

Promises Betrayed? Ideological Commitments and Revolutionary Outcomes

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Abstract

Why do some revolutions end in dictatorship and others in democracy? Selectorate theory argues the incentives leaders face in the struggle for political survival shapes the decisions they make on post-revolutionary institutional forms. Yet the theory predicts that only the scale of victory and its attribution help us understand revolutionary outcomes. Instead, we argue the role of ideology, specified as a consistent and explicit vision for a future polity, has been largely ignored when considering the shape of post-revolutionary institutions. Prior ideological commitments by revolutionary challengers cannot be ignored as they facilitate a winning coalition and subsequently constrain the range of political choices available to winners. Specifically, we critique selectorate theory's claim that ideology only operates as a mobilization variable. Rather, we show that it conditions plausible coalition partners, informs allocation decisions made by leaders, and defines the acceptable scale and attribution of victory to begin with. Employing historical cases to illustrate our argument, we show that ideological commitments by revolutionary leaders have been crucial factors not only affecting their political survival but also the subsequent institutions that developed out of revolutionary situations.

Why do some revolutions result in dictatorship and others in democracy? Comparative-historical sociology (Moore, 1966; Skocpol, 1979) argues the make-up of class coalitions and state expansion best explain this puzzle. However, sociology lacks a systematic theory of revolutionary outcomes. In political economy, selectorate theory (Bueno De Mesquita et al., 2003; Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2011) provides a clear and parsimonious explanation of revolutionary outcomes. Selectorate theory contends that the incentives leaders face in the struggle for political survival shapes the decisions they make on post-revolutionary institutional forms. We argue selectorate theory works well for routine politics, but struggles when affinities—i.e. cultural characteristics—are correlated across society. Correlated affinities result in salient cleavages across society that dictate political groupings and loyalties. These are ubiquitous in revolutionary situations. Therefore, we elaborate an extension of selectorate theory under this more realistic scope condition and argue that ideology, the critical source of political affinities, influences every stage of the revolutionary process.

Whereas selectorate theory explains revolutionary outcomes through two key variables—the scale of victory and the attribution of victory—we add that prior ideological commitments matter. We conceptualize ideology as a vision for a future polity that specifies potential beneficiaries of that polity. Thus, we argue ideology influences revolutionary outcomes because they can inform credible political commitments (North and Weingast, 1989; Hanson, 2010). In this sense, prior ideological commitments mold the acceptable scale of victory and its attribution to begin with. These commitments also condition whether revolutionary challengers are willing to bargain with an incumbent regime in the first place.

Selectorate theory specifies ideology as a mobilization variable for mustering a revolutionary challenge, but we further elaborate on ideology’s role both in this regard and others. First, ideology conditions the formation of cohesive revolutionary coalitions. Selectorate theory argues ideology functions as a public good for the challenger coalition. We agree but we amend why this is the case. Ideology matters in coalition formation because ideological affinities among members enhance the credibility that members of the coalition will become beneficiaries of the future regime. However, unlike selectorate theory, we argue ideology conditions the coalition to ideologically plausible coalition partners only. Ideology sustains the coalition’s ability to coordinate a struggle against an entrenched incumbent. Second, ideology constrains the ability to bargain as coalitions containing ideological enemies of the incumbent regime will not be satisfied with a mere pay-off that leaves the established political order in place. Finally, prior ideological commitments define the acceptable scale and attribution of victory, meaning that coalition leaders cannot act purely opportunistically or face the wrath of their own constituents.

We show ideological commitments are compatible with the logic of political survival when incumbent regimes are constrained in their use of force, institutional uncertainty hinders the calculations of routine politics, and affinities are correlated across society. All of these conditions are common in revolutionary situations. Under these conditions, we argue ideological commitments primarily function as a credence good. They influence whether a challenger is co-opted by a regime versus forming a revolutionary coalition; they influence a revolutionary coalition’s ability to bargain with an incumbent regime versus escalating the conflict; and if the revolutionaries are victorious, they influence whether the institutional outcome yields an outcome with a strong or weak loyalty norm.

By analyzing ideology in this fashion, we provide an alternative solution to an enduring puzzle in the study of revolutions and their outcomes: why do some leaders seemingly renege on their initial promises? We argue prior ideological commitments and informational asymmetries explain this puzzle more so than the scale and attribution of victory alone. In doing so, we complement the work of selectorate theory by elaborating on its logic under specific conditions.

1 Selectorate Theory and the Logic of Political Coalitions

Selectorate theory (Bueno De Mesquita et al., 2003; Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2011) is a theory elaborating a logic for the political survival of leaders. The theory assumes that a political leader's principal desire is to gain political office and maintain that position. The major constraint political leaders face are selection institutions—i.e., the ways in which political leaders are chosen. Selectorate theory divides the polity into three major groups: the residents (N), the selectorate (S), and the winning coalition (W). Residents are all people within the territory defined by the polity. The selectorate consists of all the residents who have a say in choosing the next political leader. The winning coalition is a subset of the selectorate that a political leader actually needs to gain the position. From this scheme, selection institutions are defined by the selectorate and the winning coalition. And since the winning coalition is a subset of the selectorate, there are only three general arrangements of selection institutions: (1) systems with a small selectorate and a small winning coalition, (2) systems with a large selectorate and a small winning coalition, and (3) systems with a large selectorate and a large winning coalition.

The size of W has two crucial effects. First, it dictates whether leaders propose packages of public goods or private goods to the selectorate. When W is large, leaders cannot credibly provide private goods to every one who supported them; thus, they propose packages of public goods instead. When W is small, leaders can feasibly pay off their supporters with private goods; thus, they emphasize packages of private goods to the selectorate. Potential followers choose between an incumbent and a challenger based on their proposals of private and public goods as well as the followers own calculation of work versus leisure time and the loyalty norm (see below). Ties are broken by affinities—matters of taste like ideology, shared ethnicity or religion, political party, etc.

