

Constructing Political Persona via Jokes in Pakistan: A Thematic Analysis

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Abstract

Jokes and humor play a vital role in contribution to construct political persona. Besides providing entertainment and amusement, these also depict social and political issues. Political jokes are not only funny or witty remarks but a part of cultural text which inform us about the political issues of the society. This study uses constructivist-interpretivist paradigm (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) and focuses on Michael Billig's Theory of Humor and Ridicule (2005). The research uses inductive reasoning and qualitative research method. Political jokes were collected from Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram in the period from January 2023 to June 2025. The collected Political jokes were analyzed by using thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis of jokes reveals that Political humor in Pakistan is not only use to entertain people but it also reflects the frustration, emotions, and disappointment of people on the politicians. These jokes not only make people laugh but they carry deeper meanings and act as social dialogue. The study also highlighted different traits of political leaders in Pakistan depicted through jokes and humor. Humor act as a way of political education for public. Also, these jokes act as a tool through which people build identities of politicians by combining their thoughts, observation and situation in which they live.

Keywords: political jokes, political persona, politicians and identity construction

Introduction

Political persona refers to the socially constructed image of political figures totally opposite to how they are in their personal life (Corner, 2000). Persona includes the way people show their character, communication style, their beliefs and values (Street, 2019). The term persona is explained by Marshall (2010) persona

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is “performed identity.” This means that it is partially real and partially deliberate display of one’s character. Political persona is not just only formed by the actions of politicians but it is shaped by media and how people perceive or react to politicians (Lalancette and Raynauld, 2019). Henri Bergson (1914) explains that jokes that are considered as comic art instill rigid behavior or ‘mechanical inelasticity’ in people and society. Bergson explains that this rigidity in societal norms and culture sparks humor in the joke. It criticizes society and exposes its flaws in a humorous way. Political persona is built through political speeches, media coverage or other branding strategies one of these obvious means are jokes and humor. Joke reflects social issues present in society. It also reflects the public opinion. Jokes can turn complex situation into funny stories (Davies, 2011).

Morreall (1983) says that humor and jokes serve the purpose of entertainment. It offers a break from everyday stress, a psychological relief by providing light-hearted comments on societal flaws. It criticizes society in a socially acceptable manner. Humor reflects cultural values in a way that it helps people to understand the political complex situation in simple and emotional way (Kuipers, 2015). Jokes are not only funny or witty remarks but they are the cultural text which tells about the political, social, or economic issues of the society. Henri Bergson explain that humor reflect how humans behave. Sometime human behavior reflects their rigidity which Henri Bergson called as human “mechanical inelasticity”. Humor is created by reflecting these rigidities in social interactions, which allow people to reflect on their own experiences and social norms. On the other hand, Sociologist Erving Goffman talks about how humor can represent social situations. Erving Goffman call this as face in communication. Through humor psychological tension is released and it play a part in strengthening group identity. This point is related to the culture in Pakistan. In Pakistan humor help to strengthen the bond between the group identity and to critique the social and cultural norms.

Victor Turner’s concept of “communitas” state that humor and laughter create the feeling of attachment and unity among individuals. People can reflect their cultural values, individual bonds and initiating commentary on controversial topics through jokes. Repeated jokes on TV or media build the certain kind of political persona. In Pakistan, direct criticism on politicians is usually avoided but humor help people to express their opinion and question the one who are in authority (Baig, Shehzadi, & Hussain, 2023). Jokes do not only play a part in mocking on others but it helps in building identity. Political persona is not pre planned image making process but it

also made by public through jokes. In Pakistan usage of satire, mimicry and irony is common in social media. Humor reflects the political realities that builds or destroy the political identities.

Humor found everywhere, but it varies across different reigns. Indirect criticism allows people to question the authority with direct confrontation (Tsakona, 2017). Humor influences the image of politicians. In western countries mid night comedy shows usually use humor to mock on the politicians. They usually made fun of their honesty and capability (Baumgartner & Morris, 2008). Humor do not only reflect the opinion of people but it can also help in shaping the identity by highlighting the traits of people or community (Street, 2019). In Pakistan, humor play a vital role in political commentary. Many newspaper cartoons use visual satire to criticize the inefficiency of governance, corruption etc. Many newspapers like Dawn or The Nation use to publish such satirical political cartoons (Azhar et al., 2021).

