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Institutions and Innovation

*Voters, Parties, and Interest Groups in the
Consolidation of Democracy—France and
Germany, 1870–1939*

MARCUS KREUZER

Ann Arbor

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Preface

In writing this book, I became deeply indebted to history. History came to my rescue for the first time in early 1989. During that winter and spring, glasnost and perestroika toppled not just communist regimes but also most proposals that had been carefully drafted for the dissertation-writing seminar in which I participated at Columbia. Witnessing the emergence of brand-new liberal democracies and free markets quickly jaded my enthusiasm to contribute yet another study on how the Greens were going to solve the solid-waste crisis and reform bureaucratic parties. Yet this newfound excitement quickly yielded to the sobering realization that CNN-style headline history lacks the data sets, the secondary sources, and the distinct outcomes required for the effective deployment of the methodological apparatus that modern social science demands. Faced with the predicament of joining the ranks of transitologists, I was rescued by history a second time when somebody pointed out that the very same issues that kept us rushing for the newspaper each morning had made their historical debut in interwar Europe. The possibility of studying democratization through historical examples offered a tempting solution to the methodological problems posed by analyzing the present day transitions to liberal democracy. The passage of 70 to 80 years provided distinct outcomes and voluminous political histories that together enabled the formulation of a theoretically informed, methodologically self-conscious comparative study.

The political histories of interwar Europe offered more than just redress to methodological problems. They also suggested two key factors affecting the fate of interwar democracies. First, they placed an inordinate amount of attention on political parties. This emphasis might be explicable by the fact that interwar democracies lacked corporatist arrangements, constitutional courts, or supranational organizations, which nowadays act as rival channels to parties for the representation of societal interests. Much more than nowadays, interwar parties were the principal game in town for assisting citizens, voluntary associations, and economic interest

groups to voice their interests and for keeping politicians, bureaucrats, and generals accountable. In short, interwar parties constituted the principal democratic fulcrum on which societal actors could leverage their political influence. Second, the general importance of parties stands in striking contrast to the actual leverage they offered citizens in different countries. In some countries, parties acted like voter-oriented, innovative entrepreneurs, while in others they behaved like inert, inward-looking bureaucratic behemoths. This difference in the willingness to innovate and take risks was particularly pronounced across French and German parties, which is one reason (further reasons are listed in the introduction) that I concentrate my analysis on these two countries. Interestingly enough, the centrality of parties and their entrepreneurialism increasingly emerge as themes in the analysis of postcommunist societies; thus, we might indeed learn a few lessons from history.

While history inspired this book, it did not readily divulge compelling explanations. Many strictly historical explanations were either unnecessarily exceptionalist or complex in accounting for the differing innovativeness of parties and the varying leverage they offered societal groups. On this front, the vast American literature on Congress and its rapidly growing comparative offspring provided invaluable insights. It gratifyingly integrates formal institutional analysis with rational choice models and provides extremely compelling and empirically thoroughly tested accounts of how formal representative institutions structure the choices of political actors. This literature provided the indispensable theoretical road map for piecing together the innumerable but highly scattered references about political institutions made by historical monographs. Once these institutional fragments were linked together, it became apparent that institutional incentives were key for explaining the varying innovativeness of parties.

These efforts to trespass back and forth between history and political science would not have been possible were it not for the support that I received from many different sources. I obtained generous financial support from the Canadian Social Science Council, Canadian Institute for Peace and Security Studies, Columbia University, DAAD (German Academic Exchange), Council for European Studies, Mellon Foundation, and Institute for Human Sciences (Vienna, and Villanova University). The MTA's Capital Improvement Funds are to be thanked for restoring the tracks and rolling stock of New York subways to the point where I could actually get some work done on my daily rides to and from Brooklyn.

I received intellectual advice and much-needed moral support from Mark Kesselman, Lisa Anderson, Jeffrey Olick, and Robert Paxton, who also generously served on my dissertation committee. I would like to thank Chuck Myers, Kevin Rennells, and Eric Dahl for their help in preparing the final manuscript. Mark Lichbach, in turn, used all his intellectual breadth to situate the argument more comfortably in the different theoretical literatures from which it draws. Mark Zacher kindly and persistently nudged me to get done and reminded me that scholarship is equal parts perspiration and inspiration. I counted 20 singled-spaced pages of comments I received over the years from anonymous referees. The best way I can thank them is to point out that their comments delayed the manuscript's completion by over two years. Were it not for their many small and large criticisms, this would have been a different book. Thanks also to *Comparative Politics* for permission to reprint parts of "Electoral Institutions, Political Organization, and Party Development: French and German Socialists and Mass Politics," vol. 30, no. 3 (April 1998): 273–92, and *Social Science History* for permission to reprint "Money, Votes, and Political Leverage: Explaining Electoral Performance of Liberals in Interwar France and Germany," vol. 23, no. 2 (summer 1999): 211–40.

In navigating the perilous waters of interdisciplinary scholarship, support was at first difficult to find but ultimately all the more generous and rewarding. Stathis Kalyvas had just traveled these difficult waters and shared his lessons as well as recommendations of first-rate Mediterranean restaurants. As a long-standing and accomplished practitioner of historically grounded social science, Ira Katznelson reassured me that doing history is not only okay but also of profound intellectual significance. Finally, the comments of Peggy Anderson were unrivaled in their insightfulness, subtlety, and above all thoroughness. They helped retrieve insights from muddled passages that even I could no longer retrace; they added invaluable historical nuances; and their wit and kindness always served as a welcome morale booster. Maybe her generous style of commenting explains why it has been such a pleasure to read the works of her fellow historians.

Books rest on more than just financial patrons and intellectual mentors. The interest and perseverance propelling this endeavor would have been unthinkable without my parents, Harald and Edda Kreuzer. I owe them deeply for their constant encouragement, persistent support, and early reminder that intellectual curiosity has payoffs far more rewarding

and lasting than even the most lavish Wall Street salary. My wife, Pam Loughman, on the other hand, deserves credit for her gentle insistence that I periodically ignore my work and appreciate the other joys of life—a task recently made easier by the arrival of Lucas and Julia. As my editor in chief, Pam helped guide me through more than just the stylistic complexities of the English language.

Abbreviations

ADGB	Allgemeiner Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund General Federation of German Trade Unions
ALP	Action libérale populaire Liberal Popular Action
ANR	Association nationale républicaine National Republican Association
BdL	Bund der Landwirte Agrarian League
BVP	Bayerische Volkspartei Bavarian People's Party
CGT	Confédération générale du travail General Confederation of Labor
CNBLP	Christlich-Nationale Bauern- und Landvolkpartei Christian-National Peasants' and Farmers' Party
DDP	Deutsche Demokratische Partei German Democratic Party
DNVP	Deutschnationale Volkspartei German National People's Party
DVP	Deutsche Volkspartei German People's Party
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands German Communist Party
KVP	Konservative Volkspartei Conservative People's Party
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei National Socialist German Workers' Party
PCF	Parti communiste français French Communist Party
PDP	Parti démocrate populaire Democratic Popular Party

PPF	Parti populaire français French Popular Party
PR	Proportional representation
PSF	Parti social français French Social Party
Radicals	Parti radical Radical Party
SFIO	Section française de l'internationale ouvrière French Socialist Party
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands German Social Democratic Party
UIE	Union des intérêts économiques Association of Economic Interests
URD	Union républicaine démocratique Republican Democratic Union
USPD	Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany