



# Revolutions: Theorists, Theory and Practice



# Revolutions: Theorists, Theory and Practice

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*STUDENTS OF PSCI 3062 – REVOLUTION  
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I came to embrace the Open Access movement after more than twenty years in academe. It was due not only to the exorbitant cost of textbooks (which my students have complained they cannot afford at the beginning of each semester), and the extraordinarily little remuneration that goes to the authors, but also due to the unreasonable costs of academic journals charged to our library which are then passed on to our students in increased tuition. The growth of library budgets has not kept pace with the inflation of journal costs. The cost of providing peer review cannot possibly explain these increases particularly since print journals are rarely provided anymore.

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Gregory D. Young

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SECTION I  
INTRODUCTION



# I. The Study of Revolution

GREGORY YOUNG



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"The hopeless don't revolt, because revolution is an act of hope."

-Peter Kropotkin

There have been many attempts by scholars to formulate universal theories that explain how revolutions develop and predict their

success or failure, yet most have yielded disappointing results. I begin my class on revolutions by asking my students that question, "Why do Men Rebel?" An interrogative variation of Ted Gurr's eponymous book, *Why Men Rebel* (Gurr, 1970). Inevitably, I am barraged with responses like, "they have no economic opportunity, they face violence or a corrupt government, or there is a democratic deficit. These environmental or structural factors the students contend are the most important independent variables to predict a revolutionary situation (a group of people engaged in protest or insurrection). But these factors do not seem to do well to predict revolutionary outcomes (the reform or governmental change that follows the revolutionary situations). Using structural explanations, revolutions are the attempts of normal people responding to abnormal situations. Any group of people faced with the same difficult circumstance would react in the same manner.

These structural or environmental factors are clearly important in predicting revolution to several theorists who occupy a lofty position in the canon of the literature. Karl Marx believed as societies advance, they compete over the control of the means of production, and that capitalist exploitation will inevitably lead

to a revolution of the proletariat. The actors do not matter; they march lock-stop according to Hegel's dialectic. Other structuralists include neo-Marxist, Barrington Moore and his PhD students Theda Skocpol and Charles Tilly (Moore, 1966, Skocpol, 1979, Tilly, 1992).

Later in the semesters, when the class examines the Arab Spring, and looks for causes that caused protests to erupt almost simultaneously across twelve Arab states in 2011, inevitably they cite the same litany of structural causes. When confronted with the evidence that these conditions have existed in these countries for decades, I ask these same students, "Why revolt now?" What is it that turns these environmental features into action? With that the class begins to examine the actor-oriented theories or the agency that acts within the structure. From Gurr's "relative deprivation" which expands in scope and intensity to Trotsky's "Vanguard of the proletariat", students find it takes abnormal citizens to motivate the masses to react to the normal misery that the structures can bring. Was Hitler the personification of Thomas Carlyle's "Great Man" theory (great meaning important not morally good) that persuaded the German people to respond to the depredations of the Versailles Treaty and the depression to elect him Chancellor (Carlyle 1840).

At this point those in my classes have moved to what Chalmers Johnson describes as "conjunction theories", those that combine elements of both structure and agency. Crane Brinton sets out in his uniformities of revolutions, structural elements like economic growth which leads to unmet rising expectations. Actor oriented elements include the necessary defection of the intellectuals when the old ruling class begin to distrust themselves or lose faith in their traditions (Brinton, 1965).

An oft overlooked element for study is the theories of counter revolution and the topic that almost developed a cult following of late, theories of counterinsurgency (COIN). Classical theorists of war like Clausewitz and Jomini can be compared to more contemporary revolutionary writers like Mao and Che Guevara. The decisions to use maximum military force to destroy the insurgency

or minimum force to win the “hearts and minds) of the citizens can be used to examine multiple intrastate conflicts currently around the globe. Dr. John Nagl uses both organizational and national strategic culture to explain why one or the other of these strategies were adopted by the UK or the US in Malaya and Vietnam (Nagl, 2005).

At the outset, they believe that revolutions are the causes of change. But, by the end of the semester, these same students are more likely to believe that change is the cause of revolutions. Particularly, the government’s inability to respond to change. In each revolutionary situation, there are generally those on the left who are trying to alter economic, social, and political structures and relationships and those on the right who wish to protect the status quo or return to a previous status quo.

At the end of the day, these young scholars have developed a nuanced and multi-faceted understanding of the underlying structure as well as the actions of certain citizens that can cause people to go out into the street and call for economic, social, and political change. Additionally, they can predict when those calls for change will be successful.

The first several chapters of this text will lay the groundwork by examining the key classical theorists in the study of both revolutionary situations and revolutionary outcomes. Then these theories will be applied to the French and Russian revolutions. This work will then examine counterinsurgency and counter revolution and apply it to case studies in Malaya, Vietnam, and Algerian revolutions. As the course moves to more contemporary uprisings the international component is included that is the key for theorists like James Defronzo (Defronzo, 2012).

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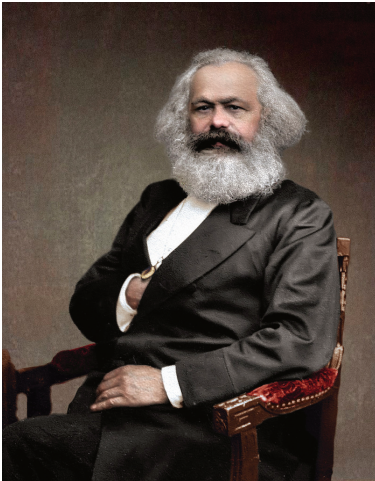
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SECTION II  
THEORISTS





## 2. The Revolutionary Theory of Karl Marx



“Karl Marx | Карл Маркс, 1875” by klimbims is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

“Proletarians of all countries, unite!”

– Fredrich Engels & Karl Marx  
1848

The journey through revolutionary study starts with the most influential revolutionary theorist in the field, Karl Marx. His work influenced the proceeding conflict scholars, making his work inseparable from the study of revolution and political violence. Although many of his now-known Marxist theory applications failed to occur, the

core ideas Marx introduced are still significant contributions to the field of political science. His work was one of the first to understand and account for the social conditions responsible for revolutionary situations and outcomes. By doing so, Marx created a foundation for proceeding scholars who would build on his ideas to explain why revolutions occurred. For this reason, it is essential to start with Marx when studying revolutions, as many core components of his theory will continue to reappear in the works of countless theorists after him. In this chapter, Marx’s ideas will be introduced and used to analyze two relevant case studies, the Algerian Revolution, and the Vietnamese Revolution. As two former French colonies, these revolutionary situations parallel each other in ways that align with

Marx's class conflict theories, dialectical materialism, and radical elites' role.

## Introduction to Marxism

At its core, Marxism attempts to understand society from a scientific perspective to create a predictive framework to analyze human history. In doing so, Karl Marx outlined his view of the human condition's history through a rough timeline based on historical materialism. In the view of Marx, history divides into different eras, the era of primitive communism (10,000 BCE), slave society (7,000 BCE-500 CE), feudal society (500-1600 CE). Finally, he claimed capitalist society began in 1600 CE and would end in the early 20th century. From the era of "primitive communism" to the current era of global capitalism, Marxism maintains the fundamental assertion that history invariably contains opposing power differentials between classes of people (Hudson, 1959). Marx has even gone as far as to argue that "the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles" (Marx, 1848 p. 57). Marx argued this because Marxism is heavily rooted in the Hegelian dialectic.

