



"Memes, New Media, and Political Expression: A Semiotic Approach to Digital Political Content and Algerian Youth Participation"

"الميمات، الإعلام الجديد، والتعبير السياسي: مقاربة سيميائية للمحتوى السياسي الرقمي ومشاركة الشباب الجزائري"

Borhane eddine Bouchelarem
Borhane.bouchelarem@univ-constantine3.dz
9558-9323-0009-0009

Hamid Bouchoucha
hamid.bouchoucha@univ-constantine3.dz

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Abstract :

this study investigates the semiological analysis of Algerian political memes in the light of new media, addressing the question: How do political memes serve as tools of expression and engagement for Algerian youth? and to explore the symbolic meanings embedded in these memes and their implications for political discourse and youth mobilization.

The results reveal that political memes encapsulate the frustrations and identities of Algerian youth, facilitating a space for collective expression. Additionally, this research highlights the significance of political memes as a cultural artifact and a mechanism for political participation among Algerian youth , suggesting that they play a key role in shaping future political participation in the country.

Keywords : internet memes ,new media , political expression ,political participation , youth

الملخص:

جاءت هذه الدراسة للوقوف على ظاهرة الميمات الرقمية السياسية الجزائرية في ظل الإعلام الجديد، من منطلق كونها أداة للتعبير السياسي للشباب الجزائري، من خلال توظيف المقاربة السيميولوجية لتحليل هذه الظاهرة الاتصالية. تسعى الدراسة للإجابة على السؤال: كيف تُستخدم الميمات السياسية كأدوات للتعبير والمشاركة السياسية لدى الشباب الجزائري؟ الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة هو استكشاف المعاني الرمزية المضمنة في هذه الميمات وتأثيرها على المشاركة السياسية للشباب.

أظهرت النتائج أن الميمات الرقمية السياسية تجسد الإحباطات والطموحات والهويات لدى الشباب الجزائري، مما يسهل خلق مساحة للتعبير الجماعي والحوار السياسي. بالإضافة إلى ذلك تؤكد هذه الدراسة على أهمية الميمات الرقمية السياسية كأثر ثقافي وآلية للانخراط السياسي بين الشباب، مشيرة إلى أنها تلعب دوراً محورياً في تشكيل المشاركة السياسية المستقبلية للشباب الجزائري.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الميمات الرقمية , الإعلام الجديد, التعبير السياسي , المشاركة السياسية , الشباب

1. Constantine 3 university (Algeria)
2. Constantine 3 university (Algeria)



1. Introduction

Interactivity stands as one of the defining attributes of new media, revolutionizing the way users engage with digital content, particularly on social media platforms¹. These platforms have transformed into vibrant hubs where multimedia content not only flows from creators to audiences but also allows users to engage in dialogue, reshaping traditional communication models. Through this shift, a new dynamic emerges, blurring the once-clear lines between sender and receiver, creating a complex, interactive relationship where users can generate their own content, what we now refer to as user-generated content. This evolution fundamentally alters the media landscape, making feedback and participation integral to the process.

In particular, Facebook pages exemplify this transformation, offering a space rich with diverse information sources and topics. Digital content has become intertwined with daily life across societies, with advancements in content production and issue framing leading many to rely on these platforms to discuss and express opinions, especially on political matters.

In Algeria, the phenomenon of producing digital political content emerged after YouTuber Chamseddine Amrani released a video on YouTube titled "Manvotich" (meaning "I will not vote") in response to the 2017 parliamentary election campaign, which had the slogan "Make your voice heard" (As observed by the researcher). The video went viral within the first few hours of its release, and the slogan became the most widely shared among users, who reposted the video on their personal pages, in groups, and on public pages on Facebook. This video called for a boycott of the parliamentary elections addressed different economic and basic public issues, like levels of incomes as well as the health sector, maintaining that the government had run the country badly.

