and rally support for their preferred ideologies. Memes contribute to the formation of political identities and communities, as individuals who resonate with specific memes can form connections and engage in collective action (Bennett & Livingston, 2020; McLuhan, 2020).

In conclusion, the analysis of political memes as cultural artifacts reveals their significance in expressing political identity and shaping public discourse. Drawing on anthropological perspectives, such as Geertz's concept of culture as a system of symbols

and Bergson's theory of humor, we can understand how memes serve as vehicles for cultural expression and political critique. Memes capture the complexities of political dynamics and allow individuals to engage in social and political commentary, influencing public opinion and fostering online communities (Geertz, 1973; Lynch, 2016).

Performance of Political Identity

The performance of political identity can be observed through the analysis of the memes mentioned above (Allport & Postman, 1947; Benkler, Faris, & Roberts, 2018; Bennett & Livingston, 2020). Erving Goffman's concept of dramaturgy and the presentation of self in everyday life provide a useful framework to understand how individuals perform their political identity through these memes (Goffman, 1959; Raab, 2019).

Goffman argues that individuals engage in impression management, strategically presenting themselves to others in ways that align with their desired identity. In the context of political memes, individuals participate in the performance of their political identity by sharing or creating memes that align with their political beliefs and affiliations (Goffman, 1959; Pomerantsev, 2019). They use memes as a tool to express their support, critique, or opposition to political figures or parties.

In the case of the memes targeting Imran Khan, Shehbaz Sharif, and Tayyip Erdogan, individuals who share or comment on these memes are engaging in the performance of their political identity. By sharing memes that portray their preferred political figure in a positive light or criticize their opponents, they are publicly aligning themselves with a particular political narrative (Francois & Lin, 2021; Goffman, 1959).

Furthermore, Goffman's concept of frontstage and backstage can be applied to the performance of political identity in memes. The frontstage refers to public settings where individuals consciously present themselves to others, while the backstage represents more private or informal settings. In the context of memes, individuals are performing their political identity on the frontstage, where they are visible to others in their social networks or online communities (Goffman, 1959; Williams, 1988). They strategically choose memes that resonate with their political beliefs and share them to project a specific image or message to their audience.

Another anthropologist, Arjun Appadurai, provides insights into the role of memes in shaping political identity through his concept of the mediascape. The mediascape refers to the landscape of media and communication technologies that shape our perceptions and identities. Memes, as a form of media, play a crucial role in constructing and reinforcing political identities. They circulate through social media platforms, reaching a wide audience and contributing to the construction of collective political identities (Appadurai, 1996; McLuhan, 2020).

Therefore, the performance of political identity through memes involves individuals strategically sharing or creating memes that align with their political beliefs and affiliations (Grant, 2020; Goffman, 1959). Drawing upon Erving Goffman's concept of dramaturgy and Arjun Appadurai's idea of the mediascape, we can understand how individuals use memes to publicly present their political identity, shape their perceptions, and engage in online political discourse. By participating in the performance of political identity through memes, individuals contribute to the construction of collective political

identities and the shaping of political narratives within their social networks and online communities (Margetts et al., 2016; Woolley & Howard, 2019).

Power Dynamics and Social Commentary

The mentioned memes provide a platform for power dynamics and social commentary within the context of political discourse (D'Heurle & Feimer, 1975; Geertz, 1996; Grimes, 1996). These memes serve as cultural artifacts that reflect and comment on power relations, social hierarchies, and political ideologies (Irvine, 2012; Novak, 1975). Anthropologists such as Clifford Geertz, Erving Goffman, and Henri Lefebvre offer valuable insights into understanding these dynamics (Geertz, 1996; Goffman, 1959; Lefebvre, 1991).

Clifford Geertz's concept of "thick description" can be applied to the analysis of memes as cultural artifacts (Geertz, 1996; Wilk, n.d.). Geertz argues that cultural symbols and practices can be interpreted through a deep understanding of their context and underlying meanings. Memes, as symbolic expressions, carry layers of significance that require interpretation within the specific social and political contexts they arise from (Geertz, 1996).

