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# Laughing It Off The Role of Comedy and Humor in Combating Extremist Ideals in Jordan

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# Laughing It Off

## The Role of Comedy and Humor in Combating Extremist Ideals in Jordan

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# **Laughing It Off**

## **The Role of Comedy and Humor in Combating Extremist Ideals in Jordan**

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Lastly, I would like to thank all the students of SIT JOR 2016 for making my experience in Jordan much more enjoyable.

This research focuses on comedy in Jordan, and whether it plays a role in the larger fight against extremist ideals in the region. The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of how comedy is used in Jordan for a purpose other than merely making people laugh. Through this research, I study whether Jordanians believe that comedy has a role in combating extremism and if so, whether it is systematically employed for this specific purpose. The hypothesis of this study states that most Jordanians believe that comedy is a powerful weapon in the fight against extremism and as such, comedy has naturally experienced a change in its topics of focus. This research draws mostly on primary sources including interviews with comedians and government officials, surveys, material culture including past comedy performances, comedy shows, caricatures, etc., and prior research done on the topic. The war on terror cannot be won if it is solely fought on the battlefield. For this reason, studying this topic is of high importance because understanding other, non-conventional, methods of combating extremism will bring us that much closer to victory. The data of this research shows that most Jordanians, including comedians and government officials in fact believe that comedy serves as a powerful weapon to combat extremism. However, the data also shows that comedy is not systematically employed as an anti-terror tool neither from a government initiative, nor from comedian-led initiative. According to the data, this is due to reasons: the first is that the Jordanian government does not allocate appropriate funding and support to the comedy sector. Second, comedy in Jordan largely focuses on topics of government corruption and abuse of power. As it is the case that most Jordanians believe that comedy is a powerful tool which can help in the fight against extremism, it is important to find ways to support comedy and use it for the purpose of combating extremism.

**Key Words:**

Communications and the Arts: General

Regional Studies: Middle East

Political Science

## **Introduction**

A few years ago, I knew very little about the Arab world. Most college students learn about the Arab world through international relations courses or religion courses. My door to the Middle East was a very unconventional one: comedy. One day I stumbled upon some YouTube videos of a Saudi Arabian comedian making fun of the government. I was shocked. I had no idea comedy even existed in the Middle East let alone in Saudi Arabia. The show titled “La Yekthar” deals with social issues, government corruption, women’s issues, etc. The show is in Arabic with English subtitles and in 2013, it was one of the most watched YouTube channels in the Middle East. This show sparked my interest in learning about comedy in the Middle East.

In November 2005, Egyptian-American comedian Ahmed Ahmed was fed up with the way Middle Easterners were portrayed in American media. After former U.S. President George W. Bush labeled Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as the “Axis of Evil” in his 2002 State of the Union address, Ahmed Ahmed started a comedy group with the same name. He solicited the help of other famous comedians including Iranian-American Maz Jobrani, Palestinian-American Dean Obeidallah, and Arabic speaking South Korean Wonho Chung. The purpose of this comedy tour was to counter the narrative of Middle Easterners being evil people who seek the destruction of the United States of America. The comedy tour was very successful and performed in Arabic and English all over the Middle East including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Lebanon, Jordan. His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan even attended one of their shows and praised the group for their work.

These two events were the ones that inspired this research here in Jordan. I have always enjoyed comedy and have grown to love and appreciate the comedy of the Middle East. I also know the power of comedy and its potential to shape public opinion, shape narratives, and even provoke changes in society. Knowing this, and having studied the issues of the region, I wanted to learn about how comedy can influence society to the point where it is used as a tool in the fight against terror.

This topic is especially relevant today because we are in a time where conventional tools of fighting terror, such as outright war, are not working. New methods need to be employed to fight extremism in the region from early education, opening up job opportunities for people, to more unconventional methods such as humor and ridicule. For the past decade, comedy, specifically stand-up comedy, has been a growing trend in the Middle East. In 2010, Dean Obeidallah, who is the executive producer of the Amman International Stand-up Comedy Festival said, “Perhaps aided by Jordan's more relaxed laws on censorship for the region, the Amman festival has, in three years, grown to become the biggest event of its kind in this part of the world.” (Neild, 2010)

Jordan is one of the safest countries in the region. However, it is surrounded by war and terror and inside it is plagued by government corruption and public discontent. Comedy is a way to relieve some of the worries of the issues facing Jordan. Aside from the Amman International Stand-up Comedy Festival, comedy is not very big in Jordan. One of the main reasons for this is that the Jordanian people are largely not interested in comedy given all of the issues in the



region. A big significance of this research is that it views comedy as part of the solution to the problems facing the country.

