

Ideology and Party System Development

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Note: This essay is taken from the draft Introduction to my forthcoming book on Ideology, Uncertainty, and Democracy: Party Formation in Third Republic France, Weimar Germany and Post-Soviet Russia, combined with a section of Chapter 3 on the methodology that will be used in the case studies.

A party government? The lessons of history tell us that everything is possible, but I am against introducing such a measure into Russian politics today. I am deeply convinced that in the former Soviet Union where the economy is developing, the state is being strengthened, the principles of federalism are finally taking root that we need a firm presidential authority.

--Vladimir V. Putin, January 31, 2006¹

The words cited above, coming from an increasingly authoritarian president whose every utterance constituted an official policy pronouncement, arguably sounded the death knell for Russia's post-Soviet experiment in constructing a vibrant system of truly competitive political parties. To be sure, President Putin during his second term continued from time to time to assert the need for strengthening of party organizations in Russia. But the overall evolution of Russian political institutions, in which the formally nonpartisan executive branch now dominated every aspect of the political process, had rendered the role of political parties effectively moot.

By 2006, of course, the weakness of Russian political parties was hardly news. The massive increase in executive power engineered by Putin—who like his predecessor

¹ Putin Press Conference, January 31, 2006. Full text available at www.kremlin.ru.

Boris Yeltsin remained formally unaffiliated with any party—had relegated the Russian parliament to a marginal position in Russian political life, drastically narrowing the scope for independent action by the parties represented in it. Within the State Duma, the overwhelming majority held by the slavishly pro-Kremlin party United Russia ensured the automatic passage of every Kremlin initiative. Notwithstanding this fact, Putin had moved in 2005 to limit parliamentary power still further, constructing a new parallel “Public Chamber” made up of appointed dignitaries, with its own right to review legislation. Russia’s two main liberal parties, the Yabloko (Apple) Party and the Union of Rightist Forces, had failed to attain representation in the State Duma altogether in the December 2003 elections, and were almost totally deprived of funds and media exposure as a result. Even the two parties that had managed to endure as coherent political organizations throughout the Yeltsin and Putin eras—the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) led by Gennadii Ziuganov and the so-called Liberal Democratic Party of the Russian Federation (LDPR) led by Vladimir Zhirinovskii—commanded the loyalty of only a small minority of Russian voters.² As had been the case since the 1990s, only a miniscule percentage of Russian citizens professed any trust whatsoever in political parties as an institution, and—at least until an all-out campaign by the state formally to enlist members of the United Russia party as the 2007-08 elections approached—an even tinier fraction actually claimed to be party members.³ Putin’s

² By May 2006, only 9 per cent of Russians polled expressed support for the KPRF, while only 6 per cent supported the LDPR. See Levada Analytical Center Survey, “Public Opinion and the Duma” at howrussiavotes.org, accessed on June 25, 2006.

³ Richard Rose reports that only 10 per cent of Russians profess any trust in parties, while 76 per cent do not; only 7 per cent of respondents say they identify with any party, a figure that drops to 4 per cent of those under 30. See Rose, New Russia Barometer XIV: Evidence of Dissatisfaction, Glasgow: Studies in Public Policy, No. 402, Centre for the

negative verdict on the idea of party government, then, only expressed the sentiments of the vast majority of his countrymen.

Along with the disintegration of Russia's fledgling political party system came another less-noticed development: the effective collapse of Russian political ideology. Despite the repeated, high-profile efforts of leading Russian politicians since 1991 to discover a new Russian "national idea" to replace the discredited former orthodoxy of Marxism-Leninism, no clear and consistent political definition of the Russian nation, its mission and place in the world, had emerged in the first decade and a half of the post-Soviet era. On the contrary, Putin's efforts to build legitimacy for his regime involved an eclectic mixing and matching of contradictory symbols that, if anything, were even less coherent than Boris Yeltsin's ideological platform. Putin simultaneously called for renewed pride in Soviet-era accomplishments, and approved the ostentatious reburial of White Russian General Anton Denikin. He trumpeted the need to "rebuild the Russian state" and warned darkly of conspiracies to destroy the nation—but he simultaneously upheld the importance of "civil society" and European values.⁴ He termed the collapse of

Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, 2005. For an interesting account of the different membership figures reported by Russian parties to the media and to the Russian Justice Ministry, see "How Many Party Members?: Depends on Who's Asking," Radio Free Europe/Radio Free Liberty Russian Political Weekly, Vol. 3(3), January 16, 2003. According to the figures Russia's party leaders gave to the media in 2002, all major parties in Russia put together had a total of 1,669,900 members, or just over 1 per cent of Russia's population. However, according to the figures Russian parties reported to the Justice Ministry that year, there were only 189,700 party members in all. In contrast, by early 2006, United Russia announced that it had reached the one million mark in party members; see "Russia's Main Pro-Kremlin Party Posts One Million Members," Mosnews.com, March 6, 2006, at <http://www.mosnews.com/news/2006/03/06/unitedmillion.shtml>, accessed on June 25, 2006.

⁴ Sergei Medvedev, "Juicy Morsels: Putin's Beslan Address and the Construction of the New Russian Identity," Program on New Approaches to Russian Security, Policy Memo

the USSR the “biggest geopolitical catastrophe of the century,” but then publicly lauded Boris Yeltsin for bringing “freedom” to the Russian people.⁵ Even the new official state symbols approved early in the Putin era reflected an underlying ideological ambivalence: the old Soviet national anthem was restored with new, ideologically-neutral words; the communist red flag was approved for the military, along with the tricolor flag of Russian anti-communists for everyone else. Russia’s presidential authoritarianism under Putin thus had an odd, hollow quality, not standing for or against any identifiable ideological principles.⁶ This did not pass unnoticed by Putin’s closest advisors, who by 2006 had redoubled their efforts to construct a viable new ideology that might somehow bolster the regime’s legitimacy in advance of the approaching 2008 elections.⁷

Few if any Western theorists of democratic transition and consolidation expected this outcome in post-Soviet Russia. Indeed, a review of the initial predictions of political scientists specializing in postcommunist democratization shows that most were quite optimistic about the future of Russian party organizations, arguing that the adoption of a new democratic constitution in 1993 and the experience of several reasonably free and fair elections was gradually solidifying the emerging links between social groups in

No. 334, November 2004, Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies; Vladimir Putin, “Speech at the First Plenary Session of the Public Council of the Russian Federation,” January 22, 2006, www.kremlin.ru.

⁵ Vladimir Putin, “Speech to the Federal Assembly,” April 25, 2005, www.kremlin.ru; “Yeltsin, 75, enjoys bash at the Kremlin,” St. Petersburg Times, Issue 1142(8), February 3, 2006.

⁶ Kathleen E. Smith, Mythmaking in the New Russia: Politics and Memory during the Yeltsin Era, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002; James H. Billington, Russia in Search of Itself, Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.

