INTERNATIONAL PREMIER JOURNAL OF LANGUAGES & LITERATURE (IPJLL)
VOLUME 3, ISSUE 6, 2025 p-ISSN: 3007-2336 e-ISSN: 3007-2344

METAPHORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PAKISTANI AND AMERICAN POLITICAL SPEECHES

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Abstract

This research shows that how political leader use metaphor in their speeches when discussing Human rights. Although, Human rights are universal right but understand and express differently across different cultures. Using conceptual metaphor theory, developed by Lakoff and Johnson, this research analyses four major political speeches delivered between the time period 2021 to 2025, two from Pakistan (Imran Khan and Shahbaz Sharif) and two from American leaders (Joe Biden and Donald Trump). This research identifies metaphorical pattern as Pakistani leader predominantly use religious and emotional metaphor while framing rights as divine responsibility and national struggle. Meanwhile, American leaders emphasize war, and journey metaphors framing right as community responsibility and collective progress. This comparative analysis shows that supposedly universal human rights language is fundamentally shaped by culturally specific metaphorical frameworks.

Keywords: *American Politics, Comparative Analysis, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Human Rights Discourse, Metaphorical Framing, Pakistani Politics.*

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1. Introduction

Human rights are considered universal that belongs to every person simply because they are human. This research examines how metaphors are a powerful tool that shapes how we think and feel. It compares the metaphorical language used by political leaders in Pakistan and America when addressing human rights issues. Pakistan's discourse is shaped by Islamic values, collective social structure, and postcolonial identity. American discourse emerged from Enlightenment liberalism and individual culture. That is why human rights are understood and expressed differently across cultures. Contemporary research in cognitive linguistics has explained that metaphors are far more than decorative language. According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, developed by Lakoff and Johnson in their book *Metaphor We Live By,* metaphors are fundamental to how humans think and understand. Language is never neutral in politics; it serves multiple functions as it simplifies complex ideas by comparing them to familiar concepts. Secondly, metaphors help to create an emotional connection with the audience.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Human rights are considered universal across nations, but they are articulated by political leaders differently in different nations. Research shows that metaphors create and shape political discourse, yet research comparing metaphorical language around human rights in Pakistani and American speeches is not sufficient. This gap in research limits our understanding of how political language around rights is affected by culture, religion, and political histories, ultimately minimizing human rights support.

1.2. Significance of the Study

The study compares the use of metaphors by Pakistani and American political leaders in their speeches on human rights to see the difference in their ways of thinking. It helps in examining the unique ways people from different cultures use language in politics. This research highlights that language reflects and constructs cultural and political identities. This study also applies the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which explains that metaphors provide metal framework that people understand abstract concepts with concrete experiences. Moreover, this study highlights that understanding of metaphorical patterns is important for cross-cultural communication to know how universal ideas are interpreted and expressed through different cultures.

2. Theoretical Framework

The research utilizes the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, as developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). The main idea of this research is that metaphors are not simply figurative language but play a key role in how people think about, understand, and experience abstract ideas by comparing them to concrete experience. Metaphorical experience shapes how humans perceive, express, and act within the world. Conceptual Metaphor Theory serves as a framework for considering how political leaders

in Pakistan and America utilize metaphors in discussions about human rights. Conceptual Metaphor Theory helps in recognizing metaphorical patterns in political speeches by focusing on how different cultures express and understand metaphors to develop meaning. The framework focuses on examples of religious metaphors, emotional metaphors, journey metaphors, and war metaphors, as they reflect the role of cultural identity and political histories in affecting language about human rights.

2.1. Research Objectives

1. To identify metaphorical pattern in Pakistani and American political speeches on human rights
2. To compare metaphorical construction of human right between Pakistani and American political discourse
3. To examines how cultural factor, shape metaphorical framing of human right in both contexts

2.2. Research Question

1. What metaphorical pattern in Pakistani and American use in political speeches on human rights?
2. How do these Metaphorical Construction differ between Pakistani and American political discourse?
3. How does cultural factor shape metaphorical framing of human right in both contexts?

3. Literature Review

This research analysed that metaphor is not just a linguistic device but a fundamental to human cognition and communication. This literature examines three interconnected domains to analysing metaphorical construction of human rights in Pakistan and American political discourse. First Conceptual Metaphor Theory as theoretical framework for the research. Second, how metaphors work in Political Discourse, and third, it discusses how human rights are express and understand differently across cultures.

