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Visualizing Legitimation: Photographic Strategies in the Autobiographies of Pakistani Military Dictators

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Keywords: Autobiography, Political Discourse, Political Photographs, Legitimation, Visual Analysis, Ayub Khan, Pervez Musharraf, Multimodal Discourse

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Abstract

*Political autobiographies, especially those written by military dictators, have rich political agendas, as they are carefully crafted narratives designed to legitimize their power. This paper examines the use of photographs in the autobiographies of two Pakistani military dictators: Ayub Khan's *Friends Not Masters* (1967) and Pervez Musharraf's *In the Line of Fire* (2006). The analysis focuses on the role of visual elements in cultivating a favorable image of these leaders, emphasizing their patriotism and heroism. Using a qualitative approach, this analysis incorporates aspects of Machin's (2013) multimodal framework and Van Leeuwen's (2017) strategies of multimodal legitimation. The results indicate that Ayub Khan and Musharraf utilized imagery to influence public perceptions of their leadership and legacy, intentionally situating themselves within symbolic or historically significant contexts. This study makes a significant contribution to the field of political discourse by revealing that visual elements are not merely illustrative but are central to the process of political legitimation.*

Keywords:

[Autobiography](#), [Political Discourse](#), [Political Photographs](#), [Legitimation](#), [Visual Analysis](#), [Ayub Khan](#), [Pervez Musharraf](#), [Multimodal Discourse](#)

Introduction

Autobiographies are generally considered personal narratives of their authors. Based on introspection, they are records of individual journeys and life-changing events of one's life. However, the autobiographies written by politicians, especially those with a military background, serve a more strategic purpose than just personal expression. They are used as tools of image management and self-promotion. They are employed for historical positioning. The personal blends with the political,

and the narrative is carefully knitted around memory with the intention of justifying power and crafting legitimacy. Since Military dictators' claim to power lacks a democratic foundation, they design their autobiographies and memoirs to present their leadership as necessary and justified based on their heroic deeds.

While words have primary importance in autobiographies, the photographs inserted in them are no less significant. These images are not included by the authors just for decorative purposes



or to break the monotony of text; rather, they carry symbolic meaning and persuasive weight. In fact, they often serve as visual arguments and reinforce or even sometimes surpass the impact of the written narrative. A single photograph of a leader in uniform with the national flag in the background can communicate authority, patriotism, and control more powerfully than a paragraph of text. Combined with written content, the images can evoke certain emotions and manage the public persona of the leaders. Hence, photographs are not just part of storytelling; they are silent but powerful tools to shape how power is remembered by the public.

This research focuses on the autobiographies of two Pakistani military dictators. *Friends Not Masters* (1967) by Ayub Khan and *In the Line of Fire* (2006) by Pervez Musharraf, who both ruled the country during crucial periods of political transition. Although there is a significant gap of 39 years between the two discourses, both dictators used their autobiographies to frame their leadership as necessary, morally justified, and historically significant. Interestingly, both works include photographs that serve much more than an illustrative purpose. These images portray moments of their military command, diplomatic engagement, national symbolism, and even familial bonds. All these contribute, consciously or unconsciously, to legitimize their hold on power.

This study draws upon two key theoretical frameworks to analyze how the given photographs function as instruments of legitimation. The first is Theo van Leeuwen's (2007) model of legitimation strategies, which outlines four major ways through which legitimacy is discursively constructed. The components of this design are Authorization (based on tradition, law, or authority figures), Moral Evaluation (appeals to moral values), Rationalization (appeals to logic or function), and Mythopoesis (narratives or anecdotes that convey moral lessons or heroic stature). The study also employs helpful tools provided by Machin's (2013) approach to multimodal critical discourse analysis. The features such as gaze, body posture, setting, and symbolic objects shape meaning and influence interpretation. The integration of these two frameworks helps in investigating how the photographs included in two autobiographies visually communicate legitimation strategies. The findings of this research using the above-mentioned

framework furnish the answer to the following research questions.

Q. How do the cover photographs of political autobiographies by Pakistani military rulers construct and legitimize their authority and identity through visual rhetoric?

Q. In what ways do the selected internal photographs within the selected political autobiographies contribute to the legitimation of their political narrative and their ideological positioning?