In 2019, following the declaration of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's candidacy for a fifth term, the call to establish a popular movement, popularly called Hirak, began to translate into action from social media to the real world. Friday was designated as the official day for demonstrations, and during this period, users began utilizing various creative tools offered by Facebook, such as live streams, photos, and edited videos. What was particularly intriguing was the rise of digital memes. Most of these memes were responses to the country's political situation as well as the political speeches of key political figures.

Internet memes a humorous and often satirical hybrid of text and images that became an accessible form of political expression touted by Hirak and the 2019 election became prime vehicles through which young political dissent was mobilized against the state narrative, thus allowing them to promote solidarity within an alternative political discourse. Memes have become a way for Algerian youth to creatively and openly critique their leaders, comment upon their current conditions, and develop political discourse.

Political memes combine the image and short, attractive text with the ability to appeal for an immediate understanding and contemplation of political issues. These are indeed attractive pieces of well-researched political satire inspired by stages of our most beloved life since the Hirak movement

¹ There is a difference among researchers regarding the nature of social media, whether it should be referred to as platforms or sites. After reviewing various studies and research, we have decided to use the term "social media platforms" instead of "sites" due to its relevance in this study to the field of politics, where these platforms serve as tools for political expression. Moreover, the user in this context is the producer of the digital content, represented in this study by political internet memes.



to the 2019 and 2024 presidential elections, circulating on various digital media platforms and broadly addressing the complaints, disappointments, and hopes of youthful Algerians. Using humor and cultural references familiar to Algerian audiences, these memes provided entertainment while mobilizing youth and solidifying their sense of collective identity and agency within the political process.

This research focuses on the use of internet political memes as a tool for political expression among Algerian youth within the context of significant political events, namely, the Hirak movement and the 2019 and 2024 presidential elections. It aims to explore the symbolic meanings embedded in these memes, analyzing how they reflect and shape new media dynamics, contribute to meme culture, and construct political expression in Algeria. By examining the most widely circulated political memes during this period, the study seeks to uncover the layers of symbolism, humor, and cultural resonance that these digital artifacts convey, offering insights into their role as vehicles for youth-driven political discourse and participation.

2. Definition and Evolution of Memes

A meme is a cultural object or an idea that spreads within society due to the continuous retransmission of thought, including text, interaction, sound, images, and videos from person to person or between communities without distinction, it contains various symbols, signs, and messages. Memes include sounds, speech, music, and jokes, customs, urban legends, propaganda, advertising, tall tales, expressions, fashions, and symbols. (Wang, 2015)

memes fall into categories of key types of non-verbal communication including design, art, advertisement, cocktail reception, publication with music and propaganda.

Mememes may be in the form of text, news, but they are usually video, photo or animation content (Šešum, 2011: 108). A characteristic of these types is that they are presented in combination of image content (which dominates) and the textual content that serves as a clarification of ideas of a meme. The images of memes work by referencing and sampling other forms of culture, such as comics, movies, or news, effectively appearing through parody thereafter. On the other hand, textual elements are variable and allocate the conceptual meaning of meme. (Milosavljević, 01 janvier 2020).

Mememes are classified as natural and artificial: Artificial mememes arise by design or by a direct attempt to create a meme that reaches as many people as possible. The commercial message, the advertisement, the hoax, and the propaganda.

Mememes present a high value of redundancy that guarantees the reliability and safety of news information. In the case of fake news, viral mememes are more reliable than mememes that are sparsely spread. These signals act as a summary of the information and serve as a heuristic for decision making. Various aspects stimulate or discourage the use of a particular preparation of a meme. The image form, the status of the creator, the visual appeal, and the message length are those aspects seem to be important when produce a perfect preparation image of meme.

The term "meme," first introduced by Richard Dawkins in 1976, describing it as a set of "cultural genes." These are the fundamental units of culture music, narratives, and ideas that undergo transformations as they traverse and propagate within societal frameworks. The etymology traces back to "mīmēma," a term that can be loosely translated to "something that is imitated." Dawkins employs the notion of "replicators" to articulate what constitutes a meme, emphasizing that these cultural elements spread throughout a collective consciousness, bouncing from mind to mind like sparks igniting a fire (Dawkins, 2006)

In the context of modernity, the term "meme" has undergone a profound transformation, gaining significant relevance in the analysis of contemporary digital culture.