Dialectics is a philosophical exercise that focuses on opposites' unity through the conflict between two opposing groups, the thesis, and the antithesis. According to Hegel, the thesis and the antithesis can engage in conflict to form a new social paradigm. Hegel referred to this as the synthesis. When discussing dialectics, the thesis will represent a socially dominant group, while the antithesis represents a socially subordinate group. This concept is quite abstract, so it helps to look at an example. For Marx, the primary dialectic that affected him and his contemporaries most directly took place between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Since the bourgeoisie holds far more power than the proletariat, the bourgeoisie will represent the thesis, and the proletariat will represent the

antithesis. By recognizing this relationship, Marx expanded on Hegel's original concept of the dialectic by combining it with his historical materialism idea, creating dialectical materialism. This where the scientific aspects of Marx's view of history come to fruition. With this understanding of history, certain conclusions can be made about a society based on its material conditions.

Marx's theory's central point is that society splits into two classes, the bourgeoisie, and the proletariat. One of the main talking points of Marx's manifesto is the class struggle. The bourgeoisie controls the means of production and therefore has disproportionate control over political and economic institutions. For this reason, they are the dominant economic class. This class has been the product of historical feudalism, which we have seen throughout time and will continue in this state. The bourgeoisie will continue to gain capital by exploiting the proletariat by owning and selling the proletariat products. A capitalist society with a global free market allows for the growth of the bourgeoisie. According to Marx, they can exploit the market for their growth, with their main goal being maximization (Marx, 1848). This sets up a society driven and motivated by money, which provides society with safety and dignity. Marx sees this lifestyle as a problem arising from capitalism as money becomes a way to evaluate each other and ourselves. (Marx, 1848).

The proletariat, on the other hand, is oppressed. The proletariat was made up of the working class and worked for the bourgeoisie, who benefitted from the proletariat's labor. Although the proletariat was the lower class within society, Marx sees this class with the power to overcome the bourgeoisie. The proletariat had the numbers and potentially the power to rise against the oppressor. Marx also speaks of how the proletariat will continue to grow in numbers due to the ever-expanding bourgeoisie class. As the bourgeoisie continue to expand and revolutionize their production means, this will eventually drive the smaller tradesmen and self-employed to join the proletariat class as they cannot compete with the true bourgeoisie (Marx, 1848). Moreover, as the proletariat continues to expand in size, members of the bourgeoisie see this

expanding class and decide to switch over to avoid the inevitable outcome of a working-class revolting against the bourgeoisie. However, the bourgeoisie cannot survive without the proletariat as they are the producers of their capital. Hence, the bourgeoisie continues to keep the proletariat at a length where the working class can survive but never more than this (Marx, 1848). Although Marx argues the harm in a capitalist society, his work argues that capitalism creates the opportunity for communism to arise as the increase of class inequality and the proletariat's global togetherness due to similar capitalist conditions worldwide. Both of these factors help contribute to the rise of communism. (Marx, 1848). All of these various factors within a capitalist society move towards an end goal, which is communism.

Marx also speaks about the idea of labor value. Marx believed that workers should be paid based on their output and the number of hours taken to produce a specific product (Marx, 1848). Marx identified that the bourgeoisie often made the working-class work long workdays while producing goods worth a significant amount of money. However, instead of receiving a wage relative to the number of goods produced within the hour, the workers will have received an amount of pay set by the factory owner, which did not reflect output. For Marx, a fair representation of their work would emulate the amount of work done with the amount paid (Marx, 1848). However, since labor value is only a theory, the reality was quite different within the bourgeois rulership. Since the bourgeoisie owned the factories and the labor force, they used free trade to their advantage. Their use of free-market capitalism allowed the bourgeoisie to expand their wealth as they could create more significant profit margins by keeping wages low. Additionally, by setting the prices for the products made, the factory owners would do their best to gain a competitive advantage over the market competition by lowering costs and maximizing output. The latter ultimately affected the workers due to the harsh working conditions these factory workers would often be made to work in (Marx, 1848). All these factors combined with continuing to boost the

bourgeoisie's wealth and increase the class gap. While on the other hand, these same factors would also be, according to Marx, the downfall of the bourgeoisie as these conditions within a capitalist society would force the proletariats to come together for this communist revolution (Marx, 1848).

## Marx's Theory of Revolution

According to Marx, a revolution occurs when two classes within a society compete for control over the means of production. This relationship has occurred throughout several historical stages, from Greece and Rome's classical aristocracies to feudalism and Marx's industrial capitalism era. In each of these stages, the class in control of production (masters, lords, capitalists) is challenged by the exploited underclass (slaves, serfs, and the proletariat) in a revolutionary process that results in a new political and economic Superstructure. This process is known as dialectical materialism, and Marx argued it was a predictive formula for understanding the progression of economic and political history. Taking this formula and applying it to his age, Marx presents many claims regarding how human society's future would develop. Central to this is the clash between the proletariat and the capitalist bourgeoisie, which Marx argues will result in the proletariat class overthrowing the capitalist institutions within society, and ultimately replacing them with a communist society free of hierarchical dominance. While his theory has been far from perfect in predicting the specific events of revolutions that have occurred since publishing the Communist Manifesto in 1848, this does not mean his works were not influential. (Marx, 1848)

As one of the first political philosophers who contemplated how material conditions influence revolutions, Marx pioneered a whole political science discipline and inspired countless thinkers after him. Structuralists, like Barrington Moore and several of his

students, have expanded on a concept first presented by Marx that is central to his understanding of revolutions. As he put it in the opening remarks of the Communist Manifesto, “In a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted... fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large or in the common ruin of the contending classes.” Here Marx argues that revolutions result from the social and economic structures present within a society, and structuralist thinkers after him understand this to be the primary cause of revolutionary situations and outcomes. In addition to those who heavily draw on Marx’s theories, even scholars who do not accept a strictly structuralist interpretation of revolutions are influenced by his arguments. For example, professor and theorist Ted Gurr gives more attention to the individual and personal factors present within societies that lead to revolution. One of the defining distinctions between Gurr’s three stages of revolution is contingent on the level of dissatisfaction elites have with the current regime. This idea is clearly influenced by Marx’s arguments from the Communist Manifesto regarding the ‘petty bourgeoisie’ in revolutions. Marx acknowledges how the nature of bourgeois society constantly threatens the status of the petty bourgeoisie. For this reason, he argued it is natural to have “these intermediate classes... take up the cudgels for the workings class”. Ultimately, Marx’s ideas presented in the Communist Manifesto were some of the earliest attempts to account for the social factors that lead to revolutions. Any analysis of a revolutionary situation or outcome is incomplete without his contributions. (Marx, 1848).

## The Algerian Revolution in Relation to Marx

The French rule of Algeria began in 1830 and lasted until the

conclusion of the Algerian revolution in 1962. During this time, Algeria was controlled by a minority population, divided into sections, and directly administered by the French government (Jean, 1962). Over the decades in which France had control over Algeria, there had been a tenuous relationship between the Muslim Alger people and their French counterparts. There were attempts to engage in reforms such as the 1947 Organic Statute, which aimed to give the French and Algerians 50/50 representation in the governing of Algeria. However, this action failed because the nine to one Muslim Algerian majority that made up the country viewed the action as an unacceptable half-measure (Lilley, 2012). While instances of reform occasionally graced French Algeria, events such as the 1945 Setif Massacre are better remembered by the ethnic Algerians. On May 8th, Victory in Europe Day (VE Day), demonstrators took advantage of the celebrations taking place in Setif and Guelma to march in support of Algerian independence. In response, the French police confiscated banners and even went as far as to fire upon protesters (Cole, 2010). This sparked massive riots in the cities that led to direct attacks on  *pieds-noirs*, resulting in 103 deaths (Lilley, 2012). In a retaliatory effort, French forces went on to kill thousands of Algerian Muslims (Hitchens, 2006).