⁷ See in particular the February 2006 speech of Deputy Director of the Russian Presidential Administration Vladislav Surkov, reprinted as “General’naia Liniia,” Moskovskie Novosti, Vol. 7, March 3-9, 2006, pp. 10-11; and “General’naia Liniia,” Moskovskie Novosti, No. 8, March 10-16, 2006. pp. 10-11.

Russia and the new parties working to mobilize them, as well as providing increasingly effective coordination of partisan factions within the legislature.⁸ Even Putin's initial consolidation of state power was seen by some analysts as potentially strengthening the party system by providing clearer institutional rules governing their activities; indeed, Putin himself said as much in arguing for the adoption of such rules during his first term in office.⁹ More pessimistic analysts of post-Soviet Russia, meanwhile, tended to predict a return to an explicitly anti-Western form of dictatorship, either of the communist or nationalist variety.¹⁰ The emergence of an explicitly anti-ideological authoritarianism in Russia, fifteen years after communism's collapse in Eurasia, is thus a puzzle worthy of sustained theoretical investigation.

The central thesis of this book is that these two phenomena—the decline of Russian political parties and the absence of coherent Russian ideologies—are in fact logically connected. Put simply, I will argue that political ideologies, defined as clear and consistent definitions of the principles of membership in a desired political order, are typically necessary (although not sufficient) for the mobilization of enduring, independent national party organizations in uncertain democracies. In highly turbulent social environments of the sort generated by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the formation of large-scale parties requires the solution of a massive collective action

⁸ M. Steven Fish, "The Advent of Multipartyism in Russia, 1993-95," Post-Soviet Affairs, Vol. 11(4), 1995, 340-383; Moshe Haspel, Thomas F. Remington, and Steven S. Smith, "Electoral Institutions and Party Cohesion in the Russian Duma," Journal of Politics, Vol. 60(2), May 1998, 417-39.

⁹ See, for example, Peter Lavelle, "The Poor Political Lexicon of Russia's Liberals," RIA-Novosti, Sept. 26, 2005, <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20050926/41512468.html>, 1/15/06.

¹⁰ Jerry F. Hough, and Susan Goodrich Lehmann, The 1996 Russian Presidential Election; Stephen Shenfield, Russian Fascism: Traditions, Tendencies, Movements, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2001.

problem: while everyone who belongs to or is represented by a political party might benefit from its existence, no single individual will ordinarily find it rational to contribute to the initial formation of such a party on her own. For this reason, new parties in uncertain democracies cannot emerge simply because of opportunities provided by formal political institutions or demands from particular social groups. There must be also some individualized incentives to motivate initial party-builders to join in sustained, collective sacrifice for common party goals. Yet in the absence of stable state institutions, individual efforts to introduce and enforce “selective incentives” to promote such behavior are themselves instrumentally irrational.

Clear and consistent ideologies, I argue, can have the effect of artificially elongating the time horizons of those who embrace them. By presenting an explicit and desirable picture of the political future, successful ideologues can induce at least some instrumentally rational individuals to embrace a long-run strategy of cooperation with other converts. When enough new converts cooperate in this way, sustained collective action to defend and extend party power becomes possible. Successful party ideologies thus have the character of self-fulfilling prophecies: by portraying the future polity as one organized to serve the interests of those loyal to specific ideological principles, they help to bring political organizations centered on these principles into being. If the reasoning above is correct, the failure of Russia’s postcommunist political parties can be traced to the absence of successful party ideologies in the wake of the discrediting of Marxism-Leninism. In short: no ideologies, no parties.

This central argument is reasonably simple. To sustain it, however, requires an extended and complex exposition, for the claim that ideology can be seen as a crucial

“independent variable” for explaining institutional outcomes directly contradicts much of mainstream social science thinking about the role of ideas in history. Despite their myriad differences, the three social science paradigms that have dominated political science over the past century—modernization, Marxism, and rational choice theory—are generally unified in their assumption that political ideologies should be understood not as causes of social outcomes, but as reflections of more fundamental social forces (be these cultural, class-based, or strategic in nature). The ironic result, as Kathryn Sikkink has pointed out, is that scholars who spend their entire lives developing, disseminating, and defending their own ideas nevertheless generally insist that ideas have no systematic social impact.¹¹

Indeed, there is a kind of methodological catch-22 facing social scientists who wish to argue for the theoretical importance of ideologies as explanatory variables in particular empirical contexts. We might term it the “suicide test.” To wit: mainstream social scientists, attuned to discovering the hidden strategic or material interests lurking behind every profession of political principle, quickly conclude that ideology is irrelevant the moment they discover that so-called “ideologues” have acted in a self-interested manner.¹² Apparently, only those politicians who march like lemmings to their own political and/or personal destruction can truly be considered “true believers.” Ideologues

¹¹ Kathryn Sikkink, Ideas and Institutions: Developmentalism in Brazil and Argentina, Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1991, p. 1.

¹² For example, note the way in which the alternative explanations based on “ideology” are quickly dismissed in Stathis Kalyvas’s very fine book about the origins of Christian Democratic parties in Western Europe. Since the Catholic Church officially opposed the creation of such parties, Kalyvas assumes that ideological beliefs played no role in their formation, which must instead be explained by strategic factors. Left out of account in this analysis is any effort to ascertain the political beliefs of the actual founders of new Christian Democratic parties themselves. Kalyvas, The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996.

who do commit political or personal suicide, however, no longer play any role in real world politics—and therefore they can be safely ignored. In short, the only “proof” of ideology’s independent effect currently accepted by the social science mainstream automatically also proves that ideology is irrelevant.

On top of this catch-22, there is an element of intellectual “path dependence” at work in the continuing marginalization of research into political ideology. Since the dominant social science paradigms downplay the causal significance of ideas, few political scientists bother to spend much time learning the specific nuances of ideological discourses. For this reason, even leading scholars frequently possess stereotyped, inaccurate conceptions of major ideological traditions such as Marxism-Leninism, Nazism, liberalism, and social democracy. These incorrect folk understandings of major ideologies are then compared to the political strategies pursued by their adherents to gain political power, economic resources, and international influence—with the result that the irrelevance of “ideological beliefs” for explaining political behavior *appears* obvious. This naturally reinforces the standard initial assumption that ideology isn’t worth sustained analytic attention—and the cycle continues.¹³

To counter both the suicide test and the resulting general inattention to ideological specifics in contemporary social science research, then, two analytically distinct steps are necessary. First, it must be shown theoretically that ideologically principled actors, genuinely committed to their belief systems, can under certain conditions be “selected

¹³ Of course, this depiction of mainstream political science should not be taken to imply that there are no good contemporary studies of political ideology whatsoever. As will be discussed in Chapter Two, in the past decade or so, pioneering scholarship on the role of ideas and ideologies has begun to emerge in all major subfields of political science. Still, the situation facing advocates of idea-based explanations in most leading U.S. political science departments remains largely as described above.