Jokes play an important role in Pakistani society. As it helps people to talk about things that they usually avoid. Jokes help people to express their thoughts, feeling and expectations. It also helps people challenge the societal and political norms. As Iqbal, Mahmood, and Azher (2020) talk about how jokes strengthen negative stereotypes about women being talkative and silly. Most of the jokes represents women as silly individuals who need assistance in doing simple work. These types of jokes strengthen the gender stereotypes. Whereas, in 2023 Khurshid, Shaheen, and Iqbal studied political humor. It reveals that this type of jokes helps to shape the thoughts of people specially youngsters. Similarly, Suleman and Saleem, study political memes on Facebook that reflect message and allow people to discuss about it. Other studies talk about how jokes as a medium for showing anger and frustration. As Irshad, (2025) study humor on Instagram after Pahalgam incident. People use humor to show anger and protest after Pahalgam incident. Humor can also be used to create identity or to resist social pressure as, Saraiki women use jokes to talk about their sufferings and struggles (Azher, 2023). TV satire became popular in 2000s. any shows like Hasb- e-Haal or Khabarnaak used mimicry to present the political figures. These programs indirectly criticize political figures (Nadeem, 2020).

In recent years memes became an obvious mean to criticize political personas. Memes simplify the political situation and exaggerate certain traits of political figures to entertain people and provide them understanding of how politics work

(Baig, Shehzadi, & Hussain, 2023). Many online platforms like Facebook, Instagram or X (Twitter) circulate jokes on regular basis. Jokes reinforce stereotypes about politicians. Memes became a source of political socialization. Studies reveal that young people heavily rely on memes to form opinion about the political figures (Safdar & Khan, 2025). Humor builds political persona in two ways first, it associates the politicians with certain trait until they became their identity and secondly, shared laughter on some joke validate the point that people collectively agree on what joke means (Kuipers, 2015). Humor in Pakistan crosses languages and communities. Jokes in many regional languages circulates online which create diverse culture of amusement as well as of critique. Humor helps in understanding traits of politicians. It acts as a way of knowing political figures (Baig et al., 2023).

Political jokes in Pakistan are not only for entertainment but they greatly reflect the emotions and opinion of people. Jokes reflect how people see and feel about society. The themes in the joke provide meaning and structure to the humor highlighting the everyday issues and opinion of people living in Pakistani society. The themes in jokes become the key point in highlighting the social truths within the society. Through humor people find emotional relief as they shared laughter on common issues but humor can reflect what is considered right or wrong in the society. Political jokes in Pakistan, apart from humorous effects, can also contribute to the stereotypical representation of political persona. Through this study, political persona is analyzed and identified. Pakistani political humor is influenced by polarization and censorship. Jokes play dual role of entertaining people and to show resistance (Baig et al., 2023). Humor can turn complex political ideas into simple form by representing the image political leader in funny but meaningful way.

Review of the Literature

Humor has dual face it can criticize and question those who are in power at the same time it can also support the existing norms and social hierarchies. Lim (2025) named it as “double edged discourse” because joke is funny in nature, they let people criticize those who are in authority as well as entertain them. Billig (2005) also point out that jokes can hide the underlying meanings. It can make fun at the same time it can also reinforce stereotypes and social rules. By looking at the dual nature of joke, it is clear that joke serve challenging societal functions that are beyond surface. Humor influence on people in many ways. It had great impact on people personal, social or political life by allowing people to express their emotions and feelings.

Humor basically represents the shared experience of people that are both entertaining and meaningful in nature. Humor and jokes play an important role in the society by influencing different aspects of life like social, political or economic. It not only provides the chance to laugh at others but also on ourselves, providing the personal satisfaction and enjoyment. Humor and jokes usually provide the positive message, feelings or emotions in the individuals, groups and society (Romero and Cruthirds 2006). According to Freud (1960) jokes and humor are like unconscious process he compares joke work with dream work according to him jokes and dreams both connect vivid ideas together bringing laughter, excitement and positive feelings. It is like unconscious process. This concept is further explored by Matte-Blanco (1975) by describing symmetrical and asymmetrical thoughts. Jokes often help people to express their suppressed desires, emotions and thoughts in socially acceptable manner (Freud 1960).

