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**GHOSTS WHO LINGER: HOW DICTATORS RETAIN PARTIAL LEGITIMACY  
AFTER TRANSITION**

**by  
LILLIAN PERLMUTTER**

**SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS**

**PROFESSOR PAHWA  
PROFESSOR SANJUAN PASTOR**

**8 DECEMBER 2020**

Last fall, subway fares in Santiago, Chile were raised by the equivalent of four cents per ride. In response, over a million people took to the streets in the largest protest movement the country has ever encountered. The movement blossomed through the winter and spread to all major cities in Chile, flatlined only by lockdowns to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the movement began as a student-led outcry over the high cost of living in the capital, it swiftly transformed into a wider campaign to rewrite the 1980 Constitution, thereby eliminating one of the most visible and most authoritative relics of the dictatorial regime of Augusto Pinochet, who led the country between 1973 and 1989. The movement was also a repudiation of the neoliberal capitalist leadership of President Sebastián Piñera. Under Piñera's leadership, wealth inequality has risen in tandem with costs associated with energy, healthcare, and education. At the same time, nearly a third of Chilean workers have unstable or informal employment.<sup>1</sup>

At the height of the protests, clashes between civilians and police took a violent turn, resulting in the deaths of some 30 people and thousands injured. President Piñera called in military forces to patrol the streets, for the first time since the Pinochet era. He said, “Estamos en guerra contro un enemigo poderoso e implacable.” *We are at war with a powerful and relentless enemy.* He was condemned later that day by the media and members of his own government for this comment. Activists compared his rhetoric to that of the fallen dictator. Piñera's approval rating dipped as low as 22 percent, the lowest of any President at any point since democratic consolidation. Instead of resigning, he dismissed each of his eight cabinet ministers, including his

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<sup>1</sup> Han, Clara. *Life in Debt: Times of Care and Violence in Neoliberal Chile*. University of California Press, 2012.

Interior Minister, Andrés Chadwick, a controversial appointment who was a staunch supporter of the Pinochet regime.<sup>2</sup>

On October 25<sup>th</sup> of this year, a public plebiscite was held, and 78 percent of the country voted to write a new constitution and to elect representatives by popular vote to participate in the drafting committee. The protest movement and subsequent vote mark the end of an era, as the most consequential piece of institutional legacy remaining from the Pinochet regime will be discarded, after lasting for thirty years post-transition.

The residue that feeds dictators continued legitimacy after the fall of the dictatorship is not uniformly institutional in all cases, as in Chile, and can be cultural instead, a positive view of the dictator that loiters in the collective memory of a population. For example, in Spain, uproar ensued from a sector of the public last fall when the body of former dictator Francisco Franco was exhumed from its gilded mausoleum and moved to a family plot.<sup>3</sup> It is a convincing argument that shards of partial legitimacy in a post-dictatorship environment are the result of the specific conditions of the dictatorship and the level of public support for the dictator at the time of transition. However, in this paper, I will explore ways in which transition governments, in Chile and Italy, contributed to the lasting partial institutional or cultural legitimacy of a dictator decades after his ouster.

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<sup>2</sup> Deming, Michael Albertus, Mark. "Pinochet Still Looms Large in Chilean Politics." *Foreign Policy*. Accessed December 8, 2020. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/11/05/chile-ongoing-protests-pinochet-dictatorship-looms-large/>.

<sup>3</sup> Hedgecoe, Guy. "Franco Exhumation: Dictator's Move Stirs Fury in Divided Spain." *BBC News*, BBC, 24 Oct. 2019, [www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50171253](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50171253).

After the fall of both dictators, Benito Mussolini in Italy and Augusto Pinochet in Chile, the countries went through the expected public rejection of the dictators' ideologies. However, this abandonment of the pillars of the dictatorial agenda was noticeably incomplete in both cases. Both Chile and Italy house an abundance of artifacts from the dictatorial era that allow the dictator to influence political action decades post-mortem.

Italy's military strategy in the Second World War was a set of indubitable failures.<sup>4</sup> Without a single significant victory and with the added pressure of an increasingly restless public, a plot was hatched to oust Mussolini. With Mussolini out of power, Germany invaded, then the allies. Italy was thrust into a civil war between fascist apologists and anti-fascist rebels. In 1945, when the allies were on the cusp of victory in Northern Italy, Mussolini attempted to escape to Switzerland with his mistress, Claretta Petacci. The couple was stopped by a group of partigiani (anti-fascists) and shot. Their bodies were transported to a piazza in Milan where they were beaten, then hung by their feet from the roof of a gas station.

The post-war political climate in Italy was dominated by the Christian Democrats and the Italian Communist Party. Public remembrance of the fascist era was not pursued to a serious extent, as Italian war criminals were deported to Yugoslavia and accounts of war crimes by Italian figures were not included in school curriculums. While leaders pursued an agenda distinct from Mussolini's fascist agenda, there was little effort to shape how the public interacted with the memory of the dictatorship. Fascist and neo-fascist groups remain even today and were major participants in terrorist violence against civilians in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup> Italian politicians, most

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<sup>4</sup> Falasca-Zamponi, Simonetta. *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy*, 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Bull, Anna Cento. *Italian Neofascism: The Strategy of Tension and the Politics of Nonreconciliation*. 1st ed. Berghahn Books, 2012. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1btbzwf>.

notably Silvio Berlusconi and Matteo Salvini have continued to make positive references towards Mussolini in recent years.

