

POLITICS OF CARICATURES: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF CARTOON COVERAGE OF 2014 ISLAMABAD SIT-INS

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ABSTRACT

Newspaper cartoons say what verbal discourse structures find difficult to do. Having symbolic significance and carrying social and ideological meanings, these caricatures influence public opinion as strongly as any other genre of discourse. Like other powerful print medias of the world, Pakistan's English print media has a long history of cartoon coverage during historically remarkable political events. One such coverage was seen, in 2014, during the anti-government marches which followed months of sit-ins by PTI and PAT-two mainstream opposition parties of Pakistan. The cartoon coverage of these sit-ins by the print media played a vital role in manipulating public opinion in favor of either of the two sides-the government or the opposition. In the back drop of sit-in events, this research aimed to unveil how the cartoon coverage by the mainstream Pakistani English newspapers, Dawn, The News, and The Nation, exploited the semiotic and discursive dimension of discourse, to produce a particular communicative effect on audience. Following a qualitative descriptive approach, this study anchored around the principle of Critical Discourse Analysis that discourse has a semiotic dimension which works in collaboration with the verbal dimension to perform a communicative function in a society. The cartoons were selected from the online sources of the newspapers to find out how the event was represented in them, what ideological meanings were conveyed through these visual devices, and how they played their role to enact, maintain, or resist social injustice. The findings of the research rendered that the English print media remained divided in its cartoon analysis of the issue. The News extended its favor to the government and ridiculed the goal, agenda, and leadership of the opposition parties; Dawn portrayed a humorous picture of the events; and The Nation emerged most satirical and coarse in its criticism of both sides: the government and the opposition.

KEY WORDS: Cartoons, Critical Discourse Analysis, PTI, PAT, Government

INTRODUCTION

The results of 2013 general elections in Pakistan witnessed a grave political unrest among the opposition parties of the country. However, PTI (*Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf*), the political party led by Imran Khan raised a louder voice as compared to other political parties, and kept on recording its protest until it culminated in the form of a long march and a sit-in which affected the political system of the country more than ever before. Meanwhile, PAT (*Pakistan Awami Tehreek*) of Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri joined hands with the PTI on the common agenda of the resignation of the then Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, and his younger brother, the then Chief Minister of Punjab, Shahbaz Sharif. Although, PAT named its march as the '*Inqilab*' march, which was motivated by a different incident of the killing of 14 followers at Minhaj Trust in Lahore, yet they shared the same goal of removing the current government.

The newly freed media appeared to cover this issue of paramount importance not as reporters, but as supporters of either of the two sides. In fact, the political temperature of the country was so high that no one could deny the rise in heat. Media, as an important pillar of the state, found it more exciting to portray

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the self-assumed role of a power center. Having full control over different discourse genres which had to cover the event, the media had the power to reshape structural hierarchy in post ‘*sit-in*’ Pakistan. However, different media groups supported different political groups depending upon the political ideology of their groups. Utilizing different discourse devices and genres, the media manipulated the discourse in favor of a particular group instead of painting an impartial picture of the event. English print media was in no way behind the other forms of media in portraying the whole event in its own color.

Among different discourse genres used by media for achieving certain ends, cartoon discourse functioned more effectively in (re)shaping public opinion. Exploiting a semiotic as well as verbal dimension, this genre remained most successful in arousing a quick and desired response. Possessing a force of symbolism, imagery, analogy, exaggeration, and other rhetoric devices, these caricatures did more than provide a source of amusement to the public. In order to intensify the humor and irony of the situation, English print media presented the cartoons which appeared to convey volumes in them. No other genre could strengthen the effect of satire on the opposition as the cartoon discourse did. In this way, these visual images allowed the newspapers to influence the public opinion, in a more forceful way, by exploiting minimum space on paper.