Humor and jokes express the superiority on one's own past situation or on the other groups of society (Superiority Theory: Berger, 1987; Cooper, 2008). These general functions also extend into political area. In political domain humor, jokes and memes shape the perception of common people about political leaders. Jokes help in communicating complex political situation into simple content. Research shows that how humor influences the way people see political figures. As Baumgartner and Morris (2008) found in their research that people who watch satirical TV shows in U.S think that all the politicians are less competent. They did not only build this perception but watching such shows made them more interested in politics. Jokes, memes and other type of humor use an exaggerated way to highlight the good and bad traits of politicians (Highfield, 2016). Humor is an important mean in identifying and building opinion about political leaders.

Street (2019) is of the view that politician's public image is a mixture of how they carry themselves in front of media, how people perceive their actions and how the words spread about them in the society. Important thing to note is that public persona is not fixed it changes with time and it is shaped by different kind of text including humor. Humor can turn complex political ideas into simple form by representing the image political leader in funny but meaningful way. To understand that how political persona is built through people perception and jokes it is important to understand the mechanism of humor. Jokes do more than just entertaining people they reflect the social, cultural norms and values. They carry the values and tradition of the society which help people to understand the hidden

messages behind them. By looking at different theories of humor and their function, we can better understand the purpose of jokes that how they influence public perception. It has the power to reinforce or challenge the traits that are highlighted in political persona. Humor can be a way to correct the society by expressing the thoughts on controversies, or reduce the tension on sensitive topics (Bergson 1913). Research shows that humor and jokes are used as a tool of reinforcing social stereotyping (Nayef & El- Nashar, 2014). Shah, A., Khattak, N. U. R., & Kanwal, A., (2022) talk about categorization and stereotyping. People are often categorized in society and groups on the basis of stereotyping. The study finds that different formats are used to make jokes funny in Pakistan such as short stories or answer question jokes. Jokes sometime use as the tool from powerful people to reinforce negative stereotypes. Jokes are used to correct the behavior of people of a particular region in humorous way who shares the same language.

There are also many types of humor theories, like, Superiority Theory, Relief theory, Incongruity theory, Violation theory, Minsky's Theory, Sociology Theories, Maintenance Theories, Negotiation Theories and Frame Theories (Mulder & Nijholt 2002). Superiority Theory explains the we feel pleasure when we notice our superiority on others by encountering their mistakes or shortcomings (Ferguson and Ford, 2008). For example, if someone slips and fell on ice, we feel superior by seeing someone clumsy. The person who become the subject of humor due to his perceived failure arouse sense of superiority in our self. The sense of pleasure one feel by seeing others in misfortune is called as *schadenfreude* (Smith et al., 1996). Incongruity Resolution Theory express the idea that in jokes we encounter something unexpected (incongruity) but it requires the mental effort to understand this unexpected twist or words to feel excitement, pleasure and amusement (Suls, 1972). However, detecting incongruity and trying to resolve it seems to be done at the same time often consider as one process but research shows that in reality these processes are separate (Hildebrand and Smith, 2014). Group Dynamics explains that the social settings affect our outwardly expressed amusement rather than how we actually feel it. For instance, when we watch a funny movie with friends, we laugh more than when we watch it alone (Devereux and Ginsburg, 2001). This thing also explains the why people feel more amused on laughing tracks on TV (Lee and Marsella, 2011). Arousal Theory explain that the humor can trigger a sudden rise in amusement or excitement that is called 'arousal boost' and then sudden release in excitement that is called as 'arousal jag' (Berlyne, 1972). When we encounter something unexpected like a punchline in joke our brain became active and try to

understand the incongruity. When brain solve the incongruity, it releases tension or there is sudden drop in arousal. When arousal boost and fall occur together, they lead to the feeling of pleasure. Relief theory says that the humor helps people to reduce their psychological tensions resulting into feeling sense of relief. Freud states "The joke enables us to express feelings and ideas that are normally repressed, allowing for a release of tension in a socially acceptable manner." Jokes are considered a source of laughter but in reality, they convey hidden social realities. Jokes are the linguistic tools that represents how mean, intensions are portray through communication.