Comedy is particularly important for the region because comedy serves as a medium of expression. Comedians and performers can express themselves and express the grievances of the people through comedy. Comedy can also be used to fight oppression and abuses of power. Especially in this region, where many people are silenced by their governments, comedy allows people to counter these abuses of freedom. Comedy has proven itself to be a powerful political tool to make people accountable. This research focuses on comedy as a means of combating extremist rhetoric in Jordan, as a way of spreading the ugly truth of terror groups, and as a way to provide relief to people from the issues that are ever-present in their minds.

For this study, I will focus on how three groups in Jordanian society: Government officials, Comedians and performers involved in the comedy sector, and young people. The research focuses on how these groups view the role of comedy in society and whether or not each one believes that comedy serves as a powerful tool to combat extremism. Furthermore, I will study whether comedy is systematically employed through government initiatives for the specific purpose of combating extremism and extremist Ideals. This research will also focus on how comedians view their role in society and whether they believe that their work can be intelligently used to combat extremism.

This study is not, however, intended to be a psychological study on the effects of comedy on the human mind. This research is intended to explore Jordanians' perceptions of comedy and

whether 1) Jordanians believe that comedy can be used as a tool to combat extremism and extremists views in Jordan, and 2) whether or not comedy is actually used for that specific purpose and where the impetus for this comes from (Government-led or Comedian-led).

The main hypothesis of my study is that, given the prevalence of extremism in the regions surrounding Jordan, and even in some regions within Jordan, there would be a great push—especially from government entities—for comedy to be employed as an anti-terror tactic. I am operating under the assumption that, given that roughly 80% of Jordan's population is under 40, people would be open to comedy (Jordanian Department of Statistics, 2011). Furthermore, Jordan serves as a microcosm for the overall growing trend of comedy in the Middle East. Lastly, I operate under the assumption that since comedy is largely situational, in Jordan, it will naturally focus on issues of terrorism, extremism, and war given that that is what is happening around Jordan.

Relief theory of comedy maintains that laughter is a mechanism through which psychological tension is reduced (Veatch, 1998). This is the guiding theory of this research because a lot of tension and nervousness in the region is caused by the expansion of extremist views and terror threats. This theory is employed in music and plays when tensions are too high in order to provide “Comic relief.” In Jordan, tensions are really high between the people of Jordan and terror groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). These tensions were heightened after the heinous murder of Jordanian fighter pilot Muath Al-Kasasbeh by the hands of ISIS.

Many comedians view themselves as activists. Their role in society is not just to make people laugh, but to further an agenda of positive change. Speaking of his role in the Axis of Evil Comedy group comedian Dean Obeidallah said, “There’s a sense of activism” (Lee, 2007). He feels as though it is his duty to counter some of the negative rhetoric being spread about Arabs and Muslims—his people. This ties back to the relief theory of comedy because through their work, comedians like Dean Obeidallah and Ahmed Ahmed are able to relieve some of the tension caused by the “us versus them” mentality. In Jordan, cartoonist Omar Al-Abdallat says that it is not simply making fun of a group like ISIS that will delegitimize them; it is about spreading a positive message, a message of love that counters all the hate coming from outside. (Al-Abdallat, 2016) In the same way that comedy is used as a tool for activists to provoke change and to spread a positive message, it can be used to counter specific messages such as the ones emanating from terror groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda.

This research is intended to answer the question of whether Jordanians believe that comedy works as a tool to combat extremism. Furthermore, it will explore the question of whether comedy is employed as a tool for this purpose and if government is/should be involved in promoting and supporting comedy to be used as a systematic means to combat extremist ideals.