Lakoff and Johnson in their book *Metaphor We Live By,* establishing Conceptual Metaphor Theory as framework for understanding how humans think. Using cognitive linguistics approach, they demonstrated that metaphors are not just a decorative language but fundamental cognitive structures that shape human thought and action. They find out that abstract concepts are systematically understood through concrete and familiar experiences by metaphorical mappings between source and target domains. (Johnsen, 1980)

Lakoff, continued developing this theory in his work *The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor*, showing that metaphors are grounded in our bodily experiences. Because all humans have similar bodies and interact with physical world in similar ways, some

metaphors appear across different cultures. However, Lakoff also emphasized that culture plays a big role in which metaphors people use and express them. (Lakoff G. , 1993)

Kövecses in his work *Metaphor in Culture: Universality and Variation*, employing a cross-cultural comparative approach to examine metaphor variation across languages and cultures. His research revealed that cultural factors such as physical environment, social context, and historical experiences shape metaphorical patterns. (Kövecses, 2005)

In *"Corpus Approaches to Critical Metaphor Analysis*, Charteris-Black develops an important framework for understand metaphor as persuasive ideological mechanisms that draws on insights from cognitive linguistics, and is also corpus-based discourse analysis. His Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) examines metaphors in political speeches and the media to show that metaphor use is not just rhetorical, but also performs a deeper ideological function, including beliefs, values, or moral evaluations. CMA is particularly helpful in analysing how politicians develop a sense of national identity, legitimize policies, and position themselves in multi-faceted narrations. (Charteris-Black, 2004)

In the article, *"Metaphors in Political Discourse from a Cross-Cultural Perspective*, Silva Bratož examines how political metaphors are presented differently in different languages and cultures. The author examines different languages such as English, German, Slovene, Italian, and Croatian, while using a combination of theoretical and data driven methods. The author details that while certain types of metaphors such as war metaphors or sport metaphors share similarities across cultures and languages, the ways these are expressed still has cultural and linguistic differences. These metaphors act as a powerful tool to simplify and communicate political complexity. They also demonstrate not only the linguistic creativity reflect in the metaphors, also deeper culture values. (Bratož, 2015)

Demjén, Demmen, and Semino (2016) propose a comprehensive framework for analysing metaphor in relation to cognition, discourse, and the real-world practices of metaphors used to describe cancer in *"An Integrated Approach to Metaphors and Framing in Cognition, Discourse, and Practice".* They argue that metaphors are more than just representations; they inform mental processes; they shape feelings; they dictate behaviour; including how people interact with each other, especially in health contexts. Thus, Demjén, Demmen, and Semino utilize cognitive linguistics, alongside discourse analysis, in combination with practice-based research, to provide a tri-placement. Researching patient lived context, they demonstrate the magnitude of choice in the metaphor we use (i.e., "battle" vs. "journey"), and the burden versus empowerment those choices give individuals, and also how we need to be careful with the use of metaphor within medical contexts. (Demjén et al., 2016)

Jiao Xue, Zan Mao, and Na Li analysed metaphors in inaugural addresses by American presidents in their article *"Conceptual Metaphor in American Presidential*

Inaugural Addresses". The researcher claim that metaphor is a strategy utilized by U.S. presidents in their inaugural speech to influence and shape the public understandings of themselves, as individuals and as a president, when they assume the role of "the president of the people". Using the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003), the researcher analysed metaphor types, including JOURNEY, WAR, BUILDING, RELIGIOUS, and LIGHT/FIRE, are dominant in their speeches so that people can understand them and are feel emotionally connected. Each metaphor frame reflects cultural value associated with themes of unity in struggle, perseverance and resilience in a common purpose, and moral guidance and stability. The authors conclude that metaphor in inaugural speeches is not simply a style of communicating, but rather a cognitive mechanism to build trust, express ideas and motivate and inspire the public. (Xue et al., 2013)

In the paper "*Metaphor-Based Analysis of Joe Biden's and George Washington's Inaugural Speeches"*, Youness Boussaid looks into the ways in which people leaders use metaphors to inspire and connect with people. Using Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the study shows that how Joe Biden uses metaphorical framing with powerful imagery (e.g., war, light, and journeys) to establish hope, unity, and appeals to emotional appeals, and that in contrast, George Washington use few metaphorical languages in his speech. This difference in linguistic style is notable, but also supports the idea that contemporary presidents use metaphors to establish trust and that permit them to express their vision by framing the audience together with themselves. Therefore, metaphors are powerful tool for both persuasion and leadership. (Boussaid, 2022)