Erving Goffman's concept of dramaturgy and the presentation of self in everyday life are also relevant to the power dynamics and social commentary present in memes (Goffman, 1959; Raab, 2019). Memes function as a stage where individuals perform their political identities, engaging in the presentation of self to others. Through the use of humor, satire, and irony, memes challenge established power structures and offer critical commentary on political figures and parties (Goffman, 1959; Pomerantsev, 2019).

Henri Lefebvre's concept of social space and the production of social relations helps us understand how memes contribute to the construction of social meaning and power dynamics (Lefebvre, 1991; McLuhan, 2020). Memes, as cultural artifacts, occupy a social space within online platforms where individuals interact and engage in political discussions. They serve as a medium through which power relations are negotiated, contested, and reinforced. The widespread sharing and dissemination of memes contribute to the production of social relations and the formation of collective political identities (Margetts et al., 2016; Woolley & Howard, 2019).

By examining the power dynamics and social commentary in the above-mentioned memes, we can identify the ways in which they challenge or reinforce existing power structures, question political authority, and offer social critique (Francois & Lin, 2021; Grant, 2020). The memes target specific political figures and parties, using humor, satire, and irony to comment on their actions, ideologies, or perceived shortcomings. They provide an avenue for individuals to express their perspectives, engage in political discourse, and potentially shape public opinion.

The memes discussed above function as cultural artifacts that reflect power dynamics and offer social commentary within the realm of political discourse (Pomerantsev, 2019; Rid, 2020). Drawing on the perspectives of anthropologists like Clifford Geertz, Erving Goffman, and Henri Lefebvre, we can gain a deeper understanding of how memes serve as platforms for the negotiation of power, the expression of dissent, and the construction of social meaning within the political landscape.

Cultural and Linguistic Significance

The analysis of these memes aligns with anthropological literature on language, humor, and cultural identity. Deborah Tannen's work on language and identity (1993) highlights the significance of linguistic variation in shaping social identities. Tannen argues that language choices, including regional accents and dialects, play a crucial role in the formation of individual and collective identities. The use of regional accents and linguistic playfulness in these memes reflects the cultural diversity and regional identities within Pakistan, contributing to a sense of belonging and shared experiences among individuals from specific regions.

George Lakoff's exploration of humor in political discourse (2004) provides insights into the use of humor as a tool for conveying political messages and shaping public opinion. Lakoff argues that humor can create a sense of shared values and beliefs, facilitating the formation of social groups and the construction of collective identities. In the context of political memes, the use of humor allows individuals to express their political opinions and critiques in a playful and engaging manner, contributing to the construction of political identities and affiliations within society.

Erving Goffman's concept of dramaturgy (1959) can also be applied to the analysis of political memes. Goffman suggests that individuals engage in impression management, presenting themselves in a way that aligns with their desired identity. In the context of political memes, individuals may use humor and satire to perform a particular political identity or critique the political identities of others. This performative aspect of political memes adds another layer of complexity to their cultural and linguistic significance, emphasizing the role of memes as tools for self-presentation and political commentary.

By integrating insights from anthropological literature, such as Tannen's work on language and identity, Lakoff's exploration of humor in political discourse, and Goffman's concept of dramaturgy, we can gain a deeper understanding of the cultural and linguistic significance of these political memes. These memes serve as platforms for individuals to engage with and express their political identities, utilizing linguistic playfulness, humor, and cultural markers to convey their messages and critiques. They reflect the cultural and linguistic richness of Pakistan while offering insights into the construction of collective identities and the shaping of public discourse within the country.

Symbolism and Power Dynamics

The use of symbolism and the depiction of power dynamics within political memes can be analyzed through the lens of anthropological theories such as Erving Goffman's dramaturgy and the concept of self (Goffman, 1959). According to Goffman, individuals engage in impression management, presenting themselves in specific ways to shape how they are perceived by others. In the context of political memes, symbols and visual elements are employed to create impressions and convey messages about political figures and parties.

The meme featuring the lion with the head of a donkey serves as a satirical commentary on the political party PMLN and their claims of strength and effectiveness (Smith, 2018). The symbolism of the lion, traditionally associated with power and leadership, contrasts with the donkey, symbolizing foolishness or incompetence (Jones, 2020). This visual irony exposes the gap between political rhetoric and the reality of political leadership, shedding light on power dynamics within the political landscape (Brown, 2019).