Today, it refers to a specific kind of cultural digital artifact, rapidly permeating mainstream society and evolving with each passing moment. These modern internet memes proliferate from user to user through various online platforms, echoing the way the original memes traveled through cultural discourse.

In an insightful exploration of this phenomenon, (Shifman, 2014) delineates internet memes as “(a) a collection of digital items that share common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance; (b) are created with awareness of each other; and (c) are circulated, imitated, and/or transformed via the internet by a large number of users worldwide” (p. 341). This definition illuminates the dynamic nature of memes, although in popular discourse, the term has expanded to encompass a myriad of content types GIFs, videos, social media challenges, and more (Zulli Diana, 2020).

Nevertheless, the quintessential internet meme often manifests as an image adorned with humorous text, striking a chord with audiences (David M. Beskow, Sumeet Kumar and Kathleen M. Carley, 2019)

(Davison, 2020) defines an internet meme as “a part of a culture, usually a joke, which obtains impact through online communication.” The origins of internet memes can be traced to Scott E. Fahlman, credited with inventing the first internet meme known as the "smiley face" emoticon. “:-)” this symbol, composed solely of punctuation marks, was initially devised to signify humor and sarcasm in formal email exchanges. Its allure quickly captivated many, leading to a meteoric rise in popularity within mere weeks. What began as a singular emoji proliferated into an array of emoticons, captivating users far and wide. (Bisera Kostadinovska Stojchevska, 2018).

Based on the definitions and categorizations provided by various authors, several key features of internet memes can be highlighted:

- **Imitation:** Memes represent a copy of the original content they imitate, but they often go beyond merely replicating it.
- **Cultural and Social Context:** The original content is part of a culture, widely recognized, and society plays the role of both the transmitter and creator of the meaning behind a meme.
- **Humor and Satire:** Memes often parody the original content or use it as a foundation to develop new meanings, contributing to its humor or spiritual depth.
- **High Compactness of Meanings:** Although memes are simple in expression, they often carry a range of meanings, both denotative and connotative.
- **Combination of Visual and Textual Elements:** The ambiguity of memes often arises from the combination of a visual part (typically drawn from culture and providing context, message, or implications) and a textual part (which often clarifies the meaning).

With the digital evolution of social media platforms, the use of digital memes has expanded to encompass the political sphere. Users now employ this form to express and discuss political issues in a satirical manner that reflects reality, such as the speeches of presidents and government decisions or to comment on the mistakes and hypocrisies of politicians (Mia Moody Ramirez, Andrew B Church, 2019). The use of political digital memes is not limited to this; they have also become prominent in protests and demonstrations and to spread messages and calls to action related to social movements, such as Occupy Wall Street (Milner, 2013), where users and designers often modify a real image and turn them into political digital memes.

3. The Role of Memes in Political Communication

Memes have now become a central element of political communication in modern times, offering a simple, engaging way to express political viewpoints. They serve as digital artifacts that encapsulate political ideologies, opinions, and criticisms in a manner that is easily digestible and widely disseminated. According to (Shifman, 2014), the three core functions that the political memes serve are entertainment, information dissemination, and mobilization of action. The humor that accompanies political memes makes these understandings transcend beyond the isolationist walls up to the mass interests that yield votes for or against certain issues.

Memes can express political thoughts and ideologies using biting humour to convey messages spread through a poly-vocal structure of the Internet (Eemeli Hakoköngäs, 2020). They can create political pressure through continuous persuasion and motivate individuals to take part in expressing political opinions, sharing political meme-based posts, standing in political contestations, and supporting online protests (Mukhongo, 2020).

Memes in politics have emerged as a crucial means to shape and sway the political engagement of the public in general, which is more so among the younger generations (Andrew S Ross, 2017). They show different dynamics in the memes put to use during the Presidential Elections in the U.S. Memes were employed in the tactics of satire of political characters, conveying misinformation, and developing political discussions.