## Literature Review

Not much literature exists on how comedy and humor are used as tools to combat extremism. However, the works that have been published offer tremendous insight as to how exactly comedy will aid in this fight. In his piece, *Defeating the Taliban: Creating an Alternative Future Through Reframing and Humor*, Sohail Inayatullah argues that the Taliban will not be defeated through conventional means but rather it requires a mixture of military tactics and de-legitimization techniques such as humor. Inayatullah argues:

*“The Taliban will disappear when they have been de-legitimized. This will not happen through war but by reframing this battle, taking back the terms of the debate, moving from extremist to syncretic Islam. Humor can be an outstanding strategy in communicating that the Taliban's vision of the future is not in the interests of 99% of Pakistanis and the world. Being mocked is what the Taliban are deathly afraid of (not death). As religious warriors, they wish to be respected, seen as strong and as virtuous, brave in the face of every obstacle. They are not. A new story has to be told.”(Inayatullah, 2009)*

As I have argued my hypothesis, Inayatullah argues that comedy helps fight against extremist groups. However, he argues that comedy and humor alone will not win the fight. I also argue that not one single method of combating extremism will win the fight; there needs to be a combination of conventional and non-conventional methods of fighting extremism to win the fight.

Post world war two, comedy, humor, and ridicule were a decisive tool in defeating the Klu Klux Klan in the United States. (Inayatullah, 2009) In the current fight against terrorism and extremism, comedy also plays a crucial role. Although comedy and ridicule have been employed in the past to combat extremist narratives, it has not gained mainstream acceptance. (H. L. Goodall, 2012) In past instances, ridicule and humor have backfired and have had unintended consequences. The “Danish Cartoon Controversy” where a cartoon of the prophet Muhammad was portrayed with a turban shaped as a bomb in the article *Jyllands-Posten* was the cause of much anger directed at cartoonists from Danish Muslims and Muslims around the world. There is a need for caution when employing ridicule and humor to combat extremist narratives and heroes, especially when dealing with topics that are sensitive such as religion and the Prophet Muhammad. Cartoonists, satirists, and comedians in general must be very well educated on the issue before taking the responsibility of combating these narratives. Despite the need for caution, however, “there exist equally real opportunities for its effectiveness.” (H. L. Goodall, 2012)

As I previously mentioned, not much literature exists about utilizing comedy and humor as a tool to combat extremist views. I focus in my study on utilizing comedy as a mechanism through which extremist views are countered and therefore terrorist groups are de-legitimized. Literature

does exist, however, that focuses on comedy as a coping mechanism after tragedy—specifically terrorist attacks. After a tragedy such as a terrorist attack, there is a latent period, where jokes about certain topics are seen as offensive and hence off limits (Ellis, 2002). However, after a certain, undefined period, humor serves as an effective mechanism to cope. Similarly, in the Middle East, when tragedy strikes and people are full of anger, comedy helps relieve some of the tension regarding that particular tragedy. When studying anti-extremism tools, comedy as a response to tragedy can help relieve some of the anger people feel and prevent people from making bad decisions.

The Journal of Holistic Nursing endorses humor as a coping mechanism after a terrorist attack. Terrorism not only presents a physical crisis to the ones affected but also creates a psychological crisis to those directly and indirectly affected. Dr. Elaine Anne Pasquali argues, “Humor is a holistic, noninvasive strategy that may facilitate that adjustment and may be used effectively to heal both survivor-clients and disaster personnel who are working with them.” (Pasquali, 2005)

Comedy and humor serve not only as mechanisms to cope with tragedy, but also as tools to prevent people from supporting extremist groups. At the very least, comedy can help de-legitimize extremist groups.

## **Methodology**

This research focuses on the viewpoints of three entities in Jordanian society: Government, Comedians, and the public. Prior to undertaking this research project, I had preconceptions about what my experience as a researcher would be. Now in my fourth week of research, I have realized that things are completely different. I was shocked to realize that people of high stature in society were available and willing to meet with an undergraduate researcher. Through my experience, I have met with officials at the ministry of culture, a theater director, comedians, actors, and a cartoonist.

## *Survey*

I conducted the survey in a general elective class at the University of Jordan with the help of SIT. The surveys were conducted in Arabic. The survey contained demographic questions, yes or no questions, Likert scale questions, and open-ended questions. The purpose of the survey was to gauge to what extent young people have been exposed to comedy in Jordan and whether or not they believe that comedy serves as a strong counter extremism tool. Moreover, the survey contained the question of what the role of government should be when it comes to the issue. To analyze the survey responses I have used two methods: for the open-ended questions I have

translated the responses and analyzed them. For all other questions, I have used the online survey constructing service Qualtrics.com to conduct statistical analysis.