The next aspect of the Algerian revolution that needs to be explored is why it occurred in the first place. While speculation on this topic is likely endless, and many views should be analyzed, the main focus here is on the Marxist perspective. Although in many ways, the ideas of Marx are not entirely applicable to Algeria's conditions, some of the larger themes of Marxism do translate quite well. Marx had a fascinating view regarding the role of the middle-class in developing a revolution. In his eyes, society's material conditions need to be optimal for a revolution to occur successfully within it (Marx, 1848). For example, Marx would have argued that the peasants of a feudal society would not have been equipped for revolution in the same way that the proletariat or the middle-class could. They would have had neither the means nor the class consciousness needed for such an act. For Marx, revolution leading

to socialism must be made on the back of a rising middle-class with class consciousness and a value system conducive to revolution (Marx, 1848).

Although he held many similar views to Marx, the neo-Marxist sociologist Barrington Moore expounded upon and criticized Marx's view of the middle-class and revolution in a way that makes it more relevant to the modern world. He maintained that the emergence of a middle class within a society is one of the key aspects for pushing society towards revolution. However, he also mindfully included urbanization, increased commercial, economic activity, and the technological revolution in his analysis (Moore, 1976).

During the French rule of Algeria, the middle-class played a massive role in fomenting the revolution. The Algerian middle class was personified in the values, an emerging class of young, educated, and middle-class people (Sivan, 1979). While this group was not calling for revolution or even for an independent Algeria, they mainly advocated for representation in the government and more democratic society (Lilley, 2012). However, with this social class came ideas like liberalism and democracy, ideas that would contribute to the brewing of a revolutionary situation. This is essential to Moore's view, who went beyond Marx to argue that the emergence of a middle-class that held values ideas like liberalism, democracy, and nationalism are vital to revolution (Moore, 1976).

Marx's ideas can also be applied to the relationship between the Pied Noir and the Muslim Algerian population. While the Muslim Algerian population outnumbered the Pied Noir nine to one, the Pied Noir acted as a higher class within French Algerian society (Lilley, 2012). These social classes acted as opposing forces in dialectic the same way Marx would say the proletariat and bourgeoisie do. Although the Pied Noir did not have the same control over the Muslim Algerian people as do the bourgeoisie over the proletariat, they are similar in that they both represent a thesis and antithesis. A new social order developed through the conflict between the two groups and eventually revolution against French control. This represents the synthesis of the dialectic. This new



synthesis will then be challenged by its antithesis, starting the cycle over again. While Algeria has been an independent state since July 5th, 1962, and the problems they faced during French rule is over, Algerian society's current iteration faces its own internal conflicts as all societies do.

## The Vietnamese Revolution in Relation to Marx

In addition to their colonies in Algeria, France controlled territory in what is now Vietnam. However, for the Vietnamese people, the French were just one of several foreign occupiers the Vietnamese have been forced to endure throughout the centuries since the first Chinese invasion. Before French rule, Vietnam was extremely rural, with an economy primarily based on rice farming. After Chinese rule ended in the late 19th century, the Vietnamese economy began rapidly changing as the French colonial government sought to enrich their countrymen by establishing industries perpetuated by the extraction of the untapped natural resources, they found themselves in control. Because these nascent enterprises relied on Vietnam's natural resources, their social and economic impacts varied due to the geographic distribution of these resources. The North of the country, which has mineral reserves and a sizable labor force, is where most of the industry is concentrated.

On the other hand, due to French policies, the South was more agrarian with a small class of landowners in control of the majority of productive land. While a small portion of the native Vietnamese population experienced economic gains from French rule, most of the population simultaneously worked more demanding lives while their material conditions worsened (DeFronzo, 1991). The economic difference between the North and South was extremely influential in the growing political divide between these sides, culminating

in the conflict between the communist North Vietnamese and the Republic of Vietnam backed by the West.

While some aspects of Marx's theory of revolution do not entirely explain the Vietnamese Revolution's finer details, many of his theory's broader elements are applicable in explaining both sides' ideological and economic identities. For example, Marx's ideas on class conflict go a long way in explaining both sides of the conflict's composition. After Vietnam officially split along the 17th parallel through the 1954 Geneva Accords, the country's division occurred physically and socially. The South was initially led by the former Emperor Bao Dai, who undeniably represented the colonial era's wealthy elite. At the time, President Eisenhower even acknowledged this when he said, "Bao Dai, who, while nominally the head of that nation, chose to spend the bulk of his time in the spas of Europe rather than in his own land leading his armies against those of Communism" (Eisenhower, 1955). Many other wealthy and landed Vietnamese were concentrated in the South as well. Additionally, this government, led by the wealthy Vietnamese elite, was backed by the Western powers like France and the United States (USDS, 2013). For the North, the new Southern Vietnamese Republic represented the old imperialist and capitalist regime with interests in preserving the existing economic order that oppressed and exploited the majority of the Vietnamese people.

Marx's theory of revolution explains how French colonial rule transformed the material conditions of Vietnam, resulting in a revolutionary situation in which a radical elite and an oppressed working work together to overthrow the ruling class and its institutions. Marx would likely characterize political leaders in the North as the 'petty bourgeoisie' because although they often came from wealthier families than most other Vietnamese, their politics reflected the nationalistic and revolutionary sentiments shared by many Northerners who wanted an end to the old colonial regime. One of the most prominent figures who embodied the radical 'petty bourgeoisie' of the North was Ho Chi Minh. Like many of his compatriots, Minh came from a wealthy family and received a

western education. During his time learning in the West when he became increasingly radicalized and was inspired by revolutionaries of the past, like the American Founding Fathers, as well as those of his time like Vladimir Lenin. While Minh was abroad, Vietnam remained under French rule despite growing frustration among the people. However, once Japan established control over French Indochina during the Second World War, Minh returned to his homeland to resist the new occupation by establishing a guerrilla unit known as the Viet Minh. Once the Japanese occupation ended following the allied victory, the Viet Minh continued fighting for self-determination against the French, who attempted to reassert control by the colonial government (Vietnam's Revolution, 2007). For this reason, Minh's revolutionary motivation was as much, if not more of, a struggle for independence as it was a struggle against economic oppression. Still, Marx's theory of revolution is useful in explaining the series of events and conditions that resulted in a revolutionary situation in Vietnam.

## Lenin's Theory of Imperialism

The realization that Karl Marx's initial theory was not producing the outcomes it foreshadowed, particularly revolutions among developed European countries, became quite apparent for Marxist followers. As seen by the case studies, throughout the 20th century, revolutions had occurred mostly beyond the Industrialized European continent's periphery. However, rather than forgoing the theory, revolutionary theorists such as Vladimir Lenin emphasized imperialism's role in capitalist societies' ability to mitigate Marx's points of contentions initially thought to create revolutionary situations. For this theory, imperialism meant a state's ability to expand its geographical control by establishing colonies that could provide further natural resources and additional markets for excess capital (Meyer 1970). Hence, for both case studies, Vietnam and

Algeria fell into France's international monopoly system. That does not mean; however, the newly overexploited population eventually grows tired and revolts. Just as the bourgeois bribes their European states' populace, so happened with these colonies' local elites (Meyer 1970 245). For instance, in Algeria, the French emigres reaped colonial exploitation benefits, while in Vietnam, it was the Southern monarchical aristocrats.

