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*Visual Resources and the Rhetoric of Humor in  
Political Memes:  
A case Study of the 2024 U.S Presidential Election*

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# Dedication

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***To my mother:***

*An unmatched source of inspiration, I dedicate this thesis to you with gratitude. Your values of perseverance, determination, and unconditional love have guided me through every stage of my life, and your unwavering support has nurtured each step of this journey. Today, I pay tribute to you this achievement is ours.*

***To my father:***

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***Tassadit Yefsah***

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## **Abstract**

This research examines and explores how political visuals were shared in the 2024 United States presidential election to share political messages, ideas and content and influence people's views on the internet. It is based on three main theories: Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) to study how words and images combine to make sense; humor theory to learn about how humor is used in political speech; and the Grammar of Visual Design to examine how visuals are arranged to show ideas. The results show that memes use different images and words methods, like jokes, signs, caricatures, and design to help or mock politicians such as Donald Trump, Joe Biden, and Kamala Harris. These methods help show deep ideas, like populism, patriotism, anti-elitism, liberalism, and conservatism. In general, the present research shows that political memes act as useful tools to convince, to shape self image and to criticize politics. They let people to share thoughts, strengthen views, and take part in internet political talk in funny and easy ways.

**KEY WORDS:** political memes, humor theory, visual communication, MCDA, ideology, online discourse

## **List of Abbreviations**

**MCDA:** Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

**GVD:** Grammar of Visual Design

**CDA:** Critical Discourse Analysis

**AI:** Artificial Intelligence

**U.S:** United States

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# **General Introduction**

### Background of the Study

Humor has always been part of political life. Previously, society used humorous remarks, caricatures, and mockery to discuss about politics matters. Humor helped them criticize leaders, talk about problems, or support ideas. Nowadays, humor continues to play a significant function, but it is different now . With the internet and social media, political humor now appears in new forms. One of the most frequent kinds is the online meme.

A meme is usually a funny picture with text. Memes often talk about social or political topics. In the period of elections, people draw memes to defend or oppose candidates, to express views. In the 2024 U.S. presidential election, memes appeared on many platforms like Instagram, Twitter (X), Facebook and Reddit.

Many scholars have studied political humor in television or in newspapers. For instance, Baumgartner and Morris (2006) studied in what way political critique programs like The Daily Show are able to influence individuals' beliefs. Others, like Gray, Jones, and Thompson (2009), studied how political comedy influences the public. But a little of studies showed how memes use images to create humor, during elections.

Some researchers have talked about memes in politics. Like , Milner (2016) studied how individuals use memes to give their opinions in online debates. Wiggins and Bowers (2015) also examined political humorous images and in what way they transmit messages. However, many of these studies focus more on the words or the topics in memes. They do not study in detail how the pictures themselves help make the joke or message stronger.

In nowadays social media, users post visuals and clips more frequently than before. Memes are commonly image based , showing visual is significant words. The form of

pictures, the placement of things, and how individuals are presented can change the message's meaning.

This research investigates to study the following topics; how memes use images with texts to make humor and share political opinions. It will focus on memes from the 2024 U.S. election. The study will use a framework known as Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) a method that helps us look at both images and words. Like this, individuals are able to comprehend the manner in which humorous images are essential in politics nowadays.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Political memes is a major component of the online discourse , but there is still a little knowledge about their function . Numerous research efforts have examined at political humor in television program or comic animations, but not many have concentrated on online memes, especially during important political events like presidential election. Even fewer have studied how pictures in memes help create humor and send messages.

Memes are strong because they are short, humorous, and simple to share. They often use comedy, irony, or amplification. Some memes are easy and simple, while others are more difficult and complex . In the 2024 U.S. election, many memes were made using new tools, including AI-generated images. These images were more developed and could lead to new forms of creating humor or expressing political views.

Although some studies (like Ross and Rivers, 2018) have talked about memes as political tools, most do not explain how the visual parts of memes help make them funny or persuasive. For instance, a photo of a candidate with a humorous appearance or a meme that places a politician in a strange situation can create a strong message but how? What makes it humorous? What is its message?.

Also, many studies look only at the words or the political topic, and not at how text and image work together. But in most memes, the picture and the words are connected. The joke or message does not make sense without both parts. This research will respond to the missing aspect by examining both the imagery and written/ spoken aspect in memes from the 2024 U.S. election.

### **Research Questions**

This present research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most common images or visuals used in political memes during the 2024 U.S. election to be funny?
2. How do the images and texts in memes work together to share humor and political messages?
3. How does the humor in these memes support or challenge popular political ideologies?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to analyse how pictures in political memes help to create humor and share political messages. It will focus on the analysing of the memes collected from the 2024 U.S. presidential election. The study has several goals;

First, it wants to find what kinds of pictures are most used in political memes and how they help make the memes humorous. For example, it will look at face appearance, body language. Second, this research will analyse the way in which the image and text interact to add meaning to the meme. Third, it will look at whether memes support or attack political views, and how humor is used to do that.

To do this, the study will use Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA). This method helps us study both pictures and words. It also uses ideas from visual grammar and humor theory, which will help the analyse of how memes create funny and share political messages. By doing this, the study will show how political memes work and why they are important in online discussions.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is essential because memes are now a important way for political communication, especially on social media platforms. Many young people learn about political events through memes. It can make individuals laugh and enjoy, but they can also influence their views.

This study will support students, educators, and researchers discover more about political memes. Additionally, it will help journalists, content makers, and users' internet think critically about the memes. Individuals have the idea that memes are just funny and humorous visuals, but they can also be effective because they share important messages or change opinions.

Finally, this study is essential for academics like media studies, discourse analysis, political communication, and humor studies. By focusing on the 2024 U.S. election, this research also provides new information about how people use memes to talk about nowadays political events.

### **Research Technique and Methodology**

This study uses a qualitative method to analyse how political memes linked to the 2024 U.S. election use images and text to add funny aspect and communicate political

ideological content. It applies Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) as the main analytical framework. Within MCDA, the study draws on Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) Grammar of Visual Design (GVD) to analyse how visuals convey messages. To analyse the comic feature, the research also focus on three humor theories: incongruity, superiority, and relief. The corpus is about tewenty political memes collected from many platforms, like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Reddit. A selective sampling technique was used to choose memes that illustrate political characters and subjects about the 2024 U.S. presidential election. This method gives a comprehensive view about the interaction between different modes and humor to express ideological messages and influence public opinion.

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is devided into five main chapters, each part help to a better understanding of how visual resources and humor function in political memes, especially during the 2024 U.S. presidential election. First of all , is the General Introduction, where the the topic is defined , and the research questions were given , the objectives are also there, and the significance of the topic were presented. The second one, is the Literature Review, where previous research discussed about related to political humor, visual communication, and internet memes. The third one is the Methodology, that show how the research is made and what are the steps followed. These include Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA), Grammar of Visual Design, and main humor theories like incongruity, superiority, and relief theories. The fourth one is Results and Discussion, that talks about the main findings of the research. It presents the common visual elements of the memes, studies how imagery and word work together to create humor and meanings, and compares different subjects and political characters. It also works on the ideological meanings gave from the memes and how they influence public opinions. Finally, the dissertation finished with a General Conclusion,

where all the study is summarized and the most important points are given, also the research questions answering, and there are suggestions for future research.



# **Literature Review**

## **Introduction**

The present section presents the major studies about the rhetorical and image based approaches used in political memes, divided into three parts. The first analyses memes' multimodal form, focusing on the way words and visuals combine in social discussions. The second focuses on the rhetoric of humor, applying major humor theories superiority, incongruity, and relief to explain the use of satire, irony, and parody in political memes. The third part presents Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) as a methodology to explore memes, analysing its theoretical background, real world application, and related moral issues. By combining ideas from from visuals, the study of humor, and language study, this part sets the stage for examining the way memes from the 2024 U.S. presidential election express ideas, change public thinking, and influence political discussions.

## **1.1. Political Memes and Visual Communication**

To understand how political messages are shared through visual content, it is essential to begin with a clear definition of memes and an overview of their key characteristics.

### **1.1.1. Definition and Characteristics of Memes.**

The word meme was introduced by Richard Dawkins (1976) in *The Selfish Gene*, where he defined it as a social element copied and shared through a community, similar to genetic units in biological science. In the digital context, memes refer to images, videos, or texts shared online and modified by internet users to convey a humorous or critical message (Shifman, 2014). Political memes, in particular, have become a powerful tool in public discourse due to their accessibility and ability to condense ideological messages into an engaging visual format (Milner, 2016).

A common political meme has images (visuals, exaggerated portraits, screen captures) and texts (slogans, labels, remarks) to talk negatively about events, a political character, or a politic subject. According to Shifman (2014), memes have three main features: (1) durability, meaning they can continue in public conversation for long durations; (2) copy fidelity, which concerns the reproduction of main features across different variations; and (3) creativity, or the power to generate numerous versions and extensive distribution.

As mentioned by Milner (2013), political memes function as “online creations that are created and shared within larger discussions”(p.2360), they express shared belief, frameworks, and involve viewers in public discourse. Brantner and Lobinger (2020), in observed textual analysis of political meme formats, show how memes function as means of emotional communication, self representation, and political messaging. The researchers’ study highlights that visuals are based on multimodal interaction merging visual, written content and signs to support emotional and political expressions.

However, while their work presents useful findings into the discursive power of political memes, mainly concentrates to focus more on the emotional features rather than the possible concerns of simplification or misinformation. The study does not examine how the amusing or ironic attitude of memes can sometimes misrepresent complex civic matters or support closed communities. Thus, although their analysis is valuable in emphasizing the impact of imagery and textual elements, a deeper critique of the effects for civic dialogue and civic awareness.

Zollo et al. (2017) offer a case analysis of meme-driven communication during the U.S. elections. These scholars' study presents the manner in which memes serve as tools of political strategies and deception, especially through the wide distribution of eye catching. This illustrates the influence of memes on public discussions outside standard press channels. Their results stress on the significant ability of visuals data in online civic discourse, which clearly confirms the goal of this research on how funny visuals in 2024 voting memes shape public perception and political position.

Furthermore, memes operate through intertextuality, meaning they often reference or remix existing cultural symbols, making them more recognizable and persuasive (Knobel & Lankshear, 2007). Their virality, as explained by Jenkins et al. (2013), permits them to connect with wide public, shaping public opinion and shaping political narratives.

Memes work in different forms: commentary memes, which reflect on recent happening; humorous imitations, which make fun of political characters or ideologies; and propaganda memes, which indirectly or clearly advance ideological narratives.

Table 1 below offers a summary of these meme types and their primary communicative functions.

Table 1: Meme Types and Communicative function.

<b>Meme Type</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Example Content</b>
Reaction	Expressing opinion on events	This is fine , edits
Parody	Mocking politicians / ideas	Deep fake memes
Propaganda	Promoting ideologies	Nationalist imagery
Irony/ Satire	Criticizing via ambivalence	Non-playable-characters memes

### 1.1.2. The Role of Visual and Textual Elements in Political Memes

Visual communication acts like an important part in political memes, as visuals have the ability to touch moods and transmit difficult ideas immediately. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) argue that images design follows a structured model, where form, framing, and focus form how viewers interpret a visual.

Textual elements in memes complement visuals by providing context, reinforcing humor, or shaping ideological framing (Denisova, 2019). To illustrate, titles may produce satire, contrast contrary expressions, or emphasize follies in civic dialogue. The use of image and text together gives a multimodal meaning, where the message is showed from their interaction (Bateman, 2014).

A single illustration of this connection is the use of visuals, in which a fixed picture is linked to a brief text to create fun or critique. The “Distracted Boyfriend” meme, for example, has been repurposed in political contexts to illustrate shifting alliances or ideological

contradictions (Wiggins, 2019). Those kinds of memes use societal awareness, comedy, and clarity to attract the public, making them a strong mean for ideological exchange.

### **1.1.3. Political Memes as Tools of Engagement and Persuasion**

Political memes work as interactive and impactful means. On one hand, they encourage civic engagement by allowing users to express opinions, critique politicians, or highlight social issues (Highfield, 2016). On the other hand, they can serve as ideological weapons, reinforcing biases and influencing public opinion through humor and satire (Ross & Rivers, 2017).

As stated by Limor Shifman (2014), memes may be classified into meme types, like response memes, satirical memes, and ideological memes, each gives specific message aim. Response viral images, like the “Crying Jordan” meme, show affective reaction to political events. Satire memes mimic officials or rules to underline oppositions. Propaganda memes, often employed in election campaigns, strategically frame narratives to favor or discredit political figures (Goriunova, 2019).