This research aims to investigate both the semiotic and verbal structures utilized in cartoons, which appeared during the coverage of 2014 anti-government Islamabad sit-ins by three leading English newspapers-*Dawn*, *The News*, and *The Nation*. The framework of analysis is adopted from Critical Discourse Analysis/Studies (CDA) which is socio-politically committed to social equality and justice. CDA is characterized by a common interest of de-mystifying ideology and power through a systematic investigation of semiotic data. It is a characteristic of CDA analysts to keep their positions and interests explicit when retaining to their own scientific methodologies (Wodak & Mayer, 2009, p. 3). The primary concern of CDA is discursive reproduction of power abuse and resistance against it (Van Dijk, 2015). Being based on the framework of a Critical Discourse Analysis, this study endeavors to dig out how the cartoon coverage of 2014 anti-government sit-ins in Pakistan represented different stakeholders of the political conflict in different ways in order to maintain, reproduce, or resist social injustice in the society. It also talks about how, through different semiotic devices, the cartoons strengthened media’s cause of shaping public opinion more effectively as compared to other genres of news.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Pakistan’s mainstream English print media appeared to assume the role of a power center in covering the 2014 anti-government Islamabad ‘*sit-ins*’. As compared to other genres of news, the major media groups inculcated their own ideology more vigorously in their cartoon discourse by seeking aid from different discursive devices both in semiotic and verbal dimensions of discourse. Furthermore, the satire and irony aroused by these humorous devices appeared to target particular stakeholders instead of portraying the situation in general and without biasness. This study seeks to highlight the social injustice caused by the production of a tilted discourse in favor of or against certain groups who were part of the ‘*sit-ins*’.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is an attempt to explicitly highlight the role of media in (re)shaping public opinion through political cartoons. It is critical of the previous studies, which are not very large in number (to the knowledge of the researcher), on political cartoons in Pakistan for not exposing the ideological positioning of different media groups during the issues of grave political consequence e.g. 2014 anti-government *sit-ins*. In this regard, this study contributes to society by making the people of Pakistan aware about the role of their English Print media in manipulating their opinions in a certain and desired way. This study also benefits

the students and researchers of media studies to conduct future research for demystification of media's real role in society.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research endeavors to find out answers to the following research questions.

- i. How did the cartoons of English print media portray the long march/sit-in event?
- ii. How did the cartoonists exploit semiotic (visual) and verbal structures to maintain or resist social injustice in the society?
- iii. Which media groups remained impartial in their coverage of the whole event?
- iv. Which media groups showed biasness in favor of or against a particular party?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical Discourse Analysis is an explicit approach which aims to highlight what is not at the surface of discourse. It is not a particular method, but a complete paradigm of research with its own concept of language and discourse. Wodak (2006) observes that "CDA has never been and has never attempted to be or to provide one single or specific theory. Neither is one specific methodology characteristic of research in CDA." (p. 2). It means that CDA is not one among the many methods of discourse analysis, rather it is interdisciplinary. It is a complete perspective. The difference between CDA and other perspectives lies in the fact that CDA does not view language as an independent or self-sufficient construct but it finds language a socially controlled process (Fairclough, 1989) which is determined by the context. Discourse is not merely a representation of reality but it may add meanings to it. Hence, one of the common aims of CDA is to demystify discourses by deciphering ideologies (Fairclough, 1995), and to dig out how power relations are exercised and negotiated in discourse (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). It is the characteristic of CDA researchers that although they retain their own methodologies and remain self-reflexive of their research process, they keep their interests and positions explicit (Wodak & Mayer, 2009).

Van Dijk (2015, p. 63) maintains that Critical Discourse Studies (a synonymous term for the more frequently used term Critical Discourse Analysis) and its scholars are committed to social justice and equality. For achieving this socio-political end, their research becomes more problem-oriented than discipline-oriented. They are primarily interested in 'discursive reproduction of power abuse' and resistance against such structures. In this way, they strive to counter social injustice in the society. Stipulating the criteria for research, Van Dijk (1995, p.18) mentions that CDA does not only pay heed to verbal dimension of discourse: grammar, phonology, syntax, semantics, rhetoric, pragmatics, schematic organizations etc. but also to the semiotic dimensions of the communicative event such as pictures, film, music, gestures etc. In light of this criterion, this research is primarily concerned with the interplay of semiotic and discursive dimensions which underlie the cartoon discourse of mainstream Pakistani English print media to manipulate public opinion.