In Chile, after Pinochet was ousted by a public plebiscite, even as a new president with a center-left ideology, Patricio Aylwin, took the helm, Pinochet remained a prominent figure in Chilean politics, serving as a senator for life and as head of the military for ten years after his ouster.<sup>6</sup> While the Aylwin government, and the subsequent governments of Eduardo Frei, Ricardo Lagos, and Michelle Bachelet took steps to confront the violent and painful memory of the dictatorship, including releasing the Valech and Rettig reports on human rights abuses and opening public memorials to those tortured and killed by the regime, trials of regime members have been few and far between, and the reports intended to promote truth and reconciliation failed to account for the number of Chileans tortured and not disappeared, as well as the other social and economic hardships many if not most Chileans faced as a result of the regime.<sup>7</sup> The Constitution written in 1980 under Pinochet has endured until this year.

My decision to study post-dictatorship political memory and structures of authoritarian nostalgia in Chile and Italy was largely driven by the oddities of the two cases. The cases may serve as a roadmap for how current authoritarian, strongman, or demagogue leaders may be remembered or memorialized in the future. In both Chile and Italy, 20<sup>th</sup> century dictators have retained a level of political influence. Compared to other post-dictatorship scenarios, the durability of this legacy is compelling, as it contrasts with the role of the transition government, to publicly

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<sup>6</sup> Gómez-Barris Macarena. *Where Memory Dwells: Trauma, Memory, and Representation in the Aftermath of Chile's Dictatorship*. University of California Press, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> O, María Angélica Illanes. *La batalla de la memoria: ensayos históricos de nuestro siglo : Chile, 1900-2000*. Planeta/Ariel, 2002.

decry the leadership and value of the dictator.<sup>8</sup> In Germany, for example, Hitler bobbleheads are not sold in shops near his hometown, like Mussolini merchandise is sold in Italy.<sup>9</sup> In Spain, a new Constitution was ratified three years after the fall of the Franco dictatorship that repealed the majority of authoritarian structures,<sup>10</sup> while in Chile, the Constitution written under Pinochet survived for thirty years and is only being rewritten this year, giving Pinochet's allies a significant amount of oversight over legislative decisions long after the end of the dictatorship.<sup>11</sup>

The comparative peculiarity of the cases of Italy and Chile is visible when considering other post-dictatorship contexts, like those of West Germany and Japan. In the post-war period in Germany, Gudrun Brockhaus argues collective consciousness of the Nazi period was consumed by guilt and the desire to create distance between the new era and the old.<sup>12</sup> Fascist nostalgia and support for neo-fascist groups has never reached the feared levels.<sup>13</sup> This is in part because a new

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<sup>8</sup> Shain, Yossi, et al. *Between States: Interim Governments and Democratic Transitions*. Cambridge Univ. Pr., 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Giuffrida, Angela. "Mussolini's Birthplace Cashes in on the Surge of Far-Right Tourism." *The Guardian*, July 27, 2019, sec. World news. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/27/mussolini-birthplace-cashes-in-on-rise-far-right-tourism>.

<sup>10</sup> Bernat, Ignasi, and David Whyte. "Postfascism in Spain: The Struggle for Catalonia." *Critical Sociology* 46, no. 4–5 (July 1, 2020): 761–76. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920519867132>.

<sup>11</sup> Hite, Katherine, Paola Cesarini, and Helen Studies. "Authoritarian Legacies and Democracy in Latin America and Southern Europe." *Bibliovault OAI Repository, the University of Chicago Press*, January 1, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> Brockhaus, Gudrun. "The Emotional Legacy of the National Socialist Past in Post-War Germany." In *Memory and Political Change*, edited by Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt, 34–49. Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2012. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230354241\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230354241_3).

<sup>13</sup> Stöss, Richard. "The Problem of Right-wing Extremism in West Germany." *West European Politics* 11, no. 2 (April 1, 1988): 34–46. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402388808424680>.

constitution was swiftly written within four years and support for fascism and use of Nazi symbolism was outlawed.<sup>14</sup> Brockhaus attests that most Germans began to view the fascist period like a plague, an external rather than internal malicious force. Former Nazi officials were ejected from the government and thousands of high-ranking Nazis publicly stood trial for their crimes. Today, in Germany, Hitler or Nazi merchandise is nowhere to be found, leaders do not make positive references to Hitler, and Hitler is not recognized as a continuing symbol of German identity.<sup>15</sup>

After Japan surrendered in 1945, a new constitution was written within two years that stripped the Emperor of his previous role as sovereign and established a popularly-elected parliamentary system. Though thousands of bureaucrats who had held positions of power during the war returned to their positions, they were forced to work within a different system and a different culture, without disproportionate oversight when compared to new officials who had not supported the Emperor.<sup>16</sup> As Thomas Berger argues, the culture of militarism that had defined Japan's stance during the war was dissolved, and a new culture of peace was established through public memorials, institutional changes, and educational initiatives.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Brockhaus, Gudrun. "The Emotional Legacy of the National Socialist Past in Post-War Germany." In *Memory and Political Change*, edited by Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt, 34–49. Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2012. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230354241\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230354241_3).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Berger, Thomas U. "From Sword to Chrysanthemum: Japan's Culture of Anti-Militarism." *International Security* 17, no. 4 (1993): 119–50.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

In both of these cases, unlike in Italy and Chile, the legislative and institutional aspects of the regime remained connected to the public persona of the regime in the collective memory of the population. Both the cultural and institutional legacies of the dictators were addressed through the drafting of a new system of government and the establishment of public initiatives, memorials, trials, education curriculums, to influence how the population would remember the dictatorship.