Furthermore visuals exploit on intellectual prejudices, like the simple presentation impact, where frequent interaction to a concept improves its approval. Zollo et al., 2017 present a case study of meme based political communication during the 2016 US elections .

However, the researchers’ study is a little bit limited. The study primarily concentrates on how memes share false information and confirm opinions via repetition, yet it does not analyse in detail the manner how visual and comic elements contribute to their influential effect. The researchers also neglect the thing that viewers could interpret the same meme distinctly, according to their ideological perspectives. Thus, the present study does not totally represent the complication of political memes, especially in recent situations in which visuals’ design and understanding have become more detailed and sarcastic.

### **1.1.4. The Impact of Political Memes on Public Discourse**

The growth of political memes has changed societal debate, presenting a distributed, community based methods of ideological speech. Unlike traditional media, which is controlled by institutions, memes empower ordinary citizens to contribute to political conversations (Guadagno et al., 2013). However, this democratization also raises concerns about misinformation, as memes can oversimplify complex issues or propagate false narratives (Marwick & Lewis, 2017).

Research by Brantner and Lobinger (2020) suggests that political memes influence not only individual attitudes but also collective discussions by setting agendas and framing debates and conduct an empirical content analysis of political image macros.

Visuals of the 2024 American election, for instance, have an important part in influencing public opinions of the characters, plans, and civic affairs, according to Highfield, T. (2022), “Online memes over elections usually display and influence public belief by mixing humor with political analysis, affecting how viewers understand candidates and political matters”. P,1-10.

Although their humorous look, political memes carry notable communicative force. According to Wiggins (2019) states, “memes are not just jokes; they are tools of debate, influence, and ideological dialogue” (p. 212). Knowing their visual and linguistic methods is important for examining their effect on online political messaging.

## **1.2. The Rhetoric of Humor in Political Memes**

### **1.2.1. Theories of Humor**

Humor has been studied in many fields like, psychology, and linguistics, including three main concepts illustrating its functions : the Superiority Theory, the Incongruity

Theory, and the Relief Theory. All those forms offer a different interpretation on how humor works in political visuals.

The Superiority Theory, dating back to Plato and Aristotle, suggests that humor arises from a sense of dominance over others (Morreall, 1983). In political memes, the current concept is clear in ironic illustrations that make fun of political characters or beliefs. For instance, memes that depict candidates making exaggerated mistakes play on the audience's perception of incompetence, reinforcing the superiority of one political group over another (Davies, 2008).

The Incongruity Theory, championed by Kant and Schopenhauer in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, argues that humor emerges when there is a discrepancy between expectation and reality (Hurley et al., 2011). Political memes depend on contradiction by comparing important political events with ridiculous or overstated visuals. For example, a meme that places a politician's face onto a cartoon character in an outlandish situation exploits this theory, creating humor through unexpected associations (Shifman, 2014).

The Relief Theory, created by Freud (1905), claims that humor works like a relief of mental pressure. In political memes, humor offers a method for users to manage with dissatisfaction, fear, or loss of faith with political situations. Satirical memes about economic crises, government scandals, or controversial policies allow audiences to express dissent while diffusing emotional tension (Meyer, 2000).

### **1.2.2. Humor as a Persuasive Tool in Political Communication**

Humor is not simply a mean related to enjoyment; it is a strategic communicative tool employed to convince, evaluate, and attract viewers. According to Baym (2005) states, humor in civic conversation may act in three main methods: as amusement, commentary, and organization.

Political memes engage by creating political information more understandable and easy to share. The virality of humorous memes increases their visibility, ensuring that political messages reach diverse audiences (Denisova, 2019). Such as, a visual making fun of political character claims more likely to be reposted than an important administrative evaluation because of the funny draw.

Humor additionally acts as a kind of critique. As Ross and Rivers (2017) note, “visuals serves as an online civic caricatures simplifying complicated problems plain powerful assessments” (p. 31). A prominent case is the common use of the “This Is Fine” meme during political disasters, where a figure stays quietly on fire, representing political indifference in the presence of crisis.

At last, humor encourage civic movement by promoting shared sense of self and participation. Political movements have increasingly used memes to unite supporters and encourage activism (Milner, 2016). The Bernie Sanders Mittens Meme from the 2020 U.S. voting, for instance, not just amused viewers yet supported Sanders’ political visuals as an rebel, shaping general discussions about his candidacy.

### **1.2.3. Irony, Satire, and Parody in Political Memes**

Visuals using of several humor techniques, with contradiction, caricature, and imitation is being the most frequent.

Irony involves stating the opposite of what is meant, often to highlight contradictions (Colebrook, 2004). Visuals employing satire could show officials giving comments that oppose their behaviors. For instance, an image showing a politician supporting for economic justice while placed in a wealthy location forms contradiction by opposing claims and facts.

Satire represents a more forceful type of comedy that highlights weaknesses, double standard, or immorality in politics. As noted by Simpson (2003), satire “aims to fix or criticise social problems through mockery” (p. 145). Political visuals using ridicule often amplify a public’s figure or remarks to emphasize illogicality, like classic political cartoons.

Parody consists of copying an official’s discourse or gestures comically. Hutcheon (1985) describes parody as “a form of imitation with ironic distance” (p. 32). In memes, caricature can be observed in edited clips or changed visuals that imitate civic movements or discussions, challenging their primary objective.

These humor techniques are powerful because they attract viewers affectively while expressing civic ideas. As Wiggins (2019) states, “memes are communicative tools that combine comedy and criticism, making them a powerful force in online political debate” (p. 205).

#### **1.2.4. The Limitations and Risks of Humor in Political Memes**

While humor in political visuals can be interesting and influential, it also has restrictions and possible threats.

First, humor can oversimplify complex political issues. Political discourse often requires nuanced understanding, but memes, due to their brevity, may distort facts or reduce debates to binary oppositions (Marwick & Lewis, 2017). For instance, visuals that represent

public figures as both dishonest or virtuous neglect the complications of administration and planning.

Second, humor can reinforce political polarization. As stated by Zollo et al. (2017), civic visuals usually are posted in ideological closed circles, where individuals mainly respond to materials that reflects with their opinions. This selective contact might increase separations, as viewers make fun of contrary individuals instead of being involved in productive discussion.

Finally, humor may lead to false information. Satirical or parody-based memes are sometimes mistaken for real news, leading to confusion among audiences (Tandoc et al., 2018). A research conducted by Guess et al. (2019) discovered that viewers often have the difficulty to distinguish between humorous information and objective news, which may affect collective views of civic movements.

### **1.3. Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA)**

One of the key concepts that supports this research is Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, which helps explain how different modes work together to create meaning.

#### **1.3.1. Introduction to Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA)**

Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) is a methodical approach applied in this research to examine how political memes create messages through the connection of words and pictures. As political memes are essentially multimodal objects integrating text, visuals, and often design or audio in online platforms, MCDA offers the essential means to analyse their political and communicative roles.

MCDA emerges from the intersection of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and social semiotics, particularly drawing on the works of Fairclough (1995) for linguistic discourse and

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) for visual discourse. While CDA emphasizes on how discourse indicates and shapes influence and belief system, visual discourse analysis extends this emphasis to integrate pictures, signs, and structure as transmitters. MCDA therefore permits for a better understanding study of interpretation across multiple symbolic forms.

According to Fairclough (1995), language use is not only a way of expressing the reality but also cultural act that contributes to the shaping and continuation of dominance patterns. In political memes, text interprets individuals views through caricature, and vocabulary. At the same time, pictures act representatively often ridiculing, or repositioning political individuals and movements.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) states that visuals follow a type of rules, including elements like visual focus, visibility, contextual setting, structure, and realism. These elements work to focus on direct understanding and express opinions. For example, the location of a political figure at the center of a picture with distorted expressions may show mockery or criticism, while the use of cultural icons can provoke affective devices.

Machin and Mayr (2012) examine how visual aspects like color, design can reflect political messages, particularly in mass communication. In memes, like visuals are not neutral: they often represent feelings, or public opinion.

Using MCDA to political memes thus shows the analysis of textual and graphic elements in relation to their cultural background. For example, a meme attacking a political figure can use ironic text (verbal mode) alongside changed or isolated images (visual mode) to question influence or power. The relation between the two modes shows a message that is both funny and politically charged. (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p.31)

At the end, MCDA helps this study how visuals influence public opinion through social media platforms. These viral images shape individuals' views by using funny signs, and smart texts.

### **1.3.2. Kress & van Leeuwen's Grammar of Visual Design (GVD)**

One of the most impactful systems in MCDA is Kress and van Leeuwen's Grammar of Visual Design (GVD), that offers a methodical strategy to examine visual communication. GVD focus on three levels of meaning in visuals:

- **Representational Meaning** – This aspect focuses on what is depicted in an image. In civic visuals, representation includes the selection of images, contents, and visual signs. For instance, a visual that represents a public leader as a caricature communicates a particular belief concerning that leader's behaviors or personality (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p 42).
- **Interpersonal Meaning** – This element analyses how the images combine with the audience. Elements such as direct look, framing angle, and color sets influence the emotional impact. An upward view shot of a politician can make them appear powerful, while tight shot with intensified looks may elicit mockery or ridicule (Machin & Mayr, 2012, pp.51-53)

- **Compositional Meaning** – This relates to spatial structure of a visual, such as design, stress, and importance. In political visuals, compositional selections shape which parts shape attention. For instance, bold text and bright colors may highlight key messages, while background elements can add contextual meaning (Bateman, 2014, pp. 83-90).

After using GVD in public visuals, researchers may analyse how visual structures participate in humor content, impact, and political representation.

### **1.3.3. Combining MCDA and Humor Theory in Political Memes**

Civic images are not limited only visual representations; they also include humor, paradox, and ridicule, making them sophisticated multimodal creations. Combining MCDA with comedic theory permits interpretation of how visual and verbal aspects interact to produce communicative intent.

For example, memes that use humor based on contradiction (where there is a contrast between assumption and actuality) often do so through visual overstatement or ridiculous contrasts. A meme showed a political character in an imaginary situation uses humor and multimodal design to make an ideological message (Shifman, 2014).

Similarly, superiority humor, which mocks political opponents, is often reinforced through facial expressions, body language, and compositional emphasis (Huntington, 2016). A visual that focuses on a public figures embarrassing facial expressions in a debate, for example, employs words and images to boost its communicative influence.

By fusing MCDA with humor theory, we can analyse how visuals reach their rhetorical aims a mix of visual symbolism, viewers engagement, and political presentation.

#### **1.3.4. The Role of Ideology and Power in Meme Discourse**

One of the core concerns of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is how discourse reflects and reinforces power relations (Van Dijk, 2008). Civic visuals, as a type of online communication, contribute to forming political interpretations.

As stated by Fairclough (2013), rhetoric is not impartial; it is structured by implicit authority systems and commonly supports the goals of majorities. Viral visuals play a part in this political debate by presenting public officials, social actions, and plans through methods that support question, dominant perspectives.

Moreover, political memes often operate within echo chambers ( An echo chamber is a situation where people only hear opinions and information that match their own beliefs, which strengthens those beliefs and shuts out opposing views), where audiences primarily engage with content that aligns with their beliefs (Zollo et al., 2017). This limited appearance shows that visuals can cause political division, because they minimize complex issues and support incomplete views.

However, visuals may function as a mean for alternative perspective. Grassroots movements and marginalized communities use memes to challenge dominant ideologies and voice alternative perspectives (Denisova, 2019). This emphasizes the twin function of memes as equally tools of dominance and opposition.

#### **1.4. The Ethical and Methodological Challenges of Analyzing Political Memes**

Although Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) offers a detailed framework to study political memes, this approach also presents several difficulties both ethical and interpretative.

First, subjectivity in interpretation is a significant issue. Because viral content depend on textual connection, social references, and comedy, their interpretations are often exposed to numerous interpretations. As Sifman (2014) states, “The understanding of memes is very personal, as it relies on audience’ knowledge with particular cultural references and situations” (p.41).

The same meme can be perceived as humorous by one audience and offensive by another, depending on their political background and ideological stance (Wiggins, 2019). Researchers have to think about those various ideas to stop unfair studies and mistakes.

Second, the rapid evolution and short lifespan of memes complicate their study. Unlike traditional media, which remains relatively stable over time, memes are constantly being altered, recontextualized, and repurposed by online communities ( Milner,2016) . A visual’s message can change while it moves among different social media platforms, leading to a complexity to identify its primary aim and effect (Milner, 2016). This adaptable aspect demands researchers to examine not only a meme’s original shape but also the meme’s different modifications and new readings gradually.

