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## The Ideological Legacy of the French Revolution: Gaps and Challenges in Western Democracies

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### Abstract

The transformative consequences of the French Revolution are widely regarded as responsible for the democratic trajectory that European politics have followed throughout centuries. While praise for the Revolution's groundbreaking nature has dominated modern literature, recent surges in populist movements across the old continent appear to resonate with arguments made by the event's early critics. Recent elections across Europe exhibit the detachment of certain populations from democratic values and European ideals. This phenomenon is best illustrated by the concept of *democratic backsliding*. While originally observed in former communist states such as Hungary or Poland, it now seems to transcend original theories and extend to Western nations as well. Through a historical analysis of the Revolution's aftermath, this paper explores the extent to which the erasure of unifying ideologies helps explain this populist trend. To shed light on the struggle to balance revolutionary ideals with stable governance, the paper also investigated the EU's role in filling this ideological gap through the promotion of a cohesive European identity.

**Keywords:** Democratic backsliding, French Revolution, ideological gap, European identity, Western democracy

## Introduction

The French Revolution, an earthshaking event in world history, fundamentally reshaped the political, social, and ideological landscape of Europe. As Edgar Quinet aptly noted, "The French Revolution is the ultimate explosion of the human spirit against the forces of oppression."<sup>1</sup> This upheaval not only dismantled the monarchy and established a republic but also uprooted the deeply entrenched values associated with royalism and religion. The ideological vacuum created by the revolution has left an indelible mark on Western society, shaping the evolution of European identity and exposing inherent vulnerabilities that persist to this day.

The revolution's two-fold impact, embodying both the destruction of the old regime and the creation of a new political order, has sparked considerable debate among historians and political theorists. On one hand, it is praised as a triumph of "liberty, equality, and fraternity," laying the groundwork for modern democratic ideals.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, it is criticized for its violent excesses and the instability it unleashed, leading to a protracted period of political turmoil. This dichotomy is reflected in the complex legacy of the revolution, which continues to influence contemporary political thought and practice.

One of the central arguments in this discourse is the ideological gap left by the revolution. The disintegration of the *ancien régime* eradicated not only the monarchy but also the societal structures and values that had sustained it. This gap, characterized by the absence of a unifying ideology beyond democratic ideals, has posed a significant challenge for subsequent generations. As the revolutionary fervor subsided, the lack of a cohesive sociological framework led to a period of ideological fragmentation and political instability in France and beyond.<sup>3</sup>

This paper explores the idea that the ideological vacuum left by the revolution has had profound implications for the development of Western democracies. In the absence of a unifying ideology, democratic societies have struggled to forge a stable and coherent identity. This challenge is more evident in the periodic backsliding of democracies, where along traditionally addressed factors, the lack of a sustainable ideological foundation has led to systemic fragility, and to the rise of populism and social crises.<sup>4</sup> The expansion of democracy in the 19th and 20th centuries often occurred in tandem with efforts to address this ideological gap, as nations sought to establish new political and social norms that could replace the values of an *ancien régime*.

The formation of the European Union represents a significant attempt to address this ideological gap. By promoting a shared European identity based on democratic principles and human rights, the EU has sought to create a stable and cohesive political order in Europe, through what Lane refers to as a new form of "Civil Society."<sup>5</sup> However, the EU's efforts have not been without challenges. The rise of nationalist and populist movements across Europe exhibits the ongoing struggle to reconcile diverse national identities with a unified European vision.<sup>6</sup> This tension underscores the difficulty of creating a sustainable ideological framework in the post-revolutionary era.

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<sup>1</sup> Quinet, Edgar. 1865. *La Révolution*. Paris and Brussels: A. Lacroix, Verboeckhoven. <https://archive.org/details/larevolution02quin>.

<sup>2</sup> Doyle, William. 1990. *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Furet, François. 2001. *Interpreting the French Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>4</sup> Levitsky, Steven, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die: What History Reveals about Our Future*. London: Viking.

<sup>5</sup> Lane, David. 2010. "Civil Society in the Old and New Member States." *European Societies* 12 (3): 293–315. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2010.483008>.

<sup>6</sup> Noury, Abdul, and Gérard Roland. 2020. "Identity Politics and Populism in Europe." *Annual Review of Political Science* 23 (1): 421–39. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-050718-033542>.