In Chile and Italy, how did the dictators' legacies withstand movements to break away from the dictatorial ideology and decades of political and social change? In other words, how did legislation drafted during the Pinochet regime in Chile withstand the deterioration of Pinochet's public image in the years after the transition, and how did Mussolini's cult of personality withstand the condemnation of his ideology and agenda in the post-war period in Italy? What is the mechanism that allows a dictator's public persona to separate from his ideology or legislative record?

I argue the mechanism that allowed portions of these dictators' legacies to be preserved either legislatively or culturally is a type of selective blindness on the part of the transition government tasked with unifying the country once the dictator was out of power. These two cases, and this concept of selective blindness they reveal, could be helpful in anticipating the legacies of other authoritarian or populist leaders if a transition government is not aggressive enough in its efforts to eradicate both a dictator's institutional and cultural legacy. I define institutional legitimacy as the permanence of laws, governing system, leaders, or legislative agenda and cultural legitimacy as recognition from the public of the dictator as a symbol of national identity. Overhauling the system of government and the figureheads within that government destroys institutional legitimacy and guiding public perception towards a negative view of the dictator

destroys cultural legitimacy. If a transition government fails to complete either of these tasks, a dictator could retain partial legitimacy.

While Italy's dictatorship ended over seventy-five years ago, Chile's democratic consolidation began in 1990, just thirty years ago. Most supporters of Italy's fascist regime are dead, while certain Pinochet sympathizers remain in government positions in Chile to this day. Another difference between the two cases relates to the level of violence perpetrated by the dictator's secret police and military forces. Killings and torture were common in the Pinochet regime in Chile, while uncommon in the Mussolini regime in Italy. This comparison does not include the thousands of Italians killed during the Italian Civil War, after Mussolini's death.

The final difference between the cases, and the difference that will guide this paper, is the distinction between legislative or structural and cultural legacy. In order to swiftly unify the different factions scrambling for power after the fall of the dictatorships, transitional governments in Chile and Italy took care to denounce one half of the dictator's legacy, while letting the other half continue to influence political decision-making. In Chile, the social effects of the Pinochet regime, such as the torture and secret police apparatus, were publicly abandoned, while much of Pinochet's economic philosophy remained intact as the leading ideology among lawmakers.<sup>18</sup> In Italy, fascism was rejected, as it was across Europe in the post-war period, yet Mussolini's societal persona received, and still receives to this day, reverence from large swaths of the Italian population and a myriad of public figures and prominent politicians.<sup>19</sup> It is acceptable to have

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<sup>18</sup> Gómez-Barris Macarena. *Where Memory Dwells: Trauma, Memory, and Representation in the Aftermath of Chile's Dictatorship*. University of California Press, 2004.

<sup>19</sup> Griffin, Roger. "The 'Post-Fascism' of the Alleanza Nazionale: A Case Study in Ideological Morphology." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 1, no. 2 (June 1, 1996): 123–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569319608420733>.

respect for Mussolini as a figurehead, while disagreeing with the tenets of fascism and Mussolini's legislative agenda.<sup>20</sup> This distinction between institutional legacy and cultural legacy will assist me in theorizing how other leaders in present-day situations will be remembered- which aspects of their era will live on past their demise.

One particularly relevant school of thought in Comparative Politics, and more specifically in the field of social movement theory, surrounds the concept of cycles of contention: the idea that political history operates in a demonstrable, cyclical pattern, and thus, periods of unrest, or the popularity of certain political movements within a given territory, can be predicted with a respectable amount of accuracy. Sidney Tarrow coined the term 'protest cycles', defining them as predictable moments of political opportunity, allowing for popular movements against a weak government. Tarrow argues that unsuccessful movements are added to the quilt of political life in their community as well, causing the reemergence of their ideology in the next cycles.<sup>21</sup>

Alessandro Cavalli, who studies political memory and anti-fascism in Italy, claims that distance from fascism, in terms of decades, at a certain point creates an artificial image of living under fascist rule. He argues that this potentially dangerous shift occurs when few people are left alive who experienced the fascist period, and young people in schools are taught the history of

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<sup>20</sup> Falasca-Zamponi, Simonetta. *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy*, 2000.

<sup>21</sup> Tarrow, Sidney. *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.

fascism in the nation by teachers who did not live through the period.<sup>22</sup> In an analysis of youth support for a return to authoritarianism in Iraq, Marsin Alshamary asserts a similar claim: that young people, distanced from the authoritarian era, are uninformed about the negative aspects of dictatorship and thus, have a more positive view of Saddam Hussein's legacy.<sup>23</sup>

Robert Ventresca argues the opposite: that societies need time to let the memory of fascism marinate, to confront that memory in the appropriate, most beneficial way, and create an accurate, working definition of fascism.<sup>24</sup> Other scholars, including Andrea Mammone, claim that collective political memory in a period of post-fascism is heavily manipulated by cultural and political debate. The way fascism is remembered in public spaces is therefore more important than the time frame.<sup>25</sup> In my view, the most compelling argument is more akin to Mammone's, that in a post-dictatorship context, the public view of the dictator is vulnerable to serious softening and manipulation.

As far-right parties have grown increasingly popular in countries in Europe, like Italy, Spain, and Germany that housed fascist dictators in the twentieth century, scholars have rushed to address the possibility that these movements are a reoccurrence, a new cycle, of fascist ideology. Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk display in their research from 2016 how support for

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<sup>22</sup> Cavalli, Alessandro. *Patterns of Collective Memory*. Collegium Budapest/Inst. for Advanced Study, 1995.

<sup>23</sup> Alshamary, Marsin. "Authoritarian Nostalgia Among Iraqi Youth: Roots and Repercussions." Accessed December 8, 2020. <https://warontherocks.com/2018/07/authoritarian-nostalgia-among-iraqi-youth-roots-and-repercussions/>.