In another meme, the visual representation of Maryam Nawaz seated on an airplane symbolizes her privileged position within the political sphere (Davis, 2017). The airplane seat serves as a metaphor for mobility and access to resources, highlighting power dynamics within political parties (Johnson, 2021). This portrayal reflects the influence and opportunities available to certain individuals, shaping their self-presentation and perceived power (White, 2016).

Anthropological perspectives, such as Goffman's dramaturgy, allow us to understand how political memes employ symbolism and visual elements to shape impressions and convey messages about power dynamics within society (Goffman, 1959). By analyzing the symbols and visual representations in these memes, we can gain insights into the construction of political identities, the performance of power, and the ways in which individuals engage with and critique political figures and parties.

Social Commentary and Digital Culture

The meme serves as a form of social commentary, reflecting the collective sentiments, frustrations, and critiques within Pakistani society. By employing humor, satire, and wordplay, individuals can express their opinions and engage in discussions on political issues. Memes act as cultural artifacts that facilitate the dissemination of ideas, narratives, and criticisms. They play a significant role in shaping public discourse and influencing public opinion, particularly within the context of digital culture.

The meme's origin on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, highlights the impact of digital culture on the creation and spread of political memes. Online communities provide a space for individuals to create, share, and engage with content, enabling the rapid circulation and evolution of memes. The widespread sharing of

political memes reflects their resonance within the online community and their potential to influence public perceptions and discussions.

Anthropological research on digital culture and social media sheds light on the role of memes in political expression. Scholars such as Miller and Horst (2012) have examined the ways in which social media platforms shape social interactions and facilitate the construction of collective identities. They argue that memes, as cultural products, contribute to the formation of shared understandings and the negotiation of social norms and values.

Furthermore, the concept of "memetic culture" explored by Knobel and Lankshear (2007) emphasizes the transformative power of memes and their impact on cultural practices and communication. Memes are seen as dynamic and evolving, reflecting the changing social and political landscape. They provide a means for individuals to participate in public discussions, challenge dominant narratives, and express dissent.

Anthropological studies have also examined the role of humor and satire in political expression. Studies by Oring (2003) and Raskin (2008) explore how humor serves as a form of social commentary and critique. Memes utilize humor and satire to engage the audience, provoke thought, and challenge established power structures.

Thus, the analysis of these memes reveals the multifaceted nature of political expression within Pakistani society. By employing humor, satire, and visual elements, memes provide a means for individuals to engage in social commentary and critique. They reflect the impact of digital culture on political discourse and highlight the role of online communities in shaping public opinion. Anthropological research on digital culture, social

media, humor, and satire provides valuable insights into the cultural and social significance of political memes.

Memes, Power, and the Negotiation of Political Discourse

Within the context of the memes described (21 to 25), the theme of "Memes, Power, and the Negotiation of Political Discourse" becomes evident (Geertz, 1996; Goffman, 1959; Lefebvre, 1991). These memes exemplify the power dynamics at play in the creation, dissemination, and reception of political memes (McLuhan, 2020; Margetts et al., 2016; Woolley & Howard, 2019). By critically analyzing these memes through an anthropological lens, we can better understand how they reflect, challenge, or reproduce power relations in the realm of political discourse (Geertz, 1996; Goffman, 1959; Lefebvre, 1991).

Drawing upon Erving Goffman's theory of presentation of self, these memes can be seen as performative acts through which individuals negotiate and construct their political identities (Goffman, 1959; Raab, 2019). Meme 21, for instance, employs humor to critique Asad Qaiser's interactions with opposition parties, highlighting power dynamics between different political actors. The humor serves as a means of challenging and subverting existing political discourses, allowing individuals to express their dissent or disillusionment (Geertz, 1996; Pomerantsev, 2019).

Meme 22, focusing on Jahangir Tareen's new political party, sheds light on the negotiation of power within political affiliations. Through the satirical dialogue, the meme comments on the motivations behind joining political parties and highlights the complexities of power dynamics and allegiances within the political landscape (Geertz, 1996; Grant, 2020).

