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Understanding Dictators' Violent Repression and How It's Remembered

by

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Submitted to Scripps College in Partial Fulfillment of the Degree of Bachelors of
Arts with Honors

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May the world never forget the tremendous suffering of those who lived or live under repressive regimes.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the use of violent repression by dictators and the ways in which that violence is remembered, particularly through the lenses of literature and film. The first chapter will deal with the questions of when dictators choose to use violence as opposed to other forms of repression and against whom the violence is used. To do so, it will employ select cases to test a number of possible answers. The second chapter, written in Spanish, will analyze the memory of Francisco Franco's dictatorship in Spain, focusing on the empowerment of previously-silenced voices. The third chapter, written in Italian, will similarly analyze the memory of a dictatorship, this time of Benito Mussolini in Italy. These chapters emphasize the importance of recognizing the past and of making space in the public narrative for the voices of those who were repressed.

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War and Human Justice

Introduction

Dictatorial regimes frequently use violent repression of their own populations to gain or maintain their positions of power, but it is not always clear why they choose to use specific forms of violence against specific targets in their efforts at repression. This thesis will begin to examine several different possible answers to this question.

The literature makes clear that a dictator's rationale for using violence must be stronger or more pressing than the potential for uprisings resulting from the oppression. Illiberal regimes constantly run the risk of pushing the population to the point where the cost of protest for the repressed is outweighed by the potential payoffs.¹ Jan Henryk Pierskalla, in his 2010 paper "Protest, Deterrence, and Escalation: The Strategic Calculus of Government Repression," explains that "repression of popular protest can sometimes work, dissolve the opposition, deter future protest, and reaffirm the leadership in its grip on power."² A successful potential outcome is a motivator for dictators who choose to use violent repression. However, there is another possible outcome. As Pierskalla describes, "repression sometimes leads to violent escalation, a radicalization of the population, and spirals of violence that mark the downfall of the current government."³ There is no way to accurately predict the outcome of a strategy, meaning that autocrats must decide whether to use violence based on the information available and the perceived threats to the regime.

Many academics have begun positing answers to the question of when violence will be used and against whom. The proposed answers range from the influence of the

¹ Jan Henryk Pierskalla, "Protest, Deterrence, and Escalation: The Strategic Calculus of Government Repression," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54, no. 1 (2010): 117–45, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002709352462>.

² Pierskalla, 117–18.

³ Pierskalla, 118.

time period to the nature of the perceived threat (i.e. a coup d'état, popular revolt, or uprising of minority ethnic groups). However, there are limitations both to the scope of the theories I examined and to the extent to which I have been able to test them. For example, the selected authors do not go into detail about the forms of repression used. With the limitations in mind, this thesis will apply these authors' work to case studies around the world in order to examine the real-life application of their theories.

Analysis

The analytical section of this thesis will examine several posited answers to when dictators will use violent repression and against whom. It will examine theories from a number of authors and test their theories against case studies from around the world. The cases will include Joseph Stalin's Russia (1924-1953), François Duvalier's Haiti (1957-1971), Augusto Pinochet's Chile (1974-1990), Kim Jong Un's North Korea (2011-Present), and Xi Jinping's China (2013-Present). These cases are limited and do not purport to be all encompassing. Rather, they were chosen because they represent a wide range of variables in a dictatorship, including the era, perceived threat to power, dictator's personality, and available resources.

Memory of Violence

Sam Bell and Amanda Murdie, in their 2018 article, "The apparatus for violence: Repression, violent protest, and civil war in a cross-national framework" propose a situation in which the use of violent repression is likely to be unsuccessful, falling under Pierskalla's second category. Bell and Murdie explain that populations in countries with what they call a "memory of violence" are more likely to stage a revolution in the face of

violent repression, whereas people without that memory are more likely to be subdued by the same violence. According to Bell and Murdie, a memory of violence stems from a recent civil war in the country. Their study shows that “more recent mobilization is more likely to produce protest responses to repression.”⁴ They define “recent mobilization” as a civil war occurring within the last five years.⁵ Bell’s and Murdie’s study focuses on the effectiveness of violence and does not include consideration of the impact that may have on a dictator’s choice to use, or to refrain from using, violent repression. While it does not speak to dictators’ motivations in this part of the decision-making process, it is still important to be aware of as a part of the conversation on when violence is used.

The theory of memory of violence is supported by the history of Haiti, for example. Prior to Duvalier, 23 of the 36 Haitian presidents who ruled following the country’s independence from Spain in 1804 were either killed or deposed.⁶ As Bell and Murdie explained, the societal memory of violence likely primed the public for future uprising, which is evidenced by the number of times the population overthrew or otherwise removed previous presidents from power. However, as was discussed, dictators are unlikely to understand this theoretical assumption, meaning that a memory of violence should likely not be taken into account when examining the choices made by dictators.

⁴ Sam Bell and Amanda Murdie, “The Apparatus for Violence: Repression, Violent Protest, and Civil War in a Cross-National Framework,” *Conflict Management and Peace Studies* 35, no. 4 (2018): 348, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894215626848>.

⁵ Bell and Murdie, 348.

⁶ Albin Krebs, “Papa Doc, a Ruthless Dictator, Kept the Haitians in Illiteracy and Dire Poverty,” *The New York Times*, April 23, 1971, sec. Archives, <https://www.nytimes.com/1971/04/23/archives/papa-doc-a-ruthless-dictator-kept-the-haitians-in-illiteracy-and.html>.

Time Period

One theory that attempts to answer the question of when and against whom dictators choose to use violent repression is that of Sergei Guriev and Daniel Treisman, in their 2015 paper “How Modern Dictators Survive: An Informational Theory of the New Authoritarianism.” In the paper, they argue that modern dictators (meaning those of the late 20th and early 21st centuries) have differentiated themselves in terms of their use of violence as compared to the totalitarian regimes of the early- to mid-20th century and earlier. Previously, the authors argue, authoritarian regimes relied more heavily on extensive violence and terror, as well as mass-indoctrination, to create subordinate and docile populations. However, they propose that modern dictators have shifted away from the extreme level of violence – at least as a first step. Many 21st century regimes “have managed to consolidate power without... resorting to mass killings,” as Guriev and Treisman put it, which is possible because many of them rely on, and achieve, popular support.⁷

They argue that convincing the public of the dictator’s competency provides a more stable hold on power over time. In general, these leaders aim to eliminate opponents through more targeted, discriminate violence than was implemented by their 20th century counterparts. By harassing, attacking, arresting, or killing potential opposition leaders and journalists and by censoring the media, the public is not exposed to negative information about the regime, which helps build public support for the leader. This, in turn, means that more expansive violence is unnecessary and could perhaps be

⁷ Sergei Guriev and Daniel Treisman, “How Modern Dictators Survive: An Informational Theory of the New Authoritarianism,” *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper*, 2015, 2, www.nber.org/papers/w21136.

counterproductive for the regime, as it would expose a greater portion of the population to negative experiences with the regime.

Understanding that dictators will choose to use violence against their population when information control is not successful in subduing negative popular opinion does not explain, however, what forms of violence dictators choose or against whom. Guriev and Treisman argue that a key determinant of the choice is the influence of the era, suggesting that the specific political conditions, norms, and possible instruments for control in different time periods affect dictators' use of force against their own populations.⁸ There are a number of potential reasons why the era may have an impact on a dictator's choice to use force, including the role of social media in connecting people, changing demographics, increased globalization, or simply learning from past mistakes.

The massive levels of violence, with very little discrimination, that were committed in the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin clearly aligns with Guriev and Treisman's understanding of 20th century dictators. Stalin first came into power during Vladimir Lenin's reign when, in 1912, Lenin placed Stalin on the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party. A few years later, the party staged a successful coup and overthrew Aleksandr Kerensky's provisional government, which had replaced the unpopular Tsar following World War I, in what is now known as the October Revolution. Stalin later became the Secretary-General of the Central Committee and increasingly amassed political power in the Bolshevik Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.⁹

⁸ Guriev and Treisman, 2.

⁹ "The Russian Revolution and the Rise of Joseph Stalin" (Hampton Roads Naval Museum, n.d.), <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/dam/museums/hrnm/Education/EducationWebsiteRebuild/RussianPropagandaAboutGermany/Russian%20Revolution%20Background.pdf>.

When Lenin died in 1924, Stalin took the opportunity to take over party and country leadership. Considering the country's very recent memory of violence and the political turbulence of the time, Stalin had a tenuous hold on power. Limited repression combined with a discontent populace would have likely spelled a quick end to Stalin's regime. Rather than risk losing power, following his ascension, Stalin began eliminating his opponents. At first, he had his direct opponents either exiled or executed.¹⁰ However, over time, the measures he took became more drastic and the temporarily targeted attacks quickly gave way to mass violence. Provoked by the 1934 killing of Sergey Kirov, an ally of Stalin, for example, the dictator dramatically expanded the list of his opponents, which began the period of his dictatorship known as the Great Terror.¹¹ During this time, it is estimated that there were 2 to 3 million excess deaths, meaning deaths that can be attributed to the violence of the regime.¹²

In addition to the mass violence, Stalin also directed members of his internal security apparatus to torture specific "enemies of the Soviet people," a list which he determined himself.¹³ The torture included severe beatings, some of which lead to the death of the prisoner, sleep deprivation, and being held in stress positions, to name a few. In total, historian Lidia Golovkova documented 52 different methods used by Stalin's security forces.¹⁴ In some cases, torture was used to force often-false

¹⁰ "The Russian Revolution and the Rise of Joseph Stalin."

¹¹ "Introduction: Joseph Stalin's Great Terror · Reconciling Its Oppressive Past: Moscow's Commemorations of Stalin's Great Terror · The Urban Imagination," accessed March 15, 2024, https://hum54-15.omeka.fas.harvard.edu/exhibits/show/reconciling_its_oppressive_pas/introduction.

¹² Steven Rosefielde, "Documented Homicides and Excess Deaths: New Insights into the Scale of Killing in the USSR During the 1930s," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 30, no. 3 (1997): 328, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45302036>.

¹³ "Novaya Gazeta | Special Issue 'The Truth of the Gulag' Dated 10/16/2008 No. 9 (9) | Torture from Stalin: 'Beat to Death,'" October 20, 2008, <https://web.archive.org/web/20081020110400/http://www.novayagazeta.ru/data/2008/gulag09/00.html>.

¹⁴ "Comrade Stalin's Secret Prison," openDemocracy, accessed March 16, 2024, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/comrade-stalins-secret-prison/>.

confessions from prisoners. In others, the goal was torture and eventual execution. Recent estimates suggest that, in combination, the targeted killings along with the mass terrorization of the population led to at least 10 million excess deaths under Stalin.¹⁵ This strongly supports the theory posited by Guriev and Treisman that 20th century dictators relied heavily on mass violent repression.

The Chilean government under General Augusto Pinochet provides another example of what Guriev and Treisman would consider a typical 20th century dictatorship. Pinochet's government used violence widely against anyone perceived to oppose or threaten its hold on power. Pinochet used the military and police forces to attack political dissidents, people with differing political ideologies, academics, and families of so-called "enemies of the state."