<sup>24</sup> Ventresca, Robert. *From Fascism to Democracy Culture and Politics in the Italian Election of 1948*. University of Toronto Press, 2014.

<sup>25</sup> Mammone, Andrea. *Italian Neo-Fascism from 1943 to the Present Day*. Routledge, 2010.

democracy in post-fascist countries in Europe has been in decline since its peak just after the fall of the dictatorships.<sup>26</sup> However, Renzo de Felice argues that modern far-right parties hold an ideology unmistakably distinct from fascism.<sup>27</sup> Though both ideologies are boldly nationalist, the most prominent far-right party in Italy, Lega Nord, promotes a free-market capitalist system and the continuation of democracy, albeit under a strongman-style leader.<sup>28</sup>

Argentine scholar Alberto Atilio Borón argues that Latin American fascism had not left the region even after the fall of prominent dictatorships like those in Argentina and Chile, simply because re-branding did not constitute an overhaul of agenda or ideology. In other words, what may seem like protest cycles is in reality simply cycles of re-branding. While the image and cultural significance of the specific dictator, or in the case of Argentina, military junta, was delegitimized by an incoming democratic government, the ideology of the dictators, strict, conservative social policies and admiration for hierarchy combined with free-market capitalism, continued to be legitimate, re-branded under a different name.<sup>29</sup>

I am more interested in considering the specific mechanisms or decisions enacted by a transition government after the fall of a dictatorship that could influence which aspects of a

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<sup>26</sup> Foa, Roberto Stefan, and Yascha Mounk. “The Democratic Disconnect.” *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2016, pp. 5–17., doi:10.1353/jod.2016.0049.

<sup>27</sup> Felice, Renzo De. *Fascism: an Informal Introduction to Its Theory and Practice*. Routledge, 2017.

<sup>28</sup> Arzheimer, Kai, and Elisabeth Carter. “Political Opportunity Structures and Right-Wing Extremist Party Success.” *European Journal of Political Research* 45, no. 3 (2006): 419–43. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2006.00304.x>.

<sup>29</sup> Boron, Atilio A. “El Fascismo Como Categoría Histórica: En Torno al Problema de Las Dictaduras En América Latina.” *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 39, no. 2 (1977): 481–528. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3539775>.

dictator's legacy remain as partial legitimacy. These choices, focusing on dissolving one aspect of a dictator's legacy, like legislation, over another, like cult of personality, could affect whether the dictator retains public support both in the immediate future and decades later.

In this paper, I will analyze the differences in dictatorial legacy in the Italian and Chilean cases as well as offer theories that may assist in determining why and where the legacies diverge in direction of influence. Augusto Pinochet and Benito Mussolini have retained significant political influence decades after the toppling of their dictatorships due to the failure of transition governments, and societies in transition, to discard every aspect of the dictator's system of government and governing style. Because the transition government in Chile did not destroy institutional artifacts like the 1980 Constitution, the fierce neoliberal economic ideology, and supporters of the regime holding government positions, Pinochet has retained a level of institutional legitimacy despite losing cultural legitimacy. Conversely, because the transition government in Italy failed to outlaw displays of fascist imagery and symbolism and swept war crimes committed by Italians under the rug, allowing Mussolini to be viewed as a largely non-violent leader, Mussolini has retained a level of cultural legitimacy despite losing institutional legitimacy.

To explore Pinochet's legacy in Chile, I will utilize first and foremost the 1980 Constitution and the 1978 Amnesty Law to display how the permanence of these documents has allowed Pinochet's supporters, and Pinochet himself before his death, to enjoy continued oversight over legislative decisions and evade arrest for human rights violations. I will use direct quotes from Chilean Presidents Ricardo Lagos and Sebastián Piñera to underline how political figures have been quick to declare the democratic transition complete while continuing to work within a

framework created during the regime. I will also refer to the Rettig and Valech reports, documents published by the Chilean government in the years after the transition documenting the specifics of Pinochet's torture program. These reports will assist me in arguing that Pinochet was stripped of cultural legitimacy while his constitution remained in place and he continued serving as the head of the Chilean military, evidence of his continued institutional legitimacy.

Turning to Italy, I will use tweets, public speeches, and comments made by Prime Ministers Silvio Berlusconi and Matteo Salvini to highlight how Mussolini continues to be seen favorably by a significant sector of the Italian population that follows these new leaders. I will also refer to hidden documents illustrating war crimes perpetrated by Italians to display how the concealment of Italian fascists' complicity in the Holocaust allowed Mussolini to be viewed as a less-violent alternative to Hitler. Additionally, I will use post-war depictions of Mussolini on Italian television programs to assist my argument that the failure to outlaw fascist imagery allowed Mussolini's public persona to be separated in public media from the fascist ideology and the violence of the Second World War.

In their 1995 book, *Between States- Interim Governments and Democratic Transitions*, Juan J. Linz and Yossi Shain outline four types of interim or transition governments, the third of which, called an incumbent caretaker government, involves near-complete dominance by the former ruling elite as the state transitions to a new form of governance.<sup>30</sup> Linz and Shain claim that this type of transition government is more likely to result in an incomplete transition. I argue that

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<sup>30</sup> Shain, Yossi, et al. *Between States: Interim Governments and Democratic Transitions*. Cambridge Univ. Pr., 2004.