To ensure that all respondents were well informed about the complexities of the study and also of their rights as participants, I attached a copy of the informed consent form to every survey, which explains the research topic and issues of anonymity and confidentiality.

### *Interviews*

The interview process was very smooth. For my first interview, I was nervous but I quickly realized that there was nothing to be worried about. I chose to interview an official at the ministry of culture, a cartoonist, and five university students. The interview themes were roughly the same for all participants, however, questions differed slightly depending on the interviewee's role. The main information I was seeking to acquire through each interview were: 1) how each group (Government, comedians, public) view the role of comedy in society; 2) Whether they believe that comedy plays a role in combating extremist views in Jordan; 3) What the main focus of comedy is currently and whether it has experienced a change in the past 5 years and; 4) what they believe the role of government is in employing comedy as a means to fight extremism.

During the first part of each interview, participants were informed about the research topic and about their rights as a participant in the research. Furthermore, each participant was provided with an informed consent form, which explained these issues in detail and in their own language. The interviews took place in locations convenient to the participant. This meant their place of work and five interviews conducted at the University of Jordan.



### *Challenges*

One of the main challenges faced during this process was the language barrier. My first interview I scheduled with an official at the Ministry of Culture. I scheduled the interview over the phone and I had enough Arabic to do this in his language. Then the interview had to be rescheduled because I had to find a translator because, although I had enough Arabic to schedule an interview, I did not have enough Arabic to conduct research.

All of the other participants spoke English; therefore, I conducted all other interviews English. However, one always feels more comfortable and confident in his mother tongue. For this reason, the results may be slightly affected by the language barrier, however, not to the point where it dramatically affects the research.

### *Ethical Issues and Considerations*

The most important ethical consideration in this study is that of informed consent. I am studying human subjects whose language is one other than English, which sometimes may make it difficult for the participant to understand the complexities of the study. I understand that the participant has the right to fully understand the study. Therefore, until I believed that the participant had fully understood the study, I did not proceed with the study.

In addition, conflicts of interest can lead to a researcher skewing the results. Certainly, researchers have their own personal views about the topic they are trying to study. However, I believe it is a researcher's duty to remain completely neutral so as to not have any impact on the results of the study.

## **Findings and Analysis**

The findings of this research are divided into three sections: Interview Findings, Survey Findings (Quantitative and Qualitative), and Material Culture. The main finding, which will be a recurring theme throughout this section, is that although Jordanians largely believe that comedy can combat extremism, comedians largely focus on political issues such as government corruption rather than terrorism. Through this finding, part of my hypothesis—that Jordanians believe comedy can combat extremism—is proven to be correct. However, the main hypothesis of this study that states that comedy will naturally focus on topics of extremism and terrorism due to the prevalence and recurrence of these topics in the region is incorrect.

### *Interview Findings*

All interviewees were asked about the prevalence of comedy in Jordan and to what extent it is promoted and advertised. The overwhelming consensus states that Jordanians are largely not interested in comedy. Although there exists a small community interested in comedy, the Jordanian public at large was described as serious and uninterested in comedy. Mohammed ad-Dumur, director for theater and the arts at the ministry of culture stated that the prevalence of

comedy is “not continuous,” and he added, “Sometimes it is active sometimes it is not” (ad-Dumur, 2016).

In Jordan, for the most part comedy focuses on political issues. Many issues other than extremism are on the Jordanian people’s minds. Comedy, according to cartoonist Omar al-Abdallat is shaped by what is going on in the region; political issues, refugees, corruption, etc. and many issues revolving around religion are very taboo in Jordan. Extremism is very much on Jordanians’ minds as evidenced by the impressive amount of security around the country. However, when it comes to comedy, it chooses to focus on issues of freedom of speech, censorship, government corruption, abuses of power perpetrated by parliament members, and the use of Wasata (Powerful connections).

Comedy and humor as a tool to combat extremism is not simply about making fun of a terrorist group. Mohammed ad-Dumur estimated that 90 percent of the time, videos and cartoons simply ridiculing groups such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda are ineffective in delegitimizing them. Furthermore, he argues, that people choosing to perform comedy to satirize and ridicule these issues should be careful because it can have the opposite effect. Comedians need to educate themselves on issues of extremism and the reasons behind extremism before they choose to ridicule it. (ad-Dumur, 2016)

A major assumption of this study was that if people believe that comedy plays a major role in combating extremism, then government will play a major role in the comedy and performing arts sector. However, in this is not the case. In Jordan, there is not a single initiative to promote

comedy as a means to combat extremism. Moreover, government for the most part chooses to not provide adequate funding for the promotion of comedy and the support of comedy performers. One major reason for this is that comedy in Jordan tends to rebel against the government and oppose government policies and government officials' behavior.