Jokes play an important role thematically as different elements like audience, topic, context or speaker help in creating good humor that reflect hidden messages. Jokes are based on the shared cultural knowledge. As Noor, Rashid and Latif (2024), said that to understand jokes it is important to know about the culture in which the joke is originally generated as it gives meaning to the joke. They studied that jokes became humorous because they assign roles according to the context like who acted, who was affected or who is being talked about in the joke. Similarly, humor is used in conversation to create new relationships, to show unity and identity (Kotthoff, 2006). Moreover, in 2024 Attardo said that to understand jokes it is important to understand both the deeper meaning of speaker and the literal meaning of words used in jokes. Themes in jokes reflect the desires and emotions of people as Freud (1905) said that the humor reflect the hidden desires and emotions of people which help them to release their stress and tension. Whereas, Martin said that the themes in the jokes reflect the collective ideas and thoughts of people living in the society (Martin, 2007). Attardo, 2020 said that humor is created by the thematic coherence. Themes of a joke guide listener interpretation. Whereas Dynel said that themes in the jokes act as frames of reference through which people can relate joke with their personal experiences. The themes present in jokes act as interpretive frames (Dynel, 2009). In 2024 Similarly, Suhariningsih and Nurhayati studied emotional responses of generation Z twitter users on different types of humor. They find out that generation Z had greater emotional engagement with sarcastic and theme specific humor. These theories highlight that jokes are not just social or psychological tool but it is strategic tool in politics. Both public and politicians use jokes to influence the perception or convey thoughts or meanings. Research shows that politician use self-directed jokes sometime to gain the reliability of public. to show that they are not different from public and they both have same thoughts (Imran, Gul, & Aizaz, 2025). On the other side public made fun of politicians in a way that damage their

image and credibility. This shows that humor works both ways it helps politicians to present themselves in front of public and give right to public to criticize and question politicians. Humor in political context is a powerful tool in understanding leadership style and public perception.

In Pakistani context rich studies are conducted to show how humor shapes politics. Newspaper cartoons were one of the major tools in criticizing politicians. Azhar et al. (2021) talked about newspaper cartoons. The study looked at how these cartoons often used exaggeration and symbols like puppets, moneybags or animals to make fun of politicians their inefficiency, and corruption. These cartoons were great at showing political ideas in simple manner. In 2000s this concept was further developed when media launched programs like *Has-e-Haal* and *Khabarnaak*. These programs used parody and mimicry to share the common beliefs of people (Nadeem, 2020). These programs used to mimic different political figures by exaggeration their speeches to make fun of their inefficiencies, intelligence and morals. Khan, ur Rahman, and Anayat (2020) noted that shows like *Has-e-Haal* and *Khabarnaak* are meant for education purpose also because these type of shows present complex political issues as funny story that is understandable by large number of audiences. In recent time memes have change the way we see political figures. Baig, Shehzadi, and Hussain (2023) describe memes as “micro-discourses,” as memes turn any political issue into joke. Memes act as a shared medium that allow people to collectively share their thoughts on politics. There is limited understanding of how jokes develop political persona in a lighter way as most of the studies focus on media and satirical commentary. Public lack first-hand experience of meeting politicians in daily life so the jokes act as a medium that creates the impression of politicians. Unlike other means like newspapers or talk shows jokes allow people to understand and negotiate political identities in less confrontational manner. This gap highlights the need for studying jokes to see how through playful and recurring nature of jokes help in shaping public perceptions and developing the distinctive political persona, revealing details that go beyond traditional media representations.

Methodology

The study uses constructive-interpretivist paradigm (Guba and Lincoln 1994). The research focuses on interpreting textual data. This study uses Michael Billig's Theory of Humor and Ridicule (2005). He points out that humor often involves making fun of people or ideas, which can either support existing beliefs or challenge them. The

research uses inductive reasoning and qualitative research method. Jokes were collected from various online platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Jokes were collected from January 2023 to June 2025). This time period is selected to ensure the relevance of current social issues and to maintain consistency. Data analysis is done by using thematic analysis, following the framework of Braun and Clarke (2006). This research uses qualitative thematic analysis. As thematic analysis helps in classifying, analyzing and reporting different themes from the data set.

Analysis

This study analyzed political jokes from social media platforms between January 2023 to June 2025. The analysis reveal that public do not just only laugh at the joke on politicians but they also define them through jokes. Seven main themes were generated from dataset that builds the political persona

- Corruption and moral decline.
- Fake promises and hypocrisy.
- Populism and performative nature.
- Religious manipulation and false piety.
- Opportunist and power shifting politics.
- Public misery and economic incompetence.
- Media coverage and political theater.

❖ Corruption and moral decline

The most highlighted theme found was corruption. Political figures do fake promises to the public. now people laugh at the relief packages and economic reforms announced by the government. As one of the analyze joke says,

“PML-N ky ‘relief package’ news ky aaty ki tomato Rs 800 ho gaye. Asa lagta hai jesy stock market aur sabzi mandi ek hi app se chala rahy hain.”