for” in social and political competition, defeating their more pragmatic competitors—in other words, that lemming-like ideological consistency can lead actors to the pinnacle of power, and not only to the bottom of the cliff. Second, it must be demonstrated that the substantive content of the ideological principles upheld by victorious ideologues can have a demonstrable empirical effect on the kinds of policies they adopt after taking power—that is, that principled ideologues don’t immediately turn into stereotypical Machiavellians the moment they gain control of the state.¹⁴

In my first monograph, Time and Revolution: Marxism and the Design of Soviet Institutions, I attempted to respond to the second of these two imperatives by demonstrating the empirical importance of Marxist theoretical principles in accounting for many otherwise puzzling features of Soviet political and economic institutions from the founding of the Soviet state in 1917 through its collapse in 1991.¹⁵ In particular, I traced the impact of Hegel’s and Marx’s philosophical understandings of time on the later institutional development of Leninism and Stalinism, arguing, in short, that the incentive structures of both Lenin’s Bolshevik Party and Stalin’s planned economy were explicitly designed to realize Marx’s vision of communist society by synthesizing the “rational” time discipline of Western capitalism with incentives for “revolutionary” time transcendence by party members, managers, and workers. From this perspective, I demonstrated, political debates among Marxist theorists of the Second International after the deaths of Marx and Engels, among Bolshevik party leaders after Lenin’s death, and

¹⁴ A similar point has been made by Mark Blyth, “Any More Bright Ideas?: The Ideational Turn of Comparative Political Economy,” Comparative Politics, Vol. 29(2), January 1997, 229-250.

¹⁵ Stephen E. Hanson, Time and Revolution: Marxism and the Design of Soviet Institutions (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

among Soviet leaders after Stalin's death showed a strikingly consistent pattern of division into three competing tendencies: a "left" faction promoting an immediate revolutionary leap to communism, a "right" faction arguing for an evolutionary socialism consistent with modern, rational notions of time, and an "orthodox center" faction arguing for simple fidelity to the foundational principles of Marxist and Leninist theory. I concluded by showing how Gorbachev's *perestroika* reforms, which ultimately destroyed the Soviet Union, were in fact designed as a last-ditch attempt to resurrect the synthesis of revolutionary and rational time use in the Soviet economy through the encouragement of "socialist enthusiasm" from below.

The arguments advanced in Time and Revolution, which were first developed in my doctoral dissertation in the late 1980s before the breakdown of the USSR, have stood the test of time reasonably well.¹⁶ The evidence of previously secret Soviet archives, and of countless memoirs by Soviet leaders after the collapse of communism, suggests that ideology did play a far greater role in Soviet politics and society, even toward the end of the Soviet period, than had been previously acknowledged by most Western analysts.¹⁷ Indeed, the contemporary historiography of the Soviet period has increasingly focused squarely on the question of ideological discourse, revealing the remarkable degree to

¹⁶ In an essay written in 1990 based on my dissertation research, for example, I accurately predicted that if Gorbachev continued to pursue a strategy of "disciplined dismantling" of Leninist institutions, the Soviet system would soon cease to exist. See Stephen E. Hanson, "Gorbachev: The Last True Leninist Believer?" in Daniel Chirot, ed., The Crisis of Leninism and the Decline of the Left: The Revolutions of 1989, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991, p. 54.

¹⁷ See, for example, Stephen Kotkin, Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995; Alexei Yurchak, Everything Was Forever, Until it was no More: The Last Soviet Generation, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006.

which it penetrated every facet of life in the Soviet Union.¹⁸ Stalin himself, we now know, was busy making notations in the margins of Karl Marx's works even at the end of his life, when nobody was in any position to monitor or sanction his behavior.¹⁹ And Gorbachev tells us in his memoirs, written four years after the Soviet Union's collapse, that "the most cherished of all his awards"—more important to him, apparently, than the Nobel Peace Prize he received in 1990—was the Order of the Red Banner of Labor he received for his heroic work as a combine operator on the collective farm at the age of seventeen!²⁰ For scholars who expected that the collapse of the USSR would reveal its leadership to be utterly uninterested in theory or principle when behind closed doors, such revelations have contributed to a serious rethinking of their fundamental assumptions about politics.²¹ For the small number of us who predicted such findings in advance, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that our initial theoretical assumptions have been essentially validated.

Yet as I acknowledged in Time and Revolution, the study of the Soviet Union, however suggestive for the comparative study of ideology's influence elsewhere, in the end represents only a single case. With the end of the Cold War, the political science mainstream has tended to focus on topics where ideology's putative role initially seems

¹⁸ In addition to the above works, see Igal Halfin, From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000; Halfin, Communist Autobiographies on Trial, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003; and Jochen Hellbeck, "Working, Struggling, Becoming: Stalin-Era Autobiographical Texts," in Igal Halfin, Ed., Language and Revolution: The Making of Modern Political Identities.

¹⁹ Nigel Gould-Davies, "Rethinking the Role of Ideology in International Politics During the Cold War," Journal of Cold War Studies Vol. 1(1), Winter 1999, pp. 92-93.

²⁰ Mikhail Gorbachev, Memoirs, New York: Doubleday, 1996, p. 49.

²¹ See, for example, John Lewis Gaddis, We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History, Oxford: Clarendon and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

far less clear. Indeed, even within the post-Soviet milieu, the near absence of any coherent ideological basis for politics after communism's collapse—as I shall argue later in this book—has been one of the most striking features of political life. Even for those who now acknowledge the importance of Marxist-Leninist ideology (and its disintegration) for explaining Soviet political behavior, then, the need to devote sustained attention to the analysis of ideology in comparative politics more generally is still far from clear.

Moreover, Time and Revolution did not address in any depth the first of the two analytical imperatives discussed above. That is, I did not endeavor to demonstrate in detail that Lenin's ideological commitment to Marxist conceptions of time was causally linked to his successful revolutionary takeover of power in 1917, explaining that a full account of the dynamics of the Russian revolution itself would be beyond the scope of my case study. This lacuna in the argument could perhaps bolster the conclusion that even if Lenin and his successors were genuinely committed ideologues, their victory after the fall of tsarism was an idiosyncratic event unlikely to be repeated in other social and historical contexts—and therefore, that the rise and fall of the Soviet system contains few lessons for comparativists.