In many instances, political memes facilitate a form of subversive expression whereby citizens voice their dissent in psychological political situations of repression when major outlets of media seem to be controlled by the state.

4. Memes as Tools for Political Satire and Protest

Political memes are humorous pictures, videos or text transmitted via social media with the aim of conveying ideological messages. They are composed of two layers: the denotation which represents the factual knowledge or information and the connotation which represents an ideological message.

In the United States, the internet meme has occupied a substantial role on the political stage during the presidential elections of 2016 and 2020. (Andrew S Ross, 2017) have noted, memes had become vital units of digital campaigns by politicians and grass root supporters to express their ideological stances, ridicule their opponents. Memes such as "Bernie Sanders' Mittens" (figure 1) and "Pepe the Frog" (figure 2) took on political layers of meaning reflecting deep cultural and political rifts within American society. These memes became tools for both right-wing and left-wing groups, indicating their pliability and efficacy in political communication.

Figure (01) USA Senator Bernie Sanders memes



Source: wkyc.net, Kierra Cotton: Social media reacts to Senator Bernie Sanders' appearance on Inauguration Day, January 20, 2021

Senator Bernie Sanders has inspired an internet meme sensation, after a photograph was captured of him socially distancing while bundled up at US President Joe Biden's inauguration. Social media users modify the picture, who was photographed in a mask, signature beige parka, into various scenes from movies, television shows, historical images, and even foreign political scenes.

Figure (02) Pepe the Frog USA Memes



Source: bbc.com ,Pepe the Frog meme branded a 'hate symbo', 28 September 2016

Pepe the frog is a cartoon character originally created in 2005 by cartoonist Matt Furie. It later turned into a meme that became a symbol of the alt-right, namely, the Groyper movement, a group of far right activists, internet trolls, and white nationalists.

The movement has claimed Trump as its presidential candidate of choice. The mogul has not approved it, but did re-tweet, external a caricature depicting him as Pepe the Frog in October 2015, with the caption "You Can't Stump the Trump". The frog Trump memes made headlines in mid-September when Hillary Clinton said most of Mr Trump's supporters belonged in a "basket of deplorables". (bbc, 2016)

This digital meme of the frog is used on behalf of the campaign for the 2024 French presidential elections following the candidate Marine Le Pen's statement during the 2024 French presidential elections campaign after candidate Marine Le Pen spoke about Algerians and Muslims (figure 03).

Figure (03) Pepe the Frog Marine Lepen Memes



Source:
Frog and the rise of
2017



thepointmagazine.com, Pepe the
alternative right memes, april

Memes emerged as
political expression
Arab Spring 2011.
exploited social
that derided then-President Hosni Mubarak and the political class. (figure 04)

key elements in the online
of the Egyptian during the
Egyptian activists
media to disperse memes

Figure (04) Hosni Mubarak Memes

Source: <https://imgflip.com>, Hosni Mubarak wouldn't leave the leaderboard until a revolution happened, 2015

5. Methodology and Data Collection

5.1 Data collection:

Data was collected from public accessible social media platforms (Algerian Facebook pages) where political memes related to Hirak (protest algerian movement), the 2019 and 2024 Algerian presidential election are shared.

The study focus on memes that were widely circulated and engaged with, particularly those that received a high number of likes, shares, and comments. To ensure a representative sample, memes.

The selected memes and categorized based on the following criteria:

- Topic: The political figure, issue, or event referenced in the meme.
- Tone: Whether the meme uses humor, satire, or direct criticism.
- Engagement: The number of interactions (likes, shares, and comments) each meme receives.
- Symbolism: The use of cultural, historical, or political symbols in the meme.

5.2 Data Analysis

This research employs a combination of **semiotic analysis** and **thematic analysis** to explore the political and cultural significance of memes. Semiotic analysis will focus on the signs, symbols, and meanings encoded in the visual and textual elements of the memes. This approach will help uncover the underlying political messages and ideologies being communicated.