The students that were interviewed all stated that government does play a role in the comedy sector; however, it should be mostly the private sector. There are shows on the popular television channel Ru'yya (Vision), however, these shows do not focus on issues of extremism and terror.

#### *Survey Findings - Quantitative*

For this portion of the study, a class of students at the University of Jordan was surveyed. The students' majors ranged from the Spanish language, to business administration, to engineering. Most of the students interviewed were females and they are all between 19 and 22 years old. In the survey, students were asked whether they believed that comedy plays an important role in combating extremist views and ideals. For this question, 75 percent of students responded yes. (See Figure 1) Furthermore, the majority of students that believe that comedy influences public opinion also believe that comedy is a good tool to combat extremism. (See Figure 2)

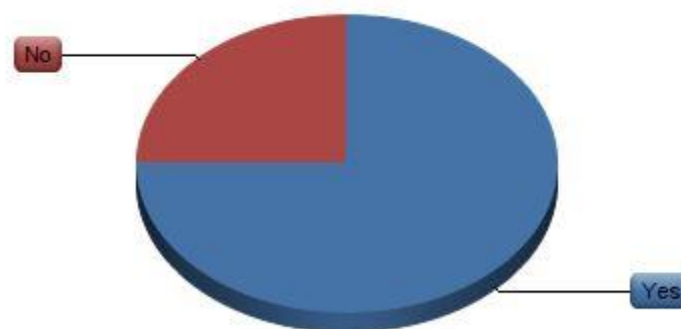


Figure 1

		Do you think comedy and humor are good tools in the fight against extremism and extremists Ideas?		Total
		Yes	No	
To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Comedy influences public opinion?	Strongly agree	3	0	3
	Somewhat agree	9	4	13
	Neither agree nor disagree	2	1	3
	Somewhat disagree	1	0	1
	Strongly disagree	0	0	0
	Total	15	5	20

Figure 2

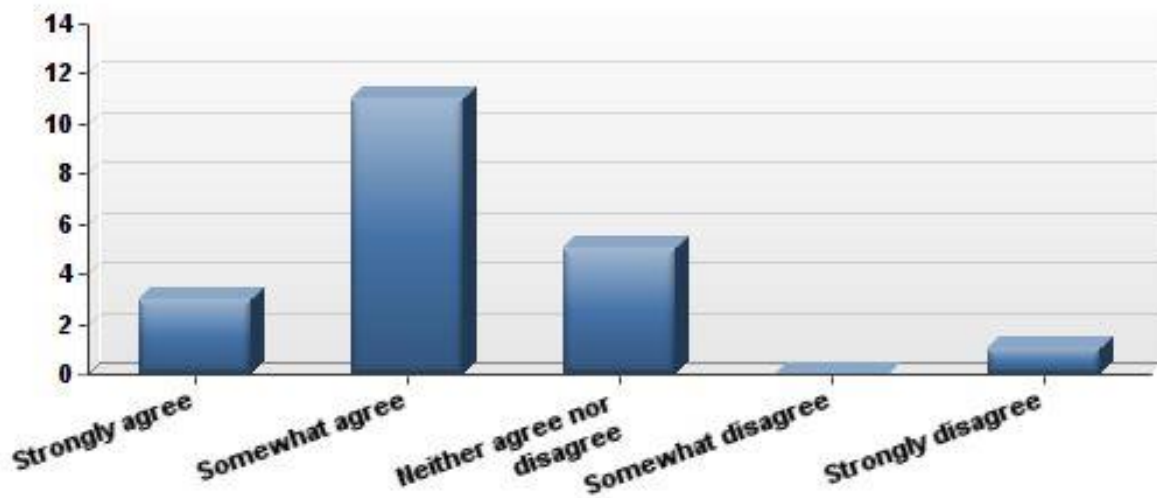


Figure 3

*Survey Findings – Qualitative*

In the open questions of the survey regarding Jordanians’ openness to comedy, most students answered along similar lines. They argued that Jordanians are serious and are not interested in Comedy. Despite this, most students argued that comedy has a very important role to play in

society. In the survey question, “What is the role of comedy in society?” almost all students portrayed the role of comedy positively and that it can solve some of the social problems that they currently are facing.