Second, the size of the winning coalition (W) relative to the size of the selectorate (S) defines the loyalty norm ($1 - \frac{W}{S}$). The loyalty norm is the probability of exclusion from future winning coalitions. The probability of exclusion is low in small S, small W systems and large S, large W systems. This is called a weak loyalty norm as followers still have a high probability of being included in a future winning coalition if they were to defect. Large S, small W systems have a large probability of exclusion. This is deemed a strong loyalty norm as defection is risky due to there being a larger pool of potential followers—the selectorate—relative to those needed to actually maintain the incumbent's position—the winning coalition. Leaders prefer a strong loyalty norm over a weak one; followers prefer a weak loyalty norm over a strong one. If given the opportunity to decide new selection institutions, leaders will prefer a large S, small W system while followers prefer either a large S, large W system or a small S, small W system.

The loyalty norm is derived from an assumption that affinities are not correlated across society. In

addition to this, the selectorate model is conditioned off the incumbent's affinities. All things being equal, leaders prefer followers with which they have the highest affinity. However, the incumbent has an advantage because they know their affinity preferences among the selectorate better than the challenger does among the selectorate. Thus, the challenger and members of the selectorate will not know each other's affinity preferences prior to coming to office. In this case, all affinity preferences are equally likely and thus, the loyalty norm takes precedence over affinity for the challenger prior to taking office. The implication is that a challenger will do whatever they can to gain office and they are not bound by any actions they make take at this moment (Bueno De Mesquita et al., 2003, p. 82).

We divert from this in two key ways. First, we believe the challenger knows affinity preferences among the selectorate more than the theory gives the challenger credit for. The challenger does realistically know who their core and marginal followers are based on affinity preferences—and the key affinity illuminating these preferences is ideology. In addition, we argue the challenger's key affinity preference—their ideology—does bound them in future rounds.

Bueno De Mesquita et al. (2003) apply the theory toward understanding revolutions. The main amendment they make is on the challenger side. They argue a challenger's package cannot credibly commit to private goods allocations. A challenger in a revolutionary situation only has one credible offer—public goods. Bueno De Mesquita et al. (2003, p. 370) argue the only public good they can offer is their ideology: "Ideology, in the sense of a description of the new selection institutions and the affinity of the new leader for her followers, is critical for mobilizing a revolutionary coalition. It explains the benefits of a successful revolution to recruits from the disenfranchised".

However, if the revolutionaries are victorious, the new selection institutions depend on the scale of victory and the attribution of victory and not on the ideology originally proposed. If the revolutionaries achieve a total victory, then the attribution of victory is the main factor driving post-revolutionary institutional forms. And as noted above, leaders and followers have different preferences over whether the new arrangements yield a strong or weak loyalty norm. If the attribution is to a singular leader, then that leader will shape the new institutions toward a strong loyalty norm. If the attribution is to a coalition, then no single leader can dominate and the coalition will prefer institutions with a weak loyalty norm.

This is selectorate theory's solution to the puzzle of revolutionary outcomes. Most end in dictatorships—i.e. systems with a strong loyalty norm—because the logic of political survival dictates this arrangement as the best for securing a leader's future. Thus, one should expect leaders to renege on their ideological promises because they are not bound by them. Affinities are secondary to the logic of political survival. Systems with a weak loyalty norm, like democracies, only emerge because of attribution to a coalition, and not necessarily because of any ideological commitment toward a democratic outcome. Bueno De Mesquita

and Smith (2009); Bueno de Mesquita and Smith (2010); Bueno De Mesquita and Smith (2017) expand the selectorate theory to include revolutionary threats but our critique still stands: the challenger is more aware of ideological preferences than the selectorate theory allows and this enables and constrains their actions in important ways.

For us, ideology is the key affinity at play in revolutionary situations. Ideology is primary because it helps to define how cultural identities like ethnicity and religion are understood in political terms. As Linz and Stepan observe: "in a democratic transition two potentially explosive questions are unavoidable: Who is a citizen in the state? And how are the rules of citizenship defined?" (Linz and Stepan, 1996, p. 28). These are fundamentally ideological questions posed by every revolutionary situation, whether or not the democracy comes in its wake.

Nevertheless, the role of ideology in revolutionary situations has been controversial. We note three general trends in the literature on ideology and revolutions. One trend—similar to Bueno De Mesquita et al. (2003)—downplays the role of ideas in favor of material conditions (e.g. Skocpol, 1979); one trend over-emphasizes the role of ideas (e.g. Sewell, 1985); and one trend mediates these two extremes by specifying a concrete role for ideology in these situations (e.g. Goldstone, 1991). We take the mediation route. All things being equal, we agree with the likes of Bueno De Mesquita et al. (2003) that self-regarding people are motivated by material goods. Our main departure is with their proposition that ideology acts only as a mobilization variable in revolutionary situations. For us, ideology operates as a credence good that informs potential credible commitments. Prior ideological commitments influence revolutionary situations beyond just amassing a large revolutionary coalition.

Other research corroborates that ideology operates more than just as a mobilization variable. For example, Hanson (2010) argues consistent ideological commitments are a critical factor in determining which political groups are able to overcome collective action problems and which are not. Subsequently, he found that groups with consistent ideologies were the main competitors in revolutionary struggle and the outcomes were shaped by ideological parties, as opposed to parties more motivated by materialism or opportunism. In studying the outcomes of the Arab Spring, Bayat (2017) argues the lack of well-defined ideologies among the coalitions that toppled the incumbent regimes allowed for counter-revolution from former regime incumbents. The institutions that the initial revolutionaries formed lacked a cohesive ideological identity which hampered their ability to coordinate and provide goods. Both works highlight how ideology shapes political survival in revolutionary situations.