Third, moral issues occure when examining ideologically sensitive viral visuals. Certain visuaals include false information, political messaging, or aspects of offensive language, causing issues about their function in online communication. The challenge lies in determining whether such memes should be included in academic research and, if so, how to analyse them responsibly (Phillips & Milner, 2021). Scholars must strike a balance between

critically examining these memes and avoiding the unintentional amplification of harmful content (Marwick & Lewis, 2017).

Finally, problems connected to information collecting and expression need to be resolved. Since memes are strongly shaped by context, their interpretation is affected by social media sites on which they distribute, the individuals who interact with them, and the larger sociopolitical setting (Tandoc et al., 2018). Choosing an adequate and inductive collection is important to confirming that results are not misrepresented by separate samples. Additionally, ethical considerations regarding user privacy and consent must be taken into account when sourcing memes from social media (Tandoc et al., 2018).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has studied the function of civic visuals in online discourse by analysing their visual and persuasive methods through three main aspects: political memes as a type of visual messaging, the expression of humor in political discussion, and the use of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) in visual examination.

First, the study showed that public affairs work as multimodal creations that mix written and imagery aspects to send political information. Their simplicity, ability to spread, and connected to other texts character make them strong means for shaping public belief and supporting political accounts. Second, comedy studied as an influential communicative method in political funny posts.

By using ideas about humor like dominance, contradiction, and relief theories. While humor improves interest and makes easier difficult topics, it can also lead to political wrong facts. Third, MCDA presented as a research method for understanding the multimodal of how meaning are built in political memes. The use of Kress and van Leeuwen's Grammar of Visual Design offered ideas in how composition, representation, and interaction help shape the political viewpoint shaping. Additionally, moral and methodological difficulties like personal understanding , meme fluidity, and the dangers of spreading false information were talked about a main points of studying memes.



# **Methodology**

## **Introduction**

The present chapter explains the followed approaches applied in this research. First, it offers motives for selecting a qualitative study approach, relying on Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA). Then, it explains how the meme group was gathered and what criteria were followed to select the memes. Finally, it shows the methods applied to analyse the data, such as Kress and Leeuwen's Grammar of Visual Design (GVD) and models of humor, to interpret the images and funny elements of political online posts.

### **2.1. Research Design**

This study follows a qualitative research design, as it investigates to examine the specific persuasive and visual parts present in political images. Unlike quantitative approaches, which prioritize measurable variables, the qualitative paradigm focuses on the interpretation of meaning, context, and the subjective dimensions of communication (Creswell, 2013).

The present memes function within culture based image and written rules, a qualitative approach is more appropriate to understand how humor is created and shared in a political messaging.

To better support the reason for the selected method, Multimodal critical discourse Analysis (MCDA) was used to examine the fit of different research approaches. MCDA allows researchers to weigh multiple factors simultaneously, such as depth of analysis, contextual understanding, methodological flexibility, and relevance to the research question (Belton & Stewart, 2002).

The criteria for selecting the analytical framework in this study were: (1) interpretive richness to help understand deep meanings in memes (van Dijk, 2008), (2) compatibility with

visual analysis, as images are a key part of memes (Kress Van Leeuwen,2006), (3) flexibility in analyzing complex rhetorical strategies (Forceville, 1966; Machin & Mayr, 2012), and (4) alignment with the subjective nature of humor (Attardo, 1994; Shifman, 2014). Every point was given a value depending on how it is important to the study aims.

After checking qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method plans study, the qualitative method was seen as being the best. It got the best final results in the review, meaning that it goes well with the aims of this study.

## **2.2. The corpus**

This section outlines the criteria used to select the memes included in the corpus of the study.

### **2.2.1. Selection Criteria**

The corpus of this research contains twenty political images about the 2024 U.S. presidential election. The choice was based on different rules to make sure importance, variety, and depth for study.

First, the humorous images needed to be focused on politics, showing information that talked about, mocked, or evaluated politicians, laws, or movements linked to the 2024 election.

Second, the images had to present visual and written combination, which means they mixed picture and writing in a way that represented common meme structure.

Third, the memes have to be shared, as evaluating by their number of likes, reposts, twitter shares, or positive comments. This condition confirmed that the memes had public presence and were part of the communal electronic narrative.

In addition, online visuals with strong expressive complexity were selected those that showed clear symbolic images, satire, textual connection, or multimodal combination.

The purpose was to choose examples that could show the difficulty of humor in memes and allow a solid analysis of language and visuals.

Finally, an initiative was taken to adjust political inclusion, choosing images over the ideological range, like both pro-Biden and pro-Trump data, in addition analytical or parodic views on both sides.

### **2.2.2. Memes' Credits**

The political memes were collected from online platforms like: Twitter, Reddit, and Instagram. These platforms were chosen for their powerful sharing and posting, political critique, and immediate feedback about the political events.

Twitter, Reddit, and Instagram each one has a significance importance in spreading political memes during the 2024 U.S. election. Twitter was used its immediate feedback. Reddit, especially community threads like r/PoliticalHumor and r/MemeEconomy, permitted to the members to share, discuss, and evaluate memes, creating a space for group exchange and different political opinions. Instagram focused more on design parts, where politically themed meme pages such as @betches\_sup and @politicsmemesdaily shared memes with strong visual elements and political messages.

The collection methods were done on one-month period (December 2024) during the high of political internet activity.

Screen images of the memes posts were saved, and date attribute like posting date, number of interactions, and audience feedback were also noted to explain their visibility and response.

The corpus is about twenty visuals selected from Twitter, Reddit, and Instagram. These posts were posted from January 2023 to March 2024. They represent major public officials like Joe Biden, Donald Trump, Kamala Harris, and Ron DeSantis. The memes explore main themes like migration, the economic situation, press impact, political issues, and the manner or appearance of the participants. They use images and written content to create humor or show a viewpoint. Some memes support a political figure, while others ridicule of the candidates.

“For the detailed references of the 20 memes selected see the table just after the appendices.

### **2.3. Analytical Framework**

This research follows a multimodal critical discourse analysis method to analyse political memes, that have difficult messages which combine picture and written content.

The method used focuses on Kress and van Leeuwen’s Grammar of Visual Design (GVD) and it also includes humor theory to explain how memes are built and how they influence individuals.

By linking these views, the study goals’ is to understand how images and humor combine to share political commentary.

#### **2.3.1. Grammar of Visual Design (GVD)**

Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) Grammar of Visual Design creates a methodical way for analysing the structural aspects of pictures and their interpretation.

GVD is based on Hallidayan social semiotics, which views all communication as multifunctional. Visual communication, like language, fulfills three metafunctions:

##### **a. Representational Meaning (What is represented?)**

This aspect identifies the characters, actions, and situations in the visual. In memes, this covers how leaders or public affairs are represented e.g., through comic exaggeration, alteration, or signs. For instance, Donald Trump may be portrayed with exaggerated expressions, or Joe Biden as overly passive, depending on the meme's ideological perspective (Kress Van Leeuwen, 2006).

**b. Interactive Meaning (Who is the viewer and how are they addressed?):**

This examines the connection between the visual and the public. Main elements has eye contact (does the figure look at the audience or not?), proximity (close-up vs. long shot), and position (high, low, or eye-level). These elements shape how viewers are positioned: as allies, observers, or critics( Kress Van Leeuwen, 2006).

**c. Compositional Meaning (How is the image organized?):**

This concerns layout and structure how elements are arranged to create meaning. Techniques such as salience (what draws the eye first), framing (boundaries between elements), and information value (left/right, top/bottom placement) are analyzed to understand how memes guide interpretation and create emphasis, tension, or contrast (Kress Van Leeuwen, 2006).

Every image expose to a methodical classification by using three stages of meaning. Visual elements (e.g., color, drawn lines, stance) will be noted and explained in relation to their aim. The analysis will pay particular attention to how visual symbols, image structure, and image-text relation create ideological meaning and humor.

**2.4.Humor Theory**

To improve the image study, the research uses three main humor theories, Incongruity Theory, Relief Theory, and Superiority Theory each presenting a unique perspective on how and why memes create humor, contradiction, or evaluation.

Incongruity Theory suggests that humor comes from the understanding of something that opposes standard beliefs. Memes often depend on unusual pairings e.g., positioning political figure in popular culture or recreating past events using ridiculous. These contrasts create mental conflict that results in amusing impact (Morreall, 2009, pp.10-12).

Relief Theory proposes that humor serves as a discharge mechanism for restrained feelings or public pressure. Civic online jokes, especially during critical events like votes, may offer affective relief, letting audiences to deal with disappointment, frustration, or worry through irony and caricature (Freud, 1928, p.2).

Superiority Theory presents humor as a gesture of rise over others ridiculing the “opposition” to show authority or community status. This theory is especially helpful for interpreting the political use of images in divided political settings (Gruner, 1997, pp.36-39).

Every meme will be analysed by these humor models to interpret the objective, public response, and political meanings of the satire applied. Humor is considered not as an impartial kind of fun, but as a communicative strategy a form of influence, evaluation, and identity shaping.

As a result, these humor theories have been previously analysed in the literature review. In the study, they will be used alongside with the Grammar of Visual Design (GVD). GVD assists in analysing how visuals are arranged and how they communicate ideas. Humor theories show the source of humor in memes and what are the messages they aim to share. By using the both together, the analysis will examine how memes share viewpoints, challenge leaders, or spread political views in the 2024 U.S. voting.

## 2.5. Integration of GVD and Humor Theory

Using GVD and humor theory together allows a deeper analysis of memes as multimodal texts. GVD presents how the message is shown through images like the structure, the eye contact, and the positioning of figures. Humor strategy helps to understand the causes behind the fun, such as shock or ridicule. For example, a meme may use an exaggerated face (GVD: representation) to make fun of a candidate (humor: superiority), arranged in a way that involves the viewer (GVD: interaction)

This combined method gives a complete view of how political memes work as visual messages, emotional reactions, and social or political commentary during the 2024 election.

Following is the table that will be followed in the analysis of the corpus:

Table 2: Meme Analysis Procedure.

Common Visual Resources	Caricature	
	Symbolism	
	Juxtaposition	
Interaction Between Visual And Textual Elements	Text	
	Irony & Satire	
	Visual And Verbal Blend	
Humor And Ideological Representation	Criticism Of Policy	
	Ideological Framing	
	Power Dynamics	

## Conclusion

A qualitative approach was chosen because it helps to study the meanings in memes. A data collection of twenty memes was chosen from digital media platforms, according to their political significance and images clarity.

The examination uses Grammar of Visual Design (GVD) to explore how the visuals are created, and humor concept to interpret why they are humorous and what meaning they deliver. By applying both methods alongside, the analysis focuses to illustrate how ideological images during the 2024 U.S. voting employed humor and pictures to communicate perspectives, challenge political figures, and participate in political discussions.

A blue horizontal scroll graphic with rounded ends and a vertical strip on the left side, resembling a rolled-up document. The text is centered on the scroll.

## **Results and Discussion**

**Introduction**

This chapter studies twenty political memes of the 2024 U.S. presidential election, emphasizing on those including President Donald Trump. The purpose is to study how image and written information connect to distribute humor and transmit messages.

The analysis examines how viral visuals use caricatures, irony, and pictures to critique or support politicians and views. These memes are not just funny they show a significant societal and theoretical opinions about popular rule, authority, and popular views.

**Meme 01: “Happy Liberation Day” by Bramhall**

<p><b>Common Visual Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Caricature</b></p>	<p>Donald Trump is shown with exaggerated features (a big body , suit and long tie), to ridicule or highlight his personality.</p>
	<p><b>Symbolism</b></p>	<p>The metal black ball named “TARIFFS” attached to a tired woman shows economic issues.</p>
	<p><b>Juxtaposition</b></p>	<p>Trump is raising his arms in celebration, while the woman looks boring . This contrast creates irony and humor.</p>

<b>Interaction Between Visual and Textual Elements</b>	<b>Text</b>	Trump declares, “HAPPY LIBERATION DAY!” it creates contradiction because it suggests freedom, but the image shows the woman still imprisoned.
	<b>Irony &amp; Satire</b>	The humor shows a big contrast between Trump’s words (liberation) and the reality (tariffs)..
	<b>Visual and Verbal Blend</b>	The humor is built by mixing the image of Trump and the message of “liberation,” which the visual clearly disproves.
<b>Humour and Ideological Representation</b>	<b>Criticism of Policy</b>	The meme ridicule Trump suggesting they hurt people rather than helping them.
	<b>Ideological Framing</b>	This image probably comes from a progressive opinion showing Trump as out of touch with the public’s real difficulties.
	<b>Power Dynamics:</b>	Trump appears joyful and strong; the individual is boring and silent. This shows a power imbalance.