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the field of political discourse, especially within a South Asian context. It highlights how military dictators extend their persuasive efforts beyond text and employ photographs as part of a broader discursive visual strategy. This not only expands our understanding of how power operates through multimodal narrative but also opens up new avenues for analyzing visual politics in postcolonial and military-led societies.

In the present age, where images circulate faster than ever before due to digital media and politicians actively enhance their public personas through visual tools, it is timely and necessary to understand the mechanics of visual legitimation. This paper, therefore, aims to contribute to this understanding by offering a critical analysis of two important political autobiographies and the visual strategies they deploy to justify power.

Literature Review

This section provides a concise review of political multimodality-based research, analyzing how visual sources are used for the purpose of power manipulation and their legitimation.

Ademilokun & Olateju (2016) highlight the importance of multimodality, declaring it an important aspect of political expression. Investigating the semiotic artefacts in election rallies of Nigeria, they found artefacts such as vests, caps, and political party colors communicating compelling political messages.

Stafford (2010) investigates the intermediality between text and photography. His work analyses the interaction of text and images in different genres like captions, fiction, and essays. He provides a unique perspective on photo-textuality by highlighting its connection to post-colonial themes.

He argues in favour of a critical perspective on the relationship of image and text to reveal new dimensions of interpretations, which a complementary perspective cannot do. This insightful work helps to expand the understanding of how text and image merge and work together, and how they are connected to memory studies.

Notable research carried out in the multimodal domain of visual legitimation is MacKay's (2013). This work examines the concept of "legitimacy" and how it can be achieved without language. Focusing on American political advertisements, it studies their role in legitimizing ideas through multimodality. It also analyzes how multimodality interacts with politics with both historical and modern perspectives. The role of myths, particularly the American Dream, is explored in terms of political branding and interpretation. The analysis specifically highlights issues of nature and credibility for legitimizing various political messages.

Qadir (2023) studies rhetorical repercussions found in the visual semiotic choices of Iraqi election posters. Focusing on visual ethos, pathos, and logos used for constructing the identity of politicians, the paper attempts to illustrate how multimodal discourse analysis can be exploited to understand subtle political ideologies behind visual rhetoric. Van Leeuwen's (2008) Social Actor Theory and multimodal semiotics (Kress and Van Leeuwen's 1996, 2006) are employed to examine the naturalization and legitimation of political image. This research furnishes a valuable understanding of visual political discourse and rhetorical strategies.

Tehseem and Bokhari (2015) analyzed political cartoons published in a Pakistani newspaper using Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006)'s visual social semiotics framework. This research studied the face-saving or face-spoiling nature of political cartoons, which depend on the political affiliation of media groups. It also discusses the impact that visual elements can have on the perception of political leaders. This research is linked to the present study as it professes the significance of visual discourse and probes into how images can be face-savior or face-spoiler for the politicians.

This and few other research (Aazam, Baig, Azam, & Azam, 2020, Shakeel & Alam, 2023, Ghilzai, 2020, Hashmi, Khalid, & Niaz, 2024) have investigated political cartoons in Pakistani print media and visual

memes in electronic media like Facebook (Qazi, Aziz, & Siraj, 2022, Ishtiaq, Zainab, Ameer, & Arshad, 2023, Suleman & Saleem, 2024). These studies have discussed how visual features are used to shape the identities of political figures.

A review of all prominent research carried out in the domain of political discourse and multimodality it is observed that most of the work focuses on analyzing political cartoons, memes, or political posters, and less attention is given to the political photographs included in discourse by the political actors themselves. Political autobiographies are analyzed from a textual perspective, neglecting the subtle yet strategically influential role of photographs. The present research endeavors to explore this gap.

Theoretical Framework and Research Design

Multimodal Discourse Analysis is now a crucial part of academic research and is widely used in various teaching and practical disciplines. Use of a multimodal legitimation framework along with Machin's (2007) semiotic tools helps in breaking down visual data into its basic components and then understanding how they work together, in order to create meaning.

The target population for this study consists of photographs in political discourse written by authoritarian leaders or dictators. The study focuses on how these leaders employ different legitimation strategies through their visuals to justify their rule and policies.

We know that Political autobiographies and memoirs serve as a form of self-representation and image construction. The analysis of included personal and political photographs in these writings provides insight into the rhetorical and ideological mechanisms used for legitimizing authority.