On September 11, 1973, Pinochet, with the support of the military, staged a coup, deposed the democratically elected then-President Salvador Allende, and took power, starting what would become a 17-year dictatorship. Shortly after the coup d'état, the brutal crackdown on dissidents began. Former employees of the Allende administration, students, union organizers, teachers, and political activists were rounded up by the Chilean military and brought to secret torture centers throughout the country or were killed. Official counts put the number of victims at over 40,000, with 3,065 dead or "disappeared."¹⁶ Another 200,000 people went into exile abroad, either after release

¹⁵ Rosefielde, "Documented Homicides and Excess Deaths," 321.

¹⁶ "Chile Dictatorship Victim Toll Bumped to 40,018 | CBC News," accessed April 22, 2024, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/chile-dictatorship-victim-toll-bumped-to-40-018-1.998542>.

from detention or to evade it.¹⁷ The vast majority (around two thirds) of these cases happened within the first few months of the dictatorship in 1973.¹⁸

The justification used by Pinochet was that the crackdown was necessary to root out communism, which won him international support, including from the United States.¹⁹ Victims were labeled as terrorists or rebels against the government. However, at no point was evidence presented to demonstrate that any victim was a legitimate threat to public safety. Rather, it is clear that Pinochet used the crackdown to eliminate political dissidents and cement his own power. It is also worth noting that, while there are similarities to Stalin's Soviet regime, Pinochet led a different kind of oppressive crackdown. The Chilean government, while brutal, was more specific in its targeting and received foreign support for its anti-communist efforts whereas Stalin's regime was so violent that he could not save face with clever international propaganda.

This comparison is not to say that Pinochet did not commit horrific acts of violence. Those who survived detention by the regime describe rape and sexual abuse, beatings, electrocution, starvation, sensory deprivation, sleep deprivation, and asphyxia. These torture methods effectively demoralize their victims, leading to trauma and fear that lasts well beyond the period of their detention. Through their implementation, Pinochet destabilized those he viewed as threats to his regime. Further, the fear he caused augmented his control over the population. According to Guriev's and Treisman's logic, his choice to use violence so widely exemplifies a 20th century authoritarian regime.

¹⁷ "Wounds of Pinochet Regime Still Raw 50 Years after Chile's Bloody Coup," France 24, September 9, 2023, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20230909-50-years-later-wounds-of-pinochet-regime-are-still-raw>.

¹⁸ Monte Reel and J. Y. Smith, "A Chilean Dictator's Dark Legacy," December 11, 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/10/AR2006121000302.html>.

¹⁹ Smith.

Representing a counterpoint to Guriev and Treisman's argument is François Duvalier's Haitian dictatorship. Duvalier, otherwise known as "Papa Doc," assumed power in 1957 following a military coup and was subsequently elected President.²⁰ While Duvalier may not have considered the consequences of a memory of violence specifically, it is likely that he correctly determined that popular revolt was the most pressing threat to his regime. Following his assumption of power, he established the Tontons Macoutes, a secret police force, that had authority to imprison, kill, or disappear dissidents without regard for the rule of law (domestic or international). Despite the near impunity with which the Tontons Macoutes could act, only around 300 people were killed by the regime in the first year.²¹ While 300 deaths represent a clear disregard for human rights, as compared to the thousands killed by many other dictators, it is a drastically lower number of people killed, which directly contradicts Guriev and Treisman's theory.

Similarly, Kim Jong Un's regime goes against Guriev and Treisman's theory, in this case showing that 21st century dictators who control the media and have co-opted the elites, as Kim has done, may still use as pervasive a level of violence as their 20th century counterparts. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, also known as North Korea), Kim Jong Un continued and increased the violent repression of his father's and grandfather's regimes and it has become a cornerstone of the North Korean government.

Beginning under Supreme Leader Kim Il Sung in 1948, when the state was established, North Korea became an oppressive, totalitarian regime and has remained so for the following nearly eight decades, through the reigns of Kim Il Sung's

²⁰ "Haiti Profile - Timeline," *BBC News*, October 31, 2012, sec. Latin America & Caribbean, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-19548814>.

²¹ Krebs, "Papa Doc, a Ruthless Dictator, Kept the Haitians in Illiteracy and Dire Poverty."

descendants Kim Jong Il (son) and Kim Jong Un (grandson). Kim Jong Un's regime is known for the extreme levels of violent repression used against the entire population.

In the highly militarized state, "collective punishment is [systematically] used to silence dissent."²² The government created and maintains an environment of immense fear. The population of the DPRK is largely targeted indiscriminately. Its citizens frequently face harsh, extrajudicial punishment. A hierarchical system (*songbun*) is applied to everyone, which ranks citizens in terms of their and their families' standing in society.²³ The system is used to subjugate the entirety of the population and maintain an environment of fear because each person is at constant risk of having their status lowered and facing the ensuing harsh consequences.

Another demonstration of the pervasiveness of violence is the frequent action that the government takes to curtail any behavior seen as potentially problematic or anti-government, which is fueled by the *songbun* system and high degrees of surveillance within the state. The judicial system of the DPRK is a farce and its sole purpose is "to isolate persons from society whose behaviour conflicts with upholding the singular authority of the Supreme Leader, Kim Jong Un."²⁴ Because of the system, "North Koreans say they live in constant fear of being caught in a system where official procedures are usually irrelevant, guilt is presumed, and the only way out is through bribes and connections."²⁵ The resulting constant fear has proved effective in the DPRK

²² Human Rights Watch, "North Korea: Events of 2022," in *World Report 2023*, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/north-korea>.

²³ Human Rights Watch, "North Korea: Systematic Repression," January 14, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/01/14/north-korea-systematic-repression>.

²⁴ "Torture, Forced Abortions and Insects for Food: Life inside North Korean Jails, Says This NGO | CNN," accessed April 22, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/03/23/asia/north-korea-torture-prison-report-intl-hnk-dst/index.html>.

²⁵ Human Rights Watch, "North Korea: Horrific Pretrial Detention System," October 19, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/10/19/north-korea-horrific-pretrial-detention-system>.

in repressing any opposition to the regime. Citizens fear even passive resistance, such as privately discussing displeasure with the current regime, because it is presumed that spies or surveillance systems are everywhere and will catch anyone who does not fall in line, which will surely lead to harsh punishment or death. The level of violence demonstrated in the DPRK contradicts Guriev and Treisman's categorization of 21st century regimes. This example, along with that of Duvalier, suggests that Guriev and Treisman's theory may not fully explain the differing levels of violence between regimes.

Perceived Threat

Several other authors argue that a potential answer to the question of when and against whom a dictator uses violence domestically is that a dictator's dominant perceived threat will help direct their decisions of whether, how, and against whom to wield violence. The three primary concerns are popular revolt, coups d'état, and insurgency or secessionist movement by a disgruntled ethnic group. Resulting from these threats, there seem to be two main recipients of violence: the whole population or specific subsets of the population.

Coups d'État

Sheena Greitens, in *Dictators and their Secret Police*, argues that dictators whose primary perceived threat is a possible coup d'état establish a "coup-proofed" internal security apparatus, which encourages violence against the population at large. An internal security apparatus is defined as "the cluster of organizations collectively responsible for domestic intelligence and internal security."²⁶ For many dictators, mass

²⁶ Sheena Greitens, *Dictators and Their Secret Police: Coercive Institutions and State Violence* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 21.

violence is a relatively effective tactic to maintain power in the face of a potential coup because it can create a largely docile population.

Coup-proofing, as Greitens explains, is a process “designed to ensure the security forces’ loyalty and limit their ability to stage a successful power grab.”²⁷ The institutions must therefore be highly fragmented and socially exclusive.²⁸

Counterintuitively, when coercive institutions have been set up with coup-proofing as the primary objective, more widespread violence is likely to occur. As Greitens explains, the violence is a result of limited institutional intelligence-gathering capacity and incentives for increased violence.²⁹

Limited intelligence makes violent oppression more widespread, targeting a greater portion of the population, because the regime can’t precisely target opposition. As a result, Greitens explains that these states are more likely to “engage in mass arrest and torture,” for example, or to “execute fifty people for fear of letting one conspirator go.”³⁰ There are also positive incentives, meaning they actively support violence, and negative incentives, meaning they “lower sanctions against it,” for violence in a coup-proofed system.³¹ These come as a result of internal competition (positive incentive) and the social exclusivity of the security apparatus (negative incentive).

There are a number of examples of coup-proofing in the cases examined in this thesis. For example, Stalin’s regime is a prime example of a dictator starting with targeted killings against specific opponents, but then quickly shifting to coup-proofing

²⁷ Sheena Greitens, 23.

²⁸ Sheena Greitens, 24.

²⁹ Sheena Greitens, 42.

³⁰ Sheena Greitens, 44.

³¹ Sheena Greitens, 49.

and the accompanying mass oppression of the population indicated by Greitens. The state's actions during the Great Terror are the most obvious results of Stalin's coup-proofing. Fragmented and exclusive security institutions, reporting solely to Stalin, put in place programs that "entailed tremendous human suffering and loss of life."³² Millions of citizens were killed, either when executed by the government or as a result of famine, deportation, detention, or other violent repressive tactics.³³ According to the *Novaya Gazeta*, a Russian newspaper, Stalin went so far as to establish a quota for the number of executions and imprisonments expected in a given year.³⁴ This acts as a clear demonstration of Greitens' theory of competition of violence between organizations leading to massive violence.

However, while the regime was coup-proofed and, at times, aligns with Greitens' explanation, it also had extreme monitoring capabilities, which allowed Stalin to eliminate specific people in addition to the violence that was going on en masse. The precise targeting capabilities of Stalin's security forces contradicts Greitens' theory that coup-proofed regimes are incapable of precisely targeting opponents.

Another example of a coup-proofed regime can be found in the DPRK. When Kim Jong Un rose to power, he initiated a reshuffling of the elite class, leading to the outcast or death of former elites.³⁵ For example, Kim Jong Un ordered the execution of his own uncle in 2013 and the former Defense Minister in 2015. Both cases illustrate

³² "Internal Workings of the Soviet Union - Revelations from the Russian Archives | Exhibitions - Library of Congress," web page, June 15, 1992, <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/archives/intn.html>.

³³ Cynthia Haven, "Stalin Killed Millions. A Stanford Historian Answers the Question, Was It Genocide?," *Stanford News* (blog), September 23, 2010, <https://news.stanford.edu/2010/09/23/naimark-stalin-genocide-092310/>.

³⁴ "Novaya Gazeta | Special Issue 'The Truth of the Gulag' Dated 10/16/2008 No. 9 (9) | Torture from Stalin."

³⁵ "North Korea's Power Structure," Council on Foreign Relations, accessed April 22, 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/north-koreas-power-structure>.

Greitens' theory of coup-proofing that dictators take steps to prevent members of the internal security apparatus from amassing any significant measure of power.³⁶ At the same time, they again demonstrate that a skilled coup-proofed regime is capable of targeted violence. The effective targeting, which is also visible in Kim's fear campaign, directly contradicts Greitens supposition that coup-proofed regimes are incapable of this level of sophisticated surveillance.