This research paper therefore seeks to scrutinize the ideological gap created by the French Revolution and its implications for contemporary Western democracies by examining the historical context and outcomes of the revolution. In addressing its lasting influence on subsequent political developments, it eventually aims to shed light on the enduring challenges and opportunities associated with revolutionary change. Simultaneously, the paper will attempt to understand the European response to the ideological shift that several modern populists seem to use as means to take power in the region.

### **The Revolutionary Upheaval and the Birth of Ideological Uncertainty**

The French Revolution, the turning point of which occurred in 1789 with the storming of the Bastille, marked a dramatic upheaval in the social and political structures of France. The ancien régime, characterized by semi-absolute monarchy and a rigid hierarchical society rooted in feudal traditions, was dismantled. This system was deeply intertwined with the Catholic Church, which played a significant role in legitimizing the monarchy and maintaining social order through religious doctrine. As such, the revolution did not merely overthrow a political system but also sought to alter the values and institutions that had supported it.<sup>7</sup>

The revolution's radical reformation included the abolition of the monarchy and the nobility, the nationalization of church lands, and the establishment of secular policies. These actions directly challenged the intertwined power of the Church and the Crown, aiming to create a society based on more egalitarian principles. However, the immediate aftermath of the revolution revealed significant political instability. The first French Republic, shaken by internal strife and external pressures, shortly gave way to other political regimes such as Napoleon Bonaparte's empire, which was stabilized through the re-establishment of religion as one of the country's pillars. This period of upheaval highlighted the profound uncertainty that followed the collapse of the ancien régime. The extreme violence, political party-war and rapid succession of political systems - from the monarchy to the republic, then to the empire - underscored the challenges in establishing a stable government and societal framework. The revolution's attempt to replace deeply rooted religious and royalist values with new secular and republican ideals faced substantial resistance and adaptation issues. The second French Republic also witnessed limits to democratic ideals as the provisory system and Napoleon III's presidency saw the rise of a more comprehensive constitution, followed by bloody repressions of revolutions, a coup and an extremely short-lasting political regime.

Furet, Tocqueville and Cochin are among the few personalities to have revised the narrative of the French Revolution to raise critiques about the misunderstandings that surround its true nature. Tocqueville argued that the divine royalty shifted to a democratic royalty, subverting ideologies while maintaining institutional functioning.<sup>8</sup> The ideological shift that emerged was a consequence of the revolution's comprehensive deconstruction of the old order. The destruction of the monarchy and the church's authority left a vacuum in the societal values and political legitimacy that had previously been unquestioned. This gap was not immediately filled by the new revolutionary ideals, which were themselves subject to continuous reinterpretation and conflict. Furet argues that these ideals died after the end of the Terror period and explains it through Cochin's theories of politics and ideology. These theories state that revolutionary ideology is philosophically optimistic one that assumes the people's need to get their rights and liberties restored, but that this ideology is only achievable through

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<sup>7</sup> Lefebvre, Georges, Raymond Guyot, and Philippe Sagnac. 1951. "La Révolution Française." *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 23 (133–142).

<sup>8</sup> Kahan, Alan S., and Robert T. Gannett. 2006. "Tocqueville and the French Revolution." *History and Theory* 45 (3): 424–35. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3874134>.

manipulation to reach political objectives. In other words, the revolutionary, or even democratic ideology, does not survive the shock of encounter with political realities.<sup>9</sup>

In his seminal contribution to revolutionary literature in which he deeply dives into the revolution's intellectual history, Jonathan Israel addresses the ideological dilemma with the original lens of describing the revolution's ideology as derived from radical ideas of the 18th century that translated into a myriad of ideological blocs.<sup>10</sup> The clash of those blocs is, according to Israel, what is today referred to under the sobriquet "French Revolution." Alongside this perspective stands Furet's "revolution's end" after the Terror, that saw a betrayal to all those somewhat-democratic ideals, instead of their fulfilment. The revolution's "end" here does not refer to the establishment of the First Republic, rather Furet suggests that the upheaval ended when democratic ideals were abandoned in practice. He points out that it was not by natural evolution that Napoleon's authoritarian regime rose to power and argues that it marked the point at which the revolutionary ideology was exhausted and had to be replaced.