This study employs a purposive sampling method. The photographs of two political discourses authored by dictators from different historical periods are selected. Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling technique in which specific cases are chosen based on their relevance to the research questions. This method is particularly useful when the goal is to gain in-depth insights into the discourse. As the goal of this research is to gain a meaningful analysis of legitimation strategies, it employs a specific criterion for selection, like an

autobiography or memoir containing images that must be written or attributed to a leader who had authoritarian control over the country. The discourse must be publicly available to facilitate comprehensive analysis. Based on these criteria, the study examines the ideological discourse of two Pakistani dictators. Ayub Khan (1907-1974) and Pervez Musharraf (1943-2023) wrote their personal and political journey in the form of a book. Ayub names it "*Friends Not Master*," published in 1967, and Musharraf calls it "*In the Line of Fire*," published in 2006.

The given research data is analysed with a structured method for identifying and categorizing the legitimation strategies. Multimodal legitimation refers to the process of justifying or legitimizing actions, practices, or institutions not only through language but also through visual and even musical elements. It integrates visuals, or other non-linguistic features, to communicate and reinforce moral evaluations and justifications of social practices and actions. Political actors or actions can be legitimized not just through language, but also through non-verbal means, which contribute to the way an audience perceives political power or

authority. Political autobiographies/memoirs often contain photographs, illustrations, or other visual representations of the leader in key moments of their life. These images are carefully selected to reinforce the narrative of strength, heroism, or moral righteousness. They work in tandem with the text to cement the leader's legitimacy. The present research will also engage in multimodal legitimation analysis of photographs to explore the complex interplay of language, visual imagery, and symbolism.

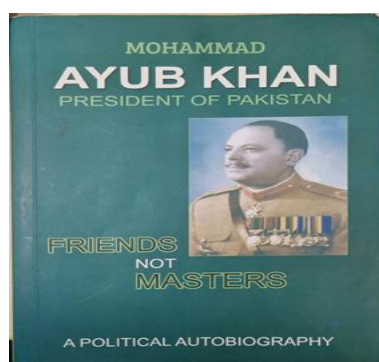
Analysis of Photographs

The analysis of photographs is conducted in two dimensions. The first dimension deals with the visual modalities. The visual details like background, frame, objects, pose, body language, and attire are significant in the meaning-making process. They are analyzed by taking insights from Machin's multimodal analysis structure (2013). Secondly, the theme of legitimation is examined in photos through Van Leeuwen's multimodal legitimation framework (2017), which explores how images are used to gain, enhance, and maintain legitimation of authors.

Analysis cover photo 'Friends Not Masters'

Figure 1

Cover Image: *Friends Not Masters* by Ayub Khan



Legitimation Strategies in Image 01

The most significant part of Ayub Khan's image is his military uniform laden with medals and decorations, which reminds one of his Personal Authority, rooted in his status and position. These objects also evoke the authority of a military institution and associate his personality with the discipline and prestige of the army. The uniform serves to link him with a legitimate source of power. His eyes show an idealized gaze directed towards the left, slightly

upwards, not meeting the viewer. This gaze is associated with a sense of vision and purpose, as it is often a motif in suggesting the foresight and vision of leaders. The weight of his position and his accessibility are emphasized by choosing a medium close frame where focus remains on his upper body, face, and medals. This framing strengthens authority but also maintains intimacy. An element of ethics and values is attached to his image through the calm and composed look on his face. This facial expression exudes a sense of confidence rooted in

his wisdom. He appears as a leader who is morally upright and capable of his role. He positions himself as the moral custodian of a newly emerged nation by visually embedding his image within the cultural structure, where the army is seen as a protective institution. Logic and reason-based Legitimacy is emphasized through the medals, which indicate the huge experience and achievements he possesses. These medals display his recognition in the military institution and rationalize his rise to power. The rationalization is further endorsed through the text, especially in the form of the subtitle "A Political Autobiography". This subtitle fortifies the impression of a reflective leader who will narrate logical explanations for his policies and will not indulge in personal ambitions. The cover image targets legitimation through narrative. The styling and composition of this photograph evoke the archetype of a military hero. The straight posture, multiple medals add up to construct his image as a valiant patriot who should be remembered for his service and sacrifices. The myth of the post-colonial hero is also evident as Ayub Khan is the first military ruler to rise to power in the post-colonial era. It frames him as the hero who served as the saviour of the nation and rescued it from the aftermath of the colonial era.