5.2.1 Semiotic Analysis

The semiotic approach in this study is grounded in **Roland Barthes' concepts of denotation and connotation**, focusing on the signs, symbols, and meanings encoded in the visual and textual elements of the memes. By examining their denotative (literal) and connotative (culturally and ideologically constructed) layers, this analysis seeks to uncover the underlying political messages and ideologies conveyed through the memes.

5.2.2 The thematic analysis aims to identify recurring themes across the memes, Key themes include:

- **Criticism of Political Leaders:** How memes critique political candidates or governing bodies.
- **Electoral Satire:** The use of humor to comment on the election process, fraud allegations, or voter apathy.
- **Youth Disillusionment:** How memes reflect the sentiments of disengagement or frustration among Algerian youth.

6. Political Memes in the Algerian Context

Memes have become a crucial form of political expression in Algeria, particularly during the most crucial period of political movement or mass protests. Algerian citizens, especially youth, have increasingly turned to memes to voice their opinions, critique government policies, and engage in political discourse.

The usage of political memes on Facebook became particularly popular when the Hirak movement started in 2019. They were as instrumental in excoriating the political class as they were useful to denounce corruption and demand democratic reforms were further more used to criticize the political system, political parties, and candidates , Moreover became symbole of popular resistance, exemplified in the shared image (figure 05) of a protester said Yetnahaw ga3 (they must all go). This memes that resonated not only within Algeria youth but also in all over the world.

However Algerians youth they used a different models of digital contents to express their opinion ,the memes have played a key role to kept the Hirak movement's energy flowing, ensuring that young people were still engaged despite the uncertainty.

As the 2024 presidential elections draw nearer, the political memes seem to have reemerged as an alternative commentary on the elections. With ironic undertones, such memes have pointed out the disillusionment of the young towards the candidates and the system itself. To a setting where the chance for formal political participation is far-fetched, memes provide a forum for Algerian youths to engage in political discourse in an creative and impactful manner.

Figure (05) Algerian proteste Memes



Source: Hirak Memes facebook page ,2019

6.1 the Political Digital Meme Regarding Abdelaziz Bouteflika's Candidacy:

With the announcement of Abdelaziz Bouteflika's candidacy for a fifth term, digital memes of his character spread across various social media platforms and blogs, highlighting the continuity of Bouteflika's rule for a fifth term, as illustrated in the image(figure 06) .

Figure (06) Abdelaziz Bouteflika's Candidacy.Memes



The first image is an artistic meme (graphic design memes) inspired from the movie *Terminator*, accompanied by the title "صاحب البرويطة," which translates to "the wheelchair."

This meme satirically refers to Bouteflika's physical condition, suggesting a perspective on his ability to govern effectively.

In contrast, the second image draws inspiration from a famous photo of football player Cristiano Ronaldo holding four trophies, symbolizing the number of terms served by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. This image humorously emphasizes the longevity of Bouteflika's presidency, inviting reflections on his leadership.

Similarly, the third image juxtaposes four American presidents with an image of Bouteflika, accompanied by the word "الخ" which implies "continuity" or "and so on."

This visual comparison highlights the perception of Bouteflika's prolonged rule in contrast to the transitions observed in other democratic contexts, thus underscoring the narrative of political stagnation in Algeria.

these memes reflect a significant cultural commentary on the political climate in Algeria, capturing public sentiment and engaging users on social media platforms.

To gain a deeper understanding of the symbolic significance of the digital meme featuring Abdelaziz Bouteflika, we have chosen to analyze the third image semiotically and examine the message intended to be conveyed by this digital meme, especially since all the images share the same underlying theme: the president's candidacy for a fifth term.

The portrait features four American presidents over a span of 20 years, signifying political transition and democratic processes, The juxtaposition of the American presidents with Bouteflika suggests a critique of the Algerian political system, where power remains concentrated in one individual over extended periods, counter to democratic principles.

The meme references the historical context of U.S. political transitions, drawing a sharp contrast with Bouteflika's extended presidency and the resistance to his fifth-term candidacy.

It connects past political promises with present realities in Algeria, highlighting the disparity in political engagement

The image serves as a reminder of the need for political change and responsiveness, reflecting a growing sentiment among Algerians for democratic processes that align with their aspirations.