In terms of this theory, then, the reason for revolt stems from these regions being weak points of the monopolistic system. Algeria and Vietnam are at the periphery of the "empire" established by the French in this case. Therefore, their governance naturally lacks control and becomes susceptible to revolts, especially when Metropolitan France's focus becomes occupied with wars dealing with other imperialist states seeking to expand their economic sphere of influence. These wars negatively affect both the winner and loser as their populace become dissatisfied with economic bribery causing domestic tensions to grow (Meyer 1970). For Algeria and Vietnam, World War I and II would be the events to cause the growth of a revolutionary spirit and situation. However, before accepting Lenin's general theory of revolution, one must look at these wars and whether they are due to economic distribution and competition for spheres of influence. This issue becomes highly contested when analyzing the two world wars as an explanation of nationalism rivals' economic causes for why the wars happened, meaning Lenin's theory possibly misrepresents why 20th-century wars occurred.

## Conclusion

While not prophetic in pinpointing where the next countrywide revolution would occur, Karl Marx's theory of revolution provided valuable information in pinpointing which economic stress points within societies scholars should analyze to explain why a

revolutionary situation might develop. Marx originally would not have foreshadowed that revolutions would occur in Vietnam and Algeria; rather he would assume these revolutions would occur in industrialized Western European countries. However, his usage of the proletariat-bourgeoisie divides and the Hegelian Dialectic still fit into the revolutionary structures these two countries faced. Ultimately, Marx's theory continues to inspire revolutionaries and revolutionary scholars. Specifically, decades after Marx's death, theorists such as Trotsky and Lenin would establish their spin on Marxism. In the second half of the 20th-century academic scholars such as Barrington Moore, Crane Brinton, and Theda Skocpol.

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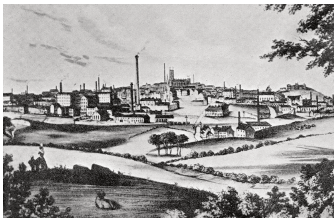
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### 3. Barrington Moore: “No Bourgeoisie, No Democracy”



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democracy.”

– Barrington Moore 1966

“...We may simply register strong agreement with the Marxist thesis that a vigorous and independent class of town dwellers has been an indispensable element in the growth of parliamentary democracy. No bourgeois, no

Karl Marx methodically laid the groundwork for the founder of structuralist revolutionary theories, Barrington Moore. Barrington Moore takes one of the first leaps among revolutionary theorists, as he sought to build predictions and pathways to revolutionary outcomes based on certain revolutionary potentials, emphasizing significant ideas of Marxist theories, specifically, social classes and society’s structure (Moore, 1966)

## Barrington Moore

Barrington Moore worked as an American political sociologist, known for constructing theories concerning societies’ structure and revolutionary outcomes. Moore attended Yale, where he received his Ph.D. in sociology, and later became a Harvard professor where he taught for 28 years (Harvard Gazette, 2005). Many scholars lump

Moore into the “neo-Marxist” school of thought, as he held a set of beliefs that concentrated on the importance of an economic system within a society. His beliefs materialized in a less idealistic manner than that of Marx’s Utopia. However, he emphasized the importance of the correlation between class conflict and economic systems within revolutions (Moore, 1966). The main goal of Moore’s theory outlined the explanation of the “differences among the sequences characteristic of major routes” of revolution (Skocpol, 1973: p. 5).

## Barrington Moore and Karl Marx

Before exploring Barrington Moore’s theory of revolution, one must compare Karl Marx and Moore as the latter’s ideas build on those of the former. Marx’s ideas of structuralism, and the division of classes based on economic terms, work as a foundation of Moore’s theory of revolution.

In *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Moore sets out to understand structural revolutions throughout industrial modernization and the roles of different classes, such as the landed upper classes, bourgeoisie, and the peasantry played in societal development (Moore, 1966). While Marx focused mainly on economic aspects when predicting changes in society, Moore focused on the social structure of the State systems themselves while also incorporating economic structures. A stark difference between Moore and Marxist theorists includes their outlook of the peasantry’s role in revolutions, which Moore describes as communist revolutions. Marx believes these revolutions remain impossible to achieve without the presence of discontented intellectuals who take the peasantry’s reins and lead them to a revolutionary outcome (Moore, 1966). Even then, Moore argues the peasant class, or proletariats, exist as the first victims of reconstruction of a new society. Despite bringing about the



revolutionary situation, they fall victim to the revolutionary outcome (Moore, 1966).

Moore's work in *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* attempts to predict what certain factors within a structured society present favorable conditions for particular kinds of revolutionary outcomes. These factors depended heavily on one class, specifically: the bourgeoisie.

## **The Capitalistic-Democratic Route:**

Barrington Moore, first, dives into the capitalistic-democratic route. This path directly aligns with Moore's famous quote- "no bourgeois, no democracy", which means the existence of a bourgeoisie endures as a fundamental prerequisite for a democratic revolutionary outcome (Moore, 1966: p. 418). This theoretical route relies heavily on the inclusion of a powerful bourgeois class, which wields power to overtake or dissolve both the peasant and the aristocratic classes through seven sequential steps.

Moore offers the Puritan Revolution, the French Revolution, and the American Civil War as the three case studies that fall under capitalism and parliamentary democratic revolutions (Moore, 1966). Moore places a heavy emphasis on social structures within his theory of revolutions. He divides society into three classes: the bourgeoisie, the landed upper class, also referred to as the aristocracy, and the peasantry class. These social classes play essential roles in each of Moore's routes, as their actions, or lack thereof, drive the revolutionary potential towards a distinct revolutionary outcome.

The capitalist-democratic route incorporates several key elements that lead to a democratic version of capitalism, such as the blooming of an economically independent class and the bourgeoisie that seeks to destroy obstacles within the societal structure (Moore, 1966). The aristocracy exists as a substantial component. In the

dawn of the revolution, which chooses to either join the capitalistic and democratic tide or the revolution's wrath consumes the aristocracy (Moore, 1966). Similarly, the peasant class either jumped into the tide of revolution or became engulfed in the storm of progress (Moore, 1966). Barrington Moore considers the capitalistic-democratic route as the revolution of the bourgeoisie, which he defines as the "...independent class of town dwellers has been an indispensable element in the growth of parliamentary democracy. No bourgeois, no democracy," (Moore, 1966: p. 418).

Moore illustrates his capitalistic-democratic route as an archaic path, which each case relatively follows. The first step of a democratic system relies on a balanced relationship between a moderately strong crown and a semi-independent landed aristocracy (Moore, 1966). These two groups' strength remains essential when considering that an overly powerful crown could lead down the path of a communist revolution. In contrast, an aristocracy with full independence already established could lead down the path of a capitalist-reactionary revolution (Moore, 1966).

The second development exhibited during the democratic-capitalistic revolution occurs with the formation of capitalistic agriculture. The turn towards commercial agriculture by the landed aristocracy, or the peasantry, acts as a key for further developing society's structure (Moore, 1966). An example of this idea presents itself in England in its movement towards commercial agriculture via the landed aristocracy's will, which led to hostilities between the aristocracy and the crown.

Moore explains that in the third step of the revolution, the peasantry's destruction represents a crucial component of the revolutionary process. Moore believes that the survival of a large peasant class leads to tremendous problems for democratic advances, at best, and, at worst, provides a reservoir for a peasant revolution or communist uprising (Moore, 1966). Therefore, "...the elimination of the peasant question through the transformation of the peasantry into some other kind of social formation appears to augur best for democracy," (Moore, 1966: p. 422). This elimination

manifested itself in the form of England's enclosure acts, as the landed aristocracy stripped what little claim to land peasants had, which eventually wiped peasants clean from the map of revolution and the social structure (Moore, 1966).