Chile's transition from the Pinochet dictatorship to democracy was led by this type of government, as Pinochet's allies, and Pinochet himself, held positions in governing bodies, the judiciary, and military leadership during the transition and in the decades afterwards. This allowed for a significant institutional legacy. Though his legislative agenda continued, the lasting cultural significance of the torture program that affected tens of thousands of Chilean families kept Pinochet from maintaining cultural legitimacy as a figurehead. The transitional government actively focused more on rejecting Pinochet's cultural legacy by creating memorials to torture victims and releasing reports, allowing his institutional legacy to continue through the presence of his supporters in the upper echelons of government.

For ten years after the fall of the dictatorship in Chile, the Chilean government was more preoccupied with presentism, growing its economy through trade agreements with the United States, China, and South Korea, than chipping away the institutional remnants of the dictatorship.<sup>31</sup> In 2005, then-President Ricardo Lagos declared the transition to democracy "has concluded" because the poverty rate had decreased and the economy had bounced significantly, despite the fact that numerous legislative barriers were left in place that enabled Pinochet and his supporters to enjoy continued political power and institutional oversight while evading prosecution.<sup>32</sup> While public memorials and other socio-cultural campaigns have been launched to address the collective memory of Pinochet's torture machine over the past thirty years, numerous institutional mechanisms remain today that perpetuate Pinochet's legacy and give his supporters continued

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<sup>31</sup> Han, Clara. *Life in Debt: Times of Care and Violence in Neoliberal Chile*. University of California Press, 2012.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

political influence post-mortem. In this way, Pinochet retained institutional legitimacy while his cultural legitimacy was stripped away.

One of the legislative artifacts that assisted Pinochet in retaining institutional legitimacy was the 1978 Amnesty Law. The law, passed during the dictatorship, gave amnesty to officials working in Pinochet's government for human rights abuses. Because the law was not repealed for the first eight years after the transition, in part because Pinochet supporters continued to influence governmental decisions as senators, it was difficult to hold perpetrators of the torture campaign accountable in the courts.<sup>33</sup> Only roughly a hundred cases moved through the courts related to the regime's torture program during this period, and they moved at a snail's pace.<sup>34</sup> This created a situation in which the Rettig report was released informing the public about the details of the program and the thousands subjected to torture and murder, while the people responsible could not be sentenced for their crimes. In this way, Pinochet continued to hold institutional legitimacy, while his public image deteriorated as a result of higher public awareness about the torture program, and he lost cultural legitimacy. It was not until 1998 that the law was amended, a fact that highlights how much influence Pinochet and his supporters continued to hold over the transition government.

While campaigning for President, current Chilean President Sebastián Piñera promised ex-officials from the Pinochet era that he would suspend remaining trials related to the dictatorship. Piñera's brother José Piñera was an official with semi-high status in the Pinochet regime, serving

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<sup>33</sup> Gómez-Barris Macarena. *Where Memory Dwells: Trauma, Memory, and Representation in the Aftermath of Chile's Dictatorship*. University of California Press, 2004.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

as Labor Minister, and President Piñera appointed Pinochet's grandniece as the Minister of Women's Affairs and Gender Equity, though she resigned a month into her post. Another example of pro-Pinochet figures given lofty posts in government was an incident that occurred in 2010 in which the Chilean ambassador to Argentina stated that most human rights abuses under Pinochet were probably not "official policy" and praised the 1973 coup. The foreign relations committee voted 6-5 to expel him from his post, after a heated debate.<sup>35</sup> These examples of pro-Pinochet figures holding positions of power to this day reflect the schism between the public view of the Pinochet era, which is tied to the collective grief surrounding the tens of thousands of torture and murder victims, and the institutional realities of the state, which allows an elite body like the foreign relations committee to see the dismissal of an apologist for a violent dictator as a genuinely controversial decision.

Pinochet himself was given the title of Senator for Life after a plebiscite was held in 1988 to determine whether the Chilean people wanted to return to civilian rule or maintain military governance, as outlined in the Constitution of 1980, and in a wounding blow, Pinochet lost the vote. Pinochet remained a senator until he was arrested in 1998 in London for human rights abuses. Pinochet was held under house arrest on and off until his death in 2006. President Piñera said at the time that the arrest was "an insult and an attack on the deepest elements of our sovereignty and our dignity."<sup>36</sup> The fact that figures who praise Pinochet or were directly connected to the regime

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<sup>35</sup> Deming, Michael Albertus, Mark. "Pinochet Still Looms Large in Chilean Politics." *Foreign Policy*. Accessed December 8, 2020. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/11/05/chile-ongoing-protests-pinochet-dictatorship-looms-large/>.

<sup>36</sup> Han, Clara. *Life in Debt: Times of Care and Violence in Neoliberal Chile*. University of California Press, 2012.

continue to guide legislation in Chile is a testament to the permanence of the 1980 Constitution. Thanks to the rules outlined in the Amnesty Law and the Constitution, pro-Pinochet players have carried enough weight to bend decisions in their own favor, enabling them to continue to hold powerful positions in government. For fifteen years after the transition to democracy, the military continued to appoint ten senators (out of a total of 48) to the Chilean Congress, while Pinochet served as the head of the military. In this way, Pinochet continued to have some level of veto power over legislative decisions.

Because the transition government decided to move forward with this document, rather than rewriting it, and subsequent governments had little luck overturning it, as it would require a supermajority in congress, Pinochetistas have remained active in government as senators appointed by the military. In this way, they have been successful in skewing the government's decisions towards policies that align with Pinochet's ideology, even if the population as a whole is not in favor.<sup>37</sup>

Economic policy under Pinochet was dominated by the influence of several advisors known as the Chicago Boys because they studied economics at the University of Chicago. They encouraged free market neoliberal capitalism, an ideology that was continued and strengthened after Pinochet was ousted. Though poverty dropped from 45 percent in 1988 to 14 percent in 2006 as government programs were established to pay debt to the poor, these programs diminished in scale and income inequality rose.<sup>38</sup> As Clara Han mentions in an anthropological study of Santiago,

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<sup>37</sup> O, María Angélica Illanes. *La batalla de la memoria: ensayos históricos de nuestro siglo : Chile, 1900-2000*. Planeta/Ariel, 2002.