Lastly, selectorate theory neglects the outcome of partial victories. The transitology literature (Linz and Stepan, 1996; Przeworski, 1991) argues the key factor in democratic transitions is a series of political pacts by which incumbents agree to share power with challengers and permit political change in exchange

for guarantees that preserve their institutional access and prevent score-settling. Democratic outcomes are unlikely absent a pacted transition involving regime stakeholders and challengers. These transitions are premised on forming credible coalitions between incumbents and challengers. Not all such pacts are viable: "Party pacts have two requirements: first, leaders with the organizational and ideological capacity to negotiate a grand coalition among themselves; second, the allegiance of their political followers to the terms of the pact" Linz and Stepan (1996, p. 61). In other words, ideology is also a crucial variable affecting these types of outcomes.

2 The Role of Ideology in Revolutionary Situations

Ideology is a notoriously fuzzy concept in the social sciences. We define ideology in narrow and specific terms. An ideology is a set of normative conceptions about politics that outline a desired future polity and those who will have a stake in it. Thus defined, we show that ideology is a powerful resource for challengers in revolutionary situations that influences their ability to mobilize collective active, decide upon strategy and tactics, and assemble a winning coalition. But our definition also means that ideology imposes constraints upon its adherents because it sets the terms of legitimacy bargains between leaders and followers (Greif and Rubin, 2022). In revolutionary struggles, ideology limits the political groups with which challengers can cooperate and influences the kind of regime that they will try to institute if they prevail in a revolutionary struggle. For incumbents, the ideological commitments that rulers have made in establishing support for their ruling coalition also impose boundaries on what support groups they can plausibly add, as rulers such as James II/VII of Britain learned when coalition politics triggered the "Glorious" Revolution of 1688 (Kulkarni and Pfaff, 2022).

That ideology matters in these ways is nothing new. Weber (1978) made a forceful case for the role ideology plays in political conflict and in legitimating political domination. Extending the Weberian tradition in political sociology (Pfaff, 2002), Carl Schmitt further specified the role of ideology in political struggles. Schmitt (1976, p. 26-29) argues that, by calling the future of the state itself into question, the uncertainty and high stakes of revolutionary crisis undercut the usual truck and barter of factional politics. It is true that in an institutionalized democracy, ideologically-motivated parties may tolerate the victory of their foes because constitutional protections are credible and because they plausibly can get into power following a future election Przeworski (1991, p. 18-19). No such confidence obtains in revolutionary situations. In a revolutionary situation, an effective party must be able to separate those parties who are potential allies from those who are existential enemies (Bendersky, 1983). In such struggles, politics takes on its fundamental character, which is a practical state of war over political survival and the shape of future institutions (Schmitt,

1976, p. 35). Rather than immediate gain, ideology now becomes the surest guide to action. This is because, by determining the non-negotiable values of their adherents, ideologies identify those political actors whose vision for an imagined future polity is so hostile to one's own that they cannot be tolerated, meaning they must be opposed, if not eliminated, in the course of struggle, and must not be included in the future state.

At their most basic level, clear and consistent ideologies that specify a future polity enable political actors—whether incumbents or challengers—to distinguish clearly who are friends, potential allies and who are irreconcilable foes. The content of the ideology is not decisive; no ideology necessarily has a built-in advantage in the struggle for political survival. What matters is that the ideology is "sufficiently strong to group human beings effectively according to friend and enemy" (Schmitt, 1976, p. 37). Ideologically cohesive coalitions built around plausible partners sharing the fruits of a future political order are thus more likely to hold together and prevail in a protracted conflict than mere political marriages of convenience or opportunistic alliances that bring together ideological foes. Hanson (2010) illustrates these dynamics clearly arguing that under conditions of institutional uncertainty, consistent ideological commitments are a critical factor in determining which political groups are able to overcome collective action problems and which can not.

We argue ideologies help to solve the coordination problems and free-riding that constitute the "rebel's dilemma" (Lichbach, 1995) in three ways. First, ideologies that clearly define friend and foe simplify the political arena and make clear to followers why they act in coalition with some groups and must refuse the overtures of others. Party members can more readily coordinate when they share a firm political identity and the same long-term goals. However, this also constrains political leaders. If they make opportunistic alliances with ideological foes, they risk disorienting their followers and fostering defection.

Second, ideologies alone are capable of elaborating a clear and consistent vision of a desired but yet insecure future. By doing so, they postpone the payoffs for political action until the post-revolutionary outcome is achieved. This is a major advantage in revolutionary situations when a challenger's access to both private goods and public goods as inducements to loyalty is limited. The principal goods being promised, whether public or private, are thus transformed into *conditional incentives*, to be paid out after the "inevitable" victory of the true believers over their enemies. This feature of ideology also constrains challengers. Ideological compromises that go against the core definition of friends and enemies or the desired future polity provides new information to followers that calls into question the surety and fixity of the the cause, undermining the credibility of the promises upon which conditional incentives are based (Greif and Rubin, 2022).

Ideologically-motivated parties have a collective action advantage in revolutionary situations. They are better able to contain free-riding than pragmatic parties. This is because by imposing present sacrifice for

the sake of future gains and adopting an ideology that specifies its ultimate goals and its ideological foes prior to the onset of the revolutionary situation, the party becomes less attractive to opportunists and free-riders. As a result, the average level of commitment and willingness to undertake collective action on behalf of the group will be higher in ideologically motivated parties than in merely pragmatic parties (Berman, 2009; Iannaccone, 1992). Thus history is replete with examples of relatively small sectarian political groups that punch above their weight in revolutionary situations.