This joke hints towards the irony of relief package followed by hardship for public. Basic goods prices increase every time government announces relief package for public to facilitate them financially. It highlights the hollow promises of government. There is always a big difference between what government promises to pubic and what they get in return. Public has lost its trust in government. Joke highlights the gap between government policies and their implantation in real life.

Even when government announces relief package people are unable to buy basic goods. This shows that there is need of proper policy which can be implemented to control inflation. Another joke captures the helplessness of public,

“Government ny 5 saal ka mega plan announce kar diya maghar hakeekat to yeh hai bhai ky awam alga hafta hi survive kar lein to bari baat hai.”

Government gives 5-year plan but in reality, it is really difficult for people to even survive under such pressure. Joke expresses the idea that political leaders speak about fancy things but in reality, they burden the public through their decisions. These jokes indicate the theme of corrupt politician. Who smiles and deceives people by making fake promises. Joke represents the reality of politician's incompetency, their corruption and greed. The joke highlights the theme of corruption to point out that how it affects everyone.

❖ Fake promises and hypocrisy

Corruption led to fake promises. People feel disappointed in government. Politicians made promises but they never fulfill it. As the joke says,

PPP ka slogan ab bhi “roti, kapra, makan” hai. Awam pooch rahi “Wifi aur fuel ki bari kab aaye ge?”

The joke mocks on the slogan of PPP. Joke highlights that now people need something more than cloth, food and shelter. This slogan was best for 1970s but now basic needs of people are changing. Joke highlights that in today's world fuel and internet are more like necessity of life. People rely on internet for basic information, working, and education. Whereas fuel is necessary for managing transport and electricity. To meet the need of people political promises should evolve. Joke represents the static politics of PPP. Politicians need to understand the necessity of modern man and change their vision according to the public's need. Government turns into drama that one can never escape. As the joke says,

“Netflix ky drama se ziyada to Pakistan ki budget speech fictional hai. Dono bs itna fark hai ky Netflix mein skip ka option hota hai maghar Pakistan budget speech mein nahi.”

These jokes indicate the nature of politicians. They are storytellers. They do not take action to fulfill public needs. This theme highlights that budget speech is more like performance in which politicians follow script. Budget is made without any serious plan, politicians made promises but in reality, they never fulfill it. people see budget as fiction in which politician made big promises but in contrast people actually face poverty, unemployment and low salaries. These are the promises that never became true. joke highlight that how politicians just want to appear good instead of doing something good for public.

❖ Populism and performative nature

Politicians in Pakistan usually take politics as drama. Politicians are dramatic and overconfident as one of the jokes says,

“Pakistan ky elections iss baar group project jesy thy jis main ek kaam karta hai, teen credit lety hain aur do WhatsApp par larty hain.”

This joke criticizes politicians who claim the victory without even putting effort. It represents the culture of politics; how different political form alliances with the winning party. In 2024-2025 elections only independent candidates, and public do their work like running campaigns without having enough resources but in the end, others took credit. In recent elections PPP and PML-N joined hand to create the government. In joke they represent the students who took credit in the end. it is common that leak videos or messages came on surface during elections. This indicate that members of same party fight with each other behind the scene as the joke refer “two fight on WhatsApp”. Another joke represents the over-dramatic nature of politicians,

“Assembly ka session dekh ky ammi ny kaha ‘beta WWE nahi news channel lagao’.”

The joke compares assembly session with WWE. Now politicians are more focused on being loud, blaming on others and shouting than on focusing on their jobs. Instead of logical argumentation or making laws they usually prefer to fight with each other. mother comment on assembly session highlights that how common people view assembly not as institution but as wrestling ring. This is all because of politicians’ behavior in assembly. This indicates the need of stronger rules, mutual respect and cooperation during lawmaking process.

❖ **Religious manipulation and false piety**

Religion is sensitive topic. In Pakistan leaders often use religion as a shield to hide their inefficiencies. As one of the jokes says,

“Jis tarhan murghay ki azan ka taluq namaz se nahi, usi tarhan Fazal-ur-Rehman ki khidmat ka taluq deen se nahi.”