This portrait contrasts the political landscapes of the U.S. and Algeria, illustrating the stark differences in leadership styles and public sentiment. The four American presidents embody democratic transitions and accountability, emphasizing the expectations of political leadership in a functioning democracy. In contrast, Bouteflika's extended rule reflects systemic issues within Algeria's political framework, where attempts to cling to power in the face of public dissent raise concerns about legitimacy and representation.

The accompanying text, referring to "In America" and "In Algeria," further underscores this contrast, suggesting a call for change and a reminder of the democratic principles that many Algerians aspire to achieve. This portrait invite a conversation. It is also a pedagogical reflection of the political dissatisfaction and the desire for the situation to change, among young people but also "the street" in general in Algeria. In summary this portrait works as a political cartoon, and that also work in a way in that it functions like government needs to, responding to the peoples need for a government to govern and legislate, not simply occupy opposition, hoping for fundamental change to come. According to these interpretations, which I think are derivative but not too far off the mark, memes allowed many Algerians to make a political statement in rejecting Abdelaziz Bouteflika's attempt to run for a fifth term. These readings suggest much higher levels of political literacy among Algerian youth.

6.2 the Political Digital Memes about Hirak (Algerian Protest Movement)

During the Hirak movement, Algerian youth actively engaged with various local political issues that emerged in conjunction with Abdelaziz Bouteflika's candidacy for a fifth term. Their engagement manifested through a critical evaluation of the government's performance during this period, articulated via the medium of digital memes.

These memes served as vehicles for addressing various concerns, including the nation's economic circumstances, governmental actions.

Additionally, digital memes adeptly captured and commented on a range of sub-issues, such as the rhetoric employed by political figures and candidates, as well as the reforms introduced by the government.

Moreover, these digital expressions also explored the theme of framing the popular movement and identified representatives of the citizenry who sought to engage in dialogue with the authorities during this tumultuous time.

Thus, it can be posited that Algerian youth utilized a diverse array of digital meme types and formats to convey their political attitudes and articulate the aspirations of the Hirak movement. This is evidenced by a selection of posts that exemplify politically charged digital memes (figure 07), reflecting the collective consciousness and socio-political critique prevalent among the youth during this pivotal moment in Algerian history.

Figure (07) Hirak (Algerian Protest Movement) Memes

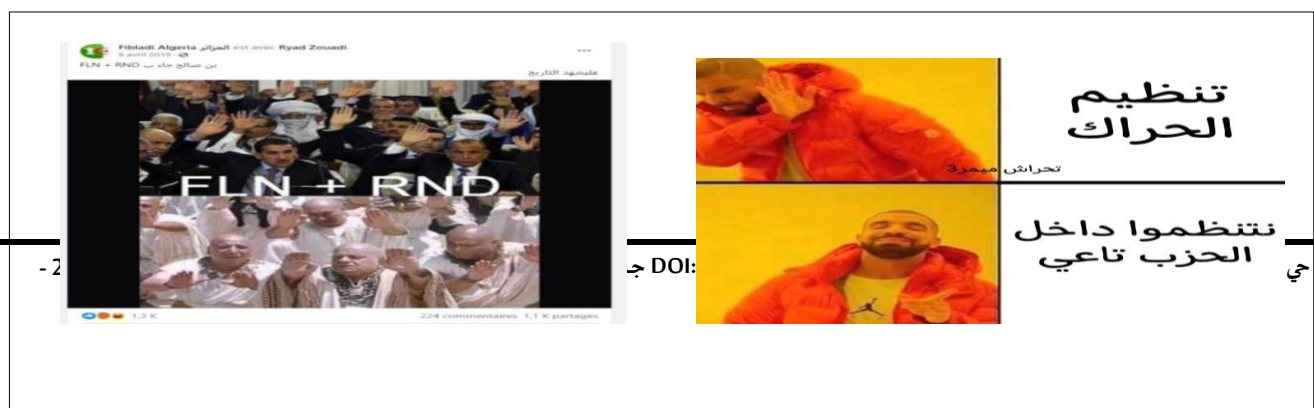


Image 01

image 02

Source : facebook.com

The first and second images serve as digital memes that critique Algerian political parties, specifically the National Liberation Front (FLN) and the National Democratic Rally (RND).

- The first image is divided into two halves: the upper section depicts a realistic representation of a parliamentary meeting with representatives from both parties voting on leadership for the transitional phase in Algeria. In contrast, the lower section features priests from the temple of Amun from the series "Joseph the Prophet," symbolizing cunning and deceit. This juxtaposition suggests that the political figures prioritize their self-interest over the welfare of the people and the nation, indicating that their primary concern is maintaining power.

this meme taps into collective memories of deception, resonating with an audience that recognizes these symbols. Furthermore critiques the prevailing political system in Algeria, indicating a disconnect between leadership and the citizens they are meant to serve.

Cause the use of The reference to Amun priests draws from historical narratives of power and manipulation, providing a lens through which contemporary political behavior can be critically examined.

the image transports clear and dominant skepticism into the intentions of the political leaders, suggesting that there is a deep sense of betrayal among the Algerians youth.

- The seconde image depicted uses the widely known Drake meme, which has become an iconic digital reaction to stimuli, stemming from an image of the Canadian rapper and actor in the music video for his popular 2015 Hot 100-hit "Hotline Bling." The first section of the image deals with the complexities of organizing a social movement following the Hirak, and the second segment critiquing the representation of the very. Drake's image serves as a recognizable cultural reference, allowing for humorous engagement while addressing serious political topics. The juxtaposition of the two segments underscores the disillusionment with party representation and the need for grassroots organization within the Hirak movement.

Representing an overall advent of political memes as genuine instruments of expression and dissent in Algerians with the Hirak movement attached to it. Political memes offer humor and satire to critique political institutions and advocate change.

The memes underscore the chasm separating the political class from the citizenry they ought to serve and demand accountability and responsiveness from those in political office.

Moreover, memes have awakened a political awareness among the Algerians and opened the door for discussions around representation and governance and the need for reform. They can act on a range of issues due to their wide public dissemination and community building associated with the circulation of culturally-aligned messages.

6.3 Semiotic Analysis of the Political Digital Memes about the 2024 Algerian presidential election:

During the 2024 Algerian presidential elections, digital memes spread widely across social media platforms, particularly on Facebook pages, according to the study sample. Political digital memes

were primarily in the form of images, unlike videos and GIFs, which were shared on other platforms such as TikTok and YouTube.

Algerian youth expressed their opposition to Abdelmadjid Tebboune's candidacy for a second term through digital memes, which varied in their critique of the country's governance, as well as the term "New Algeria" that the current president frequently uses in his political speeches.

(figure 08) On the other hand, most of the political digital memes featured the President of Algeria, Abdelmadjid Tebboune, with much concern between supporters and opponents on the issue of the unemployment grant.(figure 09)

6.3.1 the Political Digital Memes about Abdelmadjid Tebboune's second-term candidacy