The meme adopts visual exaggeration, irony, and contradiction to criticize Donald Trump's tariffs by using humor. Representationally, Trump is posted as the principle figure in a comical and exaggerated situation, employing extreme appearance and images like bursting industries to emphasize the damage on his rules. Interactionally, he does make eye at the audience, forming space and allowing critique rather than support. The mocking text increases the irony, showing a difference between what Trump claims and what people really feel, which demonstrates incongruity theory, where fun comes from surprising contradictions.

Compositionally, this meme expresses a progressive stance, showing Trump as disconnected with individuals. As Shifman (2014) states, memes let people to express thoughts and create common understandings through humor, and as Bounegru et al. (2018) observes, memes can attack prominent leaders and expose government issues. As a result the meme is humorous and political expressive.

**Meme 02: “My Tariff Plan: 2+2=5” by Gary Markstein**

<p><b>Common</b></p> <p><b>Visual</b></p> <p><b>Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Caricature</b></p>	<p>Donald trump is posted with an orange skin, and a destroyed hair . This makes him funny.</p>
	<p><b>Symbolism</b></p>	<p>The equation “2+2=5” gives a false information. Which means that Trump’s plan is not logical. It also remebers public about the lies of politicians.</p>
	<p><b>Juxtaposition</b></p>	<p>Trump is happy because of his plan, but his proposition is wrong. The man there says it’s “smart” even if it does not make any correct sense.</p>

<b>Interaction Between Visual and Textual Elements</b>	<b>Text</b>	My tariff plan: $2+2=5$ . It looks like a correct plan, but the calculation is false. This makes the message ridiculing.
	<b>Irony &amp; Satire</b>	It's ironic because Trump acts like a serious man, but his idea is wrong. It also mocks the public who agree with him without taking time to think.
	<b>Visual and Verbal Blend</b>	The image and words combine. The wrong math and the serious faces make it funny and critical.
<b>Humour And Ideological Representation</b>	<b>Criticism of policy</b>	The meme says that Trump's ideas are not based on real . It also laughs at public who support him .
	<b>Ideological Framing</b>	The meme comes from a liberal view. It shows Trump as someone who says wrong things and is still helped by others.
	<b>Power Dynamics</b>	Trump, showing power. The others look and agree without thinking. But the funny shows that this idea is focused on something wrong.

This meme uses cartoon, mockery, and exaggerated signs to evaluate Donald Trump's fiscal strategy and the uncritical approval of his aides. By putting a clearly incorrect calculation at the middle of an important policy debate , the caricature emphasizes illogic in command and participation among supporters. This corresponds to previously stated in the literature review, where comedy was described as a communicative strategy used to show

contradictions in political debates and to contest ruling ideas. As mentioned by researchers like Bounegru et al. (2017), political images often employ visual emphasis and ridicule to encourage analytical response with governmental discourse. The humor in this meme serves as an ideological criticism based on a progressive viewpoint, encouraging the audience to refuse automatic support and accept analytical reasoning.

**Meme 03: Save the Date – June 20, 2029**

<p><b>Common Visual Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Caricature</b></p>	<p>Trump is shown with an orange face, a long red tie, and a big size body and in small high. This makes him look ridiculous and weak.</p>
	<p><b>Symbolism</b></p>	<p>The lady is sign of justice , law and freedom. The text “Save the Date June 20,2029” is suchas a party invite, but it really means a court date.</p>
	<p><b>Juxtaposition</b></p>	<p>Trump is nervous, while Lady Justice is tall and strong. It shows who is strong and who is weak.</p>
<p><b>Interaction Between Visual</b></p>	<p><b>Text</b></p>	<p>The expression “Save the date” seems happy .But when we see the picture, we understand it is about punishment. That is what makes it funny.</p>

<b>And Textual Elements</b>	<b>Irony &amp; Satire</b>	It's ironic because the sentence is joyful, but it means Trump have to go to court. Trump looks like a cartoon, but law looks real.
	<b>Visual and verbal blend</b>	The meme and the words interact together. It shows the power of justice, and the text transfer a serious message.
<b>Humour And Ideological Representation</b>	<b>Criticism of policy</b>	The meme shows that strong people like Trump can be punished. And justice is for all humans.
	<b>Ideological Framing</b>	This visual encourages justice and critiques Trump. It shows that justice is here and doesn't protect wrong behavior.
	<b>Power Dynamics</b>	Trump is weak and boring. Lady Justice is powerful. It means that Trump lost power, and justice is wins.

This cartoon uses comedy and satire to represent Donald Trump as powerless and at last in justice. Representationally, he is showed submitting in a comical way to Justice statue, who looks tall and dominant, representing power and justice. Interactionally, Trump does not make visual contact with the audience, establishing separation and presenting him as small and humble, while Lady Justice appears proud, encouraging humor. Compositionally, Lady Justice located at the top, making her the central elemnt, while Trump is lower, emphasizing his decline of authority. The expression "Save the Date" includes contradiction, using happy words to point to an important judicial date. The meme attacks Trump and defends that all are equal under the law.

**Meme 04: Meet the author**

<b>Common</b>  <b>Visual</b>  <b>Resources</b>	<b>Caricature</b>	Trump is drawing with a long red tie, and long hair. This makes him look like a mockery.
	<b>Symbolism</b>	The books of bibles shows truth, morals, and religion. Trump stayed there as the "author" is a fun he's not. It shows he acts like a moral authority.
	<b>Juxtaposition</b>	The sign (the Bible) is mixed with a ridicule idea. This contrast makes the meme funny.
<b>Interaction</b>  <b>Between</b>  <b>Visual</b>  <b>and</b>  <b>Textual</b>  <b>Elements</b>	<b>Text</b>	The cards says "MEET THE AUTHOR" , this is for real book signings. But here is Trump and the Bible something false. Here where the humor starts.
	<b>Irony &amp; Satire</b>	Trump is happy but it doesn't match with the situation. The woman is surprised., This is satire , it criticises his actions employing humor.
	<b>Visual and Verbal Blend</b>	Trump's image mixed with the word "author" of the Bible creates a humorous idea.

<b>Humour And Ideological Representation</b>	<b>Criticism of policy</b>	The meme shows Trump’s use of religion to promote himself, instead of respecting its true meaning.
	<b>Ideological framing</b>	The meme shows a liberal opinion. It interpret that Trump is arrogant , while the public stays shocked.
	<b>Power dynamics</b>	Trump appears confident and powerful. The woman is nervous and calm at the same time, and it shows an imbalance. Trump trying to control while people lacks trust in him.

This cartoon illustrates Donald Trump at a book of Bibles and a sign that tells “Meet the Author,” which is ironic because he did not write the Bible. Representationally, Trump is shown as the leader in an usual and absurd context, which abuse his self importance and frames him as someone who tries to claim ownership for holy items. Interactionally, Trump does not face the public, which causes distance and permit them to mock at him rather than relate to him. The woman’s look aids shape the public’s response to her disbelief reflects the viewers’ reactions.

Compositionally, Trump is showed in the a focused place, enclosed by Bibles books, which makes him look like the centerpiece of spiritual focus, adding to the satire. The humor in this image is based on incongruity theory (Morreall, 2009), because it presents a contrast between Trump’s visual and actuality. It also shows what Bounegru et al. (2018) states as the function of visuals to ridicule officials and highlight their conflicts. The meme attacks Trump’s use of faith for personal publicity and points out he is detached from shared beliefs and public.

**Meme 05: “Closing Arguments” By Nick Anderson**

<p><b>Common Visual Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Caricature</b></p>	<p>Trump is with an orange face, and with hair in the air, with a big body. This caricature makes him funny and humorous.</p>
	<p><b>Symbolism</b></p>	<p>The pumpkin with the word “democracy” is a sign of freedom and fair government. Trump is destroying it.</p>
	<p><b>Juxtaposition</b></p>	<p>Trump is very messy and upset. The woman is quiet and looking at him with a surprised face. It shows irony and makes it funny and critical.</p>
<p><b>Interaction Between Visual And Textual Elements</b></p>	<p><b>Text</b></p>	<p>“closing arguments” seems formal, and we can also see Trump destroying a pumpkin.</p>
	<p><b>Irony &amp; Satire</b></p>	<p>It’s ironic because Trump is shown like he is finishing something seriously, and he is making a mess. It makes him funny.</p>
	<p><b>Visual and verbal blend</b></p>	<p>The content and the destroying image of Trump create humor and criticism.</p>
<p><b>Humor And Ideological</b></p>	<p><b>Criticism of policy</b></p>	<p>The meme shows that Trump hurts democracy, not protecting it. It shows his dangerous behaviors.</p>



**Meme 06: There are methods to a third term by Bill Bramhall.**

<b>Common Visual Resources</b>	<b>Caricature</b>	Trump in a big size body, with an orange face and a messy hair, and charging bombs.
	<b>Symbolism</b>	It shows American law and democracy, with a big danger and destroy.
	<b>Juxtaposition</b>	Here trump is pressing bottom to charge bombs while the constitution is passive. This contrast creates humor and fear.
<b>Interaction Between Visual And Textual Elements</b>	<b>Text</b>	The text tells us “ There are methods to a third term”, which look clever, but the caricature presents Trump destroying the law.
	<b>Irony &amp; Satire</b>	It’s ironic because Trump acts like being powerful, but he is breaking the rules. The cartoon makes fun of his attitude.
	<b>Visual and verbal blend</b>	The image and text presents Trump’s dangerous work in a funny way. This mix gives a influential message
<b>Humor And Ideological Representation</b>	<b>Criticism of policy</b>	The cartoon says Trump does not respect democratic limits and wants more power.
	<b>Ideological framing</b>	The message comes from a liberal point of view. It defends democracy and attacks Trump.
	<b>Power Dynamics</b>	Trump looks strong and active. The constitution is just sitting there, about to be destroyed. This shows an unfair use of power.

In this caricature, Donald Trump is presented about to destroy the U.S document with charge to obtain a third mandate, employing humor and overstatement to mock his desire for authority. Representationally, Trump is the dominant character, and his face appearances and the use of signs like dynamite stress the danger he presents to civic values. Interactionally, Trump does not look at the audience, which produces emotional disconnection and makes him appear negligent and indifferent.

The spectator is placed to evaluate his behaviors severely. Compositionally, Trump and the dynamite are placed at the center, making the risk to the image, while the text presents contradiction by suggesting the action is acceptable or defended. This application of ridicule shows Bergson's (1911) idea that humor can expose social behavior and draw focus to inappropriate actions. The illustration also confirms Chouliaraki and Fairclough's (1999) opinion that imagery can expose political conflicts, like the tension between personal desire and democratic ethics.

**Meme 07: The best political cartoons on the 2024 presidential election.**

<b>Common</b>  <b>Visual</b>  <b>Resources</b>	<b>Caricature</b>	Trump is drawn tired pushing a big ball with an orange face, a long red tie and an open mouth. He looks as a crazy man. This adds a humoristic and critical image to the meme.
	<b>Symbolism</b>	The big ball named “2024 election lies” shows the difficulty of giving false narratives . The “2020” year focuses on the recycled nature of claim.
	<b>Juxtaposition</b>	The image shows that Trump gives all his energy to assume what he said to do but in the same time he looks failing while pushing a big ball . That makes contrast between his belief and reality.
<b>Interaction</b>  <b>Between</b>  <b>Visual</b>	<b>Text</b>	Trump tells: “This time...it will work!” and he made efforts sounds (“grunt”, “push”). The text expresses determination and a heavy weight.



This meme presents Donald Trump driving a big stone named “2024 Election Lies” up a hill, with distorted visuals and satire to make fun of his false ideas. Representationally, Trump is the primary subject, shown in depicted in a comic and overdone style, with uncomfortable stance, presenting the strong pressure of pushing rejected statements. The stone symbolized his false election claims, and the steep effort shows how hard and ineffective his attempts appear. Interactionally, Trump avoids eye contact, which builds separation and positions him as someone to laugh. His text bubble telling “It will work this time” adds linguistic contrast, as the image shows him making efforts. Compositionally, Trump takes up the central of the image, attracting the viewer’s focus toward ridiculous cycle.

The meme employs incongruity theory (Morreall, 2009), where comedy results from the contrast between Trump’s certainty and the clear mistake. It also shows Milner’s (2016) concept that memes are used to oppose popular discourses and highlight power play through humor.