As this paper dives into the emergence of this ideological illusion, marked by the dissonance between the revolution's proclaimed ideals and the reality of its outcomes, it is trivial to question whether it had long-term implications for the development of Western democracies. It had. Regardless of if what followed the rebellion was a democracy of the bourgeoisie or a revolutionary oligarchy, the revolution's optimistic principles became foundational to modern democratic ideals. Nevertheless, the instability and conflict that succeeded its initial phase revealed the difficulties of establishing a coherent and lasting political order. This period of uncertainty set a precedent for the challenges that would face other European democracies that were established shortly after, as they sought to balance these revolutionary ideals with the need for stable governance. Hobsbawm attributes the shaping of this complex European democratic ideology to two revolutions, the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution that began in Great Britain.<sup>11</sup> While critics, such as J. Godechot, accuse him of disregarding the American Revolution's role in modelling these dynamics, the author does acknowledge its impact but chooses to focus his analysis on Europe, which he argues was predominantly shaped by the Dual Revolution,<sup>12</sup> at least until 1848.<sup>13</sup>

In summary, the outcome of the French Revolution can sometimes appear as "prêt-à-penser" (ready-to-think) intellectual material, as a convenient or uncritical reference for the origins of modern democracies. However, in regards to international relations and the making of Western European democracies, the complexities of the event's origins and ideological dimensions are considerably impactful in ways that have received little traction in the literature.

### **The Ideological Blur and Democratic Backsliding**

From the French Revolution's aftermath stemmed an ideological blur whose long-term effects on contemporary Western democracies are still being explored. This section investigates whether the resulting ideological vacuum may have contributed to the democratic backsliding seen in modern European countries, particularly through the rise of populism. We will consider Alexis de Tocqueville's suggestion that excessive empowerment of the populace

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<sup>9</sup> Furet, François. 1981. *Interpreting the French Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>10</sup> Israel, Jonathan. 2015. *Revolutionary Ideas: An Intellectual History of the French Revolution from the Rights of Man to Robespierre*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

<sup>11</sup> Hobsbawm, Eric J. 1962. *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789–1848*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

<sup>12</sup> "Dual Revolution" refers to Hobsbawm theory drawing a parallel between the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution.

<sup>13</sup> Godechot, Jacques. 1964. "E. J. Hobsbawm. *The Age of Revolution, Europe from 1789 to 1848*, 1962." *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* 175 (1): 108–11. [https://www.persee.fr/doc/ahrf\\_0003-4436\\_1964\\_num\\_175\\_1\\_3661\\_t1\\_0108\\_0000\\_3](https://www.persee.fr/doc/ahrf_0003-4436_1964_num_175_1_3661_t1_0108_0000_3).

could lead to instability, and whether this phenomenon mirrors the class crises reminiscent of the French Revolution's origins. Additionally, this section aims to examine whether the resurgence of populist movements represents a collective attempt by citizens to reclaim lost ideological values.

*The Ideological Blur* - The French Revolution's wrecking of the ancien régime left a France where traditional values and institutions were replaced with revolutionary ideals remodeled by its new leaders. However, these new principles were not fully integrated into the societal fabric, leading to a "blur" that persisted into the modern era. Francois Furet, who can be said to have laid the ideological groundwork necessary to identify the *blur*, addressed how the revolution's attempt to replace deeply entrenched values with secular and republican ideals led to a period of ideological fragmentation translating into political instability.<sup>14</sup> This ideological blur created an environment where different groups could project their aspirations and frustrations onto the political landscape. The absence of a clear, unifying ideology has made it challenging for democracies based on the same systematic approach, to establish a stable and coherent identity. Hobsbawm later highlighted the intricacies of this prolonged period of ideological uncertainty following the revolution as societal dynamics changed with industrial development. Rural exoduses and the birth of the modern working class came with inequalities that, far away from ideological convergence, struggled to find their place in post-revolution settings.<sup>15</sup>

*Democratic Backsliding* - Democratic backsliding, essentially the rise of populism, can be seen as a response to this ideological uncertainty. In fact, populism thrives in environments where there is a perceived disconnect between the political elite and the general populace. In his prophetic speech in February 1789, Alexis de Tocqueville wondered: "I ask whether selfishness is not the driving force behind the exercise of political rights. I question if this is not a true degradation where both public and private morals are diminished." He was referring to his idea of a future revolution as the outcome of considerable losses of ideological values.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, Tocqueville claimed that the empowerment of the people through democratic means can lead to instability if not properly managed. In "Democracy in America," he warned that allowing too much power to the people could result in a tyranny of the majority, where egoistical, or at least class-based populist sentiments, could undermine democratic institutions.<sup>17</sup>