### *Material Culture*

For this study, I analyzed popular comedy plays in Jordan and the cartoons of Omar Al-Abdallat. Through my analysis, I found that the vast majority of topics touched on in these works were political. The comedy play *Comister* (a popular Jordanian hide-and-seek game in which you yell “comister” once you have found your target) deals with topics of government corruption, abuses of power, violations of rights and freedoms, etc. Within the play, the term *comister* alludes to the fact that many government officials will not denounce corruption because they themselves are corrupt. If they yell “comister,” someone else will yell *comister* on them.

The cartoons of Omar Al-Abdallat focus on a wide range of themes. However, a recurring topic and target of his cartoons is the use of *Wasta* in Jordan. In his cartoons, he also ridicules government officials and the behavior of the “Middle East dictator.” The cartoon on the right reads, “American Report:



Widespread usage of Wasta(connections) in Jordan.” To which the Jordanian Man holding the hand of his Wasta Responds, “Hey Americans, take everything, but leave us our Wasta.”

Although not all comedy and not all cartoons are political, this is representative of the wider trend in Jordan where comedians choose to focus on the political issues that most affect their people, rather than poking fun at terrorist groups and their extremist Ideals.

One of the most famous plays in Jordan, *Al'an Fahamtukum (Now I Understand You)*, deals with topics of authoritarianism in the Middle East. Specifically it touches on the Arab Spring, and what was happening in the region at the time. The play was so popular that His Majesty King Abdullah II and other members of the royal family attended.

The play is one of the most popular plays in Jordan and went on for almost two years. Usually, comedy plays in Jordan last a few months due to lack of funding. The play centers on the character of Abu Sakr, portrayed by Mosa al-Hijazeen, who is that authoritarian figure in his family. Abu Sakr had deaf ears to the demands of his family (as authoritarian leaders react to the demands of their people), until his family rebelled and he had to honor their wishes.

## **Conclusion**

Comedy has existed in the Middle East for many decades. However, only in the past decade has comedy seen exponential growth in countries like Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Jordan. The growth of comedy in the region and the interest in creating a comedy hub in the Middle East has been parallel to the growth of terror groups like ISIS. Moreover, western comedians who focus on the Middle East usually treat issues of terrorism, extremism, and religious fundamentalism.

The main assumption of this research was that the main focus of comedy in Jordan would be extremism and ridiculing fundamentalists. Furthermore, I predicted that most Jordanians would agree that comedy is a strong tool to combat extremism, and therefore, government would be interesting in promoting and supporting comedy as a means to combat terror. Through this research, I discovered that indeed Jordanians believe that comedy is a powerful anti-terror tool. This means that most Jordanians believe that ridiculing terror groups can help delegitimize them. However, this did not translate into an interest from government or those involved in the comedy sector to promote comedy for this purpose.

The Jordanian government does support some comedy endeavors by providing monetary support. However, the monetary support is often insufficient. Furthermore, the Jordanian



government has not launched any initiatives to support comedy specifically as an anti-terror mechanism.

Comedians in Jordan, for the large part, choose not to delve into topics of extremism and terror.

Through my research, I reached two conclusions for why this is the case in Jordan.

- 1) Comedians choose to deal the topics that most concerns their audience. In Jordan, these topics are mainly political such as government corruption, abuses of power, violations of freedoms, and failed government policies.
- 2) Comedians focus on the issues that most concern them as performers or artists. In Jordan, these issues tend to be issues of freedom of speech, censorship, social “red lines,” and injustices toward those in the performing arts sector.

This is not to say in any way that Jordanians are not concerned with issues of terrorism and the threat it poses to their country. However, Jordanians for the most part trust their security apparatus to keep them safe. For this reason, the trend in Jordan is for the populace to focus on political issues in order to improve transparency in their government; and this trend has influenced the trend in the Jordanian Comedy sector.

### **Study Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research**

One of the largest limitations to my study is the small size of the population sample. In my study, I tried to gain deep understanding of the perspectives of different groups in Jordanian society. It would have been optimal to interview several government officials, several comedians in different fields (Cartoonists, actors, stand-up comics, etc.), and a large representative sample of the Jordanian public. Given the limited time allotted for my study and the busy schedules of people I sought to interview, this was not possible. The sample size was also limited by conducting the survey at the University of Jordan.