**Meme 08: The best political cartoons on the 2024 by Tom Stiglich.**

<p><b>Common</b></p> <p><b>Visual</b></p> <p><b>Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Caricature</b></p>	<p>Trump is drawn as a powerful and strong man. This makes him look silly and proud at the same time, with hands on air which shows the victory.</p>
	<p><b>Symbolism</b></p>	<p>The boxing red gloves show a powerful, and his position shows victory. The lips full with blood means he was hurt, but he looks also like a winner. The American flag behind him means the 2024 voting.</p>

	<b>Juxtaposition</b>	Trump looks powerful and happy, but the blood in his lips shows weakness. This contrast makes a question if he really have the victory. It mixes weakness and failure.
<b>Interaction Between Visual And Textual Elements</b>	<b>Text</b>	There is no words or text , but the image itself speaks. His face and body shows that he wants to say that he is strong man.
	<b>Irony&amp; Satire</b>	The irony is that Trump is happy, and hurt and the same time. It makes us laugh, and think perhaps he lose.
	<b>Visual and verbal blend</b>	The image and Trump's position give a clear message. His humorous look, the US flag, and the hurting lips all work alongside to show power and weakness.
<b>Humor And Ideological Representation</b>	<b>Criticism of policy</b>	The meme does not show the ideas of Trump, but he shows himself as a winner, but he also was hurt.
	<b>Ideological framing</b>	It tells the audience that Trump wants to appear strong, but maybe he not really weak inside.
	<b>Power dynamics</b>	Trump is alone, in the center, showing his power and strong appearance. But the meme says: "He is not as stronger as he thinks"

In this meme, Donald Trump is shown as a confident fighter who has just won, but his lips is full of blood suggests he is not as powerful as he is presented. Representationally, Trump is the primary character, drawn with emphasizes strength and a proud posture, but the visible damage on his face shows a contradiction that makes the victory uncertain or fake. His physical appearance shows self confidence, but the blood shows suspicion.

Compositionally, the figure is put in the center, with illumination or shade possibly attracting focus to his stance and the damage. This example shows the Superiority Theory (Billig, 2005), in which humor aims at people who look silly while acting to appear dominant. It also matches to Lockyer and Pickering’s (2008) opinion that mockery often functions by emphasizing oppositions between look and truth in public characters. The image criticizes Trump’s statements of dominance and victory, employing humor to show that his reputation is mostly act that reality.

**Meme09: Gee, they look, equally scary to me, by Phil Hands.**

<p><b>Common Visual Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Caricature</b></p>	<p>Trump looks as a monster, with a strange hair ,a green face and a scary custom . His body looks huge and scary. This makes him look frightening.</p>
	<p><b>Symbolism</b></p>	<p>Trump’s costume shows fear and danger. The girl with a pink dress means , peace, and happiness</p>
	<p><b>Juxtaposition</b></p>	<p>Trump looks huge and dangerous, the girl looks cute and pretty. But the boy there tells they are scary. This mix is humorous and confusing.</p>

<b>Interaction</b>  <b>Between</b>  <b>Visual</b>  <b>And</b>  <b>Textual</b>  <b>Elements</b>	<b>Text</b>	The man tells the viewers, “Gee, they look equally scary to me”. He is honest, but the image shows the difference, one is scary but the other soft.
	<b>Irony &amp; Satire</b>	It is ironic, the man there looks at them scary. The girl looks happiness, so we laugh at how public look to politics nowadays.
	<b>Visual and verbal blend</b>	The text and the clothes tell a message. The meme interact what we hear and see to create a humor.
<b>Humor</b>  <b>And</b>  <b>Ideological</b>  <b>Representation</b>	<b>Criticism of policy</b>	The cartoon shows how people may see two parties the same, even when one is more different.
	<b>Ideological framing</b>	The cartoon shows Trump as something dangerous (on the right). The girl is shown as peaceful and calm (on the left).
	<b>Power dynamics</b>	Trump takes more place and is huge, but the man thinks they are same. This shows confusion and fear in politics.

In this meme, Donald Trump is wearing a scary costume, and he is walking next to a pretty girl in a fairy outfit, while a man says that the two are scary. Representationally, Trump is illustrated as a frightening figure, representing governmental danger, while the girl, who looks innocent, reflects the other political position. The meme employs opposition to show how some citizens see all political options as bad, even when one seems pure.

Interactionally, Trump and the girl do not look to the public, forming distance and let the viewer to examine the context. The man’s remark shows misunderstanding in public opinion. Compositionally, the outfit of Trump take all the image because of its black color, which shows fear, while the girl adds irony. This shows incongruity theory (Morreall, 2009), where humor results from clashing ideas, contrasting a sprite to a monster. It also states Gray, Jones, and Thompson’s (2009) claim that political humor can examine how people simplify or misinterpret difficult political truths. The meme mocks civic fear and danger, proposing not all “sides” the same and bad, even if some citizens think like that.

**Meme 10: Election cycle spin drain by Walt Handelsman**

<p><b>Common</b></p> <p><b>Visual</b></p> <p><b>Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Caricature</b></p>	<p>Uncle Sam’s eyes are big, his hands are blocking in the washing machine, and he is hurting. He looks very scared and humorous at the same time.</p>
	<p><b>Symbolism</b></p>	<p>The washing machine shows the voting process. It spins and drains like clothes and also like elections happen.</p>
	<p><b>Juxtaposition</b></p>	<p>We can see a funny image, but the message is too much important. The cartoon hides a societal issue, which is perhaps that Americans are tired.</p>
<p><b>Interaction</b></p> <p><b>Between</b></p> <p><b>Visual</b></p> <p><b>And</b></p> <p><b>Textual</b></p>	<p><b>Text</b></p>	<p>“Cycle, Spin, Drain” shows the washing machine process. The man inside it says, “M-M-Make I-I-It S-S-Stop!” because he is fear.</p>
	<p><b>Irony &amp; Satire</b></p>	<p>Voting is the hope of the citizens, but here it is very scary. It is not the same thing than the expectation .</p>

<p><b>Elements</b></p>		
	<p><b>Visual and verbal blend</b></p>	<p>The image and word combine. The washing machine hurts him, and the text transmit the message.</p>
<p><b>Humor</b>  <b>And</b>  <b>Ideological</b>  <b>Representation</b></p>	<p><b>Criticism of policy</b>  <b>Ideological framing</b>  <b>Power dynamics</b></p>	<p>The caricature shows how voting make individuals tired and weak.</p> <p>The man inside the machine is small. It shows how people feel weak.</p> <p>The machine big and new. Uncle Sam is scared. This shows how voting controls individuals.</p>

In this meme, Uncle Sam is presented inside a washing machine named “Election 24,” he is afraid and needing help. Representationally, Uncle Sam represents the American individuals, and the washing machine represents the disordered voting process. His facial expression and physique posture show fear and stress, showing how many people feel stressed by the government. Interactionally, Uncle Sam looks out to the public, creating an immediate link and encouraging empathy or worry.

Compositionally, the washing machine in the center, with Uncle Sam inside it, causing the disorder the emphasis. This use of imagery signs shows Relief Theory (Freud, 1905), where humor gives a psychological release from pressure and anxiety. The cartoon also confirms Holbert et al. (2011), who state that political humor can show general dissatisfaction and decrease psychological weight of political participation. While the picture

is comical, it sends a an important meaning about how tiring and unclear votes can be for ordinary people.

**Meme 11: Photo finish by Jack Ohman**

<p><b>Common</b></p> <p><b>Visual</b></p> <p><b>Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Caricature</b></p>	<p>Kamala Harris and Donald Trump, Harris has an open and big mouth with big teeth and a horrible face. Trump is with a colorful skin, messy hair, and an upset face.</p>
	<p><b>Symbolism</b></p>	<p>The image behind them with lines and the phrase “Photo Finish” means a close voting. They just finished the election procedure.</p>
	<p><b>Juxtaposition</b></p>	<p>Harris is laughing, and Trump is very angry. This distinction creates fun by showing their different feelings.</p>
<p><b>Interaction</b></p> <p><b>Between</b></p> <p><b>Visual</b></p>	<p><b>Text</b></p>	<p>The phrase “PHOTO FINISH...” add irony. In sports, a photo finish means the winner. Here, it shows Trump angry and Harris happy, without focusing the winner. This insist on the viewer to make mind about the winner.</p>

<p><b>and</b></p> <p><b>Textual</b></p> <p><b>Elements</b></p>	<p><b>Irony &amp; Satire</b></p>	<p>The fun comes from the different moods of Trump and Harris. Harris is the winner, while Trump the loser. The caricature does not say, but it makes humor of Trump's reaction and perhaps shows Harris won.</p>
	<p><b>Visual and verbal blend</b></p>	<p>The meme uses humor caricature and a simple phrase to present the situation. The interaction of the image and word creates a funny and clear political meaning.</p>
<p><b>Humour</b></p> <p><b>and</b></p> <p><b>Ideological</b></p> <p><b>Representation</b></p>	<p><b>Criticism of Policy</b></p>	<p>The cartoon does not say Trump's opinions, but his upset appearance may represent people critique . It shows a negative opinion of how he accept losing .</p>
	<p><b>Ideological framing</b></p>	<p>The cartoon supports Harris because she is happy. Trump, on the other hand, is very frustrated. This shows a more liberal perspective.</p>
	<p><b>Power Dynamics</b></p>	<p>Harris is powerful and happy, while Trump is weak and upset. This difference of power makes the image humorous and presents support for Harris.</p>

This meme uses amplification, opposition, and contradiction to express a governmental meaning. Representationally, it shows Kamala Harris laughing while Donald Trump unhappy and upset, as if they are ending an event. The visual shows that Harris is more positive, while Trump is discouraged, reflecting a difference in how each character is viewed. Interactionally, both individuals ignore looking at the audience, causing their looks debatable and calling the public to evaluate them.

Compositionally, Harris looks in a better image while Trump's looks and face shows discourage. The meme employs caricature to suggest a change in public opinion. This represents Davison's (2012) concept that online memes are means of expression, where humor serves as a way to respond to governmental issues and figures. It also supports Highfield's (2016) opinion that political memes can express moods and collective views in a humorous but meaningful way.

**Meme 12: “What’s Black and White and Red All Over?” by Tom Stiglich**

<p><b>Common</b></p> <p><b>Visual</b></p> <p><b>Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Caricature</b></p>	<p>The two men in the picture are shown a simple and way. They are not like real people, but their faces are funny. One is shocked, and the other he’s talking about a given subject.</p>
	<p><b>Symbolism</b></p>	<p>The U.S. voting map is in red and blue, the big part is in red. Red supports for Republican votes, and blue supports for Democrat votes. the colors are symbolic: red = Republican power, blue = Democrat weakness. The map shows the political result of the 2024 voting.</p>
	<p><b>Juxtaposition</b></p>	<p>The image places a two men next to a serious discourse. “What’s black and white and red all over?” is a humor. But here, it tends to an image answering the red is dominated voting map. This distinction between fun and serious shows humor and shock.</p>

<b>Interaction Between Visual and Textual Elements</b>	<b>Text</b>	<p>The words is a short phrases between two men. One man gives his opinion: “a newspaper.” But the image reflects a twist : the true answer is the voting map.</p>
	<b>Irony &amp; Satire</b>	<p>The fun is from irony. A humor ends with a humoristic answer now ends with a political discourse. The caricature shows Republican success and Democratic loss.</p>
	<b>Visual and verbal blend</b>	<p>The cartoon combines a phrase with a strong picture which is the map. This combine helps trasmit the message clearly and In funny way. It uses a comedy format to present about something serious</p>
<b>Humour And Ideological Representation</b>	<b>Criticism of Policy</b>	<p>The image does not mention politic discourse, but it shows that Republican aspects were more effective in the election. The map has a lot of red shows a shift in political support.</p>
	<b>Ideological Framing</b>	<p>The red areas represent Republican dominance. The small blue areas show Democratic weakness. This framing shows that the Republic is powerful after the 2024 election.</p>

	<b>Power Dynamics</b>	The map shows image which represents power of the Republicans. But the Democrats are hidden in small blue places.
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This meme uses a popular questions and a red-blue political map to construct ideological humor. Representationally, the red areas on the map indicate Republican victories, and the small blue parts show Democratic defeats, generating a clear opposition. The humor starts in an amusing mood but finishes by presenting an important ideological meaning Republican dominance. Interactionally, the audience looks the chart far view, without any focused look from characters, which encourages analysis rather than empathy.

Compositionally, the big red area visually dominates the blue areas, making the Republican side look more dominant. The use of irony combining a basic humor with serious findings adds to the humor. This supports with Wiggins (2019), who states that memes can clarify complex societal truths and emphasizes authority structure. It also affirms Bakhtin's (1981) theory of the carnivalesque, where humor lets people to critique power and social systems.