<sup>38</sup> Han, Clara. *Life in Debt: Times of Care and Violence in Neoliberal Chile*. University of California Press, 2012.

the transition government led by Patricio Alwyn was more concerned with maintaining its image as a growing economy than undoing some of the most damaging acts of privatization enacted under the Pinochet regime, like the privatization of water, education, and healthcare.<sup>39</sup> Currently, Chile is one of the ten most liberalized economies in the world and near thirty percent of the population lives with debt.<sup>40</sup>

The failure of the post-dictatorship governments to repeal the 1980 Constitution and the 1978 Amnesty Law and to relieve Pinochet holdovers, including Pinochet himself, of their posts in the judiciary and other parts of government created an environment that allowed Pinochet and his supporters to continue their agenda institutionally and legislatively, even as the country moved in a different direction in its collective, cultural remembrance of the regime.

In 1946, Italy transitioned to a parliamentary democracy, with a centrist coalition governing for most of the mid to late twentieth century. While outright fascist sympathy was outlawed, neo-fascist and post-fascist political parties continue to be included in the parliamentary system.<sup>41</sup> However, unlike in the post-dictatorship period in Chile, members of Mussolini's inner circle were not given positions as senators for life or allowed any significant level of oversight over the actions of the new government. Economic policy took a sharp turn away from the strict hierarchical structure of fascism and flipped back and forth between socialist and free market capitalist ideologies as different coalitions took power, demonstrating that the government had moved on from the dictator's economic vision, a contrast to the continued dominance of the

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>40</sup> Ibid

<sup>41</sup> Bull, Anna Cento. *Italian Neofascism: The Strategy of Tension and the Politics of Nonreconciliation*. 1st ed. Berghahn Books, 2012. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1btbzwf>.

Chicago Boys' vision in Chile.<sup>42</sup> The permanence of the 1980 Constitution, and its guarantee of Pinochet supporters being appointed to positions in government, allowed Pinochet to retain institutional, ideological legitimacy, even as he lost cultural legitimacy.

Though right-wing movements in Italy do not advocate for Mussolini's agenda from ninety years ago, Mussolini as a positive figurehead continues to be legitimized by modern leaders, Italian pop culture campaigns, and artifacts that remain in the collective consciousness of the population. I argue that Mussolini continues to have a significant cultural legacy in Italy because leaders failed to address the social aspects of Mussolini's persona, allowing him to be separated from the fascist label, separated from the institutional legacy that the new government swiftly destroyed.

While Chile has been governed by a representative democracy for only 30 years, a blink of an eye for some, Italy began the process of democratic consolidation over seventy years ago. The forty-year difference involves a generational turnover. Most Italians have little personal connection to the Mussolini regime, at least at first glance. Statues from the fascist era remain scattered across Italian cities, and David Bidussa argues that language originating in the Mussolini era is visible today in the family lexicon of Italian life.<sup>43</sup> Writings from prominent intellectuals in the post-war period continued to adopt the dominant style and rhetorical tools from the fascist period.<sup>44</sup> Unlike Pinochet in Chile, Mussolini wielded a forceful cult of personality. Renzo de

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<sup>42</sup> Han, Clara. *Life in Debt: Times of Care and Violence in Neoliberal Chile*. University of California Press, 2012.

<sup>43</sup> Bidussa, David. *Me Ne Frego*. Chiarelettere, 2019.

<sup>44</sup> Torriglia, Anna Maria. *Broken Time, Fragmented Space: A Cultural Map for Postwar Italy*. University of Toronto Press, 2002.

Felice is most known for his argument that by the early 30's, the majority of Italians accepted fascism without fear or mental manipulation. Some kept photographs of Mussolini prominently displayed in their homes.<sup>45</sup>

Since the 1990's, a positive opinion of Mussolini as a figurehead, as a symbol of Italianism, has made a comeback in politics. The dictator's granddaughter, Alessandra Mussolini, was elected to the Italian parliament. Former Prime-Minister Silvio Berlusconi is an occasional Mussolini apologist, stating once, "Mussolini non ha mai ammazzato nessuno." *Mussolini never killed anyone.*<sup>46</sup> This is a reference to the fact that Mussolini's regime never consented to send Jews to concentration camps. It was only after Germany's occupation of Italy in 1943 that 8,000 of Italy's 50,000 Jews were deported eastward by German forces and killed. Mussolini also rarely ordered the murder of anti-fascists. The secret police were tasked with finding anti-fascists, yet they rarely killed them, instead forcing them to drink castor oil. Roughly 6,000 anti-fascists, homosexuals, and others deemed counterproductive to the fascist agenda were sent into internal exile in small villages in Southern Italy or on islands in the Mediterranean.<sup>47</sup>

The current leader of the Italian far-right, Matteo Salvini, has tweeted Mussolini quotes like "tanti nemici, tanto onore" (*so many enemies, so much honor*) a riff on Mussolini's famous

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<sup>45</sup> Felice, Renzo De. *Fascism: an Informal Introduction to Its Theory and Practice*. Routledge, 2017.

<sup>46</sup> Griffin, Roger. "The 'Post-Fascism' of the Alleanza Nazionale: A Case Study in Ideological Morphology." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 1, no. 2 (June 1, 1996): 123–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569319608420733>.