According to Moore, the bourgeoisie emerges from the cracks of the social structure as the peasants begin to dissipate into the memory of revolutionary potential. The bourgeoisie typically took the form of the upper stratum of peasants, commercial and industrial leaders within the towns' urban areas (Moore, 1966). Here, Moore feels inclined to agree with Marx and Marxist theorists, as the bourgeoisie exists as an irreplaceable element of parliamentary democracy, as he wrote, "No bourgeois, no democracy" (Moore, 1966: p. 418).

After the emergence of the bourgeoisie, the next step alludes to aligning the interests between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. Moore believes the coalitions, and countercoalitions, occur as an integral aspect of political framework and an environment for action, creating opportunities, contributing to the revolutionary potential (Moore, 1966). This occurrence leads to the sixth step, an alliance of the two classes. Eventually, the aristocratic society adapts to the bourgeoisie society's characteristics, as the populace weens off the agrarian aspect of the economy and expands commercial industrialization (Moore, 1966). The coalition of the bourgeoisie and the upper landed elites, combined with the modernization of the rapidly growing capitalist economies, leads to an opposition of the royal authority (Moore, 1966). As seen in France, the monarchy could not reform adequately, which led to its quick demise.

Ultimately, these conflicts lead to a final climax of political violence, which one witnesses during the American Civil War, as well as the French and Puritan Revolutions. The Puritan Revolution allowed the new coalition of the upper stratum of society to maim the British monarchy, while the French Revolution broke the pre-commercial elites' power (Moore, 1966). The American Civil War

removed the South's aristocracy, an obstacle to democracy (Moore, 1966).

Finally, the bourgeoisie, with or without the help of the aristocracy, attains a revolutionary outcome, which consists of restructuring society as a bourgeoisie democratic society. Key elements of this new capitalistic and bourgeoisie society include voting rights, representation in a legislating body, a system of objective law concerning birthrights, and secure property rights (Moore, 1966). Moore admits that, although the steps of revolution do not always occur in practice, Moore emphasizes the outcomes of these revolutions, a capitalistic-democratic society (Moore, 1966).

## The Capitalistic-Reactionary Route

Barrington Moore names his second route the Capitalistic-Reactionary Route. This path also exists as a capitalistic revolution; however, society experiences intense revolutionary upheaval: a revolution from a fascist regime above, as exemplified by Germany and Japan (Moore, 1966). Throughout this revolution, seven steps exist that range from a peasantry posing a threat to the other classes to the final product of a fascist dictatorship. Ultimately, those at the top of the capitalistic-reactionary system (the aristocracy and bourgeoisie) maintain the peasant society's structure with a strong, central government, allowing them to extract surplus capital from the peasant class to sell and make a profit (Moore, 1966).

The first step of the Capitalistic-Reactionary route manifests itself as the aristocratic and bourgeoisie classes recognize the threat the peasant class presents to their power and the structure of society, which leads to the second step: the bourgeoisie and aristocracy existing as entities, independently, too weak to suppress this menace (Moore, 1966). However, one must understand the bourgeoisie in this situation, although weak, the bourgeoisie must

fare well enough to present itself as a formidable ally of the upper class; otherwise, the route could turn down the path of communism through a peasant revolution (Moore, 1966). This leads to a coalition between the aristocratic and bourgeoisie classes (Moore, 1966).

Moore's third step outlines the aristocratic-bourgeois alliance turning to the state to protect their economic interest, emphasizing the use of the structured society's labor repressive system. The repressive labor system involves using political mechanisms, such as the state, to provide an adequate labor force, rather than a free market as seen in the democratic-capitalistic route - the state ultimately exists as the "invisible hand" (Moore, 1966). Ultimately, in order to ensure their survival, the bourgeoisie class, according to Moore, gives itself up to the upper landed aristocracy and royal bureaucracy, opting out of any chance to rule for the ability to prosper economically (Moore, 1966).

The fourth step in this route involves the emergence of an autonomous, mildly authoritarian state. After forming the coalition between the aristocracy and bourgeoisie, the labor-repressive agriculture system insufficiently competes with more technically advanced societies (Moore, 1966). The landed aristocracy then faces economic fallout as the system fails to compete, which leads the landed upper class to wield the state's power to preserve its own rule (Moore, 1966). As the coalition continues to succeed, a prolonged period of a conservative, authoritarian government falls just short of fascism (Moore, 1966). One may see this in Germany, from the Stein-Hardenberg reforms to the end of World War I, and in Japan, from the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate to 1918 (Moore, 1966).

One should note that these mildly authoritarian regimes lead to weak parliaments, such as the Weimar Republic in Germany and the Taisho Government in Japan (Moore, 1966). Here, in democracy, the door to fascism opens (Moore, 1966). Moore then explains his fifth step: the regime fails to reform in the face of an economic crisis. Ultimately, the democracies cannot remain reluctant to change the

fundamental structure of the failing economic system (Moore, 1966). It thrusts the state into a revolution.

Moore's sixth step defines the central government's power, which leaves behind the weak democracy and establishes itself as the strong central authority, wielding a unified administrative system and a uniform code of law and system of courts (Moore, 1966). This exists as an essential step towards modernization for nations experiencing this route. To complete the third step, the leadership drags along and controls the landed upper class (Moore, 1966). This leadership, then, establishes a powerful bureaucracy, and within it, the "agencies of repression," such as the military and police forces (Moore, 1966: p. 441). This allows the government to exist in an incubated state, free from society's compulsion and extreme reactionary pressures (Moore, 1966). Crucially, the government's stability allows it to remain vigilant, oppressing revolutionary situations, and ultimately, revolutionary outcomes (Moore, 1966).

Due to the shortcomings of the authoritarian regime, the final step in the capitalistic reactionary route ultimately leads to an outright fascist dictatorship. The strong, conservative regime has advantages, such as controlling economic growth by paying close attention to the peasantry class's economic success, not allowing for too much growth that would ultimately threaten the upper strata's power (Moore, 1966). However, it became clear for these societies that there existed an inherent problem with their modernization: they attempted to modernize without changing their social structures. According to Moore, modernization cannot succeed without these changes (Moore, 1966). For the upper classes, militarism presented the only relief from this dilemma, brought on by a fascist dictatorship (Moore, 1966). However, militarism would lead these systems to a cataclysmic demise as they sought out foreign expansion, choking on their aspirations (Moore, 1966).

## Communist Route

Moore continues with the Communist Revolution, the final route, exemplified in China and Russia. This revolution's general element manifests itself within an agrarian bureaucracy, hindering commercial and industrial growth (Moore, 1966). In these societies, the bourgeois never became more than a frail class, making it an unviable partner for other social classes (Moore, 1966). The lack of modernization allowed for the proliferation of a substantial peasantry, which existed as fuel for a revolutionary force, set to overthrow the existing agrarian structure and propel itself into a revolutionary outcome (Moore, 1966). Moore explains that societies that heavily rely on a powerful central government to extract surplus capital remain prone to these types of revolutionary outcomes (Moore, 1966). Moore believes there exist eight archaic steps that guide a revolution to a communist dictatorship.

One can see the initial step society takes down the path of communism as the inability of the upper landed elite to develop commercial agriculture, aiding in the survival of a large peasant social organization (Moore, 1966). The failure to modernize the economy by transitioning to commercial agriculture led to slow economic growth, while the pressures on the peasantry to produce continued to rise.