In *Metaphor in Contemporary American Political Discourse*, Nicholas Howe (1988) analysed the role of metaphor in the shaping of political language and political thought in the United States. He focuses on the metaphors of sports and war because these dominate the way American politicians and the media present or describe political events e.g., campaigns, debates, conflicts. The sport and war metaphors connect to the American people, particularly men, because they are already familiar with these cultural experiences. Howe also acknowledges that such language can uniquely influence how people think about politics and that it will marginalize people who do not relate to the domains of sports and war. Howe's article suggests that metaphor is not just a figurative language, but it is a powerful tool that frames political realities. (Howe, 1988))

In the article *"Discursive Functioning of Parts of Speech in Political Parties' Manifestos in Pakistani Election 2013,"* Mehwish Malghani (2019) focus on how language is used strategically to influence public attitudes about political results, as well as highlight the party identity itself. Specifically, the study analysed parts of speech (nouns, pronouns, and verbs in particular) to describe how those grammatical choices are designed and can carry discursive functions such as ideology asserting, group identity building, and intended

voter influence. Using Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive model and Social Identity Theory, the authors analysed the manifestos from five major political parties in Pakistan to demonstrate how linguistic structures can enable the self-representation of party identity while also contributing to negative representation of political opponents. The findings from the study conclude that grammatical aspects, rather than being "covertly neutral, are consciously chosen", hence providing a basis for understanding the applications to political persuasion and the role of ideologies of political parties during election campaigns. (Malghani, 2019)

In this study, Khan, Khan, and Alam analysed the use of language in political communication through a comparative discourse analysis of selected speeches by Imran Khan and Maulana Fazlur Rahman. This research used principles from Critical Discourse Analysis and Aristotle's rhetorical appeals to analysed how each leader crafted persuasive narratives based on their respective ideas. Imran Khan's narrative included nationalist themes and anti-corruption messages aimed at youth and urban voters, while Maulana Fazlur Rahman's narrative included religiously infused language rooted in the Islamic tradition to resonate with largely conservative audiences. The study found that metaphor, repetition, and emotional appeal are potential persuasive devices for political discourse in Pakistan with its diverse socio-political nature, and that language not only expresses ideology but shapes public perception and mobilizes support. (Khan et al., 2025).

Woods conducted *A Comparative Analysis of Conceptual Metaphors in Political Speeches* using qualitative corpus analysis of 40 American presidential speeches from 1994 to 2021. Examining three conceptual metaphors (Politics is war, politics is a journey, politics is love), the study found no significant differences in metaphor usage between Democratic and Republican parties, suggesting that presidential speeches represent a distinct genre with particular metaphorical pattern regardless of party affiliation. (Woods, 2022)

Hussain, Aqeel, and Iqbal (2020) investigate how Pakistani politicians use metaphor in their article "*Politics of Metaphor: An Analysis of Interviews of Contemporary Pakistani Politicians,"* primarily focusing on English language conversations with international media representatives. They utilize the socio-cognitive approach, framed within Critical Metaphor Theory, to examine the communicative purpose of metaphors. They find that metaphors are not only decorative aspects of language, but based on context can guide or dictate political narratives, prompt emotion, and meaning making about political topics. They also discover major metaphor domains BATTLE, JOURNEY and HOPE, CONTRIBUTION, which enabled complex political ideas to be simplified, and allow politicians to better connect with their audience. The study also identifies the function and value of metaphors in politics while highlighting how

linguistics choices matter politically and the way metaphor language functions can create ideological space within messaging and citizen engagement. (Hussain et al., 2020).

In the paper *"Politics is a Game: A Study of Cricket Language Used as Metaphors in Imran Khan's Political Speeches,"* Shakir Ullah and Farzana Masroor (2021) analyse the use of cricket metaphors by Imran Khan to construct effective political stories. As a well-known cricketer, Khan incorporates cricket terminology "teamwork," "fair play," and "bouncers" into his speeches and messages, turning abstract political ideas into more tangible ideas that are relatable by the audience. Utilizing the theoretical framework of Lakoff and Johnson's Metaphors We Live By, Ullah and Masroor argue the metaphors, while appealing to the public's cognitions, can promote patriotism and enhance the political identity of their leader. The analysis shows that cricket is such a part of 'deep cultural' fabric of Pakistan, and metaphorical language can be an important tool for leadership communication in a political context. (Shakir Ullah & Farzana Masroor, 2021).