Popular Revolt

Popular revolt is another perceived threat that may impact the choices a dictator makes about when and against whom to use violent repression. Greitens argues that, in cases where popular revolt is the dominant perceived threat, when coup-proofing did not take place, the coercive institutions are likely to be unitary and inclusive, rather than the fragmented and exclusive institutions that are necessary to prevent coup attempts, which allows for more successful precise targeting of opponents.³⁷ Precise targeting allows for a more direct impact on the "problem" group, without needing to punish the relatively harmless majority. Unitary organization and social inclusivity aid the security apparatus in intelligence gathering. As was described earlier for the reverse consequence, intelligence is paramount in minimizing violence in a repressive dictatorship.

In addition to the impact of institutional design, many authoritarian leaders use cooptation of the elites and censorship of media and public information to shape the public narrative in an effort to avoid the need for violence. Methods can include bribing journalists to write positive messages rather than critical ones, censoring the articles

³⁶ "North Korea's Power Structure."

³⁷ Sheena Greitens, *Dictators and Their Secret Police: Coercive Institutions and State Violence*, 17, 23.

that do not align with the regime's narrative, and using less violent forms of repression, such as house arrest, imprisonment or exile, to promote alignment with the regime. The narrative available to the public is key in influencing a constituency's perception of the capabilities of the dictator.

However, Guriev and Treisman show that "if enough citizens infer, based on these various signals [from state media, independent media, and standards of living], that the incumbent is incompetent, they rise up and overthrow him in a revolution."³⁸ This means that, when facing signals of decreased belief in their competency, dictators will turn to violent repression. Guriev and Treisman explain that, "when cooptation and censorship have failed [as would be indicated by decreased belief in competency] and opposition to the regime becomes overt, state repression is all that remains – and is sure to be used."³⁹ They also argue that dictators that maintain power past the first few years of their reign "are less likely to be overthrown," which may indicate that the first few years are key to establishing the public's opinion of their competency.⁴⁰

The cases in which dictators resort back to violent repression may bring into question Greitens' non-coup proofed category. For example, Pinochet appeared to determine that popular revolt was the primary threat to his regime, perhaps correctly, given the memory of violence resulting from his coup d'état. According to Greitens, the resulting institutions should mean that there would be highly targeted violence rather than violent repression being used against the population as a whole. However,

³⁸ Guriev and Treisman, "How Modern Dictators Survive: An Informational Theory of the New Authoritarianism," 3.

³⁹ Guriev and Treisman, 5.

⁴⁰ Guriev and Treisman, 5.

Pinochet effectively terrorized more than those individuals who posed a direct threat to his regime.

On the other hand, François Duvalier's Haitian dictatorship supports Greitens' theory by providing an example of a non-coup proofed security apparatus that employs precision against specific targets rather than mass violence. For example, only one of Duvalier's opposing candidates during the presidential election escaped Haiti without being executed. The Tontons Macoutes were nevertheless "furious" with his evasion of execution, given that they were otherwise successful in eliminating key opponents of the regime, so much so that they tracked down and killed two of his brothers in retribution.⁴¹

Duvalier successfully used precise targeting to support his regime for fifteen years, the longest lasting Haitian government until that point, and never faced significant public opposition (he passed away in 1971 and was succeeded by his son, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier), nor did he ever resort to the mass violent repression exemplified by other contemporary dictators. As a result, François Duvalier provides a prime example to support Greitens theory for non-coup proofed regimes.

Ethnic Groups

In Janina Beiser-McGrath's 2019 article published in the Swiss Political Science Journal, "Targeting the Motivated? Ethnicity and the Pre-emptive Use of Government Repression," she explains that dictators may also use "preemptive and targeted repression against ethnic groups... in order to prevent future ethnic rebellions" that would pose a threat to the dictator's hold on power.⁴² Repression of ethnic groups occurs, according to Beiser-McGrath, regardless of propaganda or cooptation efforts,

⁴¹ Krebs, "Papa Doc, a Ruthless Dictator, Kept the Haitians in Illiteracy and Dire Poverty."

⁴² Janina Beiser-McGrath, "Targeting the Motivated? Ethnicity and the Pre-Emptive Use of Government Repression," *Swiss Political Science Review* 25, no. 3 (2019): 203, <https://doi.org/10.1111/spsr.12370>.

indicating that these techniques are not considered sufficient to counteract the strength of unified ethnic groups. She clarifies that violent repression is more likely if the group is “discriminated [against], strong, or [has] a history of protest or rebellion.”⁴³ Her study concludes that the strength, generally meaning the size, of the ethnic group in comparison to that of the state’s internal security apparatus has a significant relationship to the amount of repression that group faces.⁴⁴

When an ethnic group has a history of protest, uprising, or revolution, especially in recent history, as Bell and Murdie explained, they are likely to have institutions that are prepared for conflict and a societal norm that supports confrontation. As a result, the group is more likely to challenge the regime than other groups without the same history.

Similarly, a group’s strength (size) has a direct relationship to the perception of the threat it poses. The larger or stronger a group is, the more able it is to mount a successful mobilization effort against the government. Such a calculation comes from the “strength in numbers” theory, which says that people are safer and more able to achieve an end when they have support from others. Further, as Adam Lankford explains in his 2018 paper “Strength in numbers: A survival strategy that helps explain social bonding and commitment,” people often demonstrate willingness for self-sacrifice in order to support the group.⁴⁵ Consequently, dictators are more likely to perceive larger groups as more threatening to the regime and, thus, are more likely to use violence against larger, stronger ethnic groups that wield significant social power.

⁴³ Beiser-McGrath, 203.

⁴⁴ Beiser-McGrath, 218.

⁴⁵ Adam Lankford, “Strength in Numbers: A Survival Strategy That Helps Explain Social Bonding and Commitment,” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 41 (January 2018): e208, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X18001553>.

However, Beiser-McGrath found potentially contradictory evidence. She describes that, while autocrats react to group strength as a threat to their power, such reactions tend to happen when that group is not also discriminated against. A potential cost versus benefit analysis may determine that a strong *and* oppressed group could be sufficiently motivated against the repressor to withstand increased violence and continue pressing for regime change. Given that violence is only successful when the repressed group submits to the power of the repressor, dictators may determine that the potential cost of losing power outweighs the benefit of violence. As a result, if a group is strong, but also faces discrimination, the government may use alternative methods of repression, such as cooptation of the elite or campaigns of propaganda.⁴⁶

On the other hand, in the case that an ethnic group is weak, its members are more likely to be the victims of violent repression if they also face discrimination.⁴⁷ Beiser-McGrath explains that her understanding is contradictory to prior theories because it demonstrates that a group's perceived strength, which directly relates to how likely they are to be able to mount a successful opposition campaign, is not the only characteristic that dictators take into account when determining against whom they will use violence. In fact, she found that "discrimination has a significantly positive effect on repression when the military is [or other organizations within the internal security apparatus are] large compared to the group."⁴⁸ Attacking a weak, minority group that has experienced discrimination will allow the autocrat to use that group's "othering" to unite the rest of the community, effectively creating a common public enemy. As Guriev

⁴⁶ Guriev and Treisman, "How Modern Dictators Survive: An Informational Theory of the New Authoritarianism."

⁴⁷ Beiser-McGrath, "Targeting the Motivated? Ethnicity and the Pre-Emptive Use of Government Repression," 216.

⁴⁸ Beiser-McGrath, 218.

and Treisman's logic would explain, othering a weak group is another effective technique to build perception of the dictator's job competence, which will strengthen their control over the population as a whole.⁴⁹

The mass displacement and genocide of the Uyghur Muslim population in China is an example of the phenomenon proposed by Beiser-McGrath. Starting in 2017, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) led by Xi Jinping began a crackdown on so-called terrorists in the Xinjiang region (also known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region or XUAR) in northwest China. Muslims have been arbitrarily arrested for a variety of fabricated terrorism charges, such as attending services at a mosque, wearing a headscarf, or growing a beard (all common practices in Islam).⁵⁰ These charges are used as pretext to detain Muslims in "vocational education and training centers." Journalists working in the region and independent human rights organizations have described these centers as internment camps or concentration camps. A former Chinese police officer living in Europe, speaking on the condition of anonymity to protect family members still in China, described the victims as "normal people" and clarified that he believed none of the supposed terrorists posed a legitimate terrorist threat.⁵¹ Nevertheless, over a million Uyghurs have been rounded up and sent to detention camps.⁵²

⁴⁹ Guriev and Treisman, "How Modern Dictators Survive: An Informational Theory of the New Authoritarianism," 2.

⁵⁰ "China's Repression of Uyghurs in Xinjiang," Council on Foreign Relations, accessed April 22, 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/background/china-xinjiang-uyghurs-muslims-repression-genocide-human-rights>; "Torture Inflicted on Uyghurs in Xinjiang Revealed by Chinese Detective in Exile | CNN," accessed April 22, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/04/china/xinjiang-detective-torture-intl-hnk-dst/index.html>.

⁵¹ "Torture Inflicted on Uyghurs in Xinjiang Revealed by Chinese Detective in Exile | CNN."

⁵² "Who Are the Uyghurs and Why Is China Being Accused of Genocide?," *BBC News*, April 24, 2013, sec. China, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-22278037>.

Former victims and interrogators describe organized, systemic violence. Police officers are given a list of targets to capture. They then employ nighttime raids to round up hundreds of Uyghurs at a time to be sent to the prisons. In the camps, prisoners are subjected to extreme violence including beatings, rape and sexual violence, sleep deprivation, starvation, electrocution, and waterboarding. The CCP is also known to use torture in these camps to force false confessions from detainees. Numerous detainees have died as a result of the conditions in the camps, although the exact number is unknown given that the Chinese government censors all media and buries information about the camps and any alleged abuses. They have also engaged in a campaign of misinformation domestically and abroad to contradict assertions of human rights violations.

Further evidence of the regime's efforts to weaken the potential strength of the Uyghurs is the mass migration of Han Chinese (the ethnic majority in China and that of the ruling class) to the XUAR. The resettling is understood to be taking place in order to "dilute the minority population there."⁵³ While this aspect of the genocide does not involve physical violence, when paired with the extreme oppression of the concentration camps, it is clear that it is a facet of China's plan to eliminate the perceived threat of the ethnic minority in the Xinjiang region under the guise of rooting out terrorism.

This situation supports Beiser-McGrath's theory empirically. It is also important to note that, while the genocide in China was chosen for discussion in this thesis, there are numerous other examples of this phenomenon throughout the world. With that in mind, "Targeting the Motivated" may provide an explanation of the "why" behind a large subset

⁵³ "Who Are the Uyghurs and Why Is China Being Accused of Genocide?"

of the violence committed by dictators against their population, and provides a framework through which this can be understood strategically.

However, evidence from Xi's regime may indicate that targeting an ethnic group necessitates a combination of the characteristics of coup-proofed and non-coup proofed regimes, which is an additional challenge to Greitens' theory. For example, the level of organization within the Chinese internal security apparatus, when applying Greitens' logic, should mean that China has not been coup-proofed and, rather, that Xi is primarily focused on the popular threat. While it is impossible to say what Xi personally perceived as the dominant threat when he rose to power, there are signs of coup-proofing that may indicate that it also is considered a threat. For example, multiple senior level generals have "disappeared from public view" according to *Foreign Affairs*.⁵⁴ This is a key indicator of coup-proofing because high-level military officials would have a means (via military support) as well as motive to undertake a coup.