Knieper (2017) defines political cartoon as a drawing (often including caricature) made for conveying editorial commentary on politics, politicians and current events. He further elaborates that these cartoons usually appear on the editorial page and convey the opinion of the artist on significant political issues and events. In the process of compressing opinion into a visual form, an artist makes many decisions about symbols, allegories, techniques, composition and so forth. This makes the cartoon an artistic vehicle, marked with both satirical and metaphorical language, which helps in opinion formation, decision making,

and rendering a humorous perspective on news. Although, these are opinion-oriented devices, the editorial standards do not allow the cartoonist to alter facts. This study is highly critical of this ideal expectation from the cartoonist/artist that he is supposed to maintain the editorial standards intact and remain close to the facts.

According to DeSousa and Medhurst (1981), political cartoons play four major functions which include entertainment, aggression reduction, agenda-setting and framing, and specific political policy and history. They provided principle themes for understanding their nature which are political commonplaces, literary and cultural allusions, personal character traits, and situational themes (p. 77). Published political cartoons are not ordinary in their nature. They can change minds, convert ideas, and influence directly and indirectly. This art needs a science to be understood (Steuter & Marlette, 2008). Moreover, political cartoons give freedom to a cartoonist to express views that would appear extreme, mean spirited, and politically incorrect in an essay column (Gilmartin & Brunn, 1998). These views “may identify with certain ideologies, clarify issues, contrast self with others, and reinforce certain positions and attitudes (Mayer, 2000, as cited in Aryuni, 2012, p. 24)

In Pakistani context, cartoon discourse, which has a peculiar significance in fabricating public opinion, has not been given its due heed when compared to the studies conducted on other genres of news. Different studies focused majorly either on editorials (Nadia, 2008; Mahmood, 2018) or on headlines and other news items (Khan & Nawaz, 2015). The few studies conducted on cartoons in Pakistani context are related to Pakistan’s role in international relations (Jabeen, 2016; Jabeen & Ahmad, 2018). Shaikh and Saqalain (2016) deal with the issues internal to Pakistani politics, but leave a very general conclusion which does not highlight the role of particular media groups in opinion making explicitly. A vague and ambiguous conclusion may not serve the purpose of CDA in the true spirit. This study is significant in attempting to clearly highlight the role of media during its coverage of a very significant political issue i.e. the 2014 anti-government *sit-ins*.

METHODOLOGY

This research used qualitative descriptive method of data analysis. The framework of analysis has been borrowed from Van Dijk’s (2015, p. 65) analysis of Election billboard used by ‘UKIP’: a political participant in the 2014 European parliament elections. In the analysis of the visual image of the billboard, Van Dijk focuses on both semiotic and discursive structures to uncover how, through visual (semiotic) and verbal (discursive) structures, power relations are determined and racist ideology is established in the society. Furthermore, this study takes an explicit position in demystifying the hidden ideologies under the cartoons of different media groups in light of Wodak and Mayer’s (2009) characterization of CDA analysts that they assume an explicit position in their research.

The data for this research consisted of cartoons from three mainstream English newspapers: *The Dawn*, *The News* and *The Nation*. The cartoon figures were selected from the online sources of these newspapers. These humorous figures were retrieved from the very crucial editions, published in August 2014, which covered the critical moments of the long march/sit-in events. Furthermore, only those cartoons were selected in which all the major stakeholders were mentioned such as the government, Imran Khan as representative of PTI, Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri as representative of PAT, the judiciary, the umpire (introduced as an unseen character occasionally referred to by Imran Khan), and the people of the country who participated in these events, so that the ideological position of the media groups might be explicated comprehensively.