Umar, Rasul, and Kamran (2020) consider metaphorical uses of language in their article *"Metaphors of Terrorism in Political Discourse in Pakistan"* and how political leaders in Pakistan use metaphorical language to shape how the public frames their interpretations of terrorism. Through Critical Metaphor Analysis, this research identified that terrorism was often framed through metaphorical uses of war, disease, disasters, and deception, all of which have different rhetorical purposes. Political leaders such as Imran Khan, Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif, Asif Zardari, and Pervez Musharraf all use metaphorical language to justify actions, shape public opinion, and present themselves as protectors of Pakistan. For instance, Musharraf also pictured terrorism as internal (rather than a global threat) to Pakistan through the use of metaphors associated with war. This article shows the power of metaphor used in political discourse, and how it shapes national ideology. (Umar et al., 2020).

Nawaz et al. critically analysed *The Language of Politics in Pakistan* using Fairclough's Critical discourse analysis (CDA). The authors point out the ways politicians use language for the exercise of power, reinforcement of ideologies, and framing public perspectives. The researcher argue that political discourse mostly includes themes of nationalism, religion, and democracy and fail to modify their themes during political discourse about different subjects. The methodological layers of analysis (texts, speech practices, and socio-historical context) allowed the researcher to demonstrate that language occupies a space within persuasion and not simply as means of communication and maintenance of political power domination. (Nawaz et al., 2024).

In their article, *Critical Metaphor Analysis: Nawaz Sharif and the Myth of a Golden Time*, Umar and Rasul explore how former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif adopted and utilized of metaphorical language to create a nostalgic narrative of his time as a leader. After conducting a discourse analysis of speeches and public statements, the authors shows

that how metaphors such as "light", "garden," and "home," evoke the feeling from the audience such that they were encouraged to think of his time as being peaceful, prosperous, with no suffering. These metaphors presented a time of ruling that attempted to memorialize a collective remembrance that was based on feelings rather than the realities of what actually were the consequences of his governance. The researcher highlight that political discourse can engage in myth-making through metaphor, and clearly encourage what they determined as part of the identities of the nation and its citizens. (Umar & Rasul, 2017).

Ramzan et al. (2021), through a discourse analysis of the press statements by a selected group of Pakistan politicians, analysed how language is manipulated as a tool for political manipulation and to persuade the public. The authors used Gee's Seven Building Tasks of Language to show how politicians from the major parties (PML-N, and the PPP) strategically used words. These words made a narrative of development and prosperity, while concealing poverty and corruption. It also became evident that press statements were often designed for self-interests and party interests. Ramzan et al. (2021) also considered how that language is used by politicians for the purpose to maintain power, and promote a public legacy that is favourable to them. Ramzan et al., 2021).

Rani, Hussain, and Aziz (2023) conducted research on (Rani, 2023), analysed speeches by Imran khan and Nawaz sharif using conceptual metaphor theory. They identified three dominant metaphor types: religious metaphors invoking Prophet Muhammad and Quranic principles, historical metaphors referencing founding fathers and colonial struggles. They find out that Pakistani politician predominantly frames political issue through Islamic religious frameworks.

Olha Lapak investigates how metaphorical language functions as a persuasive tool in political discourse in her article “Language of Persuasion: Analysis of Conceptual Metaphors in Political Discourse”. The analysis draws from a corpus of 28 speeches by prominent Anglo- American politicians, including David Cameron, Hillary Clinton, Theresa May and Donald Trump. Lapka identifies and analysed four key metaphorical models: NATION IS FAMILY, STATE IS A BODY, POLITICS IS A WAR, and POLITICS IS A GAME. The study highlights the dominance of war metaphors, which are frequently employed to evoke strength and urgency, while game metaphors are comparatively rare. Though detailed analysis, Lapka demonstrates that metaphors is not just a figurative language but actively shape public perception. She further shows that how use of metaphors in influence by gender, political affiliation, and national background, affirming the role of metaphor as a rhetorical device in shaping political narratives. (Lapka, 2021)