The joke highlight that how some political leaders use religion as shield to gain political benefits but their action does not reflect religious values and beliefs. Joke create humor by comparing rooster's crow with politicians' services. Joke highlight that rooster crow has no relation with prayer similarly Fazal-ur-Rehman services has no link with religion. Joke express the people view about leaders with religious background. They view such leaders as a symbol of hollow spirituality. People are becoming aware of politician's tactics. Politicians use religion as a tool for influence. Another joke highlights institutional hypocrisy,

“Hum diet py hain aur Adliya azad hai. Yeh dono baatein tak taka chi lagti hain jab tak fries samny na aa jaein.”

The joke points out that judiciary claim to be independent but when this claim is tested out it turns otherwise. It is just like how people give up on their diet when their favorite food comes in front of them. People and judiciary both claim to be honest and discipline but both fail to maintain their honesty is they encounter any temptation. Judiciary appear to be fair but when they face political pressure, they give in. Joke criticizes institutions that claims big. They make big statements or claim but do not support them with their behavior or actions. They easily became the prey of temptation.

❖ **Opportunist and power shifting politics**

Political figures change loyalty faster than weather. One of the jokes highlight this concept perfectly,

“Pakistan mein dollar rate change hony se ziyada jaldi to siyasad election se pehly ittehaad badalty hain.”

This joke highlights the contrast between political instability and economic instability. In Pakistan dollar rate changes frequently but this joke compares it with

the change in political alliances. joke explain that how some politicians are not loyal to their own part ideology or beliefs. They join those who are more likely to win at elections for their personal gains. Political loyalty is unpredictable as dollar rates in Pakistan. joke represents the disappointment of public towards politicians. People belief that politicians will switch alliances whenever it is convenient for them. They have already seen this pattern too many times that they do not belief on commitments made by politicians. Another joke compares loyalty of politicians with load-shedding,

“Politics mein loyalty bikul load-shedding ki tarhan hoti hai ka baati hai aur kab chali jati hai pata hi nahi lagta.”

Loyalty status in Pakistan’s politics is very unstable. Loyalty depends on which party is offering higher status, money and seat. political parties lack clear ideology or vision. That is why politicians easily switch alliances for their personal gain. people do not have any trust in politicians as they have already seen how easily politician switch alliances it is similar to how public have adjusted to live with load shedding. This highlights that how members of the political parties often shift alliances due to their personal benefit leaving behind their party values and motif. These sudden shift in alliances can create instability in governance.

❖ **Public misery and economic incompetence**

Political figures do not act efficiently in making economy of county better. This joke highlights the economic situation of country and people suffering.

“Pichli baar N-League ki hakumat mein Pakistan ny itni taraki ki ky grey list mein ponch gaya tha, iss bar taraki karty karty default list mein ponch gaya hai.”

government fail to control the economic conditions of the country leading it to appear in default list. Joke reflects the situation of politics in tough time of country. Government should be accountable for the promises they make. This highlights that how government fail to reduce inflation which effect the daily life of people. People express their frustration towards government through protests and social commentary. Another joke talks about the nature of politician to blam others,

“Pakistan ka naya political skill: microphone pakarna, camera ki taraf dekhna aur phir kehna ky sazish ho rahi hai.”

Many politicians try to gain sympathy by acting as victim of conspiracy instead of acknowledging their faults and short comings. They blame everything on conspiracy. now a days many politicians focus in performing in front of camera rather than trying to solve the problem. In front of media, they deliver dramatic speeches and blame everything on conspiracy to gain public's sympathy and concern. "sazish ho rahi hai" is became more like punchline. Whenever politicians find no way, they blame everything on conspiracy either it is inflation, electricity or elections. Even humor on defense system turn sarcastic.

"Army Chief ny kaha China humein real-time input provide kar raha tha. Public be like; kya battlefield PUBG mein tabdeel hog ae hai?"

joke use sharp comparison between PUBG game and military action during war. When Army Chief points out towards real time input from China it sounded like something out of online games. As games uses different maps or live data to take quick actions. joke lightly mocks on Pakistan dependence on China for national defense action. Pakistan dependence make it appear less competent in its strategy. The intelligence report sharing between China and Pakistan indicates towards their relation based on trust and friendship. This information also helped Pakistani government to make good strategic decision. On the other hand, outside involvement can also worsen the diplomatic situation and conflict between two countries.