The focus was not laid merely on visual (semiotic) dimension of discourse, but the interplay of verbal and visual dimensions were also considered to explain how the artists exploited both the dimensions to achieve their desired communicative effect on the audience. Instead of only highlighting the use of visual devices in collaboration with verbal devices, the major focus was on their contribution in ideological opinion making.

ANALYSIS

Following is an analysis of selected cartoons from the three mainstream English newspapers of Pakistan; *Dawn*, *The News*, and *The Nation*. These caricatures appeared in print during the coverage of Azadi march of PTI and Inqilab March of PAT which followed months of sit-in.

DAWN

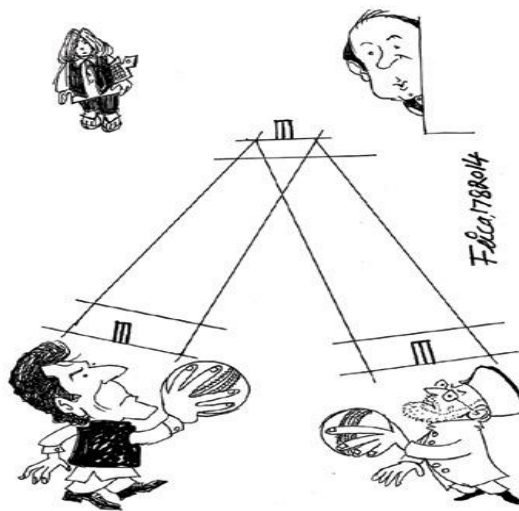


Figure 1

Dawn newspaper extensively used the metaphor of cricket in its cartoon discourse on the long march event. The reason might be that this metaphor was being lavishly exploited by the PTI chief, Imran Khan, in his speeches.

Two bowling pitches converge into a single batting pitch waiting the batsman, Nawaz Sharif, who has yet to come for batting. The two bowlers, right arm fast bowler Imran Khan, and left arm spinner Dr. Tahir ul Qadri are ready to bowl. They are determined to out the PM, sending him back to the pavilion in short time. In the cartoon, there are traces of worry and anxiety on the face of the batsman. A look at the pitch makes him worried. He anticipates that the variety of bowling he is going to face may send him back very soon. There is also an element of astonishment on the face of Nawaz Sharif. His open mouth in the cartoon shows him wondering how it came to be that he is going to face two bowlers at the same time when usually a batsman faces only one bowler at a time. The right and left arm combination may make his innings short, not allowing him to play a long inning. On the bowling end, Imran Khan is holding the ball in his right hand while Qadri has been shown as a left arm bowler, signifying that both the bowlers would apply a joint attack so that they achieve their target in the minimum amount of time required.

This cartoon is symbolic of the fact that the PM would find difficulty in tackling the two marches. This joint venture of Imran Khan and Tahir ul Qadri would keep the government on tenterhooks. At this stage of the march event, the government is in anxiety and perplexity trying to find a way out of this chaotic situation.



Figure 2

Once again, Dawn is relying on the metaphor of cricket. *Figure 2* cartoon finds the batsman in complete serenity and satisfaction. It clearly shows drops of sweat falling from the face of the bowler because of frustration. Unlike the previous cartoon, the batsman, Nawaz Sharif, is smiling as he is now aware of the fact that there is a statue of an umpire instead of a real umpire. This statue umpire would never declare him out. The face of the bowler shows that he has been struggling hard to out the batsman, but the smiling face of the batsman is evident of the fact that he feels he would be able to play a long inning as there is no umpire, only an illusion of it. The appeal of Imran Khan, who was a very successful all-rounder in the world of cricket, would go in vain.

This cartoon is a criticism on the judicial system of the country. Mr. Imran has been insisting on the need of a judicial commission for more than a year. Soon after the May 2013 general elections, he started demanding an impartial probe into the matter of rigging. This discourse, however, comments that the expectation of a free and impartial investigation would prove to be nothing more than a daydream.