Finally, revolutionary promises are credence goods. Why should any party to a revolutionary coalition believe that its leaders will make good on their promises of institutional inclusion and sharing of political benefits? Revolutionary projects envisioning future polities are quintessential credence goods with difficult to assess payoffs. Their value can be spoiled by political opportunism that discredits the vision and undermines belief. For this reason, the reputation of their proponents for consistency and fidelity to the core beliefs and imagined futures of the ideological program help to overcome the natural reluctance of self-regarding people to join a dangerous and uncertain cause like a revolutionary movement or armed insurgency. Promises about a future polity will be much more credible if made by politicians who staked out ideological commitments prior to the onset of the revolutionary situation. As Bueno De Mesquita et al. (2003) note, once a revolutionary challenge has begun, leaders will naturally make all manner of promises to widen their coalition and undermine the incumbent. However, not all of those promises are equally credible. True belief is hard to fake and followers try to hold leaders accountable to the original ideological vision that mobilized them.

In his study of political parties competing in weakly-instituted, democracies in the wake of the collapse of empires, Hanson (2010) found support for our theory of ideology. Groups with consistent ideologies became the main competitors in struggles over control of the state. In the cases of France after 1871, Weimar Germany, and post-communist Russia, the resulting outcomes, whether democratic or authoritarian, were decided by the ideological parties, with parties motivated by materialism or pragmatism swept to the side. This was because party leaders lacking a coherent ideology were prone to venality and opportunism. They made alliances with groups that did not share their fundamental interests, pursued short-term goals, and had difficulty motivating and retaining rank-and-file supporters.

In short, political groups that have a clear and consistent ideology have better odds of prevailing in a revolutionary situation. Parties lacking one have a harder time mobilizing collective action, developing long-term strategies, and building stable and effective coalitions. Whereas pragmatic and materialistic parties are prone to exploitation and manipulation by insincere allies, the prior commitments of ideologically-motivated parties helps them keep their enemies in sight, refuse damaging compromises, and focus on conditional incentives that are only paid out with victory.

Selectorate's theory argument on outcomes can be summarized by Napoleon Bonaparte. As the rev-

olutionary democrat turned autocratic emperor Napoleon Bonaparte conceded, "I had been nourished by reflecting on liberty, but I thrust it aside when it obstructed my path." Napoleon's political cynicism has guided many post-revolutionary leaders. This view, however, fails to account for those instances in which ideological commitments made prior to victory in a revolutionary situation do pattern the political institutions of post-revolutionary regimes. Indeed, pluralistic ideological commitments sometimes shape the policy choices and institutions that rulers make both in the throes of struggle and in victory.¹

3 Decision-Making in Revolutionary Situations

We elaborate on selectorate theory when affinities are correlated across society and institutional uncertainty exists. Under these conditions, revolutionary situations take a form in which regimes are constrained in their ability to repress challengers and no single challenger is capable of overthrowing an incumbent by themselves. In these situations, correlated affinities operate as blocs in which clear, discernible leader(s) emerge. These leaders operate as brokers between these blocs and the emerging challenger coalition (Goldstone, 1994). Ideology, then, emerges as more than just a mobilization variable. Ideology operates as a credence good—it shapes the credibility of challenger coalitions not only between the challenger and each of these blocs but also between the challenger coalition and the incumbent coalition.

Ideological commitments also constrain the actions of autocrats. Tullock (1971, 1974) observed that dictators face social dilemmas of their own. Public opinion may be unimportant, but an incumbent ruler must satisfy those upon whom he relies to remain in power. This mostly means delivering private goods to regime supporters; however, the necessity of mobilizing collective action in defense of the regime in a revolutionary situation means that incumbents are also restrained by prior ideological commitments. Rulers seek legitimacy by reference to ideologies of whatever kind (nationalist, religious, revolutionary, etc.) because they reduce the costs and enhance the security of rule (North, 1981). This establishes a legitimacy bargain between believers in the ideology and the ruler that constrains their future actions (Greif and Rubin, 2022). Rulers who act in ways that obviously contradict their professed ideological commitments risk the loss of support within their winning coalition. They cannot credibly bring an ideological enemy into a ruling coalition without undermining its coherence. It may be tempting for an incumbent ruler to co-opt powerful opponents into their ruling coalition but ideological enemies cannot readily be included without risk of defection of supporters. Britain's revolution of 1688 provides an excellent example of this dynamic (Kulkarni

¹More recently, revolutions against Communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989 and 1990, were "self-limiting" revolutions in that dissident leaders were committed to instituting pluralist democracies and refused to seize power, even as the old regimes collapsed. For clearly ideological reasons, they refused to implement new political institutions by fiat and favored provisional "round table" talks that included a range of parties, including representatives of the fallen regimes (Linz and Stepan, 1996; Pfaff, 2006).

and Pfaff, 2022).

As such, ideology effectively constrains on the ability to mobilize and sustain a challenger coalition and the logic of political survival in revolutionary situations. It then influences potential institutional outcomes available to incumbents and challengers. Ideology has two critical dimensions: it defines a vision for a future polity and it provides a sense of who are the friends of the ideology versus who are the enemies. Based on these two dimensions, ideology is a causal variable in coalition formation, revolutionary strategy, political survival, and the scale and attribution of victory. This is not to say that ideology is *the* only or primary causal variable. Instead, we argue that ignoring ideology fails to explain the variation of revolutionary situations. We now outline a theory of how ideology informs the strategic interaction of challengers and incumbents in revolutionary situations. We define revolutionary situations as one in which, for whatever reasons, the incumbent can no longer rely on repression alone to suppress potential challengers.

Following the approach taken by Przeworski (1991) in his analysis of the dynamics of democratic transitions in Eastern Europe and Latin America, we use game-tree representation to specify interactions between challengers and an incumbent in a dynamic revolutionary situation. Our model is heuristic rather than an attempt to identify a unique equilibrium solution to a revolutionary situation game. Our more modest goal is to specify the links between abstract categories and real world situations (Hechter, 1992).