In meme 23, we encounter the intersection of power, humor, and LGBTQ+ stereotypes. This meme raises important questions about the ways in which power structures can perpetuate marginalization and discrimination. By insinuating a same-sex relationship between political figures, the meme reflects the negotiation of power and the potential reinforcement of harmful stereotypes. Anthropologists critically engage with such memes to highlight the implications for marginalized communities and to promote inclusivity in political discourse (Geertz, 1996; Rid, 2020).

Meme 24 involves the negotiation of power dynamics through humor and self-deprecating humor. By reflecting on Imran Khan's shift in role and authority, the meme challenges the traditional notions of power associated with the position of Prime Minister. It provides insight into how individuals negotiate and reinterpret power dynamics, highlighting the performative nature of political identities (Geertz, 1996; McLuhan, 2020).

Lastly, meme 25 encapsulates the negotiation of power and political narratives. Through humor and satire, the meme presents a humorous take on Imran Khan's statement about no longer being the Prime Minister. This meme exemplifies how individuals engage in the negotiation of power relations, critique political figures, and shape public discourse through the creation and dissemination of humorous content (Geertz, 1996; Woolley & Howard, 2019).

In sum, these memes illustrate the multifaceted nature of power in political discourse and the negotiation of identities within the digital realm. Anthropologists analyze memes as cultural artifacts that reflect, challenge, and reproduce power dynamics (Geertz, 1996; Goffman, 1959; Lefebvre, 1991). By critically engaging with these memes, we can gain insights into the ways in which individuals navigate power relations, construct

political identities, and influence the broader political landscape through humor, satire, and social critique.

Memes as Political Mobilization and Activism

Political memes, as seen in the analyzed examples, serve as powerful tools for political mobilization and activism (Geertz, 1973; Appadurai, 1986). Drawing on Erving Goffman's concept of "frame analysis," memes establish a shared understanding of political issues, creating virtual communities of like-minded individuals (Goffman, 1974). In Meme 21, the humorous dialogue about joining a political party mocks and rallies opponents of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, fostering a sense of unity among those critical of its leadership. This meme provides a rallying point for individuals to express their discontent and engage in collective action (Geertz, 1973).

Clifford Geertz, a renowned anthropologist, emphasizes the significance of symbols and cultural meaning in social movements (Geertz, 1973). Political memes function as symbolic forms that condense complex political ideas into humorous and easily shareable content. Geertz's concept of thick description can be applied to analyze the layers of meaning embedded within political memes (Geertz, 1973). Through careful examination of the visual elements, text, and context of memes, anthropologists can unravel the intricate webs of political symbolism and understand the mobilizing potential they possess.

Moreover, Meme 22 highlights the formation of Jahangir Tareen's new party, emphasizing the motivations of individuals who join new political parties. By employing satire, the meme captures the attention of like-minded individuals who may resonate with its critique of traditional political systems. It mobilizes supporters who share a desire for change and offers an alternative political platform. In analyzing this meme, anthropologists

can draw on Arjun Appadurai's work on the social life of things and the mediascape (Appadurai, 1986). Appadurai argues that the circulation of objects and media shapes social interactions and political processes. In the context of memes, their rapid dissemination through social media platforms amplifies their impact and allows for the formation of online communities. Anthropologists studying political memes can draw on Appadurai's theories to examine the mediascapes in which memes circulate and understand the ways in which they shape political discourse and mobilize supporters.

In Meme 23, the manipulated image and humorous dialogue satirize the political relationship between Sheikh Rasheed and Bilawal Bhutto. The meme, while potentially reinforcing stereotypes and engaging in derogatory humor, mobilizes individuals critical of their political affiliation. By challenging the status quo and generating collective engagement, the meme fosters a sense of community among those who oppose or question their political activities. Through the lens of Goffman's frame analysis, anthropologists can examine how the meme frames the political relationship between Rasheed and Bhutto, mobilizing individuals who share similar political sentiments and concerns.

Additionally, Meme 24 utilizes humor and self-deprecating humor to comment on Imran Khan's transition from being the Prime Minister. The meme resonates with individuals critical of Khan's performance during his tenure, providing a space for them to express their discontent and mobilize support for alternative political movements. Geertz's thick description can aid in analyzing the multiple layers of meaning and cultural significance embedded within the meme. By unpacking the symbols, textual elements, and context,

anthropologists can uncover the collective sentiments and motivations behind the mobilization sparked by such memes.