The News



Figure 3

The miserable people of Pakistan who feel a deep and abiding love for their country on the eve of August 14 are afraid and hesitant to celebrate this national holiday. They celebrate this day with patriotic fervor and zeal. However, this year they are celebrating the birthday of their country with fear and uncertainty. The cause of this uncertainty, as shown in the cartoon above, is the environment of political turmoil. The proponents of Inqilab and Azadi Marches have been shown as big giants. The poor man, the representative of the masses of Pakistan, is walking between the two big giants. This sandwiching of the poor man between two very powerful marchers is implicative of the fact that the torchbearers of the country who claim to bear the torch of democracy, human rights, and justice are exploiters of the innocent people. The walking style of the three in the cartoon is suggesting that the people who earlier intended to celebrate the 'Jashn- e- Azadi' of the nation are now waving the Pakistani flag under the shadow of fear spread by the protesters. Through this cartoon, the newspaper is claiming that the two protest groups are also part of a power game and not the innocent representatives of the people of the country which they claim to be. The heavy rods in their hands imply that they would not hesitate to use force if the people do not go with them willingly. This cartoon presents the long march exponents as terror spreading people.



Figure 4

Imran Khan is sitting on a tank, but its barrel is pointing back towards him taking a U-turn. The tank is full of fire and ammunition. It signifies the aggression in the mood of PTI chief when allegedly blaming others. The tank is a metaphor of war, and its presence in the cartoon shows that Imran Khan behaves as if he were at war with his opponents. The U-turn of the barrel of the tank and its pointing back towards Imran Khan exemplifies a very deep aspect of discourse. It is a criticism on Imran's character that he takes frequent U-turns in his allegations. He is habitually praising a person at one time and allegedly blaming him with severe charges at another time. It suggests that his allegations are baseless; therefore, these would turn back on him. So, *The News* is critical of Imran Khan for targeting every other person with severe charges. It is important to note that *The News* belongs to Jung group which has also faced charges by the leader. So, this

may be retaliation in order to confuse the legitimacy of all his allegations, and an ideological representation of the opponent.



Figure 5

A clamp is compressing a person reducing him nearly to a skeleton. The machine is 'Dharna' by the protesters, and the weak bony structure is the symbol of the people of Pakistan. *The News* in many of its cartoons conveyed a message which the other newspapers did not highlight. These cartoons suggested that the country would bear a heavy economic loss due to the prevailing political instability. The above cartoon conveys this message. This compression of the bony structure implies that the Dharna of PTI and PAT would cause an intense economic pressure upon the general masses and it would increase their poverty. So, this cartoon of the newspaper stands in line with the other cartoons which criticize the protesters. *The News*, in this section of discourse, suggests that Sit-ins are a further threat to the already poor, ignorant, poverty stricken, and oppressed people of Pakistan and would lead to a decline of the economy of the country making the conditions of living even more difficult for the masses.

1.2 The Nation



Figure 6

Cartoon in figure 6 shows caricature of PTI chief Imran Khan standing in a clownish posture with one leg lifted in air and urging people to look at him instead of looking at the patriots who are celebrating the independence day of the country. The people have been shown in the background. This cartoon depiction is a sarcastic satire on the PTI chief as it ridicules him by reducing him to a clown who is trying to attract public by doing strange stunts to demand their attention. This cartoon representation has a lot of implications. Firstly, the standing posture of the leader conveys that whatever he is doing is not the act of a serious man. Secondly, his activities have thrown the Independence Day celebrations to the background. The cartoonist has shown people in the background instead of showing them parallel to the dancing leader. The remarks of the leader also confirm this fact, as he is saying: “Hey, No! Don’t Look At Them! Look At Me!” In this way, semiotic and discursive structure join together to produce the desired effect. The remarks of the leader lead to the third implication of this cartoon that the leader who is urging people to look at him and not to look at any one else is a megalomaniac, a person who is self-centered. In this way this portrait is nothing else but a cartoony representation of the editorial opinion which appeared in the same edition of the newspaper. The editorial of August 14, 2014 presents the same opinion in these words. It’s heading and the beginning lines quoted below are a very coarse remark on Imran Khan and his ally Dr. Qadri.