On the other hand, while there are indicators of coup-proofing, coups are not the only threat to Xi's reign. There is evidence that the root of Xi's decision to attack the Uyghur population is a fear of state fracturing, which can be classified within the popular revolt category. The Chinese government has fought against separatist movements repeatedly, notably in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Tibet. The governing party fears any threats to its power in China and considers independence movements to be of dire concern. Regions in China with large concentrations of a minority group, such as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, threaten the ideological and identity-based hold that the CCP has on China. In the case of the XUAR, the perceived threat prompted the

⁵⁴ Joel Wuthnow, "Why Xi Jinping Doesn't Trust His Own Military," *Foreign Affairs*, September 26, 2023, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/china/why-xi-jinping-doesnt-trust-his-own-military>.

CCP's targeted cleansing campaign. Its goal is to eventually erase the culture of the Uyghur population, which supports Beiser-McGrath's theory that strong ethnic groups are perceived as a threat to the autocrat and are, therefore, the targets of preemptive, discriminate violence but challenges other ideas about the impact of the nature of security institutions within a regime. The contradiction of Greitens' theory is discussed here because the XUAR case may indicate that, in situations where targeting ethnic groups is a priority, neither the coup-proofed nor the non-coup proofed category seamlessly applies.

Conclusion

The discussion in this thesis shows the difficulty of isolating the factors in a dictator's decision-making process but it is insufficient in scope to determine whether or to what extent the theories explain the use of violent repression. The case studies analyzed provide limited support for the theories presented, yet they also provide contradictions. As Guriev and Treisman argued, there are 20th century dictators who used mass violence to terrorize their populations, as was the case for Stalin and Pinochet. At the same time, Kim's regime demonstrates that these instances are not stuck in the past and Duvalier's regime showed that 20th century dictators may also limit their use of violence. As Greitens argued, regardless of the time period, there are dictators who established coup-proofed internal security apparatuses that subsequently resulted in massive violence, such as with Kim in the DPRK or Stalin in Russia. Additionally, there are regimes that were not coup-proofed that demonstrated the ability to precisely target opponents, such as Duvalier. However, both the North Korean and Russian cases illustrate that the capability to target discriminately is not solely a

characteristic of non-coup proofed regimes, and seemingly contradict Greitens' proposition. As Beiser-McGrath explained, there are times when ethnic groups are targeted, such as was the case with Xi, although her theory also appears to contradict or to operate outside the confines of Greitens'.

As was demonstrated by these cases, the actions of a dictator do not easily fall into a single specific category. Additionally, it is notable that two key components were missing from each of these theoretical propositions: the dictator's personality and the resources and institutions available to them. Both of these factors are likely to have large impacts on the regime. First, the personality of the dictator and their predisposition to violence will greatly shape the internal security apparatus of the state. In addition, the decisions of a dictator do not take place inside a vacuum. Practical and economic considerations will limit or support the ability of the leader to execute their plan in ways that cannot be generalized.

For these numerous reasons, no single theoretical explanation discussed in this thesis is adequate to explain or predict the choice of a dictator to use violent repression and, when that choice is made, to what extent and what kind of violence will be used. Nevertheless, this thesis provides an interesting introduction to the decision-making process of dictators in terms of their use of violent repression. In addition, it provides an important theoretical context for the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

Foreign Languages

Español

Introducción

En este capítulo, usaré el contexto del primer capítulo para analizar la dictadura de Francisco Franco. Incluiré el contexto histórico de la Guerra Civil y de la dictadura porque ambos son necesarios para entender el diálogo nacional en la España del siglo XXI sobre el pasado reciente. Con esta comprensión histórica, examinaré la manera en que obras de literatura y cinematografía tienen un impacto en la memoria colectiva de la España de la dictadura dentro de la España democrática. Para hacerlo, consideraré *La voz dormida*, de Dulce Chacón, y *El silencio de otros*, de Almudena Carracedo y Robert Bahar. *La voz dormida*, de 2002, captó la atención del público español cuando fue publicada. Llamó la atención a las víctimas de la dictadura que han sido silenciados por décadas y contribuyó al debate sobre la necesidad de reconocer el pasado. En 2007, España promulgó la Ley de Memoria Histórica, la primera ley en España que reconoció la represión sufrida por miles de personas y la obligación del estado de promover reparación. *El silencio de otros*, de 2018, tuvo un impacto similar y se estrenó cuatro años antes de la Ley de Memoria Democrática, una ley que desarrolla la ley de 2007. En esta tesis, me aproximo a cómo la literatura o un documental permiten reincorporar testimonios silenciados de la represión franquista silenciada durante la dictadura y los primeros años de la democracia a la conciencia nacional.

Contexto histórico: La Guerra Civil española

El 17 de julio de 1936, un grupo de generales del ejército español comenzaron un golpe de estado en España para sustituir el recién elegido gobierno democrático. El golpe de estado se convirtió en una guerra civil que duró tres años y terminó con la

caída de la Segunda República y una dictadura represiva de más de treinta años (1939-1975). Los generales golpistas se unificaron bajo el mando del general Francisco Franco, que al terminar la guerra se había convertido en 'generalísimo' y jefe del estado español, convertido en una dictadura.

Para entender la situación, hay que estudiar la historia que precede a la guerra. Durante cientos de años, España fue gobernada por una monarquía conservadora. Hubo avances liberales, como la igualdad de todos los ciudadanos ante la ley bajo la constitución de 1812 y el fin de la ley sálica, pero, por la mayor parte, el gobierno sirvió a las élites y no a la gente popular. Entre febrero de 1873 y diciembre de 1874, hubo un breve periodo de democracia que se llamaba la Primera República Española pero se vio empañada por ocho gobiernos distintos que no fueron efectivos. Una monarquía que fue más y más débil cedió paso a la dictadura de Primo de Rivera en 1923. Entre 1923 y 1930, Miguel Primo de Rivera gobernó junto a un rey simbólico. En 1931, el rey decidió irse libremente y hubo las primeras elecciones desde la Primera República. Así comenzó la Segunda República de España.

La Segunda República trajo consigo reformas democráticas. Hubo más libertades individuales, mejores condiciones laborales, una reforma del ejército, y un sistema educativo público y laico. Con estas reformas hubo una reducción en poder para el ejército y la iglesia que creó disensiones entre estos grupos contra el gobierno. En 1933, el gobierno pasó a ser más conservador pero no fue suficiente para disuadir la disidencia. Unos meses después de las elecciones de febrero de 1936, Franco, junto con los militares y sus simpatizantes, provocó un golpe de estado para reemplazar el gobierno.

La guerra subsiguiente duró hasta el 31 de marzo de 1939 cuando el General Casado rindió Madrid a los sublevados, el bando de Franco. Este bando, llamado el bando nacional, estaba compuesto por la Falange (un partido político fascista creado durante la dictadura de Primo de Rivera), instituciones y partidos católicos conservadores, una gran parte del ejército (especialmente los mandos medios), el partido carlista, y una variedad de grupos políticos y sociales conservadores. El bando nacional dijo que lucharon para liberarse de los enemigos de España. Estos “enemigos” eran defensores de la República (partido republicano, liberal, partido y sindicatos socialistas, etc.). También se unieron el sindicato anarquista y el partido comunista. Además miembros de la sociedad opuestos a los valores conservadores de la familia católica. El bando republicano, el otro bando de la guerra que luchaba contra Franco, estaba compuesto de estos grupos oprimidos junto con gente que quería combatir contra el fascismo (lo cual estaba ocurriendo en Alemania e Italia en esta época) o para conservar la república elegida democráticamente. La capital sublevada fue situada en Burgos, mientras que la capital de la república quedó en Madrid hasta el fin de la guerra.

Durante estos tres años, más de 500.000 personas murieron. Entre estas personas, aproximadamente 200.000 murieron a causa de asesinatos políticos, tortura, o desapariciones a mano del ejército sublevado.⁵⁵ Franco también utilizó el hambre para “erosionar esperanza” (mi traducción).⁵⁶ Helen Graham, en *The Spanish Civil War: a Very Short Introduction*, explica que, empezando en la primavera de 1938, la

⁵⁵ “La Guerra Civil Española,” accessed February 21, 2024, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/es/article/spanish-civil-war>.

⁵⁶ Helen Graham, *The Spanish Civil War: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2005), 105.

república fue “manifiestamente incapaz de satisfacer las necesidades básicas de la vida diaria de su población civil” (mi traducción).⁵⁷ Hubo más de 600.000 refugiados en la España republicana a causa de la guerra. Franco controlaba las regiones más importantes para la producción de grano y los puertos principales. La consecuencia fue que los republicanos no tenían acceso a recursos importantes, incluyendo comida suficiente para su población. Esa fue la intención de Franco. Quería que muriera el mayor número posible de oponentes durante la guerra para eliminar su oposición antes de que su dictadura comenzara y que los que sobrevivieron estuvieran descorazonados.

Otro paso que tomó hacia esta meta fue usar escuadrones de la muerte. Estos escuadrones fueron grupos de civiles y/o de soldados que masacraron a otros civiles. El uso del público hizo que todos los oponentes de Franco tuvieran miedo de sus comunidades – incluso se sabía que los familiares y los vecinos denunciaban. La consecuencia era que no podían movilizarse contra Franco por el miedo de ser descubiertos y encarcelados o asesinados

Contexto histórico: La dictadura de Franco

El 31 de marzo de 1939 marcó la caída de la República y el comienzo de la dictadura de Franco. Era una dictadura personalista utopista y fue apoyado por el ejército, la iglesia, la Falange, los partidos monárquicos (incluso los carlistas) y los franquistas puros. La dictadura puede ser dividida en dos partes: el primer Franquismo y el segundo Franquismo. Las dos partes son similares, pero hay diferencias entre los dos que demuestran la evolución de Franco como líder.

⁵⁷ Graham, 105.

Durante el primer Franquismo, que duró desde 1939-1959, hubo mucha represión contra sus oponentes. Esta represión, que fue emblemática de la Guerra Civil, continuó siendo una gran parte del plan de Franco para mantener el poder y eliminar oponentes. Durante la dictadura, aumentó la cantidad de represión y violencia. Creó campos de concentración y campos de trabajo forzado donde encerró a más de 500.000 personas.⁵⁸ También, encarceló a muchas personas. Otro tipo de represión que usó fueron las depuraciones de cargos públicos. Por ejemplo, echó a profesores, académicos, e intelectuales de sus trabajos y sus posiciones de autoridad en las comunidades. Así, controló la narrativa sobre la dictadura y eliminó la autoridad de la oposición en los ojos de los demás.

También, continuó usando el hambre para controlar a su población. Los primeros años de la dictadura se llamaban los “años del hambre” porque todo el mundo (salvo los elites en el régimen) sufrió mucho del hambre. Cada familia recibió cartillas de racionamiento que controlaban cuánta comida podían comprar. Una doctrina de la dictadura era autosuficiencia e aislamiento. Franco dijo que era a causa de este aislamiento, junto con la destrucción de la Guerra Civil, una sequía y las condiciones en Europa a causa de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, que no había comida suficiente para toda la población. Todo esto fue una mentira como han puesto de manifiesto investigadores como el historiador Miguel Ángel del Arco.⁵⁹ Franco creó estas condiciones y usó el hambre para garantizar que la población fuera débil. El gobierno

⁵⁸ “La Guerra Civil Española.”