Rahmani and Saeed described the importance of language as a political tool for social control and influence in their article, *The Power of Language: Exploring the Role*

of Language in Politics. The researcher argue that political discourse is represented as neutral; however, the reality in their view, is that political discourse is always particularly constructed to produce certain perceptions, reproduce power relations, and convey ideological messages. Politicians use persuasive techniques that reflected political considerations such as emotional appeals, promises and strategic use of lexicon that assists them in producing narratives that influence public thoughts and decisions. The authors illustrated how language in politics might represent power, disguise truths, escalate conflict, or engender unity as it relates to political strategy and governance. Understanding the ways in which language affects political awareness is critical for understanding the media anywhere, as well as for encouraging political awareness and stimulating critical thinkers among voters. (Saeed, 2024)

Benedetta Baldi's article "Persuasion *We Live By: Symbols, Metaphors and Linguistic Strategies"* (2020) examines the influence of language on political discourse and public perceptions. Baldi argues that persuasive communication depends on emotional communication, shared culture, and collective language use, not solely on facts. Politicians rely on metaphors and symbols, often referring to light, home, and battle, to create images in the minds of their audiences. The study analysed the speeches of Italian politicians including Mussolini, Berlusconi, and Salvini to demonstrate how rhetorical choices build trust, inspire emotion, and serve ideology. It examines how interpretations and understandings rely on multiple meanings and how discussions of effective persuasion rely on shared language and shared perspectives on how facts and issues are interpreted. Persuasion is rooted in everyday political discourse and matters because it is potentially persuasive with how it recognizes and draws on shared space, language, and meaning**s**. (Baldi, 2020)

4. Analysis and Discussion

In this analysis, we examine four political speeches: Imran Khan's 2021 statement to the UN, Shahbaz Sharif's 2025 speech to the UN, Joe Biden's 2021 inaugural address, and Donald Trump's 2025 inaugural address and determine which conceptual metaphors are important to each leader when they talk about human rights. The various metaphors are summarized according to their source domains (e.g., religion, war, journey, family, or justice). By evaluating how each leader constructs human rights and related matters using metaphor the analysis provides details about how the particular country's culture, history, and values play a significant role in language choice.

Table 1.1: Speech 1: Imran Khan, UNGA 76 Session, 24 Sep,2021

Conceptual Metapho**r**	Source Domain	Target Domain	Examples from Speeches
Injustice is Theft/ Plunder	Crime/Robbery	Economic Injustice	"Plunder of the developing world"

			"Organized Theft," "Stolen assets"
Oppression is War/ Violence	War/Military	Human Right Violations	Unleashed a reign of terror," "Occupation force," "War Crimes"
Islamophobia is Poison/ Disease	Disease	Discrimination	"Pernicious Phenomenon," "Scourge"
Poverty is an Ocean	Water/Sea	Economic Crisis	"Wealthy island in the sea of Poverty"
Human Rights are Sacred Duty	Religious Obligation	Rights Advocacy	"Sacred duty, Holy War or Jehad"
Survival is a Battle	War	National Existence	"Will we survive this?"

Table 1.2: Speech 2: Shehbaz Sharif, UNGA 80th Session, 27 Sep 2025

Conceptual Metaphor	Source Domain	Target Domain	Examples from Speeches
Right are Shackles to Break	Chain / Imprisonment	Palestinian Freedom	"Palestine must be liberated," "Under Israeli Shackles"
Unity is Wall	Physical Barrier	National Solidarity	"Stood as one unbreakable wall, a Bunyan un Marsoos"
Sacrifice is Eternal Glory	Honor / Immortality	Martyrdom	"Names are forever engraved in glory"
Voice is Silenced	Sound / Communication	Suppression	"India tried to muzzle the voices"
Oppression is Tyranny	Monarchy / Rule	Kashmir Conflict	"India's tyranny in Kashmir will come to an End"

Table 1.3: Speech 3: Jeo Biden Inaugural Address, Jan 20, 2021

Conceptual Metaphor	Source Domain	Target Domain	Examples from Speeches
Democracy is precious / fragile	Valuable object	Democratic System	"Democracy is precious. Democracy is fragile"

Nation is a Family	Family / Kinship	American Unity	"One people, one family, one glorious nation under God"
History is a Story	Narrative	National Identity	"Write the next chapter in the American story"
Unity is a Path	Journey / Road	National Direction	"Unity is the path forward"
Politics is Fire	Destructive Force	Political Conflict	"Politics need not be a raging fire destroying everything"
Hope is Morning Light	Dawn / Daybreak	Future Optimism	"Weeping may endure for night but joy come in the morning"