“Megalomaniacs

Not that Imran Khan and Tahir-ul-Qadri have ever called it peaceful, but have you ever seen a “peaceful” revolution? Most revolutions are bloody, if not extremely bloody. States take decades to recover from a real revolution. And the same stands for a functional democracy. Authoritarianism for Pakistan is not a type of governance but a style, one that we have seen in democratic governments. And Imran Khan and Qadri are using this same style of ordering around party workers, throwing televised tantrums and rejecting negotiations with a legitimate government. For Imran, it’s the sort of narcissism that will make him say and do whatever it takes to become Prime Minister, and pronto.” (The Nation, editorial of August 14, 2014)

This editorial gives the title of ‘megalomaniac’ to Imran Khan. The words uttered by this cartoon also suggest the same. So, after this analysis it becomes very easy to find out the newspaper’s opinion about the PTI chief, and this is the view which The Nation intends to get across to its readers.

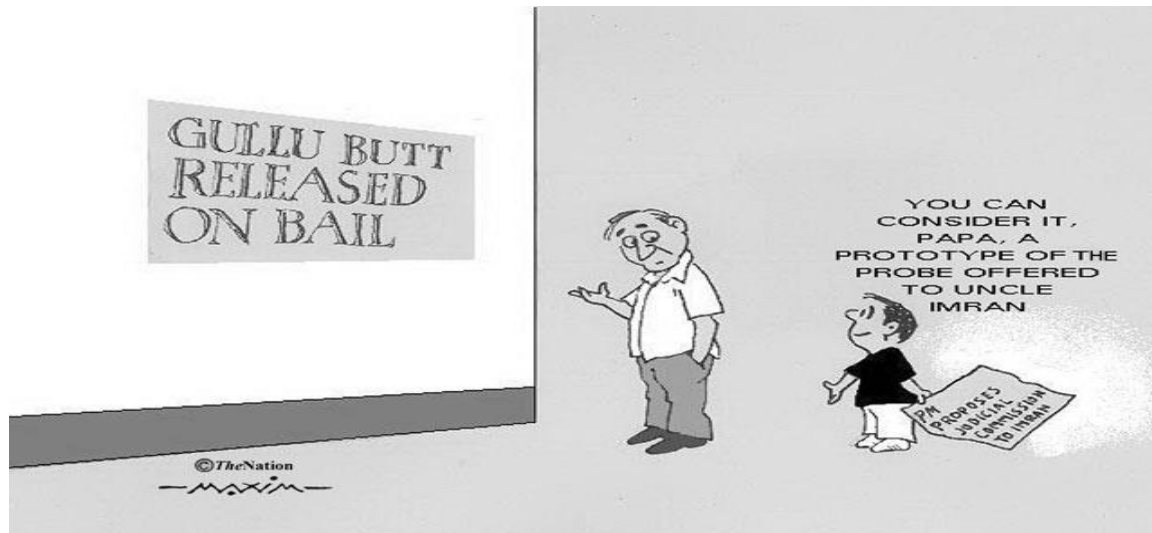


Figure 7

There is news of Gullu Butt’s release on a bulletin board. The father seems astonished at the news. The son, carrying a piece of paper which tells the news that the PM has proposed a commission to Imran, says to his father, “You can consider it Papa, a prototype of probe offered to Uncle Imran.”

The son is mocking the prime minister’s proposal to Imran Khan for formation of a Judicial Commission. The proposed commission has to probe into the matter of rigging in May 2013 general elections. On one side, the government is proposing a judicial commission to Imran while on the other side, it is releasing a rogue, Gullu Butt, who ruthlessly assailed Minhaj Trust in connivance with Punjab police. Dr. Qadri and his party perpetually demanded an impartial probe into the matter but what happened was the release of Gullu Butt who was the symbol of atrocity on PAT followers. If this were the probe offered to Dr. Qadri, it would certainly be the prototype of probe offered to Imran Khan.