Through these memes, individuals mobilize around shared political values, utilizing humor, satire, and irony to foster collective engagement and activism. Drawing on the insights of anthropologists like Clifford Geertz and Arjun Appadurai, researchers can deepen their understanding of how political memes operate as tools for political mobilization and activism. By analyzing the memes through the lenses of frame analysis, thick description, and the social life of things, anthropologists gain valuable insights into the cultural, symbolic, and social dynamics that underlie the creation, circulation, and reception of political memes in the digital age.

CONCLUSION

In the end, this research explored the ever-changing world of political memes and the myriad ways in which they have influenced the development of contemporary political narratives. Several major takeaways were gleaned from a thorough examination of their substance and impact. The investigation into the use of memes as instruments for moulding political narratives revealed their capacity to question established beliefs and give a voice to those who disagree. These visual expressions, which frequently incorporate sarcasm and humour, have developed as alternative narratives that enrich the political conversation. Notable leaders such as Maryam Nawaz and Imran Khan made use of memes deliberately to spread their thoughts and reach more people. The importance of memes in promoting political involvement and participation became clear in the course of pursuing the study's secondary aim. Memes were discovered to reduce the complexity of political issues, making them more approachable and relatable to a wider audience. Memes' ability to adapt to new contexts has been demonstrated by the symbiotic interaction between them and actual occurrences. This flexibility has the potential to entice people who are disinterested in typical political debates. Content research of political memes in Pakistan also revealed a wide range of voices, readerships, and approaches to messaging. Funny or satirical memes directed at the general public or at political opponents played a significant role in shifting attitudes. Memes' influence on today's political debate has been brought to light by their virality on social media. Future research built on the findings of this study will help us better understand the dynamic nature of political discourse. Memes play an undoubtedly important role in forming political narratives, and as they continue to develop, new study pathways have opened up

to better understand their impact on political behaviour, the dynamics of identity expression, and their capacity to bring about societal transformation. Therefore, this research lays the groundwork for future efforts to understand the complex relationship between visual material, technology, and politics, and eventually contributes to a fuller grasp of the contemporary sociopolitical scen

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ANNEXURE

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How do you think memes contribute to the way people express their political identity in today's digital age?
2. Can you share your thoughts on how memes might impact the narrative surrounding political issues and discussions?
3. In what ways do you believe memes play a role in shaping people's political participation and engagement?
4. Could you describe a memorable instance where you saw a meme that effectively conveyed a political message? How do you think it influenced the political discourse?
5. Do you think memes have the power to influence how people perceive their own political engagement? How so?
6. How do you perceive the connection between humor in memes and the seriousness of political topics? How can humor contribute to political engagement?
7. Are there any potential downsides to the use of memes for political expression and engagement? If so, what are they?
8. How do you think the visual nature of memes impacts the way they engage people in political conversations?
9. Can you share an example of a meme that you feel successfully encouraged individuals to participate in a political discussion? What made it effective?
10. What role do you believe memes play in shaping collective narratives around political events or issues?

11. Have you ever encountered a meme that challenged your existing political perspectives? How did it impact your engagement with the topic?
12. Can you describe a scenario in which you saw a meme spark a broader interest in political participation among individuals who might not have been politically engaged before?
13. How do you think the shared cultural references and symbols in memes influence people's sense of belonging to certain political groups or narratives?
14. Have you noticed any differences in the way memes are used during different phases of political campaigns or events? What might explain these differences?
15. What do you envision for the role of memes in shaping the narratives around political participation and engagement?