Analysis of Visual Details in Image 01

The aspects of visual modality cannot be ignored here. The overall green layout for the cover reminds the green colour of the Pakistani flag and signifies nationalism. Green, often called the colour of

nature, reinforces the ideas of growth and prosperity. The colour has strong ties with historical Islamic glory.

The use of bold font for the name AYUB KHAN and the title "FRIENDS NOT MASTERS "gives the impression of directness and simplicity. They reflect the element of decisiveness and bravery, which Ayub Khan wants to link with his leadership. The image gives the impression of a formal portrait, which associates it with a sense of permanence and legacy, an impression that his regime transcends the limitations of his time.

Legitimacy through Absence

Legitimacy is not always about the inclusion of elements; rather, it can also be achieved by the absence of certain controversial elements. The cover image of *Friends Not Masters* omits any visual hint at the political unrest, protest, and opposition that Ayub Khan faced during his time. The image solely focuses on his military persona with a sky blue background, reflecting serenity and peace. The absence of any other figure or object in the title not only directs all attention to him but also highlights the notion of him being the pivotal figure in Pakistan's political history.

To sum up, the photograph and the textual elements attached to it are used effectively to construct Ayub Khan's image as an authoritative leader who is morally upright and rational in his approach. The interaction of visual and textual elements invokes a heroic figure who stands for national sovereignty and prestige.

Figure 2

Ayub Khan is sitting beside his mother.



Ayub's photo with his mother is an informal moment he had with her. It is unusual from a

dictator's perspective to display private life to the public. Framed in an informal setting, this photo can

be called one of two soft, non-political photos included by Ayub Khan.

Legitimation Strategies in Image 02

Ayub's mother in this photo is a symbol of tradition and cultural authority. This is common, especially in the region of South Asia. The respect and attention Ayub displays towards his mother are a feature of Pakistani culture, where elders, especially parents, are at the head of the moral and spiritual hierarchy. He is aligning himself with this traditional value, implicitly claiming legitimacy as a leader who respects societal hierarchies.

The image constructs a morally upright perception of Ayub Khan. The perception is that, as he is respectful and attentive towards his family, he will carry the same values in his leadership and governance. The projection of a respectful son with virtues like humility and respect for elders positions him as a legitimate leader. It evokes cultural values like respect, filial piety, and familial bonds. The image serves to appeal to the personal integrity of Ayub Khan and is an indirect reinforcement of his credibility as a leader. This photo softens his image of a military dictator by depicting him as approachable and grounded.

The larger mythical narrative of *Friends Not Masters* is the construction of self-image. Personal moments like this with his mother reinforce his mythical image, where he is presented as rooted in his family values.

Thus, the image serves as an effective multimodal tool for reinforcing the persona of his

leadership. It creates an emotional resonance with his audience. It serves to humanize him as a leader, making him appear more trustworthy and reliable.

The Analysis of Visual Details in Image 02

This photo has an outdoor background, probably on the open veranda of the home. The central focus lies on the interaction between Ayub Khan and his mother. Ayub is wearing a formal suit, which indicates his role as a statesperson even in a private setting. His mother is wearing traditional casual dress. This contrast highlights both his professional identity and his familial ties. Ayub appears in a dual role: a political figure and a dutiful son. This duality lends him credibility and moral authority. Ayub's body language shows him leaning towards his mother. This gesture signifies attention and devotion towards the mother. This position, implying a deferential manner, projects his image of moral legitimacy. Both are seated on a traditional charpoy, an object deeply rooted in South Asian rural life. It symbolizes simplicity, tradition, and community. This object aligns him with rural values and cultural authenticity. He appears as a leader who remains grounded and connected to his roots, despite his high rank. The contrast of charpoy and his western suit highlights the tension between Tradition and Modernity. This contrast strengthens his appeal to both modernists and traditionalists in his audience.

The humble setting of home, his body language depicting affection, and eye contact with his mother all contribute to developing an emotional appeal.

Figure 3

Ayub Khan standing with Quaid-e-Azam as G.O.C. East Pakistan in Decca in 1948



This image, captured within one year of the creation of Pakistan, demonstrates Ayub with the founder of

Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, in a military award ceremony.