Looking at how contemporary Europe is seeing a significant rise in populist movements, one could perceive these movements as reactionary to the perceived failures of the existing democratic order to address the needs and values of the populace. The concept of democratic backsliding is best explored in literature through the case studies of Hungary and Poland. In Hungary, Viktor Orbán's Fidesz party has leveraged nationalist rhetoric to consolidate power and challenge the liberal democratic norms established post-communism, while in Poland, the Law and Justice Party (PiS) exhibits similar behaviour.<sup>18</sup> However, this trend is not to be solely attributed to post-Soviet nations nor considered as geographically limited. In fact, recent political happenings in the Western part of the old continent tend to exhibit the extent of this surging nationalism. For instance, Germany's Alternative Für Deutschland (AfD) has capitalized on anti-immigrant sentiments and economic anxieties to gain support, positioning itself as a defender of "true" German values against a disconnected

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<sup>14</sup> Furet, François. 1981. *Interpreting the French Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>15</sup> Hobsbawm, Eric J. 1962. *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789–1848*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

<sup>16</sup> Benoit, Jean-Louis. 2013. "Partie VII - La Révolution de 1848, Du Discours du 27 Janvier à la Chute de la Monarchie." *Cairn.info*. <https://www.cairn.info/tocqueville--9782262043063-page-467.htm>.

<sup>17</sup> Tocqueville, Alexis de. 1835. *Democracy in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>18</sup> Bernhard, Michael. 2021. "Democratic Backsliding in Poland and Hungary." *Slavic Review* 80 (3): 585–607. <https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2021.145>.

political elite.<sup>19</sup> Similar observation can be made with France, as Marine Le Pen's Rassemblement National (RN) has continuously gained traction by appealing to traditional French values and advocating for policies that prioritize national interests over those of the EU. European restrictions that come with the democratic federalism of the Union push countries to desire more sovereignty over their own decisions, fueling populist sentiments.

Such sentiments are currently reshaping political landscapes within the Union's founder nations. Italy's Lega, led by Matteo Salvini, has positioned itself as the savior of Italian identity and directly against perceived encroachments by EU bureaucracy and immigration policies.<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, countries outside the post-Soviet context are also experiencing similar developments, seen in Austria for example with the rise of its Freedom Party (FPÖ). These movements often highlight economic disparities, cultural threats from immigration, and a loss of national sovereignty due to EU policies as primary reasons for their rise. It therefore appears that threats such as the Great Recession, the Eurozone Crisis, and the fragilities of post-communist governance have created an ideal context for democratic backsliding. We define this backsliding as both a lack of a coherent ideological direction and a resurgence of regressive political behaviors among European populations.

On a different note, the class rearrangement that followed the French Revolution is also critical in understanding the rise of populism. The revolution is known to have disrupted the traditional class structures, leading to the emergence of new social groups with distinct interests and grievances. This shift, still observable today with the strong attachment of our democracies to the egalitarian non-division of citizens, may have created fertile ground for populist leaders who promise to address the concerns of these disparate groups by challenging the status quo. For example, the *gilets jaunes* (yellow vests) movement in France can be seen as a contemporary manifestation of class-based discontent. This movement, which began as a protest against fuel taxes, quickly expanded to encompass broader grievances about economic inequality and the perceived neglect of rural and working-class citizens by the political elite. The yellow vests movement illustrates how populist sentiments can emerge from class-based frustrations that are rooted in historical shifts initiated by the revolution.<sup>21</sup> As contemporary populist movements often present themselves as reclaiming the ideological values that were lost or diluted over time, they tap into the sense of nostalgia for a perceived golden age when national values and identity were more coherent and widely shared. This reclaiming is evident in the rhetoric of populist leaders who promise to return power to the people and restore national sovereignty against perceived threats from globalization and supranational entities like the European Union. This reclaiming of values is observable across the political spectrum, with both far-left and far-right movements gaining traction. In France, Marine Le Pen's Rassemblement National (far-right) faces on the other side of the spectrum Jean-Luc Mélenchon's La France Insoumise (far-left), which has also made significant gains, surprising many with his strong performance in the last French elections.