Table 1.4: Speech 4: Donald Trump, Inaugural Address, Jan 20, 2025

Conceptual Metaphor	Source Domain	Target Domain	Examples from Speeches
America is a Person	Human Body	Nation	"America will be respected again," America has risen"
Time is a Golden Age	Precious Era	National Renewal	"The golden age of America begins right now"
Justice is a Scale	Balance / Measurement	Legal Fairness	"The scales of Justice will be rebalanced
Progress is Light	Light	Hope / Truth	"Sunlight is pouring over the entire world"
Life is a Contest	Competition / Battle	Politics	"We will win like never before"
Destiny Is a Frontier	Territory	National Ambition	"Manifest destiny into the stars," "Frontier Spirit"

According to the analysis, Pakistani leaders most often utilize metaphors related to conflict, religious or faith values, and collective struggle in regard to human rights (Rani, 2023). For example, Imran Khan frames economic injustice through crime metaphors (e.g., "plunder" and "organized theft"), indicating the developing world is simply a collection of

nations being robbed with a system of organized crime (Rani, 2023). With respect to oppression, he uses war metaphors (e.g. "reign of terror" and "occupation force) that create circumstance in which human rights violations appear like active military aggression. (Khan et al., 2025).

Equally noteworthy, religion or faith metaphors are significant with human rights advocacy framed as the language of a duty defined as either "sacred" or a "holy war or jehad" on behalf of fellow Muslims. Shahbaz Sharif followed suit with imprisonment metaphors such as "shackles to break" to signal freedom for Palestinians, and a phrase like "an unbreakable wall" for Pakistani unity. The suggestion of survival over and above other topics (e.g. sacrifice and/or courage) is part of how we understand human rights. Overall, both leaders implicitly or not implicitly put forth a discourse on human rights (in a "collective" sense) through the lived experiences of collective defence against identifiable and external threats to establish common security. (Khan et al., 2025).

By contrast, American leaders use metaphors invoking the idea of progress, unity, and national renewal. Joe Biden describes democracy as "precious" and "fragile," both of which require ongoing protection and describes the country as a "family" that must work together, as the metaphor of "unity is the path forward," invokes travel. (Woods, 2022). As metaphors, rights and democracy signal a place or destination to which we collectively journey. Hope that symbolized "morning light" as emerging from darkness, creates an intentional pessimism, where challenges are temporary. (Woods, 2022). Donald Trump enacts metaphors of personification and competition in describing "America as a person" that can be "respected" or can "rise." In describing American perspective, he describes a golden age, and he uses the metaphor of "the scales of justice" to imply fairness. In describing a "manifest destiny into the stars" his metaphor beyond Earth refers to the ambitions of American explorations and exceptionalism (Johnsen, 1980) Both American leaders emphasize a theme of progress, achievements, and moving forward to offer synonyms of struggle instinctively defensive in nature.

The main distinction is in the core narrative. Pakistani metaphors convey a narrative of victimhood, survival, and moral resistance. Economic injustice is "a theft", oppression is "a war", and Islamophobia is an infectious and spreading "disease"(Khan et al., 2025). These metaphors place Pakistan and the Muslim ummah at the intersection of victimization from powerful forces through political or economic elites, colonial powers, and violent neighbours. Religion frames morality, that is, human rights must be defended politically, yet the act of defending human rights is also a spiritual/traditional obligation. There is a great deal of power in the use of terms like "shackles," "tyranny," and "muzzled voices," serving to build a discourse of liberation struggle in which rights must be fought for and reclaimed from oppressors. Even uplifting metaphors, i.e., "names engraved in glory," focus on sacrifice/martyrdom instead of achievement or progress. (Rani, 2023)

In contrast, American metaphors signify a narrative of shared advancement and national greatness. In American discourse, democracy is something Americans already have ("precious") that requires safeguarding, rather than something they struggle to gain. Unity is a pathway that Americans walk together, and history is a story they compose together. Moreover, even challenges are expressed in a more positive way; for example, politics might be a "raging fire" or a "roiling sea," but it doesn't need to be, and darkness always gives way to "morning light." Trump's competitive metaphors "we will win like never before, (Baldi, 2020) "frame political challenges as competitions that Americans are destined to win. The frontier metaphor positions America as an explorer that is developing not protecting itself. These differences essentially depict different relational politics to power; for example, Pakistani leaders express authority from a relative position of weakness in search of justice and political recognition, while American leaders express authority from a position of strength, of preserving or restoring greatness. (Rani, 2023)