❖ **Media coverage and political theater**

Media play one of the major roles in shaping political persona. Media highlight the dramatic side of politicians. The joke says,

"Pakistani talk shows apna format simple rakhty hain: ek guest PTI ka, ek PML-N ka, aur ek PPP ka jin ky darmiyan anchor referee ka nahi balky petrol bomb ka kam karta hai."

Joke criticizes the format of talk shows that invite guest of opponent parties and then anchor try to bring out questions that will create fight among them. anchor in talk shows act as provocateurs, they intentionally ask such questions that provoke their guests. These talk shows do not represent real journalism. joke mocks on the set format of political shows that incorporate drama to raise their channel ratings. Such events negatively effect on the reputation of politicians as well as it reduces

trust of people in them. This shows that there is need of responsible journalism and professional behavior to conduct political debate shows. Another joke shows that how talk shows quickly change the direction of questions:

“Pakistani Anchors ka plot twist: Ap ky upper corruption ka ilzam hai kya ap waqahi corrupt hain? Aur phir dusry hi lamhy ap Eid py kon sy special khany kahna pasand karty hain?”

Anchor act like performers in the interviews with politicians. They start by asking bold question to act as real journalist but then quickly switch to entertaining or light question. people who see the show feel disappointed by the anchor questions they feel like their questions are not being answered. talking about celebration bring happiness which act as a trick to hid the uncomfortable conversation and truth.

Discussion

The political jokes analyzed in this study not only entertain people but they also build the political persona of politicians in Pakistan. Each joke uses satire, irony and hyperbolic language to show the different traits of politician. It provides understanding of how they behave, how they action and what actions result in their failure allowing people to form the collective understanding of how these political leaders are and what they represent. For example, the joke about corruption highlights the comparison of relief package and stock market manipulation, this indicates the theme of corrupt trickster. Politicians who act like they care for public, who made a lot of promises but in reality, they exploit public resources. They deceive public by making false promises. Humor helps people to recognize the greedy and deceiving nature of political leaders turning corruption and dishonesty into trait of politician image. Similarly, other jokes about false promises or repeated old slogans highlight the theme of how politicians are performers and false promiser. Politicians act more like actors who speak all those rehearsed promises for public approval. This type of joke represents that public know very well about the hollow promises that leaders usually made to get sympathy from public. whenever leaders made some promise people respond with laughter which turn into political persona that all leaders are hypocritic and performers. Whereas other jokes represent that how religion plays a vital role in Pakistan’s politics. Leaders use religion to gain the interest of voters. People are of the view that religious politics is losing its popularity in Pakistan because people are disappointed by the religious leaders. joke express

the people view about leaders with religious background. They view such leaders as a symbol of hollow spirituality. Such leaders are strategically manipulative they use religion as shield to hide their inefficiencies. Overall study highlights different traits of political leaders of Pakistan through humor. Serious political debates or speeches are formal and not accessible for public whereas, political jokes and humor are informal and easy to interpret. Humor act as a way of political education for public. humor had a great impact on our memory when jokes that reflect repeated themes or traits of politician like fake promises, corruption, inefficiency, political failure or scandals appear repeatedly in front of public they became part of memory and in result people start associating these traits with political leaders forming a certain kind of political persona. Humor can also lead to over generalization and reinforce stereotyping. For example, the repeated jokes about corruption can lead people to form perception that all political leaders are inherently corrupt. This condition makes harder for politicians to prove their loyalty and honesty. Once a joke became viral about politicians it makes harder for politicians to change that perception. Humor act as a tool through which people build identities of politicians by combining their thoughts, observation and situation in which they live. Humor produces personas that are widely relatable, recognizable and socially constructed turning laughter into political understanding.

Conclusion

This study examined how political jokes in Pakistan construct the political persona through thematic analysis. Findings reveal that humor act as both social critique and coping mechanism it allows people to confront those who are in authority but in socially acceptable manner. Prominent themes derived from dataset are corruption and moral decline, fake promises and hypocrisy, populism and performative nature, religious manipulation and false piety, opportunist and power shifting politics, public misery and economic incompetence, media coverage and political theater. These themes reveal that politicians are people who only work for their personal interest they are performative, over confident and self-serving people. This indicates that jokes are not just a way of entertainment but the reflect public feelings, expectation and sentiments. Through jokes people provide their own meaning to the political events. When people laugh at the same problem, they create sense of unity and shared experience. This collective feeling creates sense of resistance. Political humor act in Pakistan as a form of social critique. It helps people

to construct political persona and keep conversation between political leadership and their accountability alive.

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