Figure 1 depicts each step in a revolutionary situation where ideology is a factor influencing decisions and outcomes. We label each branch of the tree as a decision on behalf of the actors involved. They may be described as such:

D1: Challenger decides between negotiation with incumbent regime or allying with other challengers to form a revolutionary coalition

D2: The revolutionary coalition decides between bargaining with the incumbent regime or refusing to bargain

D3: If bargaining fails or does not occur, then eventually the revolutionary coalition is defeated or the old regime is defeated

D4: If the old regime is defeated, then either the most powerful revolutionary group seizes power or a power-sharing agreement is arranged

3.1 D1: Negotiation or Coalition

The first branch in the tree involves a singular challenger and the incumbent. At this step, we argue ideology affects the willingness to negotiate with the incumbent. Per selectorate theory, this step is dictated

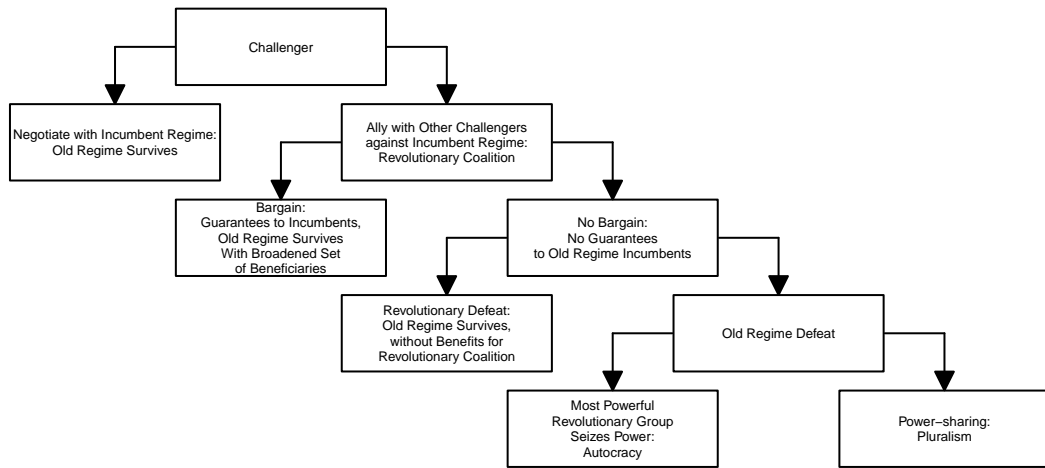


Figure 1: Revolutionary Situation Model

by whether a challenger can threaten the incumbent’s winning coalition or not—this depends on whether the challenger is powerful or not. If the challenger is powerful, then the incumbent is more likely to negotiate because the challenger is a credible threat; otherwise, the incumbent is unlikely to negotiate. In the case that the challenger is powerful, the outcome of a negotiation is a small increase in W along with private goods allocations. Should that occur, the revolutionary situation is resolved shortly after its onset by a pact between incumbent and challenger. The old regime survives, though with an expanded coalition. Otherwise, if there is no negotiation, then a challenger is forced to seek allies to form a coalition if they are serious about winning.

However, some challengers cannot be co-opted into the regime or bought off because ideological animosity makes a pact implausible. For example, the nationalist KMT regime of Chiang Kai-Shek could not include Mao’s Communists in its winning coalition after the defeat of Japan in 1945, despite its inability to defeat them on the battlefield. However, if there is ideological compatibility between the incumbent and the challenger, then negotiation is likely and a power-sharing pact can be arranged. Note however, that ideological compatibility is not enough. If the challenger is not powerful but ideologically compatible, then they are still likely to be ignored.

On the other hand, if the challenger is powerful and ideologically incompatible with the incumbent regime, the challenger, fearing co-optation that weakens their base of support, will be unlikely to negotiate. They will not accept a pay-off from an ideological enemy because there is no credibility in that offer and because the political costs may exceed the benefits. Under the selectorate model, the incumbent will prefer to include those with higher affinity to those with lower affinity. Thus, from the perspective of a challenger who is ideologically hostile, a short-term payoff of private goods is not credible as they will eventually be removed from future winning coalitions because of major differences in affinity. Lastly, challengers that are both not powerful and ideologically incompatible with the incumbent regime are likely to remain excluded. Based on these two variables, we derive a simple table of outcomes at this step (see Table 1).

	Powerful	Not Powerful
Compatible	Negotiation → Small W Increase	No Negotiation → Seek Allies
Incompatible	No Negotiation → Seek Allies	No Negotiation → Seek Allies

Table 1: The Outcomes of D1

So far, we have discussed the situation from the perspective of the challenger. However, from the perspective of an incumbent, nothing really changes. The incumbent will attempt to divide and conquer potential revolutionary threats by co-opting those who can threaten them and excluding those who do not threaten them. The important difference between the challenger and the incumbent at this stage is that challengers who are either not powerful or are ideologically incompatible will need to seek allies to build a coalition powerful enough to threaten the incumbent. Selectorate theory argues ideology is the only credible good a challenger has to offer here. In order to muster a winning coalition, challengers will espouse a broad ideology—one that promises the expansion of W (and by extension S). The result of this decision is a broad revolutionary coalition incentivized by these promises.

We do not substantially depart from selectorate theory’s basic proposition regarding revolutionary coalition formation. We offer an elaboration on pertinent details that this proposition may gloss over. First, consider this situation: two revolutionary groups exist and they espouse two ideologies. From the perspective of selectorate theory, the nature of the ideology does not matter; both will offer packages that increase W and S. In the eyes of potential followers, how do they choose between these options? What makes one ideology more credible than another? What makes promises of the expansion of selection institutions credible are ideological commitments made *prior* to the onset of the revolutionary situation.