Figure (08) 2024 Algerian Presidential Election anime Memes



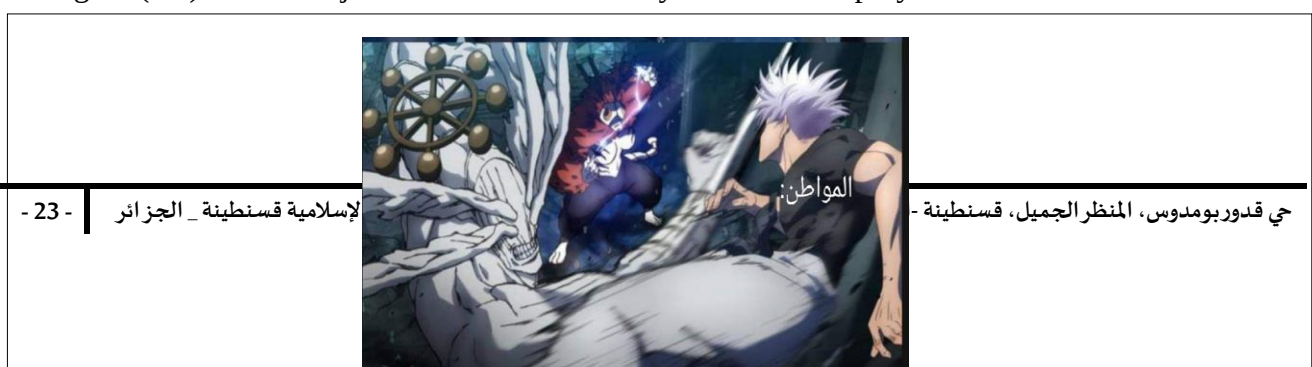
the meme surrounding President Abdelmadjid Tebboune's second-term candidacy blends cultural and political codes to convey a deep sense of disillusionment, particularly among Algerian youth.

- The first expressive in image 01 show Algerian women, where the happiness in celebrations does not compare to the joy of Tebboune not winning a second term. reflecting public sentiment that his continued leadership may hinder the country's progress. This image contrasts traditional roles of women as symbols of family and cultural values, but in this case, it signals collective relief tied to political outcomes rather than personal happiness.
- the second image, taken from the popular anime Naruto, shows a moment of emotional separation, symbolizing the growing desire among youth to emigrate in response to Tebboune's reelection. Algerian youth, feel alienated, leading to a rejection of Tebboune's leadership and a desire to escape the country's stagnant political climate.

The meme, through humor and cultural references, effectively communicates the frustration and despair felt by many Algerians, blending joy and sorrow as emotional responses to the nation's political landscape. Ultimately, it serves as a critique of leadership that fails to bridge the gap between political rhetoric and the lived realities of the people, particularly the vulnerable youth who are increasingly turning to emigration as a solution.

6.3.2 the Political Digital Memes about the unemployment issue

Figure (09) Abdelmadjid Tebboune's Candidacy and the unemployment issue anime Memes





البطالة :

Source <https://www.facebook.com/groups/733019268304665> , 10 septembre 2024

The semiotic analysis of the political digital meme addressing Abdelmadjid Tebboune's candidacy and the unemployment issue reveals a nuanced critique of Algerian political and socio-economic realities. The meme employs **anime characters** as signifiers, with strong characters symbolizing systemic challenges such as poverty , and a weak character representing the struggles of Algerian youth grappling with unemployment, high prices, and economic hardship. Drawing on **Roland Barthes' concepts of denotation and connotation**, the denotative use of anime reflects contemporary youth culture, making the meme relatable, while its connotative layers critique the disparity between the president's campaign promises and the harsh lived realities of citizens.

The meme's **cultural and political codes** highlight the growing frustration and discontent among Algerian youth, underscoring the contradiction between optimistic political rhetoric and societal struggles.

Through **intertextuality**, the meme connects historical contexts of economic hardship with present challenges, emphasizing a pattern of unfulfilled promises. Ultimately, the visual conflict in the meme encapsulates the disconnect between leadership narratives of economic improvement and the pressing realities faced by the populace, positioning the youth as vulnerable actors in a broader socio-political struggle.

7. Conclusion

Through the evolution of interaction modes in the digital are, political internet memes became an influential tool of political expression, mobilization for Algerian youth .

Moreover, political memes are used not only to express dissent but also to reflect the socio-political environment in Algeria. They epitomize the frustrations, aspirations, and identities of the Algerian youth, creating a space where voices are heard and collective experiences can be shared.

Social media has made the spread of these memes easier, faster, and broader. Social media platforms like Facebook enhance a network among users for conversation, sharing of experiences, and mobilizing for causes, thus creating a digital public sphere for political engagement .

In conclusion, political memes stand as a powerful tool of political expression among the Algerian youth , these memes fill the air and reflect the potential of online media as dialogic, dissenting, and activist spaces. This will doubtless be the medium that will shape the future of political participation among Algeria's youth.



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