<sup>47</sup> Falasca-Zamponi, Simonetta. *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy*, 2000.

catchphrase, “*molti nemici, molto onore*” (*many enemies, much honor*)<sup>48</sup>. Salvini was also criticized for holding a rally in a town where Mussolini ordered the hangings of several rebels and for quoting a fascist poet on Twitter. Confronting protesters at his rally, Salvini attested there were no fascists in the audience, asserting that a somewhat positive view of Mussolini does not guarantee fascist alignment.<sup>49</sup> The figure is separate from the ideology. Over the past decade, a work of fiction documenting Mussolini’s young life was a bestseller in Italy, and a movie in which Mussolini, depicted as a lovable buffoon, returns to modern Italy was a hit, grossing two million euros in its first two weeks in theaters.

The post-war transition government allowed for Mussolini to retain a cultural legacy, and a somewhat positive public image, through several key decisions. While Mussolini’s institutional legacy was swiftly shattered, as former supporters were ejected from government and a new constitution was drafted, war crimes committed by both Nazis and Italian fascists were swept under the rug<sup>50</sup> and the commercialization of fascist symbols was permitted. These two acts created an environment that permitted collective memory of Mussolini to soften.

Unlike in Germany, the post-war transition government in Italy did not make a point of putting war criminals on trial. Only a handful, primarily German officials stationed in Italy, were charged in the years immediately following the war, bolstering the narrative that Mussolini’s

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<sup>48</sup> account, Matteo Salvini Verified. “Matteo Salvini (@Matteosalvinimi).” *Twitter*, Twitter, 8 May 2020, [twitter.com/matteosalvinimi](https://twitter.com/matteosalvinimi).

<sup>49</sup> Mckenna, Josephine. “Salvini under Fire for Address from Notorious Balcony Used by Mussolini to Watch Executions.” *The Telegraph*, Telegraph Media Group, 5 May 2019, [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/05/05/salvini-fire-address-notorious-balcony-used-mussolini-watch/](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/05/05/salvini-fire-address-notorious-balcony-used-mussolini-watch/).

<sup>50</sup> Farrall, Stephen, ed. *Escape Routes: Contemporary Perspectives on Life after Punishment*. Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2011.

fascism was nonviolent and Italy's role in the Holocaust was entirely perpetrated by Nazis occupying the territory. In reality, Mussolini's government passed anti-Semitic laws six years before the Nazi invasion, Italian officials were complicit in the arrest of thousands of Italian Jews and their transport to death camps, and when Mussolini heard of Hitler's plan to exterminate the Jews of Europe, he said, "nulla osta", *no objection*.<sup>51</sup> In 1994, a cabinet was discovered in a military office building containing 695 files, hidden for decades, documenting fascist war crimes in Italy. This glossing over of the most violent, least palatable aspects of the fascist regime contributed to Mussolini being seen as tame when compared to Hitler. Thus, Prime Minister Berlusconi's assertion that "Mussolini never killed anyone" as a justification for his somewhat positive view of the dictator.

Berlusconi served three stints as Prime Minister, even after saying that Mussolini "in so many ways, did so well", signaling that the public is not alarmed by a positive depiction of the dictator.<sup>52</sup> This is in part because after the war, the transition government did not outlaw the commercialization of fascist merchandise or displays of fascist symbolism, unless the intent is to resurrect the fascist regime. This decision stands in stark contrast to the strict laws enacted in Germany regarding fascist or Nazi symbolism. Fascist imagery has appeared on billboards, in ads for far-right parties. Merchandise glorifying Mussolini and the fascist era is readily available in shops. The small town where Mussolini was born, where his tomb is today, receives approximately

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<sup>51</sup> Falasca-Zamponi, Simonetta. *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy*, 2000.

<sup>52</sup> Bull, Anna Cento. *Italian Neofascism: The Strategy of Tension and the Politics of Nonreconciliation*. 1st ed. Berghahn Books, 2012. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1btbzwf>.

100,000 visitors per year, including thousands of fascist sympathizers who make an annual pilgrimage to lay flowers on Mussolini's grave, ending in a fascist salute.<sup>53</sup>

Mussolini's cult of personality was given a second life through television programs in the post-war period that separated Mussolini's persona from the fascist ideology.<sup>54</sup> Media depictions of Mussolini reconciled his image as a distinctly Italian figure with democracy, ignoring the reality of Mussolini's ideology and unfurling a revised version of history in order to capitalize on the remnants of the cult of personality surrounding Mussolini.<sup>55</sup> In newsreels from the immediate post-war period, and in programs once the television was introduced in 1954, the Nazis are depicted as the sole villains in the war, omitting any mention of Italian fascism. In the subsequent decades, television producers capitalized on the popularity of films depicting scenes from Mussolini's life, and he became a coveted role for Italian actors. This dramatized version of Mussolini became the image held by most Italians, if not a beloved character, an unmistakably Italian character.<sup>56</sup> This rehabilitation of Mussolini's image in the public sphere, enabled by the failure to educate the public about the crimes committed under the dictatorship in the post-war newsreels and the failure to regulate how Mussolini's image was used in the public sphere contributed to the permanence of Mussolini's cultural legitimacy.

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<sup>53</sup> Giuffrida, Angela. "Mussolini's Birthplace Cashes in on the Surge of Far-Right Tourism." *The Guardian*, July 27, 2019, sec. World news. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/27/mussolini-birthplace-cashes-in-on-rise-far-right-tourism>.