This book, then, will focus squarely on explaining why ideologically-committed elites come to power not only in very atypical situations, but quite frequently, and for predictable theoretical reasons. To do so, I will argue that ideologies can be best understood as involving proposals to define the formal criteria for membership in a proposed polity. From this perspective, it becomes clear that establishing a coherent new ideology is itself a collective action problem, the solution of which can generate

remarkable social and political power. Successful builders of new ideologies, I argue, overcome this collective action problem by proposing clear and consistent visions of the political future—thus artificially elongating the time horizons of those who join their cause, and eventually enabling even instrumentally-rational recruits to sustain cooperation with other ideological converts. In environments of intense social uncertainty where ordinary rational actors are likely to adopt very high “discount rates,” then, committed ideologues will usually be the only political entrepreneurs capable of mobilizing large-scale networks of committed activists, giving them a key strategic advantage over their non-ideological competitors. The revolutionary victory and subsequent seventy-year hegemony of the Bolshevik party was thus not an anomaly, but a typical outcome of revolutionary social change in uncertain environments.²² If so, the study of ideology must be placed at the very center of political science inquiry.

To test such an argument empirically, I will analyze the problem of political party formation in new, uncertain democracies. Political scientists have long understood that the creation of a viable, well-institutionalized system of competitive political parties is vital to successful democratic consolidation. More recently, scholars have focused on the formidable collective action problems that would-be party builders confront in the task of building national party organizations.²³ It is fair to say, however, that the mystery of where successful, enduring parties come from in the first place is still far from resolved in

²² Jack A. Goldstone, Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991; Jack A. Goldstone, “The Soviet Union: Revolution and Transformation,” in Mattei Dogan and John Higley, eds., Elites, Crises, and the Origins of Regimes, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998.

²³ John H. Aldrich, Why Parties?: The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995; Herbert Kitschelt et al., Post-Communist Party Systems: Competition, Representation, and Inter-Party Cooperation, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

the literature. The role of ideology in this puzzle has been explored to some extent: we know, for example, that the vast majority of European political parties have had relatively consistent ideological platforms for most of their history; we know that ideologically “left” parties in Western Europe differ systematically from “right” parties in terms of their social welfare and taxation policies; and we have a sense that theoretically, ideologies must play a key role as “information shortcuts” allowing voters to choose rationally among the parties competing in democratic elections.²⁴ However, the argument that ideology can be a central independent variable causing party formation in the first place is, to my knowledge, new.

Finally, focusing on ideology as an independent variable determining the success or failure of political parties in uncertain democracies can also shed new light on the crucial problem of explaining patterns of democratic consolidation and democratic breakdown.²⁵ If I am right that clear and consistent definitions of the polity are necessary for mobilizing committed party activists for sustained collective action in periods of great social turbulence, it follows that new democracies born in such circumstances will tend to confront at some stage a zero-sum struggle between irreconcilable ideological

²⁴ See, among many other works on these topics, Ian Budge, David Robertson, and Derek Hearl, eds., Ideology, Strategy, and Party Change: Spatial Analyses of Post-War Election Programmes in 19 Democracies, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987; Harold Wilensky, The Welfare State and Equality: Structural and Ideological Roots of Public Expenditures, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975; Anthony Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy, New York: Harper, 1957; Melvin J. Hinich and Michael C. Munger, Ideology and the Theory of Political Choice, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1994.

²⁵ The argument here is thus consistent with that of Dankwart Rustow, who emphasized the importance of consensual definitions of the boundaries of the state for democratic consolidation. See Rustow, “Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model,” Comparative Politics, Vol. 2(3), April 1970, 337-64.

organizations for control over the key institutions of the polity.²⁶ I will argue here that the outcome of such struggles depends ultimately on decisions by powerful economic elites to back one or another opposed ideological faction; at this stage, then, “structure” comes back into the explanation. However, economic elites cannot fight for the victory of a party that is no longer on the political playing field. Indeed, the success of competing ideologues in mobilizing effective party organizations, and the concomitant failure of more “pragmatic” party-builders, can present property-owners with very uncomfortable political choices, none of which may reflect their initial preferences. I conclude that whether economic elites support democrats or authoritarians in periods of political polarization and crisis depends crucially on the specific ideological variants of democracy or authoritarianism being proposed by successful party leaders.

Given the admittedly ambitious scope of the above argument, this book will necessarily cover a rather broad theoretical and empirical territory. Part One will be devoted to a detailed examination of central conceptual and theoretical issues that are fundamental to the claims I am advancing. Because the major paradigms that have historically dominated the social sciences have tended to downplay the importance of ideology, I must first explain how the rather paradoxical scholarly consensus on the ineffectuality of “ideas” in politics first arose. In Chapter One, therefore, I begin with an account of the century-long marginalization of the one great social theorist who most clearly put “ideas” at the center of social scientific explanation, Max Weber. I outline the key features of the Weberian theoretical approach, showing how Weber’s unique

²⁶ A related argument has been made in Giovanni Capoccia, Defending Democracy: Reactions to Extremism in Interwar Europe, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005.

combination of methodological individualism and attention to non-strategic types of human social action sets his theory apart from Marxism, modernization theory, and rational choice theory alike.

Building on this foundation, in Chapter Two I turn to an examination of the political science literature on ideology, showing how Marxist, modernization, and rational choice approaches have all ended up “explaining” ideology in unacceptably functionalist terms. Building in part on more recent works on the role of ideas in comparative politics, I endeavor to introduce a new conception of ideology as any clear and consistent definition of the criteria for membership in a desired political order. I argue that the formation of new ideologies in this sense constitutes a previously-unrecognized collective action problem whose solution requires “principled” (or, in Weberian terms, “value-rational”) conduct on the part of an ideology’s initial advocates.

In Chapter Three, I review current theories of political party formation, showing how my analysis of ideology and collective action contributes to, and improves upon, recent literature that focuses on the supply of—and not only the demand for—new party organizations. Again, I show how previously dominant approaches to the study of comparative political parties tend to ignore or downplay the initial problem of party formation in environments of institutional uncertainty. Building on recent works by Aldrich and Kitschelt, I show how party ideology can play a crucial causal role in allowing partisans to sustain collective action in the initial phases of party-building. I conclude Part One with a discussion of some of the methodological issues involved in testing my hypothesized relationship between ideology and party formation and justify my use of a comparative historical approach to the subject matter.

In Part Two, I examine the causal impact of ideology through a comparative-historical analysis of three theoretically-chosen empirical cases. Specifically, I argue that post-Soviet Russia can be analyzed as an example of a more general phenomenon that I term “post-imperial democracy”: i.e., a situation in which a new democratic regime is born within the core nation of a formally imperial polity immediately after its disintegration, and where reasonably fair and open democratic elections are held for at least a decade after imperial collapse. In particular, I engage in a comparative historical analysis of the first sixteen years of the Third Republic in France (1870-1885), the Weimar Republic in Germany (1918-1933), and post-Soviet Russia (1991-2006).²⁷ In all three of these cases, the continuation of formal democracy well after the initial period of social chaos generated by imperial defeat and/or collapse led to a distinct environment of prolonged uncertainty governing key institutional features of the new regime—including constitutions, electoral rules, national symbols, and even national borders—that gave rise first to political stalemate between competing ideological parties, and then a decisive crisis, before the eventual consolidation of a new regime type. The three cases share other features that make them particularly fruitful for comparative analysis: each had experienced a significant degree of parliamentary liberalization in the final years of imperial rule; each saw a prolonged competition between the executive and legislative branches of government for institutional supremacy in the period after imperial collapse;