The lack of a bourgeoisie to drive democratic-capitalistic reforms, the second aspect of the communist revolution, creates a power vacuum within society. In Russia, for instance, the small, weak bourgeoisie committed itself to the preferred capitalism of the Czar, hothouse capitalism, which did not adequately expand urban commercial industrialization (Moore, 1966). Moore argued that this lack of growth experienced by the bourgeoisie allowed for a power vacuum, an opportunity for the peasants.

Moore emphasizes the peasantry's immense size within societies enroute to communism, which correlates with their power. The emergence of a powerful peasantry, the third step to a communist

revolution, creates the tinder of revolutionary potential (Moore, 1966).

The fourth characteristic Moore identifies manifests itself in the existence of a healthy bureaucratic state. As the larger central state begins to expand its authority over the market and society itself, the relationship between the peasantry and the upper landed aristocracy begins to change (Moore, 1966). The agrarian societies' social structure changes as the central authority expands its authority (Moore, 1966).

Then, Moore identifies the fifth step, the growing power of the central government and the peasant's dependency on this state, rather than the landed aristocracy. At one point in history, the landed upper class, the immediate overlord, played an essential role in the peasants' lives (Moore, 1966). However, as the central government grows, it takes over the tasks of the overlord, such as providing protection from outside threats, acting as an extension of the law when peasants had disputes amongst themselves, and offering economic advice and assistance as misfortunes fell upon the peasants (Moore, 1966). In return for the old services of the aristocracy, the upper classes would extract surplus of capital from the peasants (Moore, 1966). Slowly, this change eats away at the legitimacy of the entire aristocratic class in the eyes of the powerful peasantry.

As the central government encroaches on the aristocracy's powers, siphoning off its legitimacy, the state infuriates the peasants through arbitrary extraction, the sixth step of the route. Here, Moore asserts Marxist theories make excessive oversight, focusing too much on the peasantry class. Moore believes that Marxists miss the revolution's actual cause, the upper class's actions that provoked the revolution (Moore, 1966). The sudden change with an increasing obligation to the upper landed aristocracy, and the larger central government overwhelms the peasantry class (Moore, 1966). The grievances of individuals within the peasantry class become grievances of the entire class, lighting the fire of a revolutionary desire (Moore, 1966). With a lack of institutional links



between peasants and the upper classes, aggravated by an exploitative relationship, the peasants set aflame the aristocracy, consuming it in the revolutionary destruction (Moore, 1966).

Moore identifies the seventh step towards a communist dictatorship in a successful, peasant-led revolution from below. During the peasant-led revolution, Moore believes Marxists accurately assume that “[b]y themselves the peasants have never been able to accomplish revolution” (Moore, 1966: p. 479). Moore believes, for the sake of the revolution, peasants must weld a coalition with an upper stratum of society, intellectuals, who could do little without the power of the peasants, which they wield (Moore, 1966). One can see elements of this idea as Trotsky’s Vanguard of the Proletariat.

Unfortunately, for many of the peasants, they achieve a revolutionary outcome. In the dawn of creating the new system of government, the new social structure, the peasants bring little to contribute (Moore, 1966). Although Moore acknowledges “[t]he peasants have provided the dynamite to bring down the old building, [t]o the subsequent work of reconstruction, they have brought nothing..” (Moore, 1966: p. 480). Instead, the peasants become the first victim of the government’s attempt at the modernization of the economy, which one can see during China’s Great Leap Forward and in Russia with Trotsky’s Red Army (Moore, 1966). For Moore, the revolutionary outcome of the communist route brings about the most significant changes in society, a revolution from below; however, the class seeking freedom from oppression only finds itself back at the bottom of society.

## French Revolution

One must note the French Revolution chapter of this book, chapter 11, delves deeper into Barrington Moore’s analysis of the French case study. Moore understands the case studies do not fit entirely within

the steps outlined by the routes; instead, the steps exist as rough guidelines for the revolutionary outcomes.

Moore uses the French revolution to illustrate his capitalist-democracy route, which emphasizes the bourgeoisie destroying obstacles to a democratic version of capitalism, the most important dynamic of the route (Moore, 1966). The obstacle manifested itself as the French monarchy and feudal system. The French monarchy attempted to retain a system of inherited legal and social inequalities while failing to provide a proper structure for the commercial expansion waiting at its doorstep (Kaiser, 1976).

In France's case, commercial agriculture did not destroy the peasantry, not to an extent as one saw in England. Instead, it put a more considerable burden on the peasant class to produce excess capital, which fed into the peasants' revolutionary potential (Moore, 1966). Ultimately, the Third Estate felt threatened by the nobility's proposals to introduce enclosures, which sought to extract the excess capital from the little surplus produced by the third estate (Moore 1966). Although the aristocracy, or nobility, typically attracted the interests of the bourgeoisie, creating the alliance of the upper class and the bourgeoisie, the nobles who did have parliamentary power alienated the bourgeoisie with the threat of enclosures, adding to the revolutionary potential (Moore 1966). Due to this added pressure, the peasant class's upper stratum named the Third Estate, and the urban town dwellers, the bourgeoisie, united in opposition against the crown (Moore 1966). This united front manifested itself as the Tennis Court Oath. This oath was taken on June 20, 1789, as members of the Third Estate, the bourgeoisie, and sympathetic nobility agreed not to disperse until the monarchy granted access to parliament for all three classes, which would rid the monarchy of its perceived authority (Johnson, 2009). The combination of the alienation of the bourgeoisie against sects of the nobility and the growth of capitalism showed the monarchy's inability to reform the monarchy's failure then led to a dramatically violent uprising with the Storming of the Bastille (Moore 1966). The revolutionary outcome in France resulted in cutting off the

nobility's power, the initial destruction of the monarchy, and eventually leading to a democratic capitalist system (Moore 1966).

## American Civil War

Barrington Moore classifies the American Civil War as the last Democratic-Capitalist Revolution he observes within his case studies. However, one must understand, the form the revolution took does not follow the exact steps set out by Moore's revolutionary route. Instead, Moore focuses on the outcome, the restructuring of society, with a parliamentary democracy, on which he based his classification (Skocpol, 1973).

Elements of Moore's Democratic-Capitalist Revolution exist in the American Civil War throughout the events leading to war. The interests of the bourgeoisie and the upper, aristocratic class of the industrial North merged in the desire to tear down the system of labor within the South (Moore, 1966). The repressive labor system of the South grinded against the type of capitalism sought by the North, specifically, competitive democratic capitalism (Moore, 1966). As the North's economy became stronger, the alliance between the bourgeoisie and the Northern aristocracy realized the South's labor system ill-suited the Union's inevitable industrialization, and, subsequently, modernization (Oakes, 2016). Similar to England and France's monarchies, the South's social culture emphasized hereditary status, defined one's human worth by birthright, which Northerners rejected, as these social structures repressed the society they envisioned (Moore, 1966). The South's aristocracy made a desperate attempt to retain control of these social structures, leading to the South's secession from the Union (Oakes, 1966). Here, one may observe the alliance of the northern bourgeoisie and aristocracy joining together against the South's feudal system, the undemocratic feature of society, and employing a violent revolution upon the South, the Civil War.