⁵⁹ Javier Arroyo, “El hambre fue hambruna, no hubo pertinaz sequía: cómo el franquismo manipuló la historia,” El País, January 4, 2022, <https://elpais.com/cultura/2022-01-04/el-hambre-fue-hambruna-no-hubo-pertinaz-sequia-como-el-franquismo-manipulo-la-historia.html>.

dio estas cartillas de racionamiento, que tenían por objeto garantizar la igualdad de acceso para todos, pero no eran ni siquiera casi suficientes para sobrevivir.

Contexto histórico: Los procesos de represión de finales de la guerra y principio de la dictadura

En «The apparatus for violence: Repression, violent protest, and civil war in a cross-national framework», Sam Bell y Amanda Murdie hablan de las consecuencias de una “memoria de violencia” (mi traducción) en una sociedad. Una memoria de violencia, como fue explicado en el primer capítulo de esta tesis, viene de la existencia reciente de una guerra civil o un golpe de estado en un país.⁶⁰ Siguiendo esta lógica, durante la dictadura de Franco, hubo una memoria de violencia muy fuerte. Bell y Murdie explican que, cuando esta memoria existe en una comunidad, es más probable que la población se rebele contra la represión. Si esto es el caso, la cuestión se convierte en «¿por qué no hubo oposición exitosa contra Franco?»

En el caso de España en 1939, después de una larga guerra civil, cuando el público tenía una fuerte memoria de violencia, Bell y Murdie concluirían que la memoria haría que otra revuelta contra Franco fuese probable. Sin embargo, no tuvieron en cuenta durante su exploración del tema, qué pasaría si la última guerra civil fuera ineficaz. En el caso de la resistencia contra Franco, no tuvo éxito durante la guerra civil. Por eso, quizás los oponentes del régimen concluyeron que la continuación de resistencia no vale la pena contra una represión fuerte y continuada.

⁶⁰ Bell and Murdie, “The Apparatus for Violence: Repression, Violent Protest, and Civil War in a Cross-National Framework.”

El otro texto teórico que es importante tener en mente es el trabajo de Sheena Greitens que se llama *Dictators and their Secret Police: Coercive Institutions and State Violence*. Es posible que se pueda encontrar una explicación para la violencia amplia ahí. En su libro, explica que dictadores diseñan el aparato de seguridad interior del estado para confrontar la mayor amenaza percibida cuando toman el poder. En el caso de Franco, es probable que percibiera que un golpe de estado era la amenaza más peligrosa o probable para su dictadura. Por esta razón, creó instituciones en el aparato de seguridad con la meta de controlar y limitar los oficiales y militares en el gobierno con la mayor capacidad de amenazar su control del poder (en vez de enfocarse en la amenaza de un nuevo movimiento de resistencia popular).

Se puede ver las consecuencias de esto en la violencia que tomó paso durante la dictadura. Como Greitens explica, la represión en un sistema a prueba de golpes de estado, generalmente, es menos precisa y más violenta. Por ejemplo, en vez de enfocarse en los oponentes más poderosos, los miembros de este tipo de aparato de seguridad atacan a todos o un grupo grande de personas declaradas oponentes del régimen.

Esto fue el caso en España bajo Franco. Todos los que eran, o se presumía que fueran , «oponentes» de la dictadura (incluso republicanos, liberales, comunistas, socialistas, homosexuales, personas no católicas, etc.) fueron perseguidos.⁶¹ Como Graham explica, «la brutalidad sistemática, la tortura, el afeitado y la violación sexual de mujeres, y los asesinatos públicos en masa de hombres y mujeres» (mi traducción)

⁶¹ “Gays Persecuted by Franco Lose Criminal Status at Last | World News | The Guardian,” accessed March 31, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/dec/13/gayrights.gilestremllett>; “How Dictator Franco Built His Regime Vilifying the Jews, Then Tried to Hide It | The Times of Israel,” accessed March 31, 2024, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/how-dictator-franco-built-his-regime-vilifying-the-jews-then-tried-to-hide-it/>.

era muy común durante la guerra y durante la dictadura, especialmente durante el primer franquismo.⁶² Graham añade que «a veces pueblos totales eran destruidos por la represión» (mi traducción).⁶³ Lo que es claro es que hubo mucha represión en todos lados y no era muy centrada o discriminatoria.

Además, Franco creó un sistema de campos de concentración donde encarceló a miles de personas.⁶⁴ Los prisioneros se convirtieron en trabajadores forzados, efectivamente esclavos, que proporcionaron la mano de obra para re-crear la infraestructura de España. En total, había al menos 188 campos de concentración donde miles de personas fueron encarceladas y aproximadamente entre 5.000 y 10.000 personas murieron.⁶⁵

¿Cómo se recuerda la dictadura en la España democrática?

Un enfoque de la dictadura era controlar la difusión de información, especialmente sobre la represión de la población y la violencia cometida por el gobierno contra sus ciudadanos. Una manera en que trató de controlarla fue crear el Servicio Histórico Militar, una dependencia del gobierno con la meta de manipular la información que salía sobre la dictadura y crear información falsa para luchar contra las historias verdaderas de la represión.⁶⁶

⁶² Graham, *The Spanish Civil War: A Very Short Introduction*, 32.

⁶³ Graham, 32.

⁶⁴ Javier Rodrigo, "Exploitation, Fascist Violence and Social Cleansing: A Study of Franco's Concentration Camps from a Comparative Perspective," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 19, no. 4 (August 1, 2012): 553–73, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13507486.2012.697871>.

⁶⁵ Rodrigo.

⁶⁶ Peter Anderson and Miguel Ángel del Arco Blanco, "Mass Killings and Violence in Spain, 1936-1952," *New York*, 2015, 5, <https://api.taylorfrancis.com/content/books/mono/download?identifierName=doi&identifierValue=10.4324/9780203706404&type=googlepdf>.

También, creó monumentos u otras demostraciones públicas que reflejaban una imagen positiva de la dictadura. Por ejemplo, construyó el Valle de los Caídos, un monumento que idealiza los muertos nacionalistas de la Guerra Civil. Franco también fue enterrado ahí hasta 2019.⁶⁷ Según Peter Anderson y Miguel Ángel del Arco Blanco, «este lugar de enterramiento actúa como monumento sobre todo a los valores franquistas y más bien elude la historia de los prisioneros capturados en el transcurso de la Guerra Civil que labraron el lugar para ‘redimir’ las condenas que les impusieron los tribunales militares del régimen» (mi traducción con la ayuda de DeepL Translate).⁶⁸ Esto ejemplifica los métodos usados por Franco para controlar la narrativa.

Una consecuencia de la campaña de desinformación de Franco es que, después de su muerte y el regreso a la democracia, todavía hay un debate sobre la historia de la dictadura. La memoria colectiva de esta época ha sido muy impactada por la división popular sobre la historia de la dictadura. Hubo un borrado de las historias menos agradables (las historias de los reprimidos) de la dictadura. Esto pasó en todos los niveles de la sociedad en España. Por ejemplo, en 1977, el gobierno aprobó la Ley de Amnistía, también conocida como el Pacto del Olvido, que institucionaliza una amnistía por los crímenes cometidos durante la dictadura para que la sociedad no tenga que (y no pueda) enfrentarse a la difícil historia.⁶⁹

A causa de esta ley, el público español no ha podido recuperarse de su pasado. Por ejemplo, unas personas han tenido que vivir junto a su antiguo torturador.⁷⁰ En las escuelas, no se enseña una historia completa de la dictadura. En cambio, los jóvenes

⁶⁷ “Franco Exhumation: Spanish Dictator’s Remains Moved,” accessed March 31, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50164806>.

⁶⁸ Anderson and del Arco Blanco, “Mass Killings and Violence in Spain, 1936-1952,” 5.

⁶⁹ “BOE-A-1977-24937 Ley 46/1977, de 15 de Octubre, de Amnistía.,” accessed April 3, 2024, <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-1977-24937>.

⁷⁰ *El Silencio de Otros*, Documentary/Drama, 2019.

tienen que aprender sobre lo que pasó de sus padres o de otras fuentes. Hay mucha variedad porque los niños educados en familias nacionalistas/conservadoras aprenden otra versión de la historia que niños cuyas familias sufrieron la represión

Más recientemente, unos grupos han sido fundados con la meta de confrontar este problema. Por ejemplo, la Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica fue fundada para coordinar las exhumaciones de republicanos desaparecidos para ayudar a sus familias a aceptar el pasado.⁷¹ Al reconocer a las víctimas, la Asociación desafía la negación de la historia de los desaparecidos, sus familias, y todos los que fueron reprimidos bajo Franco.

Junto con los movimientos sociales, han habido algunos avances políticos. Por ejemplo, en 2007, el congreso aprobó la Ley de la Memoria Histórica (Ley 52/2007 de 26 de diciembre). El objeto de la ley, como está definido en el texto, es

reconocer y ampliar derechos a favor de quienes padecieron persecución o violencia, por razones políticas, ideológicas, o de creencia religiosa, durante la Guerra Civil y la Dictadura, promover su reparación moral y la recuperación de su memoria personal y familiar, y adoptar medidas complementarias destinadas a suprimir elementos de división entre los ciudadanos, todo ello con el fin de fomentar la cohesión y solidaridad entre las diversas generaciones de españoles en torno a los principios, valores y libertades constitucionales.⁷²

Esto representa un cambio grande en la sociedad y la conversación pública sobre la Guerra Civil y la dictadura. Por primera vez desde 1936, el gobierno reconoció

⁷¹ “Asociación Para La Recuperación de La Memoria Histórica,” accessed March 31, 2024, <https://memoriahistorica.org.es/>.

⁷² “Ley de la Memoria Histórica (Ley 52/2007 de 26 de Diciembre),” accessed April 15, 2024, <https://www.mpr.gob.es/memoriademocratica/normativa-y-otros-recursos/Paginas/ley-memoria-historica.aspx>.

oficialmente la represión de las víctimas. También, reconoció la necesidad de confrontar la dictadura y sus consecuencias negativas colectivamente para poder seguir adelante. Este reconocimiento, junto con el de la Ley de Memoria Democrática (Ley 20/2022 de 19 de octubre) que añadió algunas protecciones, como «un Censo de Víctimas o la retirada de símbolos de la dictadura» muestra el impacto que los movimientos sociales han tenido en la política en España.⁷³ La admisión del gobierno que reconocer el pasado es necesaria fue importante, pero no suficiente. Todavía hay personas, especialmente de la derecha política, que insisten que se debe ignorar las consecuencias de la dictadura para las víctimas.

La representación de la memoria en la literatura y la cine

Las obras literarias y cinematográficas también pueden tener un impacto muy grande en la conversación sobre la memoria. El caso de la dictadura en España es un buen ejemplo de este fenómeno. El proceso de crear una obra para el escritor o el cineasta puede ser curativo pero el impacto más grande es el que puede tener para el público. Una obra de este tipo puede ayudar o forzar al público a confrontar el pasado y puede influenciar la conversación política.