²⁷ Mark J. Gasiorowski and Timothy J. Power have found that the rate of democratic failure drops off significantly once a new democracy has endured at least 12 years. In this respect, then, the time period examined here in each case includes the years which are most crucial for democratic consolidation. See Gasiorowski and Power, “The Structural Determinants of Democratic Consolidation,” Comparative Political Studies, Vol. 31(6), December 1998, pp. 740-771.

each adopted a constitution that was widely seen initially as lacking legitimacy; each struggled with both institutional and cultural legacies of the past empire that interfered with democratic politics; and each suffered through major economic crises that had the potential to undermine the constitutional order. However, the particular regimes consolidated in these three cases—republican democracy in France, Nazi dictatorship in Germany, and presidential authoritarianism in Russia—were dramatically different.²⁸

If I am right that ideology is a necessary condition for political party formation in situations of intense social uncertainty, then we should expect to find in cases such as those examined here that ideologues with clear and consistent definitions of the future polity are initially more successful than non-ideological “pragmatists” in mobilizing activists for collective action to build national party networks—even where such pragmatists begin the process of party building with seemingly superior material and organizational resources. We should also expect that conflicts among competing ideological parties will be extremely difficult to resolve, given that each such party advocates a different, incommensurable definition of the polity itself. In the end, too, we can expect the victory of any given ideological party—or, conversely, the failure of any ideological party to establish political hegemony—will have a profound effect on the institutions that are built and policies that are adopted after regime consolidation.

²⁸ Other cases that could be added to the list of “post-imperial democracies” by my definition would be Austria and Hungary after World War I—since both were “cores” of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—and Portugal in 1974; these will be discussed briefly in the conclusion. Cases where national sovereignty was gained through the defeat and collapse of foreign empires, such as interwar Poland or the post-Soviet Baltic States, or where empire collapsed only gradually, as in twentieth century Britain, pose rather different theoretical issues.

The empirical chapters present findings that are largely consistent with these theoretical predictions.²⁹ In Chapter Four, I analyze the early Third Republic in France, a case that has been unjustifiably neglected in most studies of comparative democratization. I show that ideological consistency allowed French republicans and legitimists to outflank the more “pragmatic” Orleanists and Bonapartists, despite the latter two parties’ initial resource and personnel advantages. The emergence of the legitimist-republican partisan cleavage generated a deep political struggle between supporters of monarchical restoration and Catholic hegemony and advocates of a secular state and radical social inclusion. Given the growing electoral strength of the radical republicans, President MacMahon—who lacked any ideology of his own but whose personal beliefs tended to align him with the legitimists—decided to dismiss the lower house of parliament and use government repression to ensure a conservative majority. Given the unpalatable choice of backing a president who appeared to share the ideological agenda of the legitimists, who still staunchly defended the special role of feudal elites, or the radical republicans, with their associations with advocates of “socialism,” most of the French bourgeoisie sided with the latter. The eventual victory of the republicans generated an institutionalized republican polity that, remarkably, endured for seven decades; indeed, republicanism remains the ideological foundation of French democracy through the present day.

²⁹ I should note that while the initial hypothesis of this study was developed from a comparison of the Weimar and post-Soviet Russian cases, co-authored with Jeffrey Kopstein, the case of the French Third Republic was chosen for purely theoretical reasons, with no prior knowledge of its dynamics on the part of the author. Thus the finding that here, too, ideological parties defeated pragmatic ones, is a striking confirmation of the initial hypothesis. See Stephen E. Hanson and Jeffery S. Kopstein, “The Weimar/Russia Comparison,” *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 13(3), July-September 1997, 252-283.

In Chapter Five, I review the better known case of democratic breakdown in the Weimar Republic. Again, I show that parties with no clear and consistent definition of the polity—in particular, the two German “liberal” parties of this period—failed to overcome the collective action problems of party organization, splintering into fragments by the mid-1920s. By contrast, the successful parties of Weimar—the Social Democrats, the Catholic Center, the German National People’s Party, the Communists, and, ultimately, the Nazis—were all quite ideologically consistent, generating the political stalemate Sartori famously analyzed as “polarized pluralism.”³⁰ In the end, this stalemate was broken when the deep crisis of the Great Depression led President Hindenburg to declare emergency rule, and ultimately, to back the ideologically committed activists of the Nazi party as a way of staving off further advances by the ideologically-committed Communist Party. Faced with a choice between Nazis and Communists, the German bourgeoisie sided with Hitler—with devastating consequences for humanity.

In Chapter Six, I return to the case of post-Soviet Russia, utilizing the comparative theoretical perspective developed throughout the book. Once again, I argue, the only parties to endure in the same form over the first fifteen years after the collapse of the USSR were those that were founded with distinctive official ideologies: the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, the misleadingly-named Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, and the liberal Yabloko Party. Once again, efforts to form independent democratic parties on the basis of political “centrism” and “pragmatism” systematically failed. However, in comparison with the ideological elites of the 19th and early 20th centuries, even the most successful post-Soviet party leaders of the 1990s—Zyuganov,

³⁰ Giovanni Sartori, Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Zhirinovskiy, and Yavlinskii—sooner or later made highly public compromises with the state that undermined the initial principled commitment of party activists. The ultimate failure of all efforts to articulate a new Russian political ideology—whether democratic or anti-democratic—thus generated a situation in which all political parties were too weak to challenge even a very weak state. Whereas in both France and Germany, initially weak presidents were forced to back the activist networks of one or another powerful ideological party in an attempt to defend their political position—thereby ultimately marginalizing the role of the presidency itself—in Russia, the absence of consistent ideological parties that might effectively mobilize grass-roots support allowed the presidential administration to establish an independent hegemony. Powerful business elites who had previously hoped to influence Russian politics by sponsoring one or another political party learned—particularly after the arrest and imprisonment of Mikhail Khodorkovskiy in 2003—that support for the presidency was the only instrumentally rational political option. Thus, Russia has developed neither a consolidated democracy nor a consolidated fascism, but rather a “pragmatic” presidential authoritarianism in which the state-sponsored “party of power” simply carries out the directives of the executive branch.