**Meme 13: “Cooking Something Up” by Joey Weatherford**

<b>Common</b>  <b>Visual</b>  <b>Resources</b>	<b>Caricature</b>	<p>The caricature shows a donkey and a witch that are drawn in a funny image. The donkey wears clothes and talks as a human. The witch is like an old woman with a huge nose, a dark hat, and cooking something green. This makes the meme comical but transmit an important message.</p>
	<b>Symbolism</b>	<p>The witch and her magic green dish shows that she does something dangerous. She using "magic," which is maybe a trickery. The cartoon presents that the Democrats use unjust elements to win.</p>
	<b>Juxtaposition</b>	<p>The meme talk about serious thing that is voting and a witch cooking spells. This opposition is comical but also critical. It makes the Democratic Party like it wins via tricks instead of real support.</p>

<b>Interaction Between Visual and Textual Elements</b>	<b>Text</b>	<p>The text in the cartoon says: “Well, here we are again right before an election cooking something up for you to win.” This represents that the Democrats are using tricks before a voting procedure. The donkey says it like a normal thing. The visual and text alongside shows that the Democrats are doing something unjust.</p>
	<b>Irony &amp; Satire</b>	<p>The irony is a mix of serious and funny. Voting is serious, but the meme lets us to know that they use magic. This shows comic of the Democratic Party and make sure they don't win fairly. It uses satire to evaluate them by showing a funny but negative image.</p>
	<b>Visual and verbal blend</b>	<p>The cartoon uses comic caricature and short text to make an influential message. The visual shows the situation, and the text explains it. Alongside, they show that something unjust is happening in the Democratic part.</p>

<b>Humour and Ideological Representation</b>	<b>Criticism of Policy</b>	The meme does not talk about real politics. But, it criticizes the Democratic Party by saying they win voting using secret plans by the witch not with public support.
	<b>Ideological Framing</b>	It shows a traditional perspective. It shows that Democrats are dishonest and they cheat to win. The witch focus on the idea that the Democrats can't win without magic or unjust help.
	<b>Power Dynamics</b>	It make sure that the Democratic Party are weak and dishonest, always need help from the witch to satisfy their needs. There are no voters, no democracy, just tricks. This makes the viewer feel suspicious and mocks about them.

This meme employs a donkey and a witch to create a political humor about the 2024 voting. Representationally, the donkey represents the Democrats, and the witch reflects the concept of using tricks or unjust strategies to win. The image shows that the Democrats depend on "magic" instead of popular support. Interactionally, the individuals do not face the viewer, which positions the viewers as an external viewer allowed to evaluate the context.

Compositionally, the witch and donkey are main, and image amplification like the outfit, gestures, or intense postures contributes to the fun. The meme applies paradox by mixing imagination and policy, indicating dishonesty in a humorous style. This reflects with Pfister and Godfrey (2012), who state that political critique often combines humor with commentary to interrogate authority. It also shows Jones (2010), who observes that visual political humor can support political perspectives by ridiculing rivals. In this case, the comic

supports a republican opinion, using signs and exaggeration to present the Democrats look dishonest.

**Meme14: “Played Like a Fiddle”**

<p><b>Common</b></p> <p><b>Visual</b></p> <p><b>Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Caricature</b></p>	<p>This meme shows Kamala Harris and Donald Trump. Trump is shown with a red look, a large mouth, and a huge body. He is upset and silly. Kamala Harris is in a comic way, and she is calm and smiling. It shows a strong contradiction: Trump is nervous and out of control, and Harris is quiet and peaceful.</p>
	<p><b>Symbolism</b></p>	<p>Kamala Harris is playing a guitar. The phrase “played like a fiddle” means that a person is being fooled or controlled. So, the picture says Harris is calm and in control, and Trump is very tricked. The music instrument is a sign of power and control.</p>
	<p><b>Juxtaposition</b></p>	<p>Harris is shown calm and Trump is talking out loud. This contrast is comic and tells who has a charge. Trump is emotional and loud, while Harris is calm and self confidence. The distinction between them shows humor.</p>

<b>Interaction Between Visual and Textual Elements</b>	<b>Text</b>	<p>Trump is saying “It was rigged!” and “I won!” It makes him upset. The woman is calm and plays violin. The text and picture show that Trump is out of control, and Harris is very cool.</p>
	<b>Irony &amp; Satire</b>	<p>Trump is upset and screaming, but Harris is quiet and happy. This makes humor of Trump. It shows he is not powerful, and easy to be out of his control. The cartoon uses this contrast to make people laugh and to evaluate the reaction of Trump.</p>
	<b>Visual and Verbal Blend</b>	<p>The image and text well combine. Trump is screaming with a red face which makes him funny. The woman with the violin is quiet. The text “played like a fiddle” combine both ideas it shows she is making him calm, but he does not know.</p>

<p><b>Humour and Ideological Representation</b></p>	<p><b>Criticism of policy</b></p>	<p>The meme does not focus on politics. It does not show political discourse. But, it shows Donald Trump’s reaction and feelings. It shows that he complains, instead of acting like a political character. So, the meme evaluate his personality.</p>
	<p><b>Ideological framing</b></p>	<p>This caricature interpret an idea that supports Kamala Harris and mocks of Trump. It shows Harris as a calm , and Trump as crazy. The cartoon wants viewers to agree with Harris and mock at Trump. It shows humor to transmit a political idea about who should take power.</p>
	<p><b>Power dynamics</b></p>	<p>Trump is huge in the picture, but he looks weak. Harris is calm, but she is powerful. She pushing him to react. This change in power is humoristic and makes the audience support her, not Trump.</p>

This meme uses caricature and opposition to show Kamala Harris as calm and dominant, but Donald Trump is shown upset and silly. Representationally, Harris is shown with a violin, a sign of authority and calm, while Trump is reactively, showing he is being defeated. The amplification of their face reactions and physical gesture adds humor. Interactionally, neither person looks at the audience, which builds a distance and invites the public to evaluate the opposition between them. Compositionally, Harris is placed in a centered or superior level, supporting her control, while Trump’s confusing look draws attention to his loss of calm. This shows Baym (2005), who interprets that political humor often underlines contradiction in acts to criticize power. It also states Warner (2007), who observes that media imagery can influence beliefs by turning political tension into clear, representative images. The meme shows a democratic perspective, ridiculing Trump’s look and showing Harris as the more approval leader during the 2024 voting.

**Meme15: “Joe Biden told Barack Obama he will run again in 2024”**

<p><b>Common</b></p> <p><b>Visual</b></p> <p><b>Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Caricature</b></p>	<p>Joe Biden is shown with a comic face with big eyes and open mouth. This is often used in caricatures to make a person silly or surprised.</p>
	<p><b>Symbolism</b></p>	<p>It shows different political ideologies (left, right, authoritarian, libertarian). Biden is in the “authoritarian right” part. This lets him appear as a powerful or severe figure. Other people are in different parts of the place and they are laughing. This shows they are not agreeing with Biden.</p>

	<b>Juxtaposition</b>	Hre Biden is serious and has a serious discourse to say, but the others are laughing at him. It creates comic. He thinks it's true and important, but they find it humoristic.
<b>Interaction Between Visual and Textual Elements</b>	<b>Text</b>	The text says: "Joe Biden told Barack Obama he will run again in 2024." This phrase is very important. But the people are laughing, so it becomes funny.
	<b>Irony &amp; Satire</b>	Biden is serious, but the others are mocking. He thinks he can run again, but anyone take it in mind. This makes fun of Biden. It's satirical because it mocks on Biden's opinion in a funny way.
	<b>Visual and verbal blend</b>	The meme make serious and fun at the same time. Biden is important in the meme, but people are not serious . It shows that individuals does not believe in his discourse.
<b>Humour and Ideological Representation</b>	<b>Criticism of policy</b>	The meme criticizes Biden's important view to run again. It suggests that he is too old or not in touch with reality.

	<b>Ideological Framing</b>	The individuals are from several political places, but they all mock Biden. Here we can understand that criticism is all over the world. People from left, right, or center might feel the same.
	<b>Power Dynamics</b>	Biden is the main figure. But the individuals laughing take away his strength. He wants to be serious, but they do not let him do it. This shows that even strong characters can be mocked.

This meme employs comical illustrations, satire, and difference to attack Joe Biden's plan to run again in 2024. Representationally, Biden is presented expressing a serious speech, while public from different ideological views mock at him. This contrast shows that people across the range suspect or mock his choice, proposing he is viewed as detached or too old. Interactionally, the characters do not interact with the audience but with each other, creating the audience a quiet viewer of the common answer.

Compositionally, Biden is positioned separated, while the mocking characters surround him, visually separating him and emphasizing public doubt. This represents Boukes and Vliegenthart (2017), who state that political humor can impact how officials are seen by showing them as incapable. It supports with Thurston (2019), who remarks that memes often combine humor and criticism to question the authority of political figures. The meme is funny, but it clearly delivers a negative opinion of Biden's leadership and his choice to run in the 2024 election.

**Meme16: “Society is riding the US Election Crypto Hype”**

<p><b>Common</b></p> <p><b>Visual</b></p> <p><b>Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Caricature</b></p>	<p>The two politicians here are shown with , strong arms, and upset . They look funny and humoristic. Caricature helps to show them as dramatic and emotional.</p>
	<p><b>Symbolism</b></p>	<p>The Bitcoin symbol shows money and new technology. The American flag supports the US voting. These signs shows the main ideas of meme: elections and cryptocurrency.</p>
	<p><b>Juxtaposition</b></p>	<p>The politicians are serious and strong, there are a lot of lights . This mix makes the scene crazy. The meme shows that politics and crypto are becoming like a show .</p>
<p><b>Interaction</b></p> <p><b>Between</b></p> <p><b>Visual</b></p> <p><b>and</b></p> <p><b>Textual</b></p> <p><b>Elements</b></p>	<p><b>Text</b></p>	<p>The word says: “Society is riding the US Election Crypto Hype.” it means that individuals are too excited about political events , such they are part of a trend. The word "HYPER" shows that things are abused.</p>
	<p><b>Irony &amp; Satire</b></p>	<p>The meme is humorous and full of colors, and makes the situation comic. The two characters seems heroes or fighters, but they are shown like cartoons. The meme uses irony to say: “This is serious, but also a bit ridiculous.”</p>

	<b>Visual and verbal blend</b>	The meme interact strong images with dramatic words. Everything in the meme is intense, and the message is about hype. This makes the meme comic, but it also makes us think about how people react in political events.
<b>Humour and Ideological Representation</b>	<b>Criticism of Policy</b>	It does not critique a precise character . Instead, it makes fun of how leaders and the public are acting. It shows that society follows politics and crypto follows celebrities.
	<b>Ideological Framing</b>  <b>Power Dynamics</b>	The meme represents everyone excited by the two figures. It does not show that the whole situation is too much.  One of the two looks powerful and taller, to show that he has dominance and power. But the two are in the same crazy scene. The meme shows that even powerful people are part of the hype and noise.

This cartoon adopts vivid colors, comical images, and extreme gestures to mock of how individuals follow government affairs and digital currency like a show. Representationally, the two figures in suits likely leaders are shown with expressive looks and postures, making them look foolish and too dramatic. The audience acts with either joy or fear, showing how people react to civic and economic events.

Interactionally, the people do not look at the audience, making it as passive of the disorder. Compositionally, the Bitcoin symbol and American flags are prominent, connection

the image to economy and US politics. This confirms García-Carrizo and Rueda-Tomás (2021), who note that memes often overstate people’s actions or to question how people repond to media and power. It also illustrates Highfield (2016), who explains that memes can offer analytical takes by combining comedy with societal critique. So, the meme is not just amusing and colorful it also indicates that both politics and cryptocurrency are seen as a show rather than important matters.

**Meme17: “Vote for whoever you like: Political preferences as personal tastes”**

<p><b>Common</b></p> <p><b>Visual</b></p> <p><b>Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Caricature</b></p>	<p>This caricature does not abuse like other caricatures. Biden and Harris are smiling and looking good. They are calm and normal. This makes the meme feel light and easy.</p>
	<p><b>Symbolism</b></p>	<p>The fun in from the food choices: Biden likes pizza, and Harris likes broccoli. They are personal tastes not political ideas. Sometimes politics is to choose food not choosing a leader with strong ideas. The colorful text and named like “U.S. Elections” help us know it’s a political meme, but in a comic way.</p>

	<b>Juxtaposition</b>	The meme puts politicians with a funny topics (pizza vs. broccoli). This contrast makes it comic. It focuses on politics which sometimes becomes more about what personally likes, not about the voting..
<b>Interaction Between Visual and Textual Elements</b>	<b>Text</b>  <b>Irony &amp; Satire</b>	The text says: "Vote for whoever you like." It is easy like looking for a favorite food. The text is simple and clear. It adds humor by saying that voting is such a personal preference.  It's ironic because the meme compares voting an election to food choices. The meme is soft and playful. It uses comic to say: "Maybe we care too much about how politicians look or act, and not enough about their real ideas."
	<b>Visual and verbal blend</b>	The faces and the words combine to create a calm and funny emotion. The meme shows Biden and Harris as calm and lovely people,

<b>Humour and Ideological Representation</b>	<b>Criticism of Policy</b>	The meme does not talk about policies. Instead, it shows that political ideas sometimes focus on small, personal things
	<b>Ideological Framing</b>	The meme does not support or attack it is neutral. It just shows both people with different tastes, as if politics were like choosing between pizza and broccoli.
	<b>Power Dynamics</b>	Biden is on the left side (which is usually the “Given” side), and Harris is on the right side (usually the “New” side). This might mean Biden is more familiar, and Harris brings something different. But both are equal in the image. The message is: “Pick who you like, it’s your choice.”

