

Thesis Description

Research Topic

This thesis will attempt to answer the question of when a dictatorship is a necessary form of government. It will show that dictatorship is an appropriate form of government under certain circumstances and will show what those circumstances are. Despite being a universally despised form of government, dictatorships can provide stability and unity necessary for a state to endure a crisis. This thesis would examine where the line is drawn between a dictator leading the state through a calamity and the dictator keeping power for longer than is necessary. The case study of Francisco Franco would show that dictatorships can be brutal but that they allow the state to survive in times of crisis when brutality is a necessary evil. It will also show that dictatorships can outlast their necessity and lead to prolonged rule through violence. This thesis will compare Franco with Augusto Pinochet to show Pinochet as closer to the ideal dictator who while violent, did lead Chile to a point where he could step down from absolute power without an outbreak of violence.

Theoretical sources to be examined

This thesis will look at Livy's account of Cincinnatus as a starting point for what the ideal dictator would be, one who steps up when the state needs a leader and steps down as soon as the crisis is resolved. This would lead to an examination of Aristotle's *Politics* where he describes a dictatorship as the worst of all forms of government. The thesis would then examine Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* to show the theory behind tyrannical rule as necessary to keep society from falling apart.

Case Study

This thesis will then look at Francisco Franco as an example of a dictator that was elected to guide a state through a crisis. The thesis will point out that in terms of ancient Roman role models, Franco followed Julius Caesar's example rather than Cincinnatus' by retaining absolute power longer than necessary. The thesis will further explore Franco in terms of Hobbes' ideal to show that the longevity of his rule was less a problem than the unnecessary ruthlessness of it. Franco's permanence and cruelty as a dictator will be used to show he is an example of Aristotle's undesirable dictator who runs the worst form of government. Franco will be compared with Pinochet, who stepped down when a crisis was imminent, and though Pinochet was no Cincinnatus, he will be looked at as a dictator who stepped down rather than being violently ousted.

Sources:

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Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan. Classics of Modern Political Theory: Machiavelli to Mill*. Steven M. Cahn. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. 80-196. Print.

Livy, Titus Livius. *The History of Rome from Its Foundation, Books I-V*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1965. Print.

Orwell, George. *Homage to Catalonia*. Orlando: Harcourt, 1952. Print.

Vilar, Pierre. *The Spanish Civil War*. Havana: Social Science Editorial, 1990. Print.