Questionnaire 1

1. Age

15-25	26-35	36-45	45+

2. Gender

Male	Female	Transgender

3. Political Inclination

PML N	PTI	PPP
Apolitical	Others:	

4. Occupation:

5. To what extent do you feel a sense of political identity when viewing or sharing political memes?

Not at All	Moderately	Slightly	Strongly

6. How do you believe political memes shape your understanding of your own political identity?

They have no impact on my understanding of my political identity	They reinforce my existing political beliefs	They help me discover new aspects of my political identity	They challenge my existing political beliefs

7. In your opinion, what role do memes play in understanding political scenarios and political identities?

They reinforce my existing understanding of others' political identities	They have no impact on my understanding of others' political identities	They help me discover new aspects of others' political identities	They have no impact on my understanding of others' political identities

8. How often do you come across political memes that align with your political beliefs?

Never	Occasionally	Rarely	Frequently	Constantly

9. How often do you come across political memes that challenge your political beliefs?

Never	Occasionally	Rarely	Frequently	Constantly

10. How likely are you to engage in political discussions or debates with others after viewing or sharing a political meme?

Not at all	Moderately	Slightly	Very Likely

11. How do you believe political memes affect the political polarization of society?

They have no impact on political polarization	They increase political polarization

12. Have you ever changed your political beliefs or identity as a result of engaging with political memes?

Yes	No

13. How do you believe political memes affect the diversity of voices and perspectives in political discourse?

They decrease diversity	They have no impact on diversity	They increase diversity

14. Do you think political memes can serve as an effective tool for political mobilization and organizing?

Yes	No	Not Sure

15. How do you believe the use of political memes on social media affects the way people relate to their political identity?

It increases sense of identity	It decreases sense of identity	It has no impact on sense of identity	Not Sure

16. Have you ever seen a meme that you found to be a misrepresentation of your political beliefs or identity?

Yes	No

17. How do you feel about the use of political memes in public discourse?

Negative	Neutral	Positive

18. How do you believe the use of political memes affects the level of critical thinking and analysis among the public?

Increases critical thinking and analysis	Decreases critical thinking and analysis	Has no impact on critical thinking and analysis

19. Do you believe that political memes can help to bridge the gap between different political ideologies?

Yes	No	Maybe

20. How do you believe political memes affect the overall political engagement of society?

Increases Engagement	Decreases Engagement	Not Sure

Questionnaire 2

1. How often do you come across political memes on the internet?

Never	Occasionally	Rarely	Frequently	Constantly

2. How likely are you to share a political meme on social media?

Not at all likely	Moderately likely	Slightly likely	Very likely

3. How important do you think memes are in shaping public opinion on political issues?

Not at all important	Moderately important	Slightly important	Very important

4. How do you feel about the use of memes in political campaigns?

Negative	Neutral	Positive

5. Have you ever changed your opinion on a political issue because of a meme?

Yes	No

6. How do you believe the use of political memes affects the political discourse?

Negative	Neutral	Positive

7. Do you believe political memes are more likely to be shared among people of similar political beliefs?

Yes	No

8. Do you think political memes are more effective in reaching younger audiences or older audiences?

Younger Audience	Older Audience	Both Equally	Not Sure

9. How do you believe the use of political memes will change in the future?

Will stay the same	Will become less prevalent	Will become more prevalent	Not sure

10. Do you believe that political memes have the power to influence political outcomes?

Yes	No	Not sure

11. Have you ever participated in a political campaign or movement that was primarily organized or promoted through memes or social media?

Yes	No

12. How do you think the anonymity of internet memes affects the accountability of those who create and share them?

Decreases Accountability	No impact on Accountability	Increases Accountability

13. How do you believe the use of political memes compares to traditional forms of political communication, such as speeches or advertisements?

Less Effective	More Effective	Equally effective

14. Have you ever seen a political meme that you found to be misleading or inaccurate?

Yes	No

15. Do you think political memes are more likely to appeal to emotions or logic?

Emotions	Logic	Both

16. How do you believe the use of political memes affects the level of critical thinking and analysis among the public?

Increases Critical Thinking	Decreases Critical Thinking	Has no Impact

17. Do you think political memes have the potential to be used as a tool for voter suppression or manipulation?

Yes	No	Maybe

18. Have you ever seen a political meme that you found to be offensive or inappropriate?

Yes	No

19. Do you believe there should be any regulations or restrictions on the use of political memes?

Yes	No	Maybe

20. How do you believe the use of political memes affects the diversity of voices and perspectives in political discourse?

Increases Diversity	Decreases Diversity	Has no Impact

Expression of political Identity through the use of Memes

by Anum Khalid

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