This cartoon shows that the newspaper is critical of the government’s proposal of making a judicial commission as a solution to the rigging issue. The Nation seems to opine nothing will come out of nothing.

The following cartoon portrait is related to same subject, and it refers to the same fact. It can be taken as the second episode of the above cartoon.

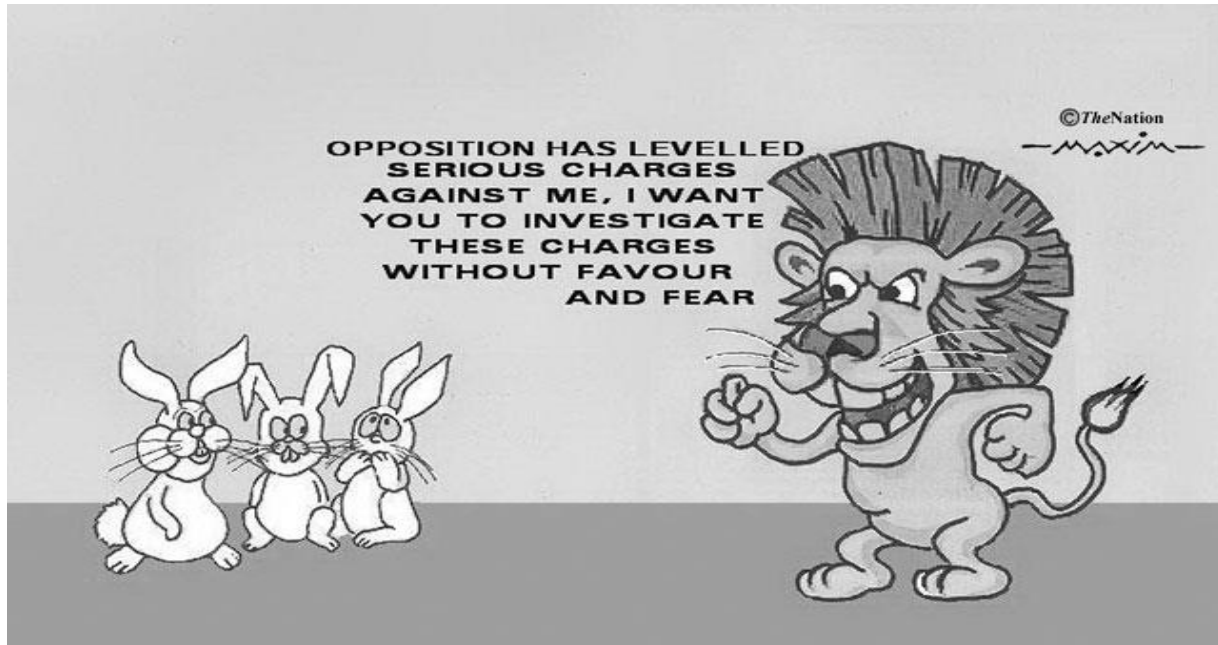


Figure 8

“Opposition has leveled serious charges against me. I want you investigate these charges without favor and fear,” the lion says to the small rabbits. How strange is the law of the jungle that an accused being so powerful commands poor and humble judges to do justice. The lion here represents the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, and the small rabbits are the prospective judges of the Judicial Commission which he has offered to Imran Khan. The cartoon laughs at the irony of the situation for it is impossible for the judges to do justice when the accused is so strong. It appears from the look of the lion commanding the small rabbits that he is roaring these words to the terrified creatures. The three rabbits in the portrait appear to be foolishly laughing at the words of the lion as if they have no sense of fear and justice. What they know to do is to laugh and smile at what happens in front of them.

The analysis of these selected cartoons from *The Nation* shows that, in this section of discourse, the newspaper is critical of both parties-the government and the protesting parties. It considers Imran as a megalomaniac and Nawaz as an exploiter of justice in his favor. The cartoon discourse very sarcastically satirizes the practices of both the stakeholders of the long march event. Furthermore, it is important to identify that the cartoon discourse of ‘*The Nation*’ relies equally on semiotic structure and discursive structure for shaping the opinion of its readers.