Chapter Seven concludes the book with a recapitulation of the main findings of the study, and an exploration of their consequences for our understandings of democratic—and autocratic—consolidation. The primary hypothesis that ideology promotes collective action by artificially elongating the time horizons of converts, I argue, holds up even when subjected to some rather rigorous empirical tests. Indeed, the comparative-historical method adopted here controls for several of the most important

alternative explanations for the fate of party systems in the cases examined. Neither the formal institutions of presidential-parliamentary systems, nor the institutional legacies of the defeated empire, nor even levels of cultural authoritarianism differed substantially at the outset of the Third Republic, Weimar Germany, or post-Soviet Russia—yet the outcomes of party formation and consolidation were decisively different.³¹ What does seem to explain the success or failure of major political parties in these three cases—as can be demonstrated through careful process-tracing—is the extent to which their founding elites were clear and consistent about their definitions of membership in their proposed versions of the political order. In conditions of high social and institutional certainty, then, ideological party builders generally win, and “pragmatists” generally lose. Moreover, ideologues do not drop their ideological commitments the moment they gain power: for good or for ill, they tend to implement the most significant elements of their initial political visions.³²

Russia is the exception that proves the rule. While the most ideologically consistent Russian party-builders were still more successful than their pragmatic competitors in forging national networks of party activists—confirming the central hypothesis of this book—in the end even Russia’s most well-known ideologues made obvious short-term tactical compromises that blatantly contradicted their professed

³¹ Other major factors mentioned in the literature on party formation and democratic consolidation do vary among the three cases, but not in ways that fit existing theoretical predictions of party or democratic success. Thus, for example, France was comparatively more agricultural in 1870 than Germany in 1918 or Russia in 1990, but no one argues that high percentages of agricultural production are good for democratic party building. Electoral systems also differed widely in the three cases—sometimes changing from election to election—but formal electoral rules also do not seem persuasively to explain differences in party formation among them. See Chapter Seven for further details.

³² Daniel Chirot, *Modern Tyrants: The Power and Prevalence of Evil in Our Age*, New York: Free Press, 1994.

principles. In part, this outcome reflects the cumulative cultural disgust with “ideology” in general in Russia, in a country where Marxism-Leninism has become farcical, fascism is associated with the horrors of the Second World War, and liberalism is seen as a plot hatched in the West to destroy the country. The failure of post-Soviet ideology, as predicted by the theory advanced here, has ultimately led to the failure of the entire political party system, rendering the parliament politically powerless. Yet Putin, lacking any ideology of his own, cannot find a way to forge national networks of committed activists that might ensure the consolidation of his authoritarian regime; he is forced instead to rely on the personal loyalty of a small circle of long-time friends and associates. The result is the establishment of a novel form of “weak state authoritarianism,” propped up temporarily by energy superprofits—with unpredictable consequences for the future political stability of Eurasia.

If I am right that ideological clarity and consistency is a necessary but not sufficient condition for party formation in highly uncertain social environments, several longstanding explanations in comparative politics for the empirical distribution of democracies and dictatorships must be rethought. The argument sheds new light, for example, on crucial political phenomena such as the establishment of the Taliban regime in war-torn Afghanistan, the revolutionary success of ideologues such as Khomeini in Iran and Pol Pot in Cambodia, and even the initial creation of liberal capitalism itself. Moreover, the relationship between ideology and collective action has important implications for politics in more stable institutional and social contexts. For at least some marginalized individuals in every society, I argue, uncertainty about the future is high enough that ideological conversion may be instrumentally rational; this helps to account

for the continuing influence of radical ideological parties and social movements even in the most successful, established democracies.

Finally, the argument here may potentially reshape our understanding of the relationship between “structure” and “agency” in social life. It is true that ambitious politicians eventually require the backing of moneyed interests and of military and/or police forces in order to rule the state; these structural factors inevitably limit political choices to a greater or lesser extent in all societies. We must reject any “great man theory of history” that fails to reckon with these limits. Yet the argument defended here shows that in uncertain periods, when collective action problems undermine the strategic coherence and consistency of economic and coercive elites alike, principled agents with long-term visions of the political future can play a decisive historical role. Perhaps, then, if this book is convincing, social scientists may begin to take into account the potential political and social importance of ideas—including their own.

Testing the Hypothesis: Some Methodological Reflections (from Chapter 3)

To restate the main thesis of this book: ideologies, I have argued, are best understood as clear, consistent definitions of the criteria for membership in a desired polity that are articulated by individuals. The motivation for articulating and defending a new ideology is value-rational in essence; ideologues thus argue for the timeless truth of their carefully deliberated principles for defining political membership. However, successful ideologies can also trigger affectual motivations for conversion, to the extent that they resonate with the strongly held prejudices and/or psychological predispositions of particular subcultures. Eventually, even instrumentally rational actors may then

choose to affiliate with ideological definitions of their identity, if they perceive the chances for the eventual success of a new ideology to be reasonably good.

The problem of party formation in uncertain democracies should theoretically be an ideal one for observing this process empirically. As the discussion above has demonstrated, the strong relationship of party competition and ideology is a consistent theme in the literature, but the reasons for this connection have not been fully explained. Given the various collective action problems involved in welding together national parties, the reasons for the initial decisions of ambitious politicians to affiliate with new party organizations remain analytically unclear. The hypothesis that ideology can act as an independent variable in accounting for the success or failure of political parties might resolve both of these theoretical issues, and thus seems well worth investigating.

The problem, however, is to test this hypothesis in a way that might convince the skeptical social scientific mainstream. As Berman and Blyth have recently emphasized, ideational arguments have in the past too frequently discarded the baby of methodological rigor along with the bathwater of outmoded materialism.³³ Fortunately, recent advances in the field of qualitative methods, which have begun to attract the attention of a growing number of political scientists, are well-suited to the sort of empirical problems I am examining here.

In particular, I will investigate the relationship between my independent variable, the presence or absence of political ideology, and my dependent variable, the formation or non-formation of national networks of party activists, by using the comparative-

³³ Berman, The Social Democratic Moment; Blyth, Great Transformations.

historical method.³⁴ Such an approach has several advantages, given my subject matter. First, the “large n” samples most often used in the study of comparative democratization consist mainly of stable democracies, where high degrees of institutional certainty tend to limit the observable role of ideology in party politics.³⁵ Second, the comparative historical approach is particularly appropriate for the study of necessary causal conditions, as opposed to linear correlations between variables.³⁶ The deterministic hypothesis “no ideology, no parties”—understood as an ideal-typical statement that can nevertheless be used fruitfully to analyze the dynamics of empirical cases of democracy that approach a situation of “pure” social and institutional uncertainty—can in principle be falsified if the independent variable is absent in a single case of successful party building under such conditions. Thus, as an initial test of the hypothesis’s plausibility, a “small n” study—based on analysis of sixteen political parties in three historical cases—seems appropriate.³⁷ Third, careful historical case studies are ideal for undertaking

³⁴ James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds. Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

³⁵ See, for example, Adam Przeworski et al., Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000. For a study utilizing data that extends back further into the nineteenth century, which generates quite different theoretical implications, see Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes, “Endogenous Democratization,” World Politics, Vol. 55(4), July 2003, 517-549.

³⁶ This point is emphasized in Charles Ragin, The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987. In my own view, deterministic causation in comparative historical research of the sort characterized by hypotheses about “necessary” and “sufficient” conditions in social life should always be understood in as having heuristic value only at the level of ideal types of collective order constructed through simplifying assumptions about individual motivations.