José Colmeiro, en «Re-Collecting Women's Voices From Prison: The Hybridization of Memories in Dulce Chacón's *La voz dormida*», explica la importancia del trabajo que puede hacer. Dice que la combinación de historias personales con el espacio público en la forma de una obra es «very relevant and necessary part of the

⁷³ “Ley de Memoria Democrática: objetivos y actuaciones,” accessed April 15, 2024, <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/serviciosdeprensa/notasprensa/politica-territorial-memoria-democratica/paginas/2024/que-es-la-ley-de-memoria-democratica.aspx>.

continuing effort to correct the historical record». ⁷⁴ Según él, ayuda no solo a la(s) persona(s) que crea(n) la obra pero también a los miembros de la comunidad que interactúan con ella. Por ejemplo, mujeres que iban a presentaciones de *La voz dormida*, un libro que va a ser discutido más abajo «saw this book as a cathartic experience that allowed them to speak and share their own individual memories». ⁷⁵ Jo Labanyi lo explicó bien cuando dijo «the ghosts of the past need to be acknowledged before they can be put to rest». ⁷⁶ Este es el trabajo de una obra que intenta interactuar con la memoria colectiva.

El silencio de otros

Se puede encontrar un ejemplo de esta idea en *El silencio de otros* (2018), un documental de Almudena Carracedo y Robert Bahar. Ahí, se puede ver otra manera de luchar contra el rechazo de la historia. Cuenta la historia de unas víctimas y descendientes de víctimas del régimen de Franco y su búsqueda por la justicia, a pesar de la Ley de Amnistía. ¿La solución? Llevar a juicio a los perpetradores de violencia en el extranjero. Según las leyes humanitarias internacionales, un juicio puede tener lugar en un país extranjero si el país donde las violaciones del Estatuto de Roma, específicamente crímenes contra la humanidad, tomaron lugar se niega a juzgar el caso. ⁷⁷ En este caso, España se niega a juzgar el caso, así que unas víctimas se unieron a una petición en Argentina que intenta juzgar a los «criminales del

⁷⁴ José F. Colmeiro, "Re-Collecting Women's Voices From Prison: The Hybridization of Memories in Dulce Chacón's *La Voz Dormida*," in *Visions and Revisions* (Brill, 2008), 193, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401205955_012.

⁷⁵ Colmeiro, 193.

⁷⁶ Jo Labanyi, "History and Hauntology; or, What Does One Do with the Ghosts of the Past? Reflections on Spanish Film and Fiction of the Post-Franco Period," in *Disremembering the Dictatorship* (Brill, 2000), 66, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004483224_006.

⁷⁷ "Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 1998," accessed February 28, 2024, https://legal.un.org/icc/statute/99_corr/cstatute.htm.

Franquismo, incluyendo torturadores, ministros y médicos implicados en los casos de niños robados» con las primeras órdenes de arresto. El juicio tiene un rol importante en ayudar a las víctimas obtener justicia.

También, hay impactos del documental en sí mismo. Primero, incluye entrevistas con víctimas. Ellos cuentan sus historias o las historias de sus familias. Con las entrevistas, tienen, a veces por primera vez, la oportunidad de hablar de sus experiencias y la represión que sufrieron. Para estas personas, el acto de compartir sus memorias es recuperativo porque se validan sus experiencias.

Al mismo tiempo, añade a la conversación pública. Gerardo Rus, en «Reclamando memoria y justicia: los fantasmas del franquismo en *El silencio de otros*», explica que el documental, especialmente las narrativas que presenta, produce una «concientización... en la audiencia», la cual crea una «empatía con la audiencia [que] es esencial en esta producción». ⁷⁸ Esta empatía viene del diálogo que el documental abre sobre los testimonios. Es fundamental que el público tenga esta oportunidad de saber de las víctimas que no han podido compartir antes. Superar las heridas de la dictadura requiere iluminar el pasado, y esto no es posible si el pasado permanece oculto. Se dice, «el tiempo lo cura todo», pero esto solo pasa cuando se tiene la oportunidad gracias a otros métodos de recuperación emocional.

El reconocimiento y la justicia son dos aspectos importantes en el proceso de superar las heridas sociales, y *El silencio de otros* ayuda con ambos. Da un espacio importante a las víctimas donde se pueden compartir sus historias o encontrar otros

⁷⁸ Gerardo Ruz, "Reclamando Memoria y Justicia: Los Fantasmas Del Franquismo En *El Silencio de Otros*," *Hispanic Studies Review* 6, no. 2 (June 26, 2022), <https://hispanicstudiesreview.cofc.edu/article/36181-reclamando-memoria-y-justicia-los-fantasmas-del-franquismo-en-el-silencio-de-otros>.

que tienen experiencias similares e introduce estas víctimas al público, donde pueden impactar la conversación sobre la memoria de la dictadura.

La voz dormida

Dulce Chacón, una autora española, intenta afrontar el pasado en un modo similar con su libro *La voz dormida* (2002). Ella hace lo que Colmeiro llama una «hybridization of memories», combinando las memorias de mujeres republicanas reprimidas, testimonios de las guerrillas, y experiencias de personas no afiliadas a partidos que viven las consecuencias de la guerra junto con documentos de archivo en la forma de una novela para publicación en la esfera pública. Intenta introducir las historias anteriormente silenciadas al público para ayudar con la comprensión del pasado.

Chacón nació en Zafra donde su padre, Antonio Chacón, fue alcalde durante la dictadura de Franco. Durante su crecimiento no fue expuesta a los lados negativos de la dictadura, no conocía ni la represión ni los desaparecidos. Cuando su padre murió, Dulce se mudó a Madrid, donde empezó a conocer más sobre la violencia cometida por el régimen de Franco. Chacón se convirtió en una activista progresista, luchando contra la represión, la violencia contra las mujeres, y la guerra.⁷⁹ Una de las causas sobre las que ella era muy apasionada era la memoria de la represión de la dictadura.

Después de haber publicado unos libros (novelas y libros de poesía), Chacón empezó a trabajar en un nuevo libro que cuenta una narrativa no tan conocida: la historia de las mujeres que han perdido la guerra. Este trabajo, *La voz dormida*, sigue a cuatro mujeres que luchan por conservar sus vidas y su libertad contra el régimen

⁷⁹ Michael Eade, "Dulce Chacón," *The Guardian*, December 13, 2003, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2003/dec/13/guardianobituaries.booksobituaries>.

represivo de Franco. Entrevistó a mujeres en España quienes habían sido perseguidas, encarceladas, reprimidas, y silenciadas por parte del régimen y el libro cuenta sus historias que han sido escondidas por décadas.⁸⁰ El título hace referencia a este silencio forzado: metafóricamente, sus voces han sido dormidas desde el comienzo de la guerra y la dictadura.

Dentro del libro, Chacón explora la hermandad de mujeres republicanas. Ellas tenían que confiar las unas en las otras. No era seguro confiar ni en sus vecinos ni en la comunidad en general. Había espías en todos lados y, como ya ha sido discutido, el aparato de seguridad era muy peligroso y violento. En cambio, estas mujeres crearon una red de personas confiables a través de la cual pudieran transmitir mensajes, enterarse de noticias u obtener ayuda. Por ejemplo, Pepita depende de la ayuda emocional y financiera de Doña Celia, especialmente después de la muerte de su hermana en la prisión de Ventas.⁸¹ Esta hermandad se convierte en un tipo de familia elegida.

Dentro de esta hermandad, contaron sus historias en susurros. Era la única manera segura para enterarse de lo que estaba pasando en las vidas de otros republicanos. Por ejemplo, en el libro, Pepita usa sus conexiones dentro de la red para enterarse de noticias sobre su familia y sus amigos. Tenía que preguntar a los demás con la esperanza de que alguien tuviera una noticia.⁸² A veces, tenía que esperar meses, esperando una carta o un mensajero. Era especialmente difícil colar cartas dentro y fuera de la prisión. Sin embargo, siempre era peligroso compartir información,

⁸⁰ Eade.

⁸¹ Dulce Chacón, *La voz dormida*, 2002, 216.

⁸² Chacón, 223–29.

particularmente en forma escrita, porque hubiera sido fatal si el gobierno se enterara del contenido.

Esta red de transmisión continuó durante toda la dictadura y continúa aún hoy en día. La mayoría de los sobrevivientes solo han contado sus historias a otras mujeres en la hermandad, y no a otros. Chacón dijo que algunas de las mujeres que entrevistó para escribir el libro tenían mucho miedo de hablar de estos temas, aunque la dictadura había acabado décadas antes. En los agradecimientos del libro, Chacón dio gracias a «una mujer que no quiere que mencione su nombre ni el de su pueblo, y que me pidió que cerrara la ventana antes de comenzar a hablar en voz baja».⁸³ La consecuencia de este sistema es que los detalles de sus experiencias vividas no son de conocimiento público. Junto con el Pacto del Olvido, hace que sea muy difícil conocer el alcance de la represión de la dictadura. Parcialmente a causa de esto, los conservadores hoy en día en España pueden continuar negando el pasado del país.

Chacón también muestra el secreto que era necesario por parte de los republicanos durante este periodo para sobrevivir. Por ejemplo, usaron nombres falsos, como «El Chaqueta Negra», para esconder sus identidades.⁸⁴ También, toda la información sobre sus identidades, ubicaciones actuales y planes son escondidas y son compartidas cuando sea completamente necesario y casi siempre de forma oral – tenía que ser así para su seguridad. Esto, en combinación con las historias que son transmitidas oralmente, hace que no haya una historia completa y precisa del periodo. Como consecuencia, permite una distorsión de la memoria colectiva.

⁸³ Chacón, 361.

⁸⁴ Chacón, 25.

El texto de Chacón hace un buen trabajo arrojando luz sobre estas experiencias que no tienen suficiente espacio en la conversación pública. El aspecto más importante del texto es que Chacón usa su posición de poder para elevar voces que han sido silenciadas por décadas. Como Colmeiro explica, «The novel follows a moral imperative to tell a collective history that needs to be told; the imperative of a memory that must be voiced; a haunting ghost that needs to be put to rest; a series of men and women who are now dead and need to be properly buried, but they need to be identified and recognized first».⁸⁵ El libro de Chacón permite que este proceso tenga lugar.

La recepción del libro muestra el impacto real que tuvo. Fue nombrado «Libro del año» en España y recibió buenas críticas del público.⁸⁶ En 2011, el libro se llevó al cine. La película con el mismo título ganó catorce premios y recibió diecisiete nominaciones.⁸⁷ Esta recepción tan positiva muestra que hay al menos elementos en España que están listos para enfrentarse al pasado.

Conclusión

Es claro que la memoria colectiva de la dictadura cambió para mejor a causa del libro de Chacón, el documental de Carracedo y Bahar, y la decisión de todas las mujeres entrevistadas de compartir sus historias. Estas obras han traído la conversación al centro de atención del público con consecuencias políticas, sociales y personales. Para cada persona entrevistada, las obras les ayudan porque les dan una

⁸⁵ Colmeiro, "Re-Collecting Women's Voices From Prison," 201.

⁸⁶ "La Voz Dormida / The Sleeping Voice by Dulce Chacon: 9788466332507 | PenguinRandomHouse.Com: Books," PenguinRandomhouse.com, accessed April 7, 2024, <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/579208/la-voz-dormida--the-sleeping-voice-by-dulce-chacon/>.