Legitimation Strategies in Image 03

Image 03 presents a visual association with Jinnah, the founding father of the nation. Tapping into role model authority, this association is invoked to position his regime within the continuum of legitimacy, where he is seen as a continuity of Jinnah's vision. Although he is standing in the background, he is framed as a key figure, a role model authority, in the hierarchy of leadership. He has a passive but attentive stance in the image where he is positioned as the custodian of Jinnah's legacy. The institutional role of the Pakistan army, especially its interference in politics, is a controversial and sensitive subject in Pakistan and raises a lot of contradictory opinions. This photo rationalizes the significant role of the military in the process of nation-building. The act of honoring a soldier through the hands of Jinnah serves to acknowledge the importance of the military institution in protecting the nascent state of Pakistan. The inclusion of this photo in his autobiography also serves to validate his rise to power, portraying him as a senior officer trusted by Jinnah himself. The photo invokes certain moral values, especially those central to military ethos, such as loyalty, discipline, sacrifice, and service to the nation. The moral alignment related to these values strengthens Ayub's position and portrays his leadership as not only effective but also morally

justified. There is a mythopoesis in the staging feature of this image. Ayub Khan, standing in the background, has been woven into the foundational myth. This positioning embeds his authority within the broader historical account of Pakistan and its early obstacles.

Analysis of the Visual Details

The background shows formal outdoor events. The ceremonial setting and decorum highlight the significance of the event. The tightly framed photo captures three individuals. Muhammad Ali Jinnah (the founder of Pakistan) on the left, Ayub Khan as G.O.C. East Pakistan in the center, and another individual in soldier attire on the right. This position emphasizes the symbolic moment as the alignment of these individuals reflects hierarchy and order. Ayub Khan is in a military uniform, indicating order and discipline in the armed forces. Jinnah, on the other hand, is in his iconic *sherwani* and cap, signifying his civilian position. The contrast in attire highlights the convergence of civil and military power. The body language of Ayub shows him in a respectful and upright position. It reflects his deference to civilian leadership. The significant object is the medal conferred by Jinnah, which is a symbol of legitimacy and recognition. The image implies the transfer of responsibility and trust from pioneer civilian leadership to the military, which is a significant theme in the political history of Pakistan.

Figure 4

Ayub Khan with President Kennedy at a state dinner in 1961



This photo serves as a powerful instrument of diplomatic and political legitimation. Taken at a state dinner on July 13, 1961, it features Ayub Khan alongside U.S. Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy.

Legitimation Strategies in Image 04

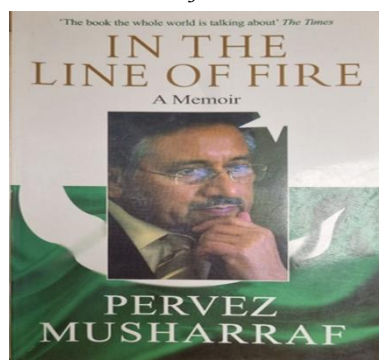
The presence of Ayub Khan with two iconic American presidents fortifies his own status and legitimizes his authority. It seeks to strengthen his image of an internationally well-recognized,

accepted, and competent leader by positioning him within the same echelon of power. This image can be the visual representation of the title *Friends Not Masters*. It strengthens Ayub's ideological narrative of Pakistan as an independent state not to be controlled by global powers. It makes a spectacle of international cooperation, equality, and goodwill. Ayub Khan takes the central position as he is the host of this event. The photo spotlights Ayub as a rational actor who is efficient in engaging diplomatic relations and meaningful dialogues. The event also portrays Pakistan as a modern and progressive state that has the confidence to engage with superpowers. Overall, the photo projects Ayub Khan's desire to claim equality, but the very impulse of seeking legitimation through the presence of global leaders mirrors the disproportion in power dynamics. This photo evokes the myth of equality and equal footing with a superpower, which is central to the main theme of this autobiography.