Ultimately, the Civil War results led to the abolishing of the South's slave labor system, and, with it, the bourgeoisie and industrial upper class of the North, quite literally, burned down the undemocratic institutions of the South, plantations (Feigenbaum, 2018). In the final campaign of the Civil War, Union General William Sherman implemented a scorched earth policy, burning the most productive plantations, the sheer power of the Southern aristocracy, all across the state of Georgia (Feigenbaum, 2018). Moore highlights the significant political consequences resulting from the revolution, such as preserving the Union and the ending of federal enforcement of slavery. The destruction of this social system resulted in a more democratic future (Moore, 1966). For Moore, the American Civil War achieved a successful reconstruction of American society, ending the reign of a monarchial system of power held by the southern upper class, abolishing slavery, and a significant expansion of suffrage (Moore, 1966).

## Application to Revolutions

Barrington Moore's theories of revolution, the three routes, offer a lens through which one may apply to other revolutions, providing one with a basis of possible predictions for revolutionary outcomes. Applying Moore's neo-Marxist theories to societal structures' development highlights the importance of economic, social structures driving revolutions (Moore, 1966). Through the necessary steps that Moore outlines in his three routes, he explains, in an archaic manner, the societal shift, or lack thereof, from agrarian to industrialized societies and the possible development of a democratic outcome, in which the presence of a bourgeois class is essential.

The statement "no bourgeoisie, no democracy" alone provides deep insight into Moore's theory of why capitalistic-democratic revolutionary outcomes occur: a discontent middle class with an

established economic base takes the reigns of revolutionary potential, building alliances with other sympathetic classes, creates swelling support for a democratic version of capitalism, drowning any obstacles to the establishment of the new system (Moore, 1966). The English Civil War, the French Revolution, and the American Revolution illustrate these capitalistic-democratic revolutionary outcomes.

Then, Moore emphasizes how, independently, weak bourgeois and aristocratic classes offer one insight into the proliferation of a capitalistic-reactionary system, seen within the rise of Germany and Japan's fascist government. In these cases, the peasant classes threatened the relatively weak aristocracy and bourgeois classes, causing the latter two to manipulate the state for protection. However, the formation of the regime stalled economic growth, leading to an economic crisis, which allowed for the rise of a militaristic and fascist leader, inevitably leading to the destruction of these societies (Moore, 1966).

The final route, the communist revolution, as seen in China and Russia, occurs when industrialization is non-existent, leading to a weak middle class, while a strong peasantry, embedded in the roots of a powerful central government, guided by revolutionary intellectuals, lead the peasants to a communist revolutionary outcome, destroying the aristocracy and any bourgeoisie that existed (Moore, 1966). Unfortunately, for the peasants, they typically fall victim to the destruction of the very revolutionary outcome they desire, a communist government (Moore, 1966).

Although no revolution, in either revolutionary route, follows the exact steps put forth by Moore, a generic pattern exists that revolutions follow. According to Moore, revolutionary outcomes depend predominantly on the relative strength, or weakness, of the bourgeoisie within a society (Moore, 1966). For Moore, revolutions occur due to society's need to modernize through industrialization. Depending on which class drives this industrialization, different revolutionary outcomes may occur (Moore, 1966). Moore's ideas offer a significant lens in the study of revolutions as a structuralist

revolutionary theory. Moore is not the only structuralist amongst revolutionary theorists, as his work inspired others' works, students of his in fact, such as Theda Skocpol and Charles Tilly. However, Barrington Moore is unique amongst structuralists, as he underlines, for him, the determinant of revolutionary outcomes exists within the bourgeoisie, "no bourgeoisie, no democracy" (Moore 1966: 418).

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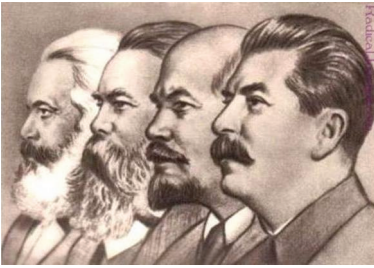
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## 4. Crane Brinton: The Anatomy of Revolution



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“We must be very tentative about the prodromal symptoms of revolution. Even retrospectively, diagnosis of the four societies we studied was very difficult, and there is little ground for belief that anyone today has enough knowledge and skill to apply formal methods of diagnosis to a contemporary society and say,

in this case revolution will or will not occur shortly. But some uniformities do emerge from a study of the old regimes in England, America, France, and Russia.”

—Crane Brinton (1965, pp.250)

Is revolution something that can be measured or seen before it occurs, or is it due to a set of random events? In his book, ‘The Anatomy of Revolution,’ Crane Brinton breaks down the structure of revolution and explains revolutions’ onsets. This chapter introduces us to the term ‘pre-revolutionary society’ and some of the conditions that may prompt society to head in the direction of revolution. While revolutions do occur under different conditions, people, and geographies, there are still some striking similarities within their societies before the conflict starts. Like Barrington Moore’s work, Crane Brinton helps us conceptualize revolution and pre-revolution. Conceptualizing revolutions in a chronological manner helps us in detecting possible future revolutions and ‘pre-revolution’ societies.

In his 1965 seminal book, ‘The Anatomy of Revolution,’ Crane



Brinton conducts a comparative study of the American, English, French, and Russian Revolutions. In his study, Brinton examines the differences and the similarities across these revolutions, bringing his findings into what he calls “The Anatomy of Revolution.” The Anatomy of Revolution would later become a significant revolution theory.

## Pre-revolution and Uniformities of Revolution

Crane Brinton compares and extracts similarities between ‘pre-revolution’ Russia, America, Britain, and France. He then compiled these similarities into the general uniformities seen within the revolutions studied. Brinton explains that uniformities support the idea that historical events are not necessarily unique. Instead, uniformities can be systematically identified to predict revolutions. The first of the five uniformities that Brinton identifies is that societies are usually on the ‘up,’ meaning they are economically prospering before revolutions occur. Hence, revolutions do not occur because of ‘starving miserable people’ (Brinton, 1965, pp.250). People that are optimistic and hopeful start revolutions, not when they are hungry, people revolt when they are unhappy. When people hold a government to a certain standard, they expect a certain quality of life threshold. If the government does not satisfy those needs and expectations, they could be in a ‘pre-revolution’ state.

The second uniformity that Brinton identifies is “bitter class antagonism” (Brinton 1965) In societies that tend to have more ‘equal’ classes, more class bitterness exists. The bitterness is typically measured by economic, social, and religious factors. Therefore, the bitterness causes tensions between the ruling class such as the aristocrats and merchant classes and not between the general elites and the downtrodden (pp.251). This is due to the

relatively similar ‘wants and needs’ of both classes. However, there is enough of a difference in which tension can grow whether it be because of what God “ordained” or the society’s cultures calls for. These economic, social, and religious restrictions hold down people of all classes. The struggle between classes exposes the “restrictions” or the entry barriers of each class and causes tensions between classes.

The third uniformity that Brinton notes is “the transfer of allegiance of intellectuals” (pp.251). Brinton observes that intellectuals start to side with ‘revolutionary groups’ due to discontent with the way their society operates. The discontent by intellectuals, and their want for change, means that they align themselves against the government.

The fourth uniformity is the ‘inefficiency of governance.’ Government is inefficient, partly through neglect. An example would be the government failing to tax people justly and not organize its finances, thus going bankrupt. The government is also unable to keep up with the speed of change in society and technology/development (pp.251).

Lastly, the fifth uniformity that was observed by Brinton is that the old ruling class come to distrust themselves (pp.252). The old ruling class may lose faith in their class’s old habits and traditions, grow intellectual, become humanitarian, or go over to the opposing side. Overall, these five uniformities are central to Brinton’s theory of revolution, and they make up the anatomy of a revolution. While these uniformities may not necessarily exist in all revolutions, it is interesting to see how they apply to different revolutions. Not all revolutions have the same circumstances, and they all have different ways in which these uniformities are satisfied.