⁸⁷ *The Sleeping Voice (2011) - Awards - IMDb*, accessed April 7, 2024, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1688649/awards/>.

plataforma para compartir sus historias. También ayuda en nivel personal cada víctima que, por primera vez, puede ver una representación de *su* historia en dominio público. La atención que llamó a ellos también ayudó en el debate político sobre la necesidad de reconocer el pasado. Como consecuencia de la presión política, la Ley de Memoria Histórica y la Ley de Memoria Democráticas fueron aprobadas. Además, socialmente, las víctimas han sido reconocidas después de décadas de represión y tienen, por primera vez, una voz en la conversación. Todos estos impactos muestran el rol que la producción cultural tiene en dirigir la representación del pasado en el presente y en mejorar las condiciones futuras.

Italiano

Introduzione

In questo capitolo, aggiungerò informazioni supplementari all'analisi del capitolo in spagnolo. Per prima cosa, spiegherò il contesto storico nel quale si sviluppa la dittatura di Benito Mussolini e metterò a confronto la dittatura di Franco con quella di Mussolini. È importante tenere a mente il contesto perché ha un grande impatto sul dialogo nazionale. Inoltre, userò la teoria del primo capitolo per analizzare più a fondo la dittatura di Mussolini in quel contesto. Successivamente, prendendo in esame il contesto storico, esaminerò la memoria collettiva in Italia attraverso la letteratura tenendo a mente la memoria della dittatura di Franco in Spagna che è stata discussa utilizzando il film di Almudena Carracedo e Robert Bahar, *El silencio de otros (Il silenzio degli altri)*, e il libro di Dulce Chacón, *La voz dormida (La voce dormita)*. Per fare questo, farò riferimento al testo scritto di Elsa Morante, *La Storia* e un documentario di Leonardo Tiberi, intitolato *Combat Film*. Queste due opere hanno richiamato l'attenzione sul discorso legato alla dittatura mussoliniana in un momento chiave e hanno avuto un forte impatto sul dibattito nazionale sulla memoria della dittatura.

Contesto storico: il Biennio Rosso

Dopo la Prima guerra mondiale, segue un periodo di due anni, tra il 1919 e il 1920, caratterizzato da grande agitazione sociale in Italia. Quel periodo è noto come il Biennio Rosso. Durante quest'epoca, molti italiani dimostrano il proprio disappunto e malcontento nei confronti del governo. C'erano infatti varie difficoltà economiche, specialmente rispetto agli altri vincitori della guerra, e gli abitanti non ricevevano aiuti di carattere finanziario dal governo. Per esempio, il costo della vita era aumentato del

300-400 per cento ma i salari non erano stati aumentati.⁸⁸ Le persone avevano difficoltà a permettersi i beni di prima necessità, come il cibo. Di conseguenza, ci sono state manifestazioni per le strade, scioperi dei lavoratori e rivolte violente. Charles L. Bertrand, in «The Biennio Rosso: Anarchists and Revolutionary Syndicalists in Italy, 1919-1920», ha chiamato queste manifestazioni un «powerful movement of unrest that for a moment had the look of a revolution».⁸⁹

Inoltre, c'erano problemi politici. Il Biennio Rosso ha seguito la Rivoluzione Russa del 1917, in cui i bolscevichi presero il potere dallo zar. Come reazione, i movimenti di estrema destra ed i movimenti dei socialisti hanno preso piede in Italia. Ogni partito politico voleva raggiungere e accentrare il potere proprio come aveva fatto Lenin.⁹⁰ Secondo il governo, i socialisti rappresentavano la minaccia più grande. Per questa ragione, i fascisti hanno potuto guadagnare maggiore slancio senza resistenza significativa da parte del governo stesso.

Il leader dei fascisti era Benito Mussolini. A Mussolini si attribuisce il merito di aver creato il fascismo, ma non era sempre il brutale dittatore che è conosciuto oggi.⁹¹ Quando era giovane, Mussolini era socialista però la sua esperienza nella Prima guerra mondiale ha cambiato la sua prospettiva. Lui ha sostenuto la guerra e, di conseguenza, è stato espulso dal partito socialista italiano.⁹² Dopo la guerra, è diventato un fascista ed ha ottenuto un posto in Parlamento. Successivamente, Mussolini ha fondato una forza

⁸⁸ "Biennio Rosso / Red Biennium - Two Red Years (1919-1920)," accessed April 7, 2024, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/it-history-biennio-rosso.htm>.

⁸⁹ Charles L. Bertrand, "The Biennio Rosso: Anarchists and Revolutionary Syndicalists in Italy, 1919-1920," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 9, no. 3 (1982): 383, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41298794>.

⁹⁰ "Profondo Rosso. La Rivoluzione Russa e Il Movimento Operaio Socialista in Italia (1917-1921)," accessed April 15, 2024, <https://iris.unito.it/handle/2318/1660426?mode=complete>.

⁹¹ "Benito Mussolini | The Dictator's Playbook," Dictator's Playbook, accessed April 7, 2024, <https://www.pbs.org/tpt/dictators-playbook/episodes/benito-mussolini/>.

⁹² Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Strongmen: Mussolini to the Present* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2020), 29.

paramilitare, le Camicie Nere, che era conosciuta per essere molto violenta. La violenza delle Camicie Nere, anche nota come «squadrismo», è cominciata prima che Mussolini prendesse il potere ma era «destinato a rimanere un connotato del regime».⁹³ Mussolini ha anche fondato un partito politico, il Partito Nazionale Fascista, nel 1921.⁹⁴ Con questa nuova piattaforma, Mussolini ha avuto un crescente sostegno popolare perché ha descritto il fascismo come favorevole a «national unity instead on class conflict, imperialism and force [fuori] instead of international solidarity, and... modernization without loss of tradition».⁹⁵ Il fascismo di Mussolini era una promessa di una vita migliore, ed è stato efficace in un momento in cui molte persone soffrivano. Con le Camicie Nere, il Partito Nazionale Fascista e il sostegno popolare, Mussolini complottò per prendere il potere.

Il 28 ottobre 1922, Mussolini e i suoi sostenitori si recano a Roma per chiedere il potere del governo dell'allora primo ministro, Luigi Facta. Questo evento è meglio noto come la Marcia su Roma. Attraverso un specie di colpo di stato in cui il re «chose the path of least conflict, appointing Mussolini to the post of Prime Minister», Mussolini diventa il nuovo primo ministro d'Italia (Vittorio Emanuele III è rimasto il re) e dà origine a una vera e propria dittatura.

Contesto storico: la dittatura di Mussolini

La dittatura di Mussolini è durata dalla Marcia su Roma, nel 1922, al 1943, quando Mussolini è stato rimosso dal potere dal Gran Consiglio del Fascismo ed

⁹³ "Mussolini e Il Fascismo : Storia, Memoria e Amnesia," 31, accessed April 15, 2024, <https://access.torrossa.com/en/catalog/readonline/5303496>.

⁹⁴ Ben-Ghiat, *Strongmen*, 30.

⁹⁵ Ben-Ghiat, 30.

incarcerato.⁹⁶ Durante quel periodo, c'era molta sofferenza. Per esempio, secondo R. J. B. Bosworth, in *Mussolini's Italy: Life Under the Fascist Dictatorship, 1915-1945*, «official reports admitted that about 40 percent of the population were suffering from hunger».⁹⁷ Mussolini ha richiesto il sostegno assoluto e indiscutibile della popolazione. Tutti erano costretti a sostenere a gran voce il regime. Coloro i quali non l'hanno fatto sono stati oppressi dalla polizia e dalle sue pratiche di repressione, tra le quali la tortura, l'incarcerazione in prigioni formali e l'esilio, specificamente alle isole ed al sud del paese.⁹⁸

Per eseguire questi ordini, Mussolini ha creato una forza segreta di polizia. L'OVRA (l' Organizzazione di vigilanza e repressione dell'antifascismo, probabilmente), che è spesso paragonata alla Gestapo in Germania, è stata fondata per proteggere Mussolini e reprimere l'opposizione del regime.⁹⁹ Mussolini ha espresso di sapere che «squadrista violence was an essential prop to his personal power and to Fascism itself» e si affidò alle Camicie Nere durante la sua ascesa al potere e all'OVRA durante il resto della sua dittatura.¹⁰⁰ Durante il periodo dello squadrismo, migliaia di persone sono state uccise.¹⁰¹ Il primo obiettivo della forza di polizia era «to protect Mussolini and help create the illusion of consensus surrounding his regime.»¹⁰² L'OVRA operava

⁹⁶ "Death of the Duce, Benito Mussolini," The National WWII Museum | New Orleans, April 28, 2020, <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/death-of-benito-mussolini>.

⁹⁷ R. J. B. Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy: Life Under the Fascist Dictatorship, 1915-1945* (Penguin, 2007), 36.

⁹⁸ Michael R. Ebner, *Ordinary Violence in Mussolini's Italy*, 2010.

⁹⁹ «Organizzazione di vigilanza e repressione dell'antifascismo (OVRA) - Storia e Memoria di Bologna», consultato il 7 aprile 2024, <https://www.storiaememoriadibologna.it/organizzazione-di-vigilanza-e-repressione-dellanti-323-organizzazione>.

¹⁰⁰ Matteo Millan, "The Institutionalisation of 'Squadrismo': Disciplining Paramilitary Violence in the Italian Fascist Dictatorship," *Contemporary European History* 22, no. 4 (2013): 552, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43299403>.

¹⁰¹ Ben-Ghiat, *Strongmen*, 203.

¹⁰² Italo G. Savella, "Arturo Bocchini and the Secret Political Police in Fascist Italy," *The Historian* 60, no. 4 (1998): 779, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24452184>.

prendendo di mira i partiti chiamati «sovversivi» che includevano «comunisti, socialisti, repubblicani democratici, democratici cristiani e gruppi religiosi non cattolici».¹⁰³

Comunque, se paragonata con altre forze di polizia di governi autoritari, come quello di Franco in Spagna, l'OVRA non usava repressione violenta di massa. La decisione di cessare di utilizzare violenza contro tutti era avvenuta per diverse ragioni. Secondo Ruth Ben-Ghiat, nel libro *Strongmen: Mussolini to the Present*, «Mussolini sought to minimize at home to market Fascism as a more humane alternative to Nazism or Communism».¹⁰⁴ Questo non vuol dire che l'OVRA non fosse violenta; sì lo era. Ma, invece di impegnarsi in atti di violenza di massa, il regime ha preso di mira specifici oppositori. Michael Ebner, nel suo libro intitolato *Ordinary Violence in Mussolini's Italy*, spiega che il governo «claimed the right to beat, torture, and kill *select enemies* with impunity».¹⁰⁵ Come conseguenza, la differenza tra l'OVRA e altre forze politiche è che «it did not engage in physical or lethal violence on a mass scale», che sarà importante per capire la memoria dell'epoca nell'Italia democratica moderna.¹⁰⁶

Arturo Bocchini è stato responsabile delle iniziative dell'OVRA dal 1926 al 1940 e lui controllava il tipo di violenza che veniva utilizzato. Italo Savella in «Arturo Bocchini and the Secret Political Police in Fascist Italy» dice che «Bocchini was able to effectively squelch opposition to Mussolini's regime without resorting to the wholesale murder that characterized the Nazi SS».¹⁰⁷ Invece, usava altri tipi di repressione. Per esempio, la polizia fascista di Mussolini usava un sistema molto organizzato per categorizzare le persone problematiche e punire quelle che costituivano una minaccia.