Cultural and historical factors can account for these metaphoric variations directly. An example of this would be Pakistan's Islamic identity; the use of religious metaphors, starting speeches with quotations from the Qur'an and calling political action a "sacred duty", makes sense in an Islamic Republic in which political identity, governmental philosophy, and religion are intertwined. This post-colonial history also demonstrates the use of theft and plunder metaphors; not to mention the constant references to the "East India Company," which explicitly interlock contemporary exploitation with the plundering of colonists and suggest that developing nations are under the thumb of the same colonial opportunists who too established an empire on its inhabitant backs. Pakistan's current realities include their present security events: terrorism, continuous conflict with India over Kashmir, and instability in basic economics make the metaphors of survival and war realities as opposed to rhetorical metaphors. The collectivist nature of the culture, especially their emphasis on identity through group membership (family, tribe, nation, Ummah) also accounts for the metaphors that revolve around collective action, like the "unbreakable wall" metaphor.

American cultural factors also produce distinctly different metaphors. The ideation of America, founded on Enlightenment principles, is apparent in the journey metaphors, America was founded on written ideals (the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence) it would aspire to realize, so naturally, talking about progress, or the journey, "a better future kind of journey" is the basis for the metaphor. The tendency of American culture to emphasize individualism can be seen, even in collective metaphors; when Biden says "one family", he is attempting to create unity across difference-- not merely describing a homogenous entity. The mythology of the American frontier, pioneers settling the west, immigrants toiling to build a new life, has made the construction/exploration metaphors very palpable and relevant. Furthermore, American

optimism, manifested in a certain level of relative safety and history of success, permits leaders to frame even our gravest problems as merely challenges to be overcome. The premise of separation of church and state forbids explicit religious framing, thus emphasizing rights as civic duties (rather than divine obligations). Trump's competitive metaphors signal a culture that celebrates winning (or succeeding), entrepreneurship, and individual accomplishment.

This comparative analysis illustrates that human rights, while framed as universal, exist within contexts that utilize culturally specific metaphorical frames. The leaders of Pakistan utilized metaphors of struggle, existential faith, and collective resistance influenced by Islamic values, postcolonial history, and current security challenges. The leaders of the United States utilized metaphors of progress, unity, and achievement influenced by ideals of the Enlightenment, frontier mythology, and geopolitical dominance. These are not simply different ways to talk about the same concepts; the two societies do not share a common vocabulary about a shared experience. The two societies ultimately deploy different epistemologies about what human rights are, where they come from, and how they operate in society. Recognizing difference is vital to achieving cross-cultural dialogue, international cooperation, and cooperative advocacy for human rights in a diverse world, wherein supposedly universal values are, and will always be, filtered through more particular cultural experience. (Kövecses, 2005)

5. Conclusion

This study contributes to the multisite literature on human rights by indicating that even if human rights are taken to be universal, it does not mean that human rights are understood or discussed the same way across cultures in different metaphorical frames. Looking at an analysis of the political speeches of together Pakistani leaders Imran Khan and Shahbaz Sharif and American leaders Joe Biden and Donald Trump, this analysis shows how it is very normative for the discourse of Pakistani political leaders to uses metaphor of 'religion', 'war', and 'struggle' to frame human rights as divine obligations and as collective resistance to oppression. This reflects the Islamic history, notion of post-colonialism, and security context of Pakistan. However, it is not the case for American political leaders, who predominantly use metaphors of 'journey', 'family', and 'renewal' to frame human rights as civic responsibilities and as collective progress to shared ideals. These again are reflective of values of the Enlightenment, cultural optimism, and American strength. This research applies the previous work of Conceptual Metaphor Theory to show how political leaders use language framed through culture to help the citizens of each country to understand phenomena as complicated and layered as human rights. Recognizing the differences in these metaphorical frameworks is critical those who would describe themselves as literate and engaged in cross-cultural contexts for communications, international standards and compliance, and human rights advocacy and

advocacy for social justice. This is partly important because it shows that while we may hold the same universal human rights, that universal human rights are still rooted in each culture's experience, belief, and history

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