In short, this ideological blur created by the French Revolution and the subsequent democratic backsliding in the form of populism highlight the ongoing struggle to balance revolutionary ideals with the need for stable governance. This tension is thought to be reflected in the rise of populist movements across Europe, which capitalize on class-based discontent and the perceived failure of highly polarized populations. In their "*Anatomy of Democratic Backsliding*," Haggard & Kaufman observed that political polarization contributes to government dysfunction and increases the risk that incumbent parties will move toward

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<sup>19</sup> Cantoni, Davide, Felix Hagemeister, and Mark Westcott. 2017. "Persistence and Activation of Right-Wing Political Ideology." *RePEc: Research Papers in Economics*. <https://doi.org/10.5282/ubm/epub.40424>.

<sup>20</sup> Mudde, Cas. 2007. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>21</sup> Foa, Roberto Stefan, and Yascha Mounk. 2019. "Youth and the Populist Wave." *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 45 (9–10): 1013–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0191453719872314>.

extremes.<sup>22</sup> In fact, both extremes seem to be concerned by ideological vacuums, and studies of revolutionary-critics as Tocqueville and J. de Maistre reveal that ideological aspirations are independent of political sides. Tocqueville, a socialist, described that some democratic-induced sociological conditions lead to “mass societies” afflicted by despotic tendencies that emanate from the very concept of equity.

What he describes translated to a people being atomized, and thus disconnected from a “central-value system.”<sup>23</sup> In a similar vision, De Maistre, a royalist, stated that the exclusion of religion by the revolution was responsible for political challenges, and that politically, “Man cannot create equality; it is a mere dream. Nature herself has established inequalities that cannot be abolished.”<sup>24</sup> This aligns with the view of socialists, in calling out this system as morally and politically illusory.

### **The Role of the European Union in Addressing the Ideological Blur**

This section explores the perspective that the EU’s creation was partly an attempt to push a European identitarian narrative, filling voids left apparent by the outcome of the two World Wars, by installing ideas of shared democratic values, human rights, and of a unified Europe. However, the state of the contemporary EU exhibits the significant challenges this process has faced, particularly in light of the rise of populism and the ongoing tension between national sovereignty and supranational governance.

The EU has endeavored since the European Economic Community (EEC) to create a shared European identity that transcends national borders, promoting ideals of peace, democracy, and human rights, promoted through declarations and treaties during the 1950s. This vision is rooted in the Enlightenment principles that also inspired the French Revolution, aiming to provide a stable ideological foundation for the member states. Since the late 20th century, the concept of a European identity has gained traction but despite these efforts, the effectiveness of promoting a federal identity has been mixed. While some citizens embrace the idea of a united Europe, others view the EU as a distant and bureaucratic entity that imposes regulations without adequately considering national contexts. Lorimer, suggests that Europe is an Ideological Resource by arguing that Europe itself does not propose a distinct ideology and that, instead, it becomes an ideological resource for populist parties to legitimize their own agendas.<sup>25</sup> Populist parties like France’s Rassemblement National (RN) exploit the lack of a clear EU ideology to convey a more acceptable political message, portraying themselves as defenders of national sovereignty against the EU’s overreach.

One of the EU’s core strategies has been economic integration through policies such as the single market and the eurozone. These policies aim to create economic interdependence that would deter conflicts and promote stability. Yet, economic integration has also led to tensions over sovereignty and control. The financial crises in the eurozone, for example, exposed deep divides between member states, with wealthier countries like Germany pushing for austerity measures that were deeply unpopular in countries like Greece and Italy. These economic tensions have been exploited by populist movements, which argue that EU policies prioritize economic efficiency over social welfare and national interests. Leaders like Salvini in Italy and Le Pen in France have capitalized on these sentiments, framing the EU as an elite project that undermines the sovereignty and well-being of ordinary citizens. Additionally, the

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<sup>22</sup> Haggard, Stephan, and Robert Kaufman. 2021. “The Anatomy of Democratic Backsliding.” *Journal of Democracy* 32 (4): 27–41.

<sup>23</sup> Tocqueville, Alexis de. 1835. *Democracy in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>24</sup> De Maistre, Joseph, and Richard A. Lebrun. 1993. *St Petersburg Dialogues: Or Conversations on the Temporal Government of Providence*. McGill-Queen’s University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt810wq>.