Analysis of Book Cover 'In the Line of Fire'

Figure 5

Cover Photo of *In the Line Of Fire* by Pervez Musharraf



Legitimation Strategies in Image 05

The cover positions Musharraf as the central authority in the narrative. The portrait, along with the title, suggests a firsthand and authentic narrative of major events of Musharraf's life, which have global significance. The moral evaluation on the cover is supported by green and white colours. As stated earlier, green is a powerful symbol for his identity as a citizen of Pakistan and his roots in Islam, while white demonstrates his desire for peace and objectivity. The pose chosen for Musharraf's photo emphasizes his role as a rational and logical thinker who, unlike a typical military image, thinks before making any decision. The mythological

Analysis of Visual Details

The prominence of Ayub Khan in the frame and his gesture pointing outward exhibit confidence and project him as a welcoming leader who is commanding attention. The positioning of U.S. presidents, showing Eisenhower on Ayub's right and Kennedy on the far side, portrays Ayub as the focal and prominent personality in this interaction. The image of Mrs Eisenhower with a warm smile is, though not prominent, alluding to a cordial atmosphere of harmony. The white tuxedo worn by Ayub Khan is also symbolic, as white is the colour of neutrality and prominence. Eisenhower is also wearing a white tuxedo, and this twinning with Ayub Khan creates the impression of equality in power dynamics.

construction through colours, font, and frame is done to present Musharraf as a leader who made difficult, yet morally justified decisions. The cover elevates him to a mythic status in Pakistan's national narrative, suggesting that his story transcends the personal and enters the domain of national legend.

Analysis of Visual Details Cover Photo

The cover page of this memoir presents a combination of visual and textual features framed to portray him as a powerful and legitimate leader. Details like the choice of colours, framing, and inclusion of national symbols add up to tie his

experiences to the journey of Pakistan. The following is a detailed analysis of these features.

The bottom half of the book is green with a visible crescent, which is a direct reference to the flag of Pakistan. The inclusion of this flag suggests Musharraf's pride in his nationalistic identity and situates him as a patriot and well-wisher of Pakistan. Green is also considered a representative colour of the religion of Islam, further legitimizing Musharraf's grounding as a Muslim. The upper half of the cover is in white colour, not only complementing the green half but also symbolizing peace, clarity, and his popular vision related to Enlightened Moderation of Islam. The contrast of green and white highlights his portrait in the middle and draws viewers' eyes to his face and the title of the book. Musharraf's face is captured through a

close-up shot and placed in the centre of the cover, which indicates his central position in the heart of the story. The thoughtful expression with his left hand on his chin reflects his introspection and deliberation on the critical situation of Pakistan. The glasses are a symbol of knowledge, intellect, and thought, creating his persona as a strategic and intellectual leader. The formal dressing in a suit and tie projects his professional competence and leadership. The civilian formal attire signifies his transition from military to political authority. The font of the title and author's name in bold, capital case, conveys authority, seriousness, and his dramatic centrality in the narrative. The tagline of 'The book the whole world is talking about' (*The Times*) is placed on the far upper side with quotation marks and source, indicating the global prominence of his narrative.

Figure 6

Destruction caused by a suicide attack on Musharraf's life in 2003

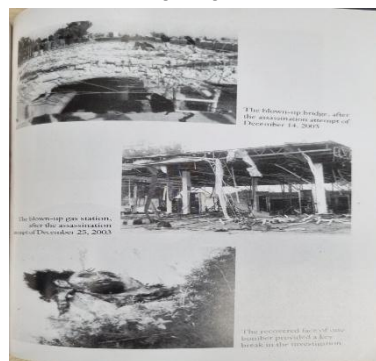


Image 06 is the first set of photos that appear in this memoir. The placement of this image at the very beginning of the visuals is significant as it complements the title, main theme, and ideology of this memoir, which is to describe the precarious conditions in Pakistan due to the terrorist wave after 9/11. 6a and 6b a visual scenes of a bridge and a gas station after a suicide assassination attempt made on Musharraf's life. 6c displays the recovered facial skin of the suicide bomber.

Legitimation Strategies in Image 06

As these photos present terrorists as the destabilizing force, responsible for the destruction of infrastructure, they implicitly position Musharraf as the legitimate leader and authority to ensure peace and stability. The photos and their captions are designed to impart a professional tone, reflecting

the state's competence in dealing with these incidents. They acknowledge his role as the head of the state, who is under threat from the terrorists as their opposing force. The photos appeal to the moral obligation of a true leader to protect the country from the threats of evil forces. Even 6c, revealing the face of the dead bomber, has the moral value of exposing the brutality of terrorism, necessary to protect the greater good. Musharraf was held responsible for many controversial policies adopted after 9/11. The two major ones were his alliance with the U.S. in its war against terror, and the other was launching an operation in Pakistan's tribal areas. These photos are used to rationalize and justify the state's actions as necessary and effective. The photos develop the myth of a battle between Good and Evil, where good and noble forces are represented by Musharraf. He is framed as a resilient and targeted

leader who endures and emerges strongly after the attacks. 2c is mythologizing the state's triumph in dismantling the threat of terrorism.