For example, consider the case of Mosaddeq in Iran. In Iran’s brief tenure with democracy from 1941 and 1953, parliament was rife with opportunists more interested in lining their pockets than passing legislation (Abrahamian, 1982). What made Mosaddeq a credible constitutionalist promising a widened W and S, rather than a mere opportunist like the bulk of his colleagues? He had established his ideological commitments prior

to 1941. Mosaddeq's opposition to the dictatorship of Reza Shah was well known among both politicians and the public at the time; he was also on record as one of the few who voted against the abdication of the Qajar Monarchy and the ascendance of Reza Khan to Reza Shah. Mosaddeq was also credible as a nationalist and anti-imperialist from his time as a bureaucrat prior to the Reza Shah period as well as the legislation he got passed against the Soviet Oil Deal in 1944. As a result, Mosaddeq's coalition partners believed in his commitment to pluralism and national autonomy when he re-emerged as challenger in 1949—in fact, it was those coalition partners who convinced him to lead the charge as part of a broad National Front movement against the Shah's maneuvers to establish an authoritarian monarchy.

Ideological differences also condition plausible and implausible coalition partners. First note that a revolutionary coalition is unlikely to form if by allying, the coalition is still not powerful enough to threaten the incumbent's winning coalition. However, the additional variable affecting coalition formation is ideological compatibility. There must be some sense of credibility of being included in the winning coalition if the challenger coalition wins. For example, during the final crisis of the Weimar Republic the Communist (KPD) offer to form an "anti-fascist" bloc with the Social Democrats (SPD) lacked credibility. The KPD's prior commitment to Bolshevism was incompatible with the SPD's democratic reformism (Hanson, 2010). Therefore, it is not the case that challengers' broaden their ideology and the coalition immediately broadens. The coalition will broaden only among ideologically compatible groups.

Ideological enemies are not plausible partners. Their ideologies do not specify each other as part of W or S. To repeat Bueno De Mesquita et al. (2003), why fight only to still be disenfranchised in the end? And while they may claim that leaders are sincere about their initial promises, we make no such assumption. Our focus is on public credibility, not private sincerity. However, revolutionary leaders have developed tricks to get around this conundrum. For example, many will only focus on specifying who the enemy is while keeping their true preferences known only to their core followers. If they were to be more honest about their true preferences with the general public, it would have been more difficult for them to muster a coalition to begin with. Sometimes the general public is only dimly aware of these ideological commitments, but party activists know what their leaders promised and can tell the difference between tactical accommodations and long-term strategy. There were people surprised about how Lenin, Hitler, Khomeini, and other revolutionary leaders betrayed friends of convenience and abandoned pragmatism once they took power, but not their core supporters. They expected and even demanded it.

3.2 D2: Bargain or No Bargain

At this stage, a revolutionary coalition exists. The coalition consists of salient affinity blocs led by brokers. These brokers are the challengers. Challengers can be one of three types:

1. The challenger is powerful and ideologically incompatible
2. The challenger is not powerful and ideologically incompatible
3. The challenger is not powerful and ideologically compatible

Based on this variation, the revolutionary coalition can take many forms. We simplify this complexity by focusing on two variables: whether the revolutionary coalition is a plausible threat to the incumbent or not and whether the guarantees made by the revolutionary coalition are credible or not. It follows that a coalition does not form unless its leaders believe they are a plausible threat to the incumbent's winning coalition. Does it necessarily follow that upon a revolutionary coalition's formation, the incumbent perceives it as a plausible threat to its winning coalition? Per selectorate theory, the revolutionary coalition must overcome the incumbent's military advantage. Thus, a revolutionary coalition is not a plausible threat unless the incumbent believes the coalition can challenge their military advantage. Otherwise, they can be ignored. If the coalition is a plausible threat, the incumbent is willing to risk concessions at the bargaining table because otherwise they risk a period of prolonged conflict—and under our scope conditions in which the incumbent is constrained in their ability to repress challengers and institutional uncertainty disrupts otherwise conventional calculation, their prospects for political survival are unclear in such a period. Thus, the incumbent will be more inclined to bargain. Otherwise, if the coalition is not a plausible threat, then the outcome is that the coalition will become more disruptive. Whether this takes the form of mass political protest or full-on insurgency is not crucial here. The key distinction we make in this outcome is that bargaining with the incumbents is not seen as a viable option.

However, similar to the first decision branch, is an incumbent regime willing to bargain with ideological enemies? If the revolutionary coalition contains challengers that are ideologically incompatible with the incumbent, then the incumbent will not consider the coalition a credible partner at the bargaining table. Put simply: no credibility, no bargain. How does the revolutionary coalition establish credibility? Their ideology must in some way signal that the incumbent will retain a position in the winning coalition, albeit accompanied with both an expansion in the winning coalition and the selectorate. The coalition leaders must also have established this commitment prior to the current situation. However, if the revolutionary coalition contains elements that are antithetical to the incumbent regime and these elements are only now changing their discourse to appear more pro-regime than they initially were, then the coalition is not credible and the

incumbent is less likely to bargain. Even if both parties were to bargain in this case, it is likely that the incumbent would renege on the deal, as they would have never considered the deal credible to begin with.

For example, returning to Mosaddeq, this is what made the Shah unwilling to bargain with the National Front. The Shah reneged on the deal he made with Mosaddeq after the July Uprising in 1952 because he never considered Mosaddeq’s coalition credible. The coalition included elements the Shah considered anti-monarchist; and as Mosaddeq’s coalition shifted more toward the left and the Communists became associated with the government, Mosaddeq’s credibility of being pro-monarch came under scrutiny by the Shah. The result was the Shah’s collusion with other anti-Mosaddeqists in hatching a plot that gave the appearance that Mosaddeq was exiling the monarch; royalist crowds then ‘emerged’ and stormed Mosaddeq’s home. After this event, Mosaddeq was convinced the Shah was trying to kill him and they ceased communication until Mosaddeq’s final overthrow in the 1953 coup.