A second limitation to my study was the fact that it does not go far enough taking into account other issues that are important to Jordanians. In the west, we tend to think that given the war in Syria, the expansion of ISIS in the region, and all the issues dealing with terrorism, these are the only issues that Jordanians care about. However, this is far from the truth; there are many issues other than terrorism in Jordanians' minds such as unemployment, government corruption, poverty, and economic inequality.

This study focuses primarily on how Jordanians view the role of comedy and whether it plays an important role in combating extremism. A major limitation of this study is that I study comedy as a tool against extremism by studying to what extent the topics that comedy focuses on deal with topics of extremism and terror. However, it is important to note that comedy can influence certain factors without necessarily having to mention these factors directly—by simply spreading a positive message that counters the negativity.

There are several ways by which this topic can be expanded. The first and most important way is by expanding the population size; distributing more surveys and interview a more diverse group of people. This would allow the researcher to obtain more varied and diverse perspectives on the issue. Furthermore, this study can be expanded upon by analyzing some of the comedy trends in other Middle Eastern countries.

In addition, this study can be improved by including a physiological study aspect to it. This study examines perspectives on comedy and whether or not it is used as a tool to combat extremism. This study, however, does not go as far as to examine the effects of comedy on the mind and whether or not comedy has had a tangible impact on the war against extremism.

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## Appendix I

Thank you for participating in this study. Your answers will be kept anonymous and confidential on the part of the student / researcher who is conducting the study.

Gender:

Masculine

Feminine

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Religion \_\_\_\_\_

Nationality \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever attended a comedy show/play in Jordan?

Yes                      No

Do you watch comedy on television?

Yes                      No

Do you think Jordanians are open to comedy?

Yes                      No

If your answer in no, why?

In your opinion, what role does comedy play in Society in general, and specifically in Jordanian Society?

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: comedy influences public opinion

Strongly agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree

Do you think comedy and humor are good tools in the fight against extremism and extremist Ideas?

Yes      No

If your answer was yes, how?

To what extent do you agree that government should play a role in the comedy sector?

(Promoting, funding, organizing, etc)

Strongly agree      agree      neutral      disagree      strongly disagree

## Appendix I

شكرا لك على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة. سيتم الاحتفاظ بإجاباتك مجهولة وسرية من جانب الطالب/الباحث الذي يقوم بإجراء الدراسة.

الجنس:

ذكر

أنثى

العمر: \_\_\_\_\_

تخصصك: \_\_\_\_\_

ديانتك: \_\_\_\_\_

جنسيتك: \_\_\_\_\_

(١) هل حضرت عرض/مسرحية كوميدية سابقا؟

نعم لا

(٢) هل تشاهد أفلام أو برامج كوميدية على التلفزيون؟

نعم لا

(٣) هل تعتقد ان الشعب الأردني يحب الكوميديا؟

نعم لا

إذا كانت الاجابة لا، فلماذا؟

(٤) من وجهة نظرك، ما هو الدور الذي تلعبه الكوميديا في المجتمع بشكل عام؟ ما هو دورها في المجتمع الأردني؟

٥) هل توافق بان الكوميديا تؤثر في الرأي العام؟

أعارض بشدة      أعارض      محايد      أوافق      أوافق بشدة

٦) هل تعتقد أن الكوميديا والفكاهة هي أداة جيدة في مكافحة التطرف والأفكار المتطرفة؟

نعم      لا  
إذا كانت الاجابة نعم، فكيف؟

٧) الى أي مدى توافق بان الحكومة يجب ان تلعب دور في قطاع الكوميديا؟ (تعزيز، تمويل، تنظيم، الخ...)

أعارض بشدة      أعارض      محايد      أوافق      أوافق بشدة



## Appendix II

# SIT Study Abroad

a program of World Learning



## CONSENT FORM

### 1. Brief description of the purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to explore Jordanians' perceptions of comedy and humor and its role in society. Furthermore, this study seeks to explore the question of comedy's role in the fight against extremism in Jordan. For this study, information will be gathered from government officials, people involved in the comedy sector, and the general public gain better understanding of Jordanians' perception of comedy.