Analysis of Visual Details 6a

The details of the broken and collapsed bridge reflect chaos and destruction. They symbolize a direct danger to state authority. The wide-angle shot taken from above fully captures the scale of the attack and exposes its massive destruction. The rubble and remnants of infrastructure highlight the severity of bomb explosions. No human or vehicle presence is captured in this photo, keeping the focus entirely on the damage.

Analysis of Visual Details 6b

The settings of this photo reveal an everyday location, i.e., a gas filling station, destroyed by a terrorist attack. It emphasizes the reach of the threat to the common man and is not limited to the life of Musharraf. The destroyed structure of the gas station indicates the indiscriminate nature of terrorism and its impact on the lives of people. It subtly seeks to legitimize Musharraf's policies against terrorism as justified. The scene of rubble, debris, and collapsed beams all communicates the destruction.

Analysis of visual details 6c

6c is a close-up shot, showing the bomber's facial skin removed from his body. The inclusion of this graphic image of a dead terrorist's face raises serious ethical concerns about the appropriateness of revealing mutilated individuals, as they are

considered dehumanizing and sensationalist. The norms of human dignity are violated through the display of such images, but the decision to include this photo in his memoir is partly to dramatize the horrors of the terrorist wave. According to Sontag (2003),

In order to provoke and change our Behavior, photographs must shock. (p.130)

Commenting upon the functions of photos, Sontag says.

Photographs provide the example, the indelible testimony. The illustrative function of photographs is not without affecting opinions, prejudices, fantasies, and disinformation. (P. 134)

This highlights the power of photographs to not only document different events but also influence how they are perceived and interpreted. In political discourse, such images are used as weapons to evoke specific emotions, where political actors can manipulate public opinion to align with their political agendas. The visual representation of suffering, scholars argue, often transforms pain into an aestheticized spectacle. As Chouliaraki (2006) notes in *The Spectatorship of Suffering*:

All the regimes of pity construe suffering as an aesthetic spectacle, but each offers the spectator a different quality of emotional and practical engagement with the distant sufferer' (P. 15).

The sense of urgency is created through this visceral image. This strategy aligns with his broader narrative of legitimation, where he is positioned as a resolute leader, fighting existential threats to the nation.

Figure 7

Musharraf receiving Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at Kargil in 1999



Image 7 consists of three photos referred to as 7a, 7b, and 7c. 7a shows a moment of a handshake between

Musharraf and his political opponent, Nawaz Sharif, in Kargil. 7b demonstrates an official briefing given

to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif by a military official on the Kargil issue. Musharraf is sitting beside him. 7c is a collage of two photos where the right side depicts Sharif addressing a podium, and the left side shows his audience, which is military soldiers sitting on the ground.

Legitimation Strategies in Image 07

The photos enhance the authority of the military as an institution that is professional and expert in its domain. It is framed to downplay the narrative of military institutions not cooperating with civil authorities. The photos also evoke patriotic emotions for the armed forces and highlight their challenges. They also highlight the collaboration, loyalty, and unity between civil and military authorities. The photos rationalize Musharraf's narrative of support and cooperation towards the Nawaz Sharif government, rejecting any opposing narrative. They overall construct the narrative of mutual respect, collaboration, accountability, and unity between civilian-military leadership. This myth is designed to counter the popular myth of the military dominating politics in Pakistan.

Delegitimation

It can be clearly noted here that these three photos are added in the memoir with the main purpose of delegitimizing his political opponent, Nawaz Sharif. One of the allegations against Musharraf was initiating the Kargil operation against India without the consent or even informing the civilian government. Nawaz Sharif's party propagated this narrative after the military coup to expose the power hunger of Musharraf and his actions exceeding his constitutional role. Musharraf presents these photos as evidence to prove that allegations against him and the institution of the army are not true. The photos are framed to expose the political lies of his opponent, Nawaz Sharif, delegitimizing his narrative, and subtly legitimizing his own narrative of never having ambitions against Nawaz Sharif.