<sup>54</sup> Roghi, Vanessa. "Mussolini and Post-War Italian Television." In *The Cult of the Duce*, edited by Stephen Gundle, Christopher Duggan, and Giuliana Pieri, 257–69. Mussolini and the Italians. Manchester University Press, 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt18mvkcv.21>.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid

<sup>56</sup> Ibid

In Italy, public memorials acknowledging Italians' participation in the atrocities of the Second World War were virtually nonexistent until the memorial honoring murdered Italian Jews opened in the Milan train station in 2013.<sup>57</sup> Conversely, public memorials were a significant tool used by transition governments in Chile to call attention to the collective emotional legacy of Pinochet's torture program, inhibiting Pinochet from retaining cultural legitimacy.

In the weeks immediately following the coup in 1973, thousands of people affiliated with socialist groups, or affiliated with someone affiliated with socialist groups, or simply affiliated with nothing at all, were picked up by the *caravana de la muerte* "caravan of death" and transported to a repurposed stadium where torture, assault, and firing squads awaited them.<sup>58</sup>

Within three years, Pinochet's henchmen had rounded up an estimated 130,000 people suspected to be socialist sympathizers. It is estimated that 80,000 people were interned for long periods of time or "disappeared" during Pinochet's sixteen-year tenure, and somewhere between two and three thousand were executed. Many bodies have yet to be located. Others have been found in mass graves near torture sites and concentration camps, on the side of the road, or in rural areas.<sup>59</sup>

The Rettig Report, released in 1991, and the National Roundtable for Dialogue, in 1998, focused only on the most brutal cases of torture, murder, and disappearance cases, overlooking the vast and lasting impact of the torture program on tens of thousands of Chilean families and on the

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<sup>57</sup> Gordon, Robert. *The Holocaust in Italian Culture, 1944–2010*. Stanford University Press, 2012.

<sup>58</sup> Gómez-Barris Macarena. *Where Memory Dwells: Trauma, Memory, and Representation in the Aftermath of Chile's Dictatorship*. University of California Press, 2004.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid

cultural and political consciousness of the population at large.<sup>60</sup> Widespread torture was not addressed until the Valech report was released in 2004, another report that failed to capture the complete effects and legacy of the violence that occurred at the hands of Pinochet's special police forces, as it only documented the stories of 30,000 torture survivors. However, Chilean philosopher and historian María Angélica Illanes asserts that the release of the Rettig and Valech reports, though incomplete in their illustrations of the legacy of Pinochet's torture program, were a hard-fought accomplishment for activists, due to reluctance from government officials to address the issue, as Pinochet supporters continued to hold positions in the Chilean Congress and judiciary.<sup>61</sup>

Macarena Gómez-Barris details how memorials, like the array of headshots of the disappeared at Puente Bulnes, create an opportunity for public, collective grieving, as well as recognition of the brutality of the regime, hobbling Pinochet's opportunity to retain cultural legitimacy.<sup>62</sup> Another notable memorial that serves the same purpose, offering a glaring recognition of the cruelty of the regime against civilians, is Villa Grimaldi, a site where four thousand Chileans were detained and subjected to torture, and at least two hundred were murdered. The estate is now a museum open to the public. While in Italy, the fact that Italian fascists were complicit in the murder of Italian Jews was hidden in a cabinet for decades, the transitional government in Chile released two reports, the Rettig and Valech reports, documenting the most brutal forms of torture performed by Pinochet's officials.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid

<sup>61</sup> O, María Angélica Illanes. *La batalla de la memoria: ensayos históricos de nuestro siglo : Chile, 1900-2000*. Planeta/Ariel, 2002.

<sup>62</sup> Gómez-Barris Macarena. *Where Memory Dwells: Trauma, Memory, and Representation in the Aftermath of Chile's Dictatorship*. University of California Press, 2004.

These cases demonstrate that in a post-dictatorship environment, institutional legitimacy, consisting of continuity in governmental structure, leadership, legislation, and agenda, and cultural legitimacy, consisting of continued approval from a significant portion of the public, do not always rise and fall together. Also, the actions of the transition government contain the ability to seriously affect whether a dictator retains partial legitimacy. Because the transition government in Chile was more preoccupied with rehabilitating the economy than instigating a structural overhaul of the governmental system inherited from Pinochet, Pinochet retained a level of institutional legitimacy. Because the transition government in Italy was more concerned with projecting an image of national unity, by softening the illustration of Italian fascism shown to the public, Mussolini retained a level of cultural legitimacy.

This model can serve to predict, on a broad level, whether leaders in modern day scenarios will retain partial legitimacy. President Donald Trump of the United States, who is not a dictator, boasts a significant cult of personality and has defied the political norms of the country by interfering in investigations carried out by the Department of Justice, withholding foreign aid passed by Congress to pressure the government of Ukraine to investigate his political rival, firing five inspectors general meant to scrutinize the actions of his administration, threatening to deploy the military in American cities, and praising authoritarian leaders.<sup>63</sup> If action is not taken by a new, incoming government to educate the succeeding generations and influence narrative surrounding

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<sup>63</sup> Montgomery, David. "A Definitive List of the 20 Norms Trump Broke." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 10 Nov. 2020, [www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/lifestyle/magazine/trump-presidential-norm-breaking-list/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/lifestyle/magazine/trump-presidential-norm-breaking-list/).

Trump, or if an incoming government is not able to repeal all of Trump's executive orders or counteract Trump's appointment of judges, Trump may retain cultural or institutional legitimacy that could continue to influence American politics for decades.

The partial legitimacy held by Pinochet and Mussolini decades post-mortem exemplifies the complexity involved in post-dictatorship recovery. If one aspect of the dictator's legacy is omitted from initiatives to restructure the government and influence public opinion, the dictator could remain as a legitimate symbol of state governance or national identity.

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