Discussion

This section juxtaposes the current study with previous studies conducted in similar contexts. The following discussion provides a comparative analysis of the findings of this study with the findings of previous studies.

It has already been established in section 2 that the tradition of studying political cartoons in Pakistan is not as old as the art of producing this significant source of humor and irony. Among the major studies, Shaikh at al. (2015) was the most relevant as it analyzed political cartoons created in the scenario of 2013 general elections. They draw a very general conclusion about the role of cartoons in arousing irony, satire, and humor through different techniques: symbolism, labeling, analogy, and exaggeration etc. The significance

of their study lies in highlighting the general feeling of public in the backdrop of general elections in the country and the role of media in capturing and adding to the perception of the public. What they lack is to serve the purpose of a critical discourse research by explicitly identifying the role of certain groups in (re)-shaping power structures in a society. Finding this gap, the current study is significant in two respects: firstly, it analyzed a more unusual situation, the post 2013 general elections chaotic situation in the form of 2014 anti-government sit-ins; secondly, it explicitly identified the role of certain groups in enacting, maintaining or reacting against social injustice.

The other significant studies on political cartoons related to Pakistan are Jabeen (2016) and Jabeen and Ahmad (2018). The former analyzed cartoons capturing Pak-India relations in post 9/11 scenario, and the latter investigated the manifestation of hidden ideology in cartoons on Pak-US relations in Musharaf-Bush regimes. Most of the cartoons analyzed in both the studies represent the ideological positioning of the nations through the personalities of the leading figures: Musharaf, Bush, and Wajpai. However, instead of focusing on these individual figures, the irony of the situation is ridiculed in these caricatures. These cartoons highlight America's double standards in dealing with the antagonizing nations: Pakistan and India, and represent Musharaf in an estranged and isolated position amongst the multi-direction hardships where the country was thrown into even after its cooperation in post 9/11 scenario. Again, the lack in these studies is the exposition of the different media groups' stance on the internationally significant issues. The studies were more issue-oriented by providing evidence of how the situation was exploited to create irony and satire instead of highlighting the ideological involvement of different media groups in depicting the situation. The current study fills this gap in two ways: firstly, it addresses an issue related to internal affairs of the country; secondly, it exposes the ideological standing of different media groups in fabricating public opinion not on facts but according to the policy of the media group.

In light of the above discussion, it is easy to establish that the current study plays a significant role in explicitly highlighting the role of English print media in manipulating public opinion in post 2013 general elections scenario.

Conclusion

The analysis of the data rendered the following findings about cartoon discourse coverage by the three newspapers.

Dawn remained more fact-based in its cartoon coverage of the issue. Its cartoons of the top leaders were less sarcastic and more humorous. There was a light humor present in the cartoons which highlighted the irony of the situation, ridiculed the position of the leaders, but did not reach the level of coarse satire. However, through this genre of discourse, the editorial opinion seems to laugh at Imran Khan's illusion of a third umpire.

The News appeared most partial in favor of the government in its cartoon discourse about the long march/sit-ins. The three cartoons selected from the news portrayed long marches and sit-ins as a threat to the economy of the country, and a cause of fear and unrest among the general public. Instead of presenting a factual picture of the event, these caricatures represented a negative picture of PTI chief Imran Khan by highlighting the negative aspects of his political strategies. In this way, this media group remained more loyal to its political ideology than real facts, and caused injustice by extending unconditional support to only one particular stakeholder of the whole event- the government.

The Nation criticized both the groups more sarcastically as compared to the other two groups. If compared to *Dawn*, its criticism was more sarcastic and less humorous, and if compared to *The News*, its criticism did not target one particular party. Its cartoons represented opposition leader Imran Khan as an abnormal megalomaniac who had embodied a clown to capture the attention of the public. However, it did not leave the government and also ridiculed their hollow proposals of a free and fair probe into the allegations against them. So, *The Nation* utilized the device of humor to criticize both the parties instead of being partial in favor of a particular party.

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