Analysis of Visual Details 7a

The background of the photo shows snow-capped mountains and harsh weather conditions of the Kargil border. This setting emphasizes the resilience and strength of the army in difficult circumstances. The challenging border defense at such a high altitude evokes the theme of national defense. The

frame is focused on the moment of the handshake, which signifies collaboration and mutual respect. Musharraf's straight body posture and smile on his face reflect his professionalism and deference for Nawaz Sharif. Musharraf's military uniform and Nawaz Sharif's civilian attire are symbolic of their respective positions. The presence of other military officials in the background evokes the perception of collective institutional power, ready to receive the Prime Minister as their leader.

Analysis of Visual Details 7b

This photo has an indoor humble setting without any opulence, which shows the practicality and need-based arrangement on the frontline of Kargil. The simple furniture and curtains make it appear like a small military operational room. The frame focuses on Nawaz Sharif sitting in the middle, flanked by his civilian cabinet members on his right and military officials, including Musharraf, on his left. The military officer giving the briefing is in a standing position and appears respectful towards the top leadership. Musharraf has his usual attentive body posture, and Nawaz Sharif appears attentive to the briefing. The contrast in their attire between civil and military highlights their respective domain of authority. The photo balances the civil-military power and places Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif as the key decision maker after taking input from army experts.

Analysis of Visual Details 7c

The photo has an outdoor background, with snow-covered mountains. Nawaz Sharif is sitting behind a table with a microphone, indicating his role as the speaker. He is wearing a military style jacket over his civilian clothes, which emphasizes his alignment and unity with the armed forces. The neat rows of soldiers on the left side demonstrate discipline and respect. The position of Prime Minister is slightly higher than the troops, which is a visual indication of his higher status and dominance over military force.

Conclusion

Although this paper does not undertake a direct comparative study of Ayub Khan's *Friends Not Masters* and Pervez Musharraf's *In the Line of Fire*, it explores the use of limited but significant use of photographs to visually support their legitimation

agenda and contribute to the broader project of their political image making. Both authors strategically use images not simply to document events but to construct persuasive identities as rightful leaders, morally grounded, and historically essential.

The cover photos used by the two dictators employ different legitimization strategies. Ayub Khan shows his military uniform with medals and military paraphernalia. With a proud and straight posture, his appearance is designed to evoke national pride and admiration. Musharraf's expression, on the other hand, suggests contemplation and concentration. He exudes a sense of seriousness and introspection. His portrayal presents him as a leader committed to confronting tough issues head-on.

In Ayub Khan's discourse, the selected photographs present a blend of his personal life and his institutional role. The image of him sitting casually beside his mother signals rootedness and respect for traditional familial values. The photograph where he stands behind Quaid-e-Azam, visually links him to the founding moment of Pakistan. The photo cleverly places him in close proximity to national history and heroic leadership. Similarly, his image with the American president offers a popular and charismatic version of the military ruler. It creates an impression of his acceptance and credibility among global leaders. Hence, these photographic visuals tend to create the myth of Ayub as a dignified yet relatable leader whose authority is legitimate and grounded in service and modesty.

In contrast to this, Pervez Musharraf's visual strategies are addressed to an audience who is well aware of semiotic tools and their significance in politics. He therefore employs a more logical and argument-based approach in his photos to achieve legitimization. The first set of photos (image 06) shows the destruction caused by a suicide attack made on his life. These images reinforce his central narrative of being a front-line warrior against terrorism. They position his role as a leader who is not only necessary but indispensable. Image 07 captures moments when he briefed then-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at Kargil in 1999. It serves a dual purpose of legitimizing Musharraf's role in a critical national event while simultaneously undermining Nawaz Sharif's claims of being sidelined by military leadership. In this way, the photographs act as visual counterarguments. They reinforce Musharraf's version of events and cast doubt on his political rival's credibility.

To sum up, photographs chosen by dictators for their autobiographies or memoirs are not mere illustrations. They may be personal or political, but in either case, they serve as calculated rhetorical devices to consolidate their claim to power. They become a powerful tool of visual legitimization. They are cleverly used to appeal to the emotion, culture, and history of the nation and justify their controversial leadership roles in Pakistan's political landscape.

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