¹⁰³ Savella, 784.

¹⁰⁴ Ben-Ghiat, *Strongmen*, 203.

¹⁰⁵ Ebner, *Ordinary Violence in Mussolini's Italy*, 4.

¹⁰⁶ Ebner, 4.

¹⁰⁷ Savella, «Arturo Bocchini and the Secret Political Police in Fascist Italy», 779.

Tutti erano altamente sorvegliati e molti degli oppositori di Mussolini sono stati esiliati in paesi nei quali l'OVRA avrebbe potuto supervisionare meglio le loro azioni.¹⁰⁸ Inoltre, non c'era un requisito di prova per punire qualcuno, quindi tutti gli abitanti vivevano nella paura di essere esiliati, torturati, o altrimenti repressi.

Contesto teorico

Nel primo capitolo di questa tesi, ho spiegato che ci sono alcuni lavori teorici che sono importanti da capire per analizzare una dittatura ed i suoi sistemi repressivi. Nel caso di Mussolini, «How Modern Dictators Survive», di Sergei Guriev e Daniel Treisman, e «The apparatus for violence», di Sam Bell e Amanda Murdie, sono tra i testi più importanti.

Secondo Guriev e Treisman, i dittatori del XX secolo usavano repressione violenta per due ragioni: terrorizzare l'intera popolazione o intimidire gli avversari.¹⁰⁹ Come è stato descritto nella prima sezione di questo capitolo, la repressione che Mussolini e l'OVRA usavano contro *tutta* la popolazione non era di carattere cruento. Però, sì usavano forme di repressione violenta contro una parte del popolo. Gli avversari di Mussolini, comprese quelle persone che avevano solo prospettive diverse sul governo o credenze religiose diverse, hanno sperimentato sulla propria pelle una repressione estrema. Questa violenza rientra nella struttura di Guriev e Treisman.

L'altro testo fondamentale per capire la violenza in Italia durante il regime di Mussolini è «The apparatus for violence». Bell e Murdie argomentano sul fenomeno che

¹⁰⁸ Ebner, *Ordinary Violence in Mussolini's Italy*, 2.

¹⁰⁹ Guriev and Treisman, "How Modern Dictators Survive: An Informational Theory of the New Authoritarianism."

si chiama “la memoria di violenza.”¹¹⁰ Secondo loro, è più probabile che un popolo combatta contro la repressione se c’è una memoria legata a una forma di violenza. Questa memoria è definita come una rivoluzione recente in un paese, specificamente negli ultimi cinque anni. Gli studiosi spiegano che «more recent mobilization is more likely to produce protest responses to repression».¹¹¹ Nel caso di Mussolini, questo è importante perché mostra che la protesta contro il governo è diventata più probabile dopo il colpo di stato del 1922.

La memoria collettiva nella letteratura e nel cinema

L’idea di Colmeiro introdotta nel secondo capitolo rimane valida per il discorso sulla memoria in Italia. Secondo Colmeiro, l’introduzione della memoria nella letteratura può essere un’«esperienza catartica» perché permette che i membri della comunità possano «speak and share their own individual memories», e che questo completi «the cycle of construction of collective memory».¹¹² Questa costruzione della memoria collettiva è necessaria per mettere a tacere il passato.

Una forma per fare questo consiste nella creazione di un *lieu de mémoire* (un luogo di memoria). Pierre Nora, in «Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*», spiega che i luoghi di memoria prendono il posto di ambienti di memoria, che non esistono di più. Quando entrano nella letteratura o in un film, il pubblico è trasportato nello stesso luogo e può accedere al luogo e alle memorie ad esso associate. Nel caso della Spagna e del testo di Chacón, la prigione Ventas funge da

¹¹⁰ Bell and Murdie, “The Apparatus for Violence: Repression, Violent Protest, and Civil War in a Cross-National Framework.”

¹¹¹ Bell and Murdie, 348.

¹¹² Colmeiro, “Re-Collecting Women's Voices From Prison,” 193.

questo luogo, portando ogni persona che legge il libro al carcere dove tante persone sono state messe a tacere e a rimanere in silenzio.

Il documentario *Combat Film* mostra un altro esempio di questa idea. Il documentario include filmati del giorno successivo all'uccisione di Mussolini nel 1945, tra cui un filmato del cadavere di Mussolini. Quando il documentario è stato distribuito, nel 1994, c'è stato molto dibattito sui meriti del mostrare il cadavere. Alcune persone pensavano che fosse importante perché insegnava la storia alla nuova generazione di italiani. Allo stesso tempo, altri gruppi, generalmente della destra politica, pensavano che non fosse necessario mostrare qualcosa del passato nuovamente. Però, la reazione generale del pubblico dimostra l'importanza di affrontare il passato. Robert Ventresca, in «Mussolini's Ghost: Italy's Duce in History and Memory», spiega che c'è una «long shadow [that] Mussolini and fascism have cast over Italian politics, historical writing and public memory».¹¹³ Affrontare quest'ombra e l'impatto che ha avuto sui sopravvissuti del regime di Mussolini è l'unico modo per fare progressi.

Il testo di Elsa Morante, *La Storia* (1974), mostra un altro aspetto importante della memoria del regime in Italia. Molte persone, quando ricordano quest'epoca, si concentrano sugli aspetti non politici della vita quotidiana. Questo non vuol dire che la politica del giorno non avesse un impatto sulla vita, sì ce l'aveva, ma molti degli abitanti (non tutti) si concentrano sui problemi sociali invece che sulle questioni politiche. Uno studio condotto da Sofia Serenelli dimostra che molte delle «memories [collected in the study] describe everyday life under Fascism exclusively in non-political terms, with the

¹¹³ Robert A. Ventresca, "Mussolini's Ghost: Italy's Duce in History and Memory," *History and Memory* 18, no. 1 (2006): 88, <https://doi.org/10.2979/his.2006.18.1.86>.

focus on either material conditions or popular culture». ¹¹⁴ Si può notare una prova di questo fenomeno in *La storia*, dove Morante scrive sull'impatto politico sulla società, facendo una critica non esplicita del governo di Mussolini, invece di criticare palesemente la dittatura.

Per esempio, nel testo, Iduzza (Ida), il personaggio principale, descrive la sua vita difficile di donna e quella di suo figlio, Usepe. Le condizioni di vita della famiglia sono state dettate direttamente dalla situazione politica del giorno. Però, la discussione si è concentrata sulla vita quotidiana dei personaggi. Questo è evidenziato nella conversazione dello stupro di Ida. Lei è stata violentata da un soldato nazista (e lei è rimasta incinta di Usepe come conseguenza). Lei ha spiegato che «compiuto lo stupro... il soldato sparisce (morirà in viaggio verso la Cirenaica)». ¹¹⁵ Qui, sebbene lei alluda alla guerra con riferimento a Cirenaica, non critica la presenza dei soldati tedeschi in Italia. Invece, quello che ricorda dello stupro è la sua umiliazione. Dice che «le pareva che le sue membra proiettassero sui suoi scolari e su tutti quanti il disonore dello stupro e che sulla sua faccia, come su una cera bagnata, fossero impressi i segni dei baci». ¹¹⁶ Questo è solo un esempio però che illustra l'idea secondo la quale, in alcuni testi sulla memoria della dittatura, le *conseguenze* delle decisioni politiche (lo stupro) sono state discusse più che le decisioni stesse nello specifico (la guerra e la presenza di soldati tedeschi in Italia).

Nel caso del libro di Morante, c'è una eccezione. Come suggerisce il titolo, il libro è scritto in parte come un racconto storico invece di un romanzo. Specificamente,

¹¹⁴ Sofia Serenelli, "It Was like Something That You Have at Home Which Becomes so Familiar That You Don't Even Pay Attention to It": Memories of Mussolini and Fascism in Predappio, 1922–2010," *Modern Italy* 18, no. 2 (May 2013): 162, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13532944.2013.780426>.

¹¹⁵ Elsa Morante, *La Storia*, Kindle (Einaudi, 1974), 10.

¹¹⁶ Morante, 115.

all'inizio, ma anche all'interno degli altri capitoli, Morante include una linea del tempo. Per esempio, descrive quello che è passato nella storia mondiale tra il 1914 e il 1940 all'inizio del libro per contestualizzare il racconto. In questa sezione, descrive quasi sempre Mussolini come «il fascista Mussolini» e il governo come una «dittatura totalitaria».¹¹⁷ Sebbene «fascista» sia una forma corretta di descrivere il governo e le azioni di Mussolini, si può vedere che Morante vuole criticare Mussolini in questi momenti. Era una decisione intenzionale descrivere Mussolini così invece di utilizzare il suo titolo formale che era «Primo Ministro» (prima del 1943) e «il Duce» (dopo il 1943). In quel modo, *La storia* aggiunge un altro modo di presentare la memoria nella letteratura: descrivere i fatti del passato con la conoscenza del pensiero moderno.

Inoltre, *La storia* dà voce alle donne ebree perseguitate da Mussolini, tra cui Ida e la sua famiglia. Ida era ebrea ma nascondeva questa parte della sua identità ed è per questa ragione che lei è sopravvissuta alla deportazione del 16 ottobre 1943. Nel momento in cui tutti gli ebrei sono stati caricati sul treno diretto verso i campi di concentramento, Ida intende andare con loro perché prova vergogna per avere nascosto la sua identità ma spiega che «della presenza di Ida, rimasta un poco indietro al limite della rampa, non s'interessava ancora nessuno».¹¹⁸ Mostra che, proprio come lei ha negato la sua identità, anche gli altri lo hanno fatto. Nei giorni successivi, si confronta con ciò che ha visto ma lei e Usepe rimangono in vita.

Questa parte del libro è importante per due ragioni. Prima di tutto, dà uno spazio a Morante per potere spiegare la storia della sua famiglia e le conseguenze di questa parte della dittatura per loro. Poi, aggiunge alla conversazione pubblica la storia ebraica

¹¹⁷ Morante, 41.

¹¹⁸ Morante, 283.

in Italia, che è spesso ignorata nella discussione dell'Olocausto. Secondo Susan Zuccotti, in *The Italians and the Holocaust: Persecution, Rescue, and Survival*, «during the first three decades of the postwar period, the Italian aspect of the Holocaust was never confronted».¹¹⁹ *La storia* è stata pubblicata nel 1974 e rientra nell'arco di questo periodo. Conseguentemente, era ancora più importante che Morante riflettesse sull'esperienza degli ebrei italiani in quel momento per aggiungere altro alla conversazione pubblica sulla guerra.

Conclusioni

Com'è stato spiegato da Colmeiro, c'è un «moral imperative to tell a collective history».¹²⁰ Opere come *La storia* o *Combat Film* fanno un lavoro importante per raccontare questa storia. Quando la memoria collettiva esiste in una forma accessibile e diventa di pubblico dominio, i responsabili, le vittime, gli astanti e la nuova generazione possono unirsi per comprendere il passato. Solo così sarà possibile andare avanti come una società unita da una memoria di violenza.

¹¹⁹ Susan Zuccotti, *The Italians and the Holocaust: Persecution, Rescue, and Survival* (University of Nebraska Press, 1996), x.

¹²⁰ Colmeiro, "Re-Collecting Women's Voices From Prison," 201.

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