Thus, if it is the case that the challenger coalition is both a plausible threat and is viewed as a credible bargaining partner by the incumbent, then the outcome will be a partial victory on behalf of the challenger. The result is an expansion of both W and S with guarantees to the political survival of incumbent regime members; the old regime partners survive albeit in a new winning coalition with a broadened set of beneficiaries. Note that the logic of this reformist pathway out of revolutionary situations has been extensively documented in the political science literature on pacted transitions from autocracy to pluralism (Linz and Stepan, 1996; Przeworski, 1991). Otherwise, a bargaining outcome is unlikely and the situation escalates into disruptive action on behalf of the challenger coalition.

	Threatening	Not Threatening
Credibility	Bargain → W and S Increase	No Bargain → Disruptive Action
No Credibility	No Bargain → Disruptive Action	No Bargain → Disruptive Action

Table 2: The Outcomes of D2

3.3 D3: Victory or Defeat

At this stage, the challenger coalition is engaging in disruptive politics. The idea here is to either force the incumbent to bargain or otherwise defeat them. Thus, the only outcomes here are victory or defeat. If the revolutionary challengers are defeated, then the old regime survives without any benefits for the revolutionary coalition. If the old regime is defeated, then the coalition decides on how to split the spoils (which we cover in D4).

Per selectorate theory, challengers use a public goods strategy to survive. Selectorate theory argues the only credible public good is ideology. The theory also argues the ideology must be broad enough to create the revolutionary coalition. However as we noted above, there are ideological tensions in coalition formation.

Thus, how does ideology affect political survival beyond the mobilization phase?

Similar to Hanson (2010), we argue consistent commitments to ideology in uncertain political situations increase the probability of survival. To be clear, we do not argue that ideology is the only factor here that influences revolutionary victory or defeat. This stage is highly sensitive to exogenous shocks that may influence the outcome. Rather, we argue that the crucial mechanism here is maintaining a winning coalition. And ideology does play a role in maintaining a winning coalition.

How do challengers exhibit consistent commitments then? First, challengers manipulate informational asymmetries amongst the coalition. Recall that ideology operates as a credence good. Coalition members have a sense that they will become part of the winning coalition if the coalition wins. However, this is not a complete information situation. Challengers control what information is available to what groups and leaders will always try to retain private information. Thus, consistent commitments to broad ideologies or consistent commitments on who the true enemy is may hold together a coalition but brokers within the coalition want assurances beyond either of these factors. In other words, they want private goods allocations for their blocs. This leads to the second crucial way in which challengers exhibit consistent commitments: allocation decisions. When given an opportunity for allocation decisions in advance of total victory, decisions that are more in line with the coalition as a whole improves the prospect of political survival. But leaders don't always make allocation decisions along these lines.

When given an opportunity for allocation decisions, we argue these decisions are influenced by ideological commitments. Challengers will allocate goods to bolster the brokers with whom they have the highest affinity. But does this always improve the prospects for political survival? Not necessarily. Consider the case of Mosaddeq here who in making leadership appointments favored liberal and nationalist party allies in the National Front over brokers from Islamist parties and bazaari interest groups (Toro, 2021). Upon his first premiership in 1951, Mosaddeq's first cabinet contained more conservatives than liberal nationalists. In the first parliamentary elections supervised by Mosaddeq's government, Mosaddeq refused to rig the elections to favor National Front candidates. This earned the ire of Islamist and bazaari groups within the coalition. After the July Uprising, Mosaddeq's second cabinet swung heavily in favor of liberal nationalists over any other group. It was at this point that the Islamist and bazaari leaders defected from Mosaddeq and joined the opposition conditional on the promise that they would be allocated ministry positions upon Mosaddeq's removal. Without the Islamist and bazaari brokers to bolster the small modern middle class, Mosaddeq struggled to retain order both in parliament and in the streets making him vulnerable to the coup plots that eventually overthrew him.

3.4 D4: Weak or Strong Loyalty Norm

If the incumbent is defeated, then the challenger coalition will erect new selection institutions. However, selectorate theory identifies two constraints upon challengers here: the scale of victory and the attribution of victory. Selectorate theory only considers total victory when considering the scale of victory. We amended this oversight by noting a bargaining outcome in D2 as a partial victory. We align with selectorate theory in D4 by assuming that challengers have achieved total victory at this stage. The other constraint is whether victory is attributed to a single challenger or the coalition. If victory is attributed to a singular leader, then the logic of political survival incentivizes this leader to develop selection institutions with a strong loyalty norm: a large S, small W system. However, if victory is attributed to the coalition, coalition members choose selection institutions with a weak loyalty norm: either a small W and small S system or a large W and large S system. We maintain the theoretical possibility of a small W and small S system arising from revolutionary situations but we will focus instead on large W and large S systems from this point forward—we will denote such a system as pluralism.

We add an additional constraint to the form of new selection institutions: prior ideological commitments. If the single strongest group within the coalition had clear prior commitments to increasing W, then we predict a pluralist outcome. Otherwise, if the single strongest group within the coalition did not have strong prior commitments to increasing W, then we do not expect a pluralist outcome. In other words, if a challenger's group began the revolutionary conflict with strong ideological coherence and credibility around forming a large W system, then at each stage the coalition was constrained to be credible on that promise in order to mobilize and sustain the revolutionary challenge. Thus, even if victory was attributed to the leader of this group, this leader would be constrained to form new institutions with a strong loyalty norm as selectorate theory predicts. Doing so would require either purging members of their own bloc who had expected to become part of the winning coalition or denying posts to other blocs they had promised to include. This would induce defection from the challenger's own winning coalition before the challenger even had a chance to govern with the new selection institutions.