³⁷ The utility of single case studies for testing deterministic causation was first emphasized by Harry Eckstein, “Case Studies and Theory in Political Science,” in Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby, eds., Handbook of Political Science, Vol. 17, pp. 79-123.

historical “process tracing” of a proposed causal mechanism—in this case, the artificial extension of individual time horizons among converts to a new party ideology.³⁸ Finally, whereas single case studies can be criticized for their potentially idiosyncratic nature and lack of generalizability, “structured, focused comparisons” of the sort advanced here allows us to “hold constant” many of the institutional and structural factors that might otherwise muddy the analysis.³⁹

Specifically, in order to examine the hypothesized relationship between ideological conviction and low individual rates of time discounting among activists within ideological parties, we need to find cases that combine extremely high levels of social uncertainty and an extended period of relatively free and fair elections within which parties might potentially form. This combination is empirically rare, since most highly unstable polities formed in the wake of autocratic collapse quickly disintegrate or generate new forms of authoritarianism, making it harder to demonstrate the possible independent role of ideological beliefs in the process of regime change.

The three cases chosen for analysis in Part Two of this book—Third Republic France, Weimar Germany, and post-Soviet Russia—are thus methodologically ideal for a number of reasons. First, all three cases involved the sudden and unexpected collapse of a previously powerful empire in war and/or revolution, generating empirically

See also John Gerring, Case Study Research: Principles and Practices, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

³⁸ Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005; Jon Elster, Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989; Robert Bates et al., Analytic Narratives, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998.

³⁹ Alexander George, “On the Method of Structured, Focused Comparisons” in Paul Gordon Lauren, ed., Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy, New York: Free Press, 1979; Bennett and George, Case Studies and Theory Development.

observable, extremely high levels of political, economic, and cultural uncertainty. All three countries found themselves confronted with deep political and social divides about the future orientation of the post-imperial regime, territorial uncertainty including the possible secession and/or annexation of important regions considered symbolically important to national identity, the need to make massive debt payments to former enemies, and threats of revolutionary violence from extremists on both the left and the right. At the same time, Third Republic France, Weimar Germany, and post-Soviet Russia also managed to maintain a relatively competitive, inclusive democratic electoral system (albeit, in the French case, one that excluded women) for at least the first decade of the post-imperial period. Politicians in all three countries were also able to build to some extent on previous party organizations developed during periods of relative liberalization during the late imperial period. Finally, the post-imperial polity in all three cases was initially formally governed by a presidential-parliamentary system in which the relative power of the executive and legislative branches of government was hotly contested.

Second, the three cases chosen for analysis also vary in crucial ways that allow for a direct test of the hypothesis of ideology's independent causal effect. The high uncertainty and relative political openness of these polities should, in principle, make it possible to distinguish empirically between committed ideologues, who alone will be able to maintain consistency with their professed principles, and "pragmatists" whose political positions will shift quickly along with the rapidly changing political circumstances. Thus within each country, among that group of parties generally recognized by contemporaries as having some prospect of joining the ruling government coalition, it is possible to

distinguish between parties that entered the post-imperial period with relatively clear and consistent definitions of the criteria for membership in the future polity and parties with only vague, inconsistent positions on the nature of the political order.⁴⁰ If we were to discover within any of these cases, then, that stable networks of national party activists emerged within independent electoral parties that articulated no clear and consistent ideology, the central hypothesis of this book would be falsified. Conversely, while the success of the more consistently ideological parties in each case cannot “prove” the theory advanced here—for this, analysis of a far greater number of appropriate cases as well as logically related auxiliary hypotheses would be necessary—direct empirical evidence of the proposed process by which ideology generates partisan loyalty in these diverse historical contexts would seem to provide *prima facie* evidence of its validity.

Finally, the three cases also vary in terms of ultimate regime outcomes: France by the mid-1880s had become a consolidated democracy; Germany by 1933 had become a fascist dictatorship; and Russia by 2006 had become a presidential autocracy with no independent political role for party organizations. To be clear, the proposed causal link between ideology and party formation advanced in this book is not meant as a monocausal explanation for the overall success or failure of democratic transition in these countries. Ideology may be a necessary condition for party formation in uncertain democracies, but articulating an ideology is not a sufficient condition for party success—

⁴⁰ Following Sartori, I confine my analysis to the four to six parties in each case generally considered, both by contemporaries and by later historians, to be politically relevant—that is, potentially either able to serve as part of a ruling governmental coalition, or, for opposition parties, to “blackmail” the regime by virtue of their strong electoral support. Theoretically it would be ideal to examine a broader sample of the parties operating in the post-imperial period, but in each case this would require historical examination of dozens of additional groupings, most of which had no discernable political influence. Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*, pp.121-123.

much less for the creation of a new political order. As the case studies will amply demonstrate, many other causal factors influenced the ultimate victory of the French Republicans, the German National Socialists, and the Putin presidential administration over their political rivals. However, the role of ideology in generating national party organizations in the French Third Republic and Weimar Germany, along with the absence of ideology and of strong parties in post-Soviet Russia, does help to explain the shape of the political “playing field” in the three cases. The republican victory in France and the fascist victory in Germany were, I argue, due in large part to the fact that powerful elites perceived competing ideological organizations as even more threatening. The presence of strong ideological parties in these two cases also prevented the president from exerting independent dominance over all political opposition. By contrast, the weakness of post-Soviet Russian ideologies generated a weak party system that in the final analysis was no match for an executive branch determined to rebuild its own political hegemony over the state.

No doubt there will still be some powerful objections to the methodology and principles of case selection used in this study. Some critics will point out that despite the explicit theoretical reasons for selecting these three post-imperial, uncertain democracies for analysis, not every potentially relevant variable is thereby held constant. In particular, changes in the degree of global economic interdependence and the technologies of mass communication over the past 150 years have had dramatic effects on modern democratic parties. Surely twenty-first century Russia, in these respects, cannot be meaningfully compared to nineteenth-century France or early twentieth-century Germany?

Here I can only note that such problems of comparability and inadequate controls affect all social science research, with the partial exception of laboratory experiments in social psychology; no two historical situations are ever fully alike. The key question is whether the alternative variables that are inevitably left uncontrolled in a given comparative-historical analysis might plausibly affect outcomes on the dependent variable in a way that undercuts one's favored hypothesis. As will be discussed at length in the conclusion, this does not appear to be the case for the three countries examined at length in Part Two; moreover, a preliminary examination of the dynamics of other, out-of-sample cases provides further support for the argument here.

Others may be skeptical of qualitative process-tracing on the grounds that interpretation of the historical record is inherently subjective. Human beings are inclined to see patterns, after all, even in empirically random data. It is entirely possible, then, that a single author with a strong incentive to find evidence supporting his theory will magically discover "ideological consistency" and "pragmatic inconsistency" wherever they happen to fit his argument. This danger is particularly serious given the fact that politicians in all countries at all times have tended to accuse their opponents of ideological incoherence, whether or not this charge is true; thus it will always be possible to quote some contemporary observer who declares that a presumed "ideologue" was actually a self-serving opportunist.