### 2. Rights Notice

In an endeavor to uphold the ethical standards of all SIT ISP proposals, this study has been reviewed and approved by a Local Review Board or SIT Institutional Review Board. If at any time, you feel that you are at risk or exposed to unreasonable harm, you may terminate and stop the interview. Furthermore, you may at any time refuse participation in any aspect of the study. Please take some time to carefully read the statements provided below.

- a. **Privacy** - all information you present in this interview may be recorded and safeguarded. If you do not want the information recorded, you need to let the interviewer know.
- b. **Anonymity** - all names in this study will be kept anonymous unless the participant chooses otherwise.
- c. **Confidentiality** - all names will remain completely confidential and fully protected by the interviewer. By signing below, you give the interviewer full responsibility to uphold this contract and its contents. The interviewer will also sign a copy of this contract and give it to the participant.
- d. **Future use of data** - data and information obtained in this study may be used in future projects done by the researcher. You may at any time request that the information you provide only be utilized in this project.

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 Participant's name printed

---

 Participant's signature and date

---

 Interviewer's name printed

---

 Interviewer's signature and dat

## Appendix II



## استمارة الموافقة

## وصف موجز للغرض من هذه الدراسة

الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو اكتشاف تصورات الشعب الأردني عن الكوميديا والفكاهة ودورها في المجتمع الأردني. علاوة على ذلك تقصد هذه الدراسة إلقاء الضوء على دور الكوميديا في مكافحة التطرف في الأردن. لهذا سيتم جمع المعلومات من خلال مقابلات مع مسؤولين حكوميين، أشخاص يعملون في قطاع الكوميديا، وشريحة من الشعب الأردني بشكل عام لأجل الحصول على صورة كاملة عن الموضوع.

## اشعار الحقوق

، فقد تم استعراض و الموافقة على هذه الدراسة من قبل لجنة SIT ISP في مسعى لدعم المعايير الأخلاقية في جميع مقترحات . إذا شعرت في اي وقت بالمخاطرة أو إذا تعرضت SITمراجعة محلية أو لجنة مراجعة تابعة لمؤسسة التعلم العالمية لضرر غير منطقي، فيمكنك إنهاء ووقف المقابلة . الرجاء أن تأخذ بعض الوقت لتقرأ بعناية البيانات الواردة أدناه .

أ. الخصوصية- جميع المعلومات التي تقدم في هذه المقابلة سيتم تسجيلها وحمايتها . إذا كنت لا ترغب بتسجيل المعلومات صوتياً، الرجاء اعلام الشخص الذي يقوم بالمقابلة بذلك.

ب. عدم الكشف عن الهوية – سيتم الاحتفاظ بجميع الأسماء في هذه الدراسة مجهولة إلا إذا اختار المشاركة خلاف ذلك.

ج. السرية- ستبقى جميع الأسماء سرية تماماً ومحمية بالكامل من قبل الشخص الذي يجري المقابلة . من خلال التوقيع أدناه، أن تعطي الشخص الذي يقوم بالمقابلة المسؤولية الكاملة لاستخدام هذا العقد ومحتوياته. سوف يوقع الشخص الذي يقوم بالمقابلة أيضاً نسخة من هذا العقد وسيتم اعطائها إلى المشارك .

د. حق الرفض - إذا كان المشارك يشعر بعدم الارتياح اتجاه الدراسة في أي فترة في الوقت، فمن ضمن حقوقه بالكامل رفض الاستمرار في الدراسة وطلب عدم استخدام اي من المعلومات التي تم جمعها حتى النقطة التي تم التوقف فيها عن اكمال المقابلة. للمشاركين أيضاً الحق في رفض الإجابة على أي سؤال لا يشعرون بالراحة بشأنه خلال المقابلة.

ه. التعويض – المشاركة في هذا البحث هو طوعي تماماً وليس هناك أي تعويض .

و. الاستخدام في المستقبل- هذا البحث يمكن أن يستخدم في دراسات مستقبلية فقط اذا اتصل الباحث بأسماء المشاركين الذين تمت مقابلتهم و يكون هذا بعد أخذ الموافقة منهم مرة أخرى مع نموذج موافقة ثان .

توقيع المشارك والتاريخ \_\_\_\_\_ اسم المشارك \_\_\_\_\_

توقيع الباحث والتاريخ \_\_\_\_\_ اسم الباحث \_\_\_\_\_