This meme presents Joe Biden and Kamala Harris looking cheerful and discussing about their chosen meals, like pizza and broccoli. Representationally, they are friends, focusing on individual choices instead of political problems. This makes the meme seem like an election promo, but the true meaning is comical it illustrates how politics can sometimes seem like selecting a light food instead of deciding on important issues. Interactionally, their calm behaviors and no eye contact create a soft, inviting atmosphere that does not stress the audience, supporting a simple and easy undersatnding.

Compositionally, the use of soft colors and even supports to the meme's calm. This shows Highfield (2016), who states that memes can offer indirect political comments by using humor. It also supports Milner (2013), who notes that memes often merge between media and civic discussions. The meme doesn't directly agree or reject anyone it simply uses humor to propose that recent political movements sometimes emphasize more on personality than real policies, encouraging viewers to think more carefully about their civic preferences.

### Meme18: Talk to my lawyers

<b>Common Visual Resources</b>	<b>Caricature</b>	Trump with a huge head, nervous face, long red tie, and big belly to make him look comical.
	<b>Symbolism</b>	The judges shows legal power or protection.
	<b>Juxtaposition</b>	Trump is talking and colorful, judges are very serious wearing dark job costumes. The red tie connects Trump to the judges, showing a strong link.
<b>Interaction Between Visual and Textual Elements</b>	<b>Text</b>	Trump says "Talk to my lawyers" and the indictment paper is ignored.
	<b>Irony &amp; Satire</b>	The words are powerful, but the image shows Trump going far of responsibility by hiding behind the judges.
	<b>Visual and verbal blend</b>	Trump is with a suits, judges are dark and serious. Trump looks at us judges do not look at us .
<b>Humour</b>	<b>Criticism</b>	The meme evaluates Trump for using powerful people to avoid legal trouble.

<b>and</b>  <b>Ideological</b>  <b>Representation</b>	<b>Ideological framing</b>	It shows a critical or liberal view of Trump as dishonest.
	<b>Power dynamics</b>	Trump is in the middle and colorful, judges are on the right, and the man with the indictment is on the left. This shows Trump tries to hide behind the courts.

This meme employs caricature and representation to show Donald Trump as ridiculous and hiding at the back judges who stand for judicial authority. Representationally, Trump is shown with distorted facial details to make him appear weak or scared, while the judges look serious and dominant. This contrast emphasizes the notion that he is not dealing with law alone. Interactionally, Trump is not looking at the audience and protected by the judges, showing he avoids duty. Compositionally, Trump is set behind the judges, which in the image shows his need on them. The mocking text, “Talk to my lawyers,” creates humor by showing that Trump employs legal backing to avoid responsibility.. It also relates to with Baym (2005), who argues that media parody helps reveal how authority is exercised .

**Meme 19: Look At Me**

<b>Common Visual Resources</b>	<b>Caricature</b>	Trump with an open mouth, orange face, and messy hands right and left to make him look comic.
	<b>Symbolism</b>	Trump screaming to attract attention; but the woman is calm, showing real work.
	<b>Juxtaposition</b>	Loud, colorful Trump vs. calm, simple woman at the podium.
<b>Interaction Between Visual and Textual Elements</b>	<b>Text</b>	Trump shouts “LOOK AT ME!!!” loudly.
	<b>Irony &amp; Satire</b>	Trump wants attention but people listen to the woman instead.
	<b>Visual and textual blend</b>	Trump faces us with open arms, the woman looks away. Trump is colorful, the woman is simple. The picture and text together make a funny and critical message.
<b>Humour and Ideological Representation</b>	<b>Criticism of policy</b>	The meme criticizes Trump for being loud but not effective.
	<b>Ideological framing</b>	Supports a liberal view that real work and calm actions matter more than loud words.
	<b>Power dynamics</b>	Trump is biggest and colorful on the left (where eyes start), but the woman quietly gets money and attention, showing she is more important.

This meme represents Donald Trump nosily calling for attention, while a calm woman is silently working and getting seen instead. Representationally, Trump is overstated with loud signals and facial looks, showing him as loud and needy. The woman, unlike him, looks caalm and concentrated, which gives her a favorable and skilled image. Interactionally, Trump’s loud stance rejected from the viewer’s support, while the woman’s calm attracts respect.

Compositionally, the woman is positioned in the middle or emphasizes space, attracting the attention, while Trump’s behavior is marginalized. This supports Greenberg (2002), who says that visual mockery often compares characters to emphasize flaws. The meme uses distinction and contradiction to say that true worth comes from calm, effective behavior not noisy self.

**Meme20: Sowing sides**

<p><b>Common</b></p> <p><b>Visual</b></p> <p><b>Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Caricature</b></p>	<p>Trump is drawn with orange face, strange hair and movements. This makes him look ridiculous and criticisable.</p>
	<p><b>Symbolism</b></p>	<p>Seeds called with “hate”, “racism”, and “lies” shows the negative ideas he spreads. The signs in the soil (fraud, violence, sexism) show the harmful outcomes.</p>
	<p><b>Juxtaposition</b></p>	<p>Trump appears to be gardening ( a normally positive act) but is actually spreading toxic ideas, creating contrast between action and meaning.</p>

<b>Interaction Between Visual And Textual Elements</b>	<b>Text</b>	The quote at the top connects the idea of “seeds we water” with what Trump is doing, making the message clear.
	<b>Irony &amp; Satire</b>	Trump acts like helpful gardener, but the “plants” are hate and fear. The irony is that he is growing problems, not solutions.
	<b>Visual and verbal blend</b>	Visuals ( Trump’s actions and signs in the soil) work with the textual quote to express a strong message: his leadership nurtures division.
<b>Humor And Ideological Representation</b>	<b>Criticism of policy</b>	Through metaphor, it criticizes Trump’s influence and political discourses by showing the harmful “fruits” of his actions
	<b>Ideological framing</b>	Presents a liberal perspective: Trump is a source of negativity, even if he appears active and proud.
	<b>Power dynamics</b>	Trump is in the center, visually dominant, yet the outcomes (violence, sexism) expose the misuse of his power his power. Humor makes the critique more accessible and sharp.

The meme “Sowing Seeds” uses humor and representation to show Donald Trump transmitting dangerous messages like hate and fear. Representationally, he is shown as a gardener, but he does not cultivate flowers or plants, he distributes toxicity and pessimism, which shows the danger of his speech. Interactionally, Trump is not looking at the audience,

showing he is ignorant or indifferent about how his behavior impact others. Compositionally, the dark plants and named seeds take main attention, leading the viewer to interpret the results of his behavior. This connects with to Chatterje-Doody and Crilley (2019), who state that visual political humor can expose dangerous belief system by combining visual and caricature. It also connects with Wagner (2022), who explores how visual memes use contradiction and overstatement to show criticism in political discourse. The cartoon uses humor to transmit a progressive idea that criticizes against the negative influence of Trump's speech.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the memes studied in this chapter presents how humor can be strong tool for political commentary. Through caricature, and representative images, these memes share an understanding messages about Donald Trump and the US politics. Whether they support or oppose, they all encourage audiences to think, laugh, and question political realities. Memes are more than amusement they are part of today's political discourse.



## **General Conclusion**

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

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This study examined how political memes used humor and visual strategies to transmit political messages during the 2024 U.S. presidential election. By using Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis and humor theory, the research provided a detailed look at how memes function both visually and linguistically. The findings show that political memes are not just jokes; they are powerful rhetorical tools that shape how people think, feel, and talk about politics online.

The multimodal analysis of the memes revealed common features such as caricature, exaggeration, symbolism, and contrast. Politicians were often drawn with exaggerated facial expressions, bright colors, and unusual proportions to highlight certain traits and create humor. Donald Trump, for instance, was repeatedly shown with orange skin, a long red tie, or a distorted face to emphasize arrogance, chaos, or dishonesty. These artistic choices were not accidental. They helped construct a visual message that aligned with a political opinion, often mocking or criticizing the subject. Symbols like the U.S. Constitution, Lady Justice, or national flags were also used to deliver deeper political commentary. When placed in ironic or absurd situations, these symbols invited viewers to laugh while also reflecting on political ideas or failures.

Humor was created not just by the drawings, but by how the images and words worked together. The combination of visual cues and short captions made memes easy to understand and share, but also rich in meaning. Many memes used irony, where the image and the text said opposite things. For example, a politician might say something confident while the image shows them failing or looking foolish. This created a gap between appearance and reality, which is a key element in incongruity theory. Humor emerged from this mismatch, inviting the viewer to laugh while questioning the message. Other memes relied on superiority theory by making the viewer feel smarter or more aware than the person being mocked. This

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

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technique was especially common in partisan memes that criticized opposing political leaders. Relief theory also played a role.

The analysis showed that memes often took a strong political stance. Most of the examples in this study leaned toward a liberal or progressive viewpoint, frequently criticizing Donald Trump, questioning his leadership, and mocking his behavior or statements. Memes that supported Joe Biden or Kamala Harris focused on portraying them as calm, smart, or powerful, especially in contrast to Trump’s exaggerated and chaotic image. However, the study also included conservative memes, such as those that depicted Democrats as dishonest or out of touch. These memes used similar visual and rhetorical tools—such as parody and visual metaphors—but from an opposite ideological perspective. In both cases, memes served as tools for reinforcing political beliefs, shaping group identity, and encouraging laughter at the expense of the “other side.”

Visual design played a key role in how these messages were communicated. The Grammar of Visual Design helped explain how layout, positioning, and framing directed attention and built meaning. Politicians were placed at the center of images, given bright colors, or contrasted with ordinary citizens to emphasize power dynamics. For example, Trump was often shown as large and loud, while the average American appeared small, tired, or confused. This kind of framing suggested inequality or criticism of leadership. Gaze, facial expression, and posture were also used to communicate emotion and authority, making the image feel more immediate and personal. When combined with text—especially ironic or sarcastic captions—these visual choices guided the viewer’s understanding and emotional reaction.

Memes were not neutral. They often reinforced ideological narratives or challenged political norms. For instance, memes criticizing Trump’s push for a third term or his reaction

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to the 2020 election results questioned his respect for democratic values. Others mocked Biden's age or public speaking, challenging his credibility as a leader. These messages, although humorous, had serious implications. They influenced how viewers thought about democracy, trust, and political power. Because memes are shared widely and quickly, they can spread these messages faster than traditional media. Yet this also raises concerns. Humor can simplify complex issues, exclude alternative viewpoints, or even mislead audiences. When satire or parody is misunderstood, it may contribute to misinformation or deepen political divisions.

This research has shown that political memes are complex, multimodal texts that carry serious social and political weight. They are shaped by the intentions of their creators, the beliefs of their audiences, and the cultural and historical context in which they are shared. They express emotion, deliver critique, and invite participation in political discourse. The use of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, combined with humor theory, allowed for a deep and flexible examination of how memes work and why they matter. This approach revealed that humor in memes is not just a form of entertainment, but also a way of doing politics—of arguing, resisting, persuading, and belonging.

In response to the research questions, the analysis found that the most common visuals in political memes during the 2024 U.S. election included exaggerated facial expressions, edited images, and well-known pop culture references. These visuals often featured political figures such as Donald Trump and Joe Biden placed in humorous or absurd situations. This helped make the memes funny while also drawing attention to specific political behaviors or controversies. Regarding how images and words work together, the study showed that visual elements like gestures, facial expressions, and symbols were often combined with short, sarcastic captions or ironic text. This combination created a strong message that was both funny and critical, allowing the memes to communicate political opinions quickly and

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

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effectively. Finally, the humor in these memes was found to play both supportive and oppositional roles. Some memes reinforced popular political views and boosted group identity, while others challenged dominant narratives, questioned political figures, or exposed contradictions in public discourse. Through humor, these memes encouraged viewers to engage with politics in a more personal and emotional way.