Comparative historical analysis should, I think, take concerns such as these very seriously indeed. One important method for limiting this problem is to read as wide a range of historical scholarship on one's topic as possible—particularly when one's argument rests to a great extent on secondary sources, as is the case in this study—so as

to avoid the form of selection bias in which one cites only those historians whose interpretations of the evidence fit one's preconceptions.⁴¹ Definitional clarity is also very important; as argued in Chapter 2, vagueness in defining key variables such as "ideology" and "culture" has been a consistent methodological problem for the comparative politics literature on the role of ideas. Ultimately, of course, readers will be free to judge for themselves where I have adequately demonstrated the clarity and consistency—or lack thereof—of various party ideologies in the cases under examination.⁴² I will permit myself to note, however, one additional reason for confidence about the argument advanced here, notwithstanding its qualitative methodology: it has already generated several accurate, falsifiable predictions about future trends in contemporary Russian politics.⁴³

⁴¹ Ian Lustick, "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias," American Political Science Review, Vol. 90(3), 605-613.

⁴² Ultimately, it might be possible to develop tools for judging ideological consistency that would attain high degrees of intercoder reliability, limiting the influence of the subjective bias of any single researcher. It seems sensible, however, first to make a plausible prima facie case for more elaborate future research along these lines, before engaging in the sort of costly, extensive training of graduate students in the Weberian theory of ideology such a project would require.

⁴³ In an essay written in early 1997, for example, I predicted that both the Our Home is Russia party of Viktor Chernomyrdin and the fledgling Truth and Order party of Alexander Lebed would disintegrate due to their lack of ideological clarity and consistency, while the relatively ideologically consistent Liberal Democratic Party of Russia led by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and Communist Party of the Russian Federation led by Gennady Zyuganov would endure for a longer period. In an essay written in 2001 and published in 2003, I argued that by Putin's first presidential term, all party ideologies had failed; I therefore predicted the final demise of Russia's independent party system. Neither of these accurate predictions was in line with mainstream analysis among Russia specialists at the time. See Stephen E. Hanson, Ideology, Uncertainty, and the Rise of Anti-System Parties in Post-Communist Russia, Glasgow: Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, Studies in Public Policy #289, and Stephen E. Hanson, "The End of Ideology and the Decline of Russian Political Parties," in Vicki Hesli and William Reisinger, eds., The Election of 1999-2000 in Russia: Their Impact and Legacy,

Finally, some analysts will object that like all comparative-historical research, my study cannot fully take into account the problem of “world time”—that is, the possible causal influence of earlier cases on the outcomes of later ones.⁴⁴ Thus, the fact that Third Republic France defeated and occupied Germany had clear implications for the ideological viability of post-imperial republicanism in the latter country; similarly, widespread knowledge of, and debates about, the basic dynamics of Weimar’s collapse arguably affected the outcome of political transition in post-Soviet Russia. Problems of institutional diffusion that limit the independence of cases—also known as Galton’s problem—surely undercut the power of comparative historical analysis of regimes from very different time periods.⁴⁵

However, my decision to focus on cases in moments of extreme institutional and international uncertainty tends to limit the problem of diffusion for explaining the divergent outcomes of post-imperial democracies in Third Republic France, Weimar Germany, and post-Soviet Russia. Since all of these countries were relatively isolated internationally, with few obvious allies to emulate and no guarantee of foreign support for any particular long-term strategy of party building, the effects of institutional diffusion on their emerging party systems were less powerful in comparison to many

Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. For more on the importance of prediction in social science methodology, see Stephen E. Hanson, “Weber and the Problem of Social Science Prediction,” in Laurence McFalls, ed., Max Weber’s “Objectivity” Revisited, Montreal: University of Montreal Press, 2006.

⁴⁴ Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979, p. 288.

⁴⁵ Stephen E. Hanson and Jeffrey S. Kopstein, “Regime Type and Diffusion in Comparative Politics Methodology,” Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. 38(1), March 2005, 69-99.

other transitional democracies.⁴⁶ As for the problem of elite learning from the past, since historical lessons only matter to the extent that political actors subjectively perceive them to be important, this is a less serious objection to my argument. Indeed, I will show that in all three cases under examination, ideological party leaders developed quite clear and consistent interpretations of the historical record, while non-ideological party leaders were unable to do so. In this respect, “world time” is actually endogenous to my theory: it exerts its influence precisely through its influence on the worldviews of influential ideologues who shape broader social interpretations of the past. Indeed, the overall trajectory of the ideological debates analyzed here—revolving around struggles between monarchists and republicans in France, then centering on a choice among liberalism, social democracy, communism, and fascism in Germany, and finally involving a post-ideological milieu in Russia in which no ideology at all seems credible—tells us something important about the fate of ideology in the modern world. If the fate of post-communist Russia is any indication, a genuine “end of ideology” on a global scale will undermine democratic consolidation just as much as it inhibits totalitarian rule. If so, the disintegration of independent political parties and general public cynicism under Putin may provide some indication of disturbing trends for democracy in general in the new century.

⁴⁶ This is not to say that international diffusion effects were entirely absent, of course. In the French case, for example, Bismarck’s decision tacitly to support the Republicans under Gambetta in the latter part of the 1870s played an important role in the final defeat of MacMahon; however, by no means did Imperial Germany build the French Republican Party in the first place. In the Weimar and post-Soviet Russian cases, Western efforts to support pro-democratic parties and politicians against their anti-liberal competitors certainly existed, but they were given relatively meager resources and had little ultimate success.

In chapters that follow, the analysis will proceed in four stages. First, after a brief discussion of the treatment of each case in the general literature on comparative democratization, I will discuss the legacies of the late imperial period in shaping the prospects for post-imperial democracy and party building. I will then discuss the conduct of key leaders of politically relevant parties during the initial period of *chaos* that followed imperial collapse, showing that ideologically consistent elites attained greater organizational success in comparison with their more pragmatic rivals. Next I will turn my attention to an analysis of the *stalemate* that emerged as a result of the success of competing ideological parties, examining in particular the interactions among the executive and legislative branches in this period. Finally, I will analyze the ultimate *crisis and resolution* that ended the period of stalemate in each country, leading either to decisive control over the state by a particular ideological party, or, in the case of Russia, to the collapse of all independent political parties and the hegemony of a non-ideological president (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1—Stages of Development in Uncertain Democracies

	Chaos	Stalemate	Crisis/Resolution
Third Republic	1870-1873	1874-1876	1877-1885
Weimar Germany	1918-1923	1924-1928	1929-1933
Post-Soviet Russia	1990-1993	1994-1998	1999-2006