<sup>25</sup> Lorimer, Marta. 2020. “Europe as Ideological Resource: The Case of the Rassemblement National.” *Journal of European Public Policy*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2020.1754885>.

United Kingdom's Brexit referendum in 2016 highlighted significant concerns over national sovereignty, with a majority voting to leave the EU, citing a desire to regain control over their laws and borders. Foa & Mounk's work on younger citizens found their attitude towards Europe is prone to democratic apathy (skepticism of democratic values) and democratic antipathy (embracing illiberal movements) as a result of social exclusion.<sup>26</sup> This attitude can be passive (loss of interest in politics due to unshareable values) or active, as the youth becomes increasingly critical of democratic institutions, domestically and supranationally. Thus, this eventually calls for renewed attention regarding Europe's failure in providing ideals that could rally young citizens, whose values and claims on sovereignty are decisive for the Union's future.

Finally, one of the compelling causes that leads to rising Euroskepticism lies in the organization's complex governance structure, in which many institutions are designed to balance the interests of member states with the need for collective decision-making. However, this structure has been criticized for its perceived lack of transparency and democratic accountability. Critics argue that the EU's decision-making processes are too removed from the electorate, leading to a democratic deficit. Scholars such as Betz, who observed the populist rise since the late 1980s, attribute the trend to the opposition of perceived far-right political necessities' victory over a substantially fragmented left.<sup>27</sup> Modern observers, in contrast, including Taggart & Szczerbiak, highlight issues of democratic legitimacy, transparency, and the balance of power between national and supranational entities.<sup>28</sup> The latter explanation is observed frequently in recent populist discourse, used by leaders as an argument to bolster traction over their agendas. By portraying the EU as undemocratic and disconnected from the people, neo-populist parties advocate for a return to stronger national governance. This rhetoric resonates with voters who feel that their voices are not adequately represented in Brussels, further deepening the ideological divide between the EU and its member states.

## Conclusion

The French Revolution shook the very foundations of the world and left a legacy that continues to shape modern democracies. Having torn down the ancien régime and brought forth the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, it left a void in ideology that future regimes would strive to fill. This paper has sought to look into how the failure to develop a coherent and durable ideological framework has contributed to challenges in balancing revolutionary ideals with stable governance.

As D. Lane points out, modern Western democracies initially anchored their ideological identity in opposition to communism during the Cold War but have failed to establish a unifying narrative in its aftermath.<sup>29</sup> Current backslidings of democracies have drawn the attention of academia in uncovering underlying factors that have led to the recent rise in populist movements across the old continent. Margaret Canovan explores populism further and

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<sup>26</sup> Foa, Roberto Stefan, and Yascha Mounk. 2019. "Youth and the Populist Wave." *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 45 (9–10): 1013–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0191453719872314>.

<sup>27</sup> Betz, Hans-Georg. 1993. "The New Politics of Resentment: Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe." *Comparative Politics* 25 (4): 413–27. <https://doi.org/10.2307/422034>.

<sup>28</sup> Taggart, Paul, and Aleks Szczerbiak. 2017. "Contemporary Populism in Europe." In *The Oxford Handbook of Populism*, 248–67. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>29</sup> Lane, David. 2010. "Civil Society in the Old and New Member States." *European Societies* 12 (3): 293–315. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2010.483008>.



shows how, through its emphasis on the sovereignty of the people, populism has come to stand as both a critique and alternative to conventional democratic ideology.<sup>30</sup>

The European Union represents one of the most ambitious attempts to bridge this ideological divide by espousing a common identity based on democracy and human rights. Increasingly, nationalist and populist movements coming to the fore exemplify unresolved tensions in reconciling diverse identities with a unified vision. These dynamics represent the lasting impact of the revolution's ideological legacy on contemporary political orders. One could expand such an analysis to find out how other revolutionary systems based on ideologies, for example, those of Russia or China, integrated their ideology into governance. By looking through these case studies, we might gain further insights into the role of ideology in shaping stability and resilience in political systems born out of revolutionary change.

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<sup>30</sup> Canovan, Margaret. 2002. "Taking Politics to the People: Populism as the Ideology of Democracy." In *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*, 25–44. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403920072\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403920072_2).

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