Although the present study offers insightful observations on political memes, its scope remains limited in certain aspects. It focused on English-language memes from major platforms, and it did not examine how different groups interpreted or responded to the memes. In addition, meme culture changes quickly, and the meanings of memes can shift as they are reshared and remixed. Future studies could explore how audiences from different backgrounds understand political memes, how humor functions in different cultural or national settings, or how artificial intelligence is changing meme production and circulation. These directions could build on the current findings and expand our understanding of political humor in digital spaces.

An important result of this study is that the memes often showed clear political ideologies. Many memes supported liberal or progressive views, especially by criticizing Donald Trump. These memes often defended values such as equality, democracy, and diversity. They showed Trump as a dangerous or dishonest leader, while Joe Biden or Kamala Harris were shown as calm, smart, or responsible. On the other side, some memes expressed conservative ideas, often attacking Democrats and their policies. These memes used humor to present them as weak, dishonest, or disconnected from the people. In both cases, memes were used to share political opinions, support one side, and criticize the other. They helped people feel part of a group with the same beliefs.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

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To end with, the 2024 U.S. presidential election generated a wide range of political memes that used humor to express ideas, support causes, and criticize leaders. These memes relied on both visual design and rhetorical strategies to create meaning, shape opinions, and engage audiences. Through exaggeration, irony, and symbolism, they offered a form of commentary that was quick, emotional, and highly shareable.

They helped people make sense of politics in a chaotic time, often by turning confusion or anger into laughter. As political communication continues to move online, studying memes is essential for understanding how citizens think, feel, and participate in democratic life.



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# **Appendices**

1. The Corpus:



Meme 1 : HAPPY LIBERATION DAY

Meme 2 : MY TARIFF PLAN : 2 + 2 = 5

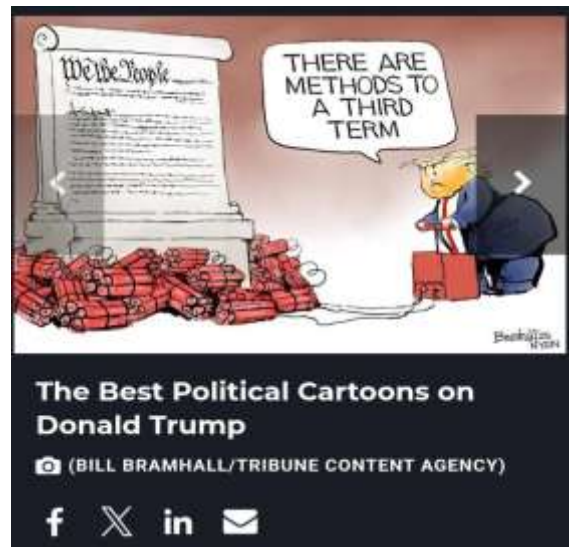


Meme 3 : SAVE THE DATE

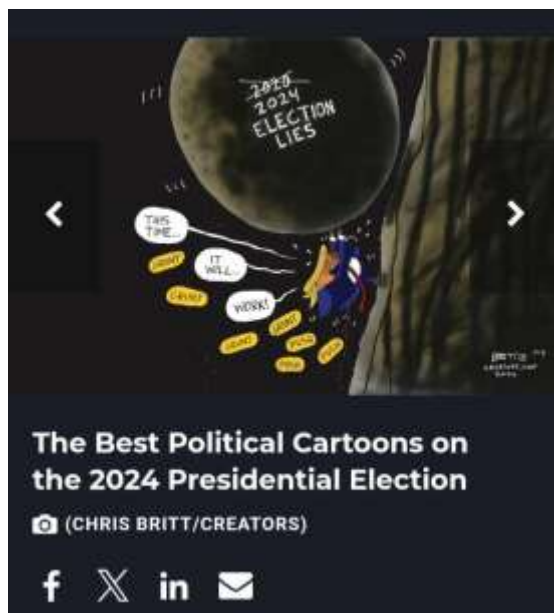
Meme 4 : MEET THE AUTHOR



Meme 5 : CLOSING ARGUMENTS



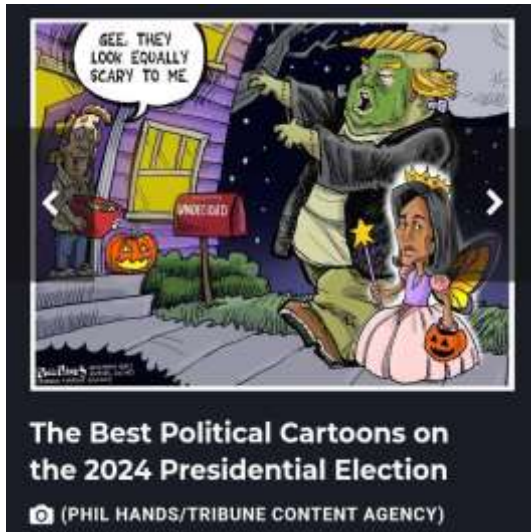
Meme 6 : THERE ARE METHODS TO A THIRD TERM



Meme 7 : THE BEST POLITICAL CARTOONS ON THE 2024 P.E



Meme 8 : THE BEST POLITICAL CARTOONS ON THE 2024 P.E



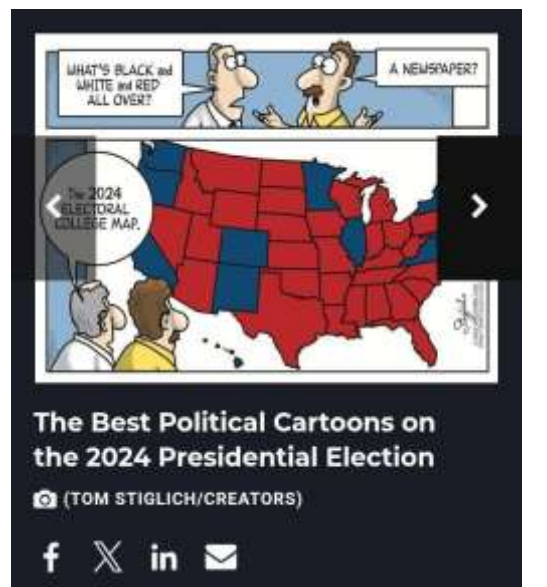
**Meme 9: GEE, THEY LOOK, EQUALLY SCARY TO ME**



**Meme 10 : ELECTION CYCLE SPIN DRAIN**



**Meme 11 : PHOTO FINISH**



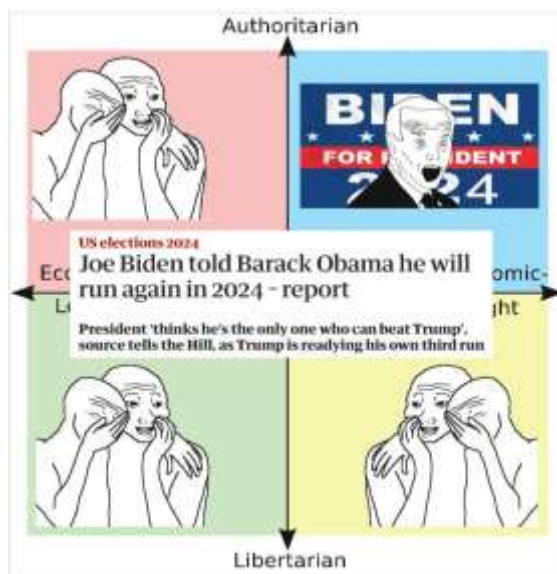
**Meme 12: WHAT'S BLACK AND WHITE AND RED ALL OVER?**



Meme13 : COOKING SOMETHING UP



Meme14 : PLAYED LIKE A FIDDLE



Meme15: JOE BIDEN TOLD BARACK OBAMA HE WILL RUN AGAIN IN 2024



Meme16: SOCIETY IS RIDING THE US ELECTION CRYPTO HYPE



Meme17: VOTE FOR WHOEVER YOU LIKE



Meme 18: TALK TO MY LAWYERS



Meme19: LOOK AT ME



Meme 20: SOWING SIDES

## 2. Memes' Credits

Meme 1	<p>Title: "Happy Liberation Day" by Bramhall</p> <p>Platform: Twitter</p> <p>Source: Bill Bramhall / Tribune Content Agency</p> <p>Date on Cartoon: 2024</p>
Meme 2	<p>Title: "My Tariff Plan: 2+2=5" by Gary Markstein</p> <p>Platform: Online Political Cartoon</p> <p>Source: Creators Syndicate</p> <p>Date on Cartoon: Not specified, but relevant to Trump-era tariff policies</p>
Meme 3	<p>Meme Title: Save the Date – June 20, 2029</p> <p>Platform: Tribune Content Agency / NY Daily News</p> <p>Source: Bill Bramhall</p> <p>Date and Cartoon: 2024, cartoon about Donald Trump and Lady Justice, referencing a potential future sentencing or legal reckoning (June 20, 2029).</p>
Meme 4	<p>Meme title: Meet the author</p> <p>Platform: Reddit</p> <p>Date and Cartoon: Editorial cartoon by Glenn McCoy likely published in 2020 during Trump's presidency</p>
Meme 5	<p>Title: "Closing arguments"</p> <p>Platform: Tribune Content Agency</p> <p>Source: Nick Anderson</p> <p>Date and cartoon: November 2024, Nick Anderson</p>

Meme 6	<p>Title: "There are methods to a third term"</p> <p>Platform: Tribune Content Agency</p> <p>Source: Bramhall, B./ New York Daily News</p> <p>Date and Cartoon: 2024 , Bill Bramhall</p>
Meme 7	<p>Title: "The best political cartoons on the 2024 presidential election"</p> <p>Platform: Politico</p> <p>Source: Chris Britt</p> <p>Date and cartoon: November 4.2024; a caricature of Donald Trump struggling to push a boulder labelled "2024 election lies" uphill , symbolizing his repeated false claims about election fraud.</p>
Meme 8	<p>Title: "The best political cartoons on the 2024 presidential election"</p> <p>Platform: Creators.com</p> <p>Source: Tom Stiglich / Creators</p> <p>Date and cartoon: 2024 , cartoon by Tom Stiglich</p>
Meme 9	<p>Title: "Gee, they look equally scray to me"</p> <p>Platform: Wisconsin State Journal / Tribune content agency</p> <p>Source: Phil Hands , political cartoonist</p> <p>Date and cartoon: 2024, Phill Hnads</p>
Meme 10	<p>Title : " Election cycle spin drain"</p> <p>Platform: Tribune content agency</p> <p>Source: Walt Handelsman , The time picayune / The advocate</p> <p>Date and cartoon: Published in 2024, part of " the best political cartoons on the 2024 presidential election" collection</p>
	<p>Title: " Photo finish"</p> <p>Platform: Tribune content agency</p>

Meme 11	<p>Source: Jack Ohman</p> <p>Date and cartoon: A caricature of Kamala Harris and Donald Trump side by side suggesting a close race in the 2024 US presidential election</p>
Meme 12	<p>Title: The best political cartoons on the 2024 presidential election</p> <p>Platform: Creators Syndicate</p> <p>Source: Cartoon By Tom Stiglich</p> <p>Date and cartoon: November 2024, a satirical cartoon by Tom Stiglich showing the 2024 US.</p>
Meme 13	<p>Title: “ The best political cartoons on the 2024 presidential election</p> <p>Platform: Tribune content agency via Yahoo News</p> <p>Source: Joey Weatherford / Tribune content agency</p> <p>Date and Cartoon: 2024, a democratic donkey tells a witch stirring a potion that they are once again cooking something up to win the election, suggesting manipulation or trickery</p>
Meme 14	<p>Title: “Played like a fiddle”</p> <p>Platform: Reddit</p> <p>Date and cartoon: 2024 US, Unknown</p>
Meme 15	<p>Title: “ Joe Biden told Barack Obama he will rain again in 2024</p> <p>Platform: Twitter</p> <p>Source: The Guardian</p> <p>Date and cartoon: 2024, Cartoonist Unknown</p>
Meme 16	<p>Title: “ Society is riding the US election Crypto Hype</p> <p>Platform: Reddit</p> <p>Source: The Fuse</p>

	Date and cartoon: 2024 US / unknown cartoonist
Meme 17	Title: “ Vote for whoever you like : political preferences as personal tastes Platform: Reddit Source: Memes created using imgflip.com Date and cartoon: 2024, US Election
Meme 18	Title: “ Talk to my lawyers “ Platform: Cagle Cartoons Source: The salt lake tribune Date and cartoon: 2024 US Election , Par Bagley
Meme 19	Title: “ Look at me” Platform: Cagle cartoons Source: Cartoon by P.Byrnes Date and cartoon: N.D
Meme 20	Title: “ Sowing seeds” Platform: Dave Granlund’s Source: Dave Granlund Date and Cartoon: 2024, US Election.