However, some revolutionary leaders do exhibit this pattern. They begin purging fellow coalition members upon singular attribution of victory. Selectorate theory argues this is strictly due to the logic of political survival. However, we argue these leaders never had strong prior commitments to increasing W to include every member of the polity to begin with. Recall the all too common pattern: challengers promote broad ideologies at the beginning of the conflict, and seemingly renege on the promise at this stage. However, unlike selectorate theory, we argue the timing and nature of the ideological commitment matters. A broad pattern will signal different things to different blocs within the coalition. Those espousing relief for the

downtrodden and depressed can rarely afford to be specific about who actually is the downtrodden and the depressed; however, they can privately assure specific bloc leaders and exploit informational asymmetries between leaders and followers.

Consider the case of Khomeini here. Khomeini established his theological doctrine of an Islamic state based on Sharia law long before the crisis that led to the fall of the Shah. His doctrine, which he began to elaborate in the 1940s, did not lay out the specifics of governance but it did lay out the principal of clerical rule. During the revolutionary crisis, Khomeini focused on anti-Western rhetoric and his populism elevated the plight of the *mostawfn* (the oppressed)—a term he coined—to the coalition (Abrahamian, 2008). Meanwhile, Khomeini assured his core group of clerical followers that if they were to take power, they would never show weakness like the Shah, and they would never share power with their secular enemies. Khomeini and his core supporters knew who he wanted in his polity and by extension, who he wanted to exclude. Indeed, when the Shah’s regime fell, the referendum for the institutional form of the new government only included two options: yes or no on an Islamic Republic. However, Mehdi Bazargan, the prime minister, demanded a third option—a Democratic Islamic Republic. Khomeini refused to accept this as part of the referendum. Consistent with his longstanding ideological commitments, he declared that Islam implied democracy and that a secular option was redundant and unacceptable (Abrahamian, 2008, p. 163). In the wake of the referendum, the Islamic Republic began to purge its ideological enemies, particularly the secular leftists, from the winning revolutionary coalition. The point here is that the attribution of victory behind a broad revolutionary coalition did not matter to Khomeini’s position since his group was the most powerful member and he always intended to purge ideological enemies irrespective of whether victory was attributed singularly to him or the coalition because he had no strong prior commitment to a pluralist outcome. His goal, clearly developed decades before the revolution, had always been an Islamic republic subject to clerical rule. He delivered it.

	Singular Attribution	Coalition Attribution
Strong Prior Commitment to Pluralism	Pluralism*	Pluralism
No Strong Prior Commitment to Pluralism	Not Pluralism	Not Pluralism*

Table 3: The Outcomes of D4. Asterisk * indicates where we predict differently from selectorate theory.

Thus, our amendment to selectorate theory’s prediction about post-revolutionary institutional forms after total victory is that strong prior commitments supersede the attribution of victory. In the case of coalition attribution, if the strongest group desires pluralism, then it will choose institutional forms with a weak loyalty norm. If the strongest group opposes pluralism, it will choose institutional forms with a strong loyalty norm.

Consider the case of Nehru in India. Nehru became the dominant leader of the progressive faction of

the Indian National Congress. As Gandhi's named successor, and the leader of Congress's strongest faction, Nehru consistently offered a clear ideological program rooted in immediate independence, secularism, political pluralism, and social democracy. For example, Gandhi's commitment to non-violence often led him to bargain with the British; Nehru always criticized these moves arguing that Congress needed to be consistent on full independence and that such bargains were antithetical to that goal (Ceplair, 2020). When Nehru was elected president of Congress, the independence movement was a challenger coalition that attempted to bring together as wide as possible a challenge to the British Raj. Nehru managed to hold the nationalist movement together, even as he judiciously shed ideological opponents hostile to his imagined future polity from Congress in the 1930s and 1940s. These groups, which included Muslim separatists, Hindu-centric nationalists, and S.C. Bose's National Socialists, were incompatible with the progressives' vision of a democratic, secular republic. For example, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, leader of the Muslim League, would accept nothing less than separatism; while Gandhi opposed this, Nehru did not, arguing that Congress should co-opt Muslims not aligned with the separatist goal (Ceplair, 2020).

After World War II, Britain agreed to Indian independence and in 1947 Nehru became prime minister in a self-governing dominion. Nehru, arguably, benefitted from both partition and Gandhi's assassination. With the Muslim League in a new electorate, Congress could credibly commit to Muslims as an electoral constituency. Before Gandhi's assassination, he began criticizing steps taken by Nehru's government (Ceplair, 2020); Gandhi's assassination rallied the masses around Nehru and prevented any further criticism Gandhi may have had. At this point, we argue Nehru's government had the chance to seize sole power and massively narrow the winning coalition but instead Nehru reinforced democracy. In 1950, despite the clear victory for Congress and his own undisputed leadership of post-independence India, Nehru made good on his longstanding ideological commitments. The new constitution established India as a secular democracy. Although it remained a catch-all party, Congress became only one among many in a parliamentary democracy. Nehru governed for sixteen years, making good on his consistent electoral pledge to deliver "a stable, secular, progressive state" (Tharoor, 2003).

4 Conclusion and Implications

Selectorate theory in political economy contends that the incentives leaders face in the struggle for political survival shapes the decisions they make on post-revolutionary institutional forms. Yet the theory predicts that only the scale of victory and its attribution help us to understand revolutionary outcomes. We have argued that selectorate theory has neglected the role of ideology in revolutionary politics and outcomes. We have shown that the role of ideology, specified as a consistent and explicit vision for a future polity,

has independent effects on the dynamics of revolutionary struggles, coalition formation, the likelihood of pacted transitions, and the shape of post-revolutionary institutions. We have shown that prior ideological commitments by revolutionary challengers facilitate a winning coalition and subsequently constrain the range of political choices available to winners.

Contra selectorate theory's claim that ideology only operates as a mobilization variable, we have shown that it conditions plausible coalition partners, it informs allocation decisions made by leaders, and it defines the acceptable scale and attribution of victory. Drawing especially on the cases of Iran and India, we show that ideological commitments by revolutionary leaders have been crucial factors not only affecting their political survival but also the subsequent institutions they instituted in the wake of victory.

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