## Wider Uniformities

Brinton expands on his central theory of revolution and identifies

specific characteristics that affect his theory on revolution. Through his comparison of the four different revolutions mentioned earlier, Brinton identifies a few ways in which revolution is 'accelerated.' The existence of a 'rule of terror' (pp. 255). A rule of terror is governance by power, punishment, and the quashing of opposition. Brinton observed a rule of terror in the French Revolution where executions were widespread. This 'rule of terror' even reaches as far as prying into citizens' everyday lives, regulating them, and controlling them. 'Reign of terror' usually goes hand in hand with 'strongmen' governments and religious governments. Brinton explains that this accelerates a revolution by fueling tensions to the point of no return.

Another accelerator identified by Brinton is, which he mentions is not as important as the former, is an industrial revolution. Brinton mentions that industrial revolutions occur at a fast rate, causing increasing development of the printing press, i.e., communication, which allows revolutions to be more streamlined (pp.260).

Adding on to his central theory, Brinton explains some wider uniformities that lead to revolutions. One of which is the 'promises to the common man.' Brinton explains that revolutions exhibit a scale of vague promises such as 'happiness' and concrete promises such as 'satisfaction of all material wants, and revenges' that are made to the common man by the government and never satisfied (pp.262). These 'broken promises' lead to discontent, and ultimately revolution. Another note made by Brinton is that there seems to be a development of conscious revolutionary techniques with time. These techniques are what enable, organize, and execute revolutions. As more nations and people revolt, more conscious revolutionary techniques develop.

## Stages of Revolution

Brinton also discusses the 'four stages of revolution.' which follow

the 'pre-revolutionary states' countries showed. The first being the rule of the 'moderates. In the first stage, moderates ascend to power as they look to be the 'most natural successor' of the old ruling class. Several factors exist during this stage, including a financial breakdown, where the government cannot manage finances. Another factor is the increase in protests against the government. The protests lead to dramatic events that cause instability. Ultimately, the moderates in power get overthrown by the radicals (p. 253).

The second stage is the rise of radicals to power. Radicals use the revolution to ascend to power and exert a more powerful presence than a moderate government. Radicals do this as they are a small number of well-organized people with high ideals and ambitions. The power lies within a central 'strongman authority.' The radical regime imposes its will on people through whatever means are at their disposal (pp. 254).

The radical regime leads to the third stage of the revolution, the crisis period. The reign of terror by radicals in power manifests through assassinations, executions, and quashing of opposition. The radicals establish an authoritarian government that pries into the lives of citizens. A brutal 'reign of terror,' combined with inefficient governance of resources and class inequality, blows fire into the flame of revolution. The radically idealistic rule of terror that aims to create perfection through vicious means does not sit well with people. The 'reign of terror' causes a 'Thermidorian reaction' (pp. 207)

The fourth stage Brinton mentions is the 'Thermidorian reaction,' a reaction to the oppressive regime. During the Thermidorian reaction, people overthrow the government and favor a return to moderates in government. Moderates return to power, and the quieter days of before return for the time being (pp. 255). Beyond this stage, Brinton observes that these revolutions had not brought much social change after the four stages occur (pp. 246).

This collection of stages does not end for scholar James H. Meisel. Inspired by the work of Crane Brinton, Meisel adds an addendum

to the list. He argues that revolutions do not merely end with the return of a moderate government rather there is a long and drawn-out period that averages around a decade before the next stage starts. This last stage proclaims a subversion of the revolution occurring in which an authoritative actor takes control of the thermidor government (Meisel 1966). At this point one can call a conclusion to the revolution which initially began with the ascension of moderates.

## Case Study 1: Russian Revolution

As is mentioned earlier, Crane Brinton's theory of revolution focuses on the conditions of 'pre-revolutionary society' that leads to the formation of revolutionary movements. He breaks these conditions down into five uniformities of revolution. Below there will be a description of them in short as well as the specifics of how these uniformities appear in Russian pre-revolutionary society. This will show the Russian Revolution through Brinton's eye and provide context. There is an explanation of the stages postulated by Brinton that all revolutions, including the Russian Revolution, went through. Interspersed are some comparisons to Marx only due to the Marxist nature of the revolutionary's ideals.

### Anatomy of a Pre-Revolutionary Society in Russia

The first requirement Brinton finds is that a society must be generally improving, but still provides discontent to their people. Revolutions are inherently optimistic and so the people must have already seen advancement to hope for more. The non-communist,

anti-monarchical revolution of 1905 provided this instance. It could be argued that quality of life was improving prior to the removal of the Tsar, as serfdom had been abolished, and generally the Monarchy was being pressured into progressive reform. After the 1905 Revolution Czar Nicholas II promised further reform. However, a decade later events, including WW-I would lead to the 1917 abdication of the Czar (Defronzo 2019). With the removal of the Tsar, former aristocrats, now referred to as the bourgeoisie, began taking power which did not suit the petty bourgeoisie or the proletariat masses (Brinton, 1965, pp. 250).

This brings us to the second of Brinton's uniformities: Class Antagonisms. A theorist like Karl Marx would argue that Class Antagonisms are constantly present, regardless of revolutionary likelihood, and would cite these antagonisms as the most important cause of revolution. Depending on how you look at it, it certainly could be what Marx claims. The antagonisms present when the Revolution began were many. There were pre-existing conditions between members of the petty bourgeoisie who made up the intelligentsia and the established former aristocrats. Here the tension was strong due to the dynastic nature of aristocratic wealth as opposed to the intelligentsia who despite still having wealth, felt apart from the rest of the bourgeoisie for their self-stylized commitment to the proletariat. The proletariat in turn was growing as serfs became free and sought to better their lives through factory work in cities. These factories served as the breeding ground for radicalization of workers against factory owners and other members of the wealthy elite (pp. 251).

As mentioned above, the move by the intelligentsia led by Lenin fulfills both Brinton's third uniformity of "the transfer of the allegiance of the intellectuals" (pp. 251), as well as the fifth uniformity of division amongst the ruling class. The Marxist intelligentsia of pre-revolutionary Russia felt incensed by the notions of Communism to support the proletariat they saw struggling to survive in the newly enlarged industrial sector. This division brought a split between the old bourgeoisie and the new.

The new siding with revolutionaries and bringing with them greater power to the revolution as a whole. Brinton wrote in his fourth uniformity that, “the governmental machinery is clearly efficient” (pp. 251). He elaborates that this is not just in terms of economic management, but also in the use of its military and paramilitary (pp. 252). In Russia prior to the revolution, the Tsar’s use of the military was historically oppressive. The failures of the Russian military during World War I also greatly contributed to the distrust and discontent of civilians towards the military apparatus and the disillusionment of members of the military toward their leaders and even towards the Tsar himself.

## Stages of The Russian Revolution

Crane Brinton states that the first to seize control of a revolution are the moderates, and although they are separate from the regime of old, they are still much less radical than those to come and their loss of power tends to be due to their own limits. In Russia, as Brinton writes, “They are not always in a numerical majority at this stage – indeed it is pretty clear if you limit the moderates to the Kadets they were not in a majority in Russia in February 1917” (pp. 253). The rise of the radicals follows this, and you see the Revolutionary direction veer to the left. In Russia this came in the form of the November revolution where the much more radical Bolsheviks and Mensheviks seized power aggressively and violently under the guise of proletarian emancipation. Brinton’s “lunatic fringes” (pp. 254), here, were total anarchists and those who wanted the dissolution of the entire and any state apparatus. The third stage of the revolution occurred as the strongman Lenin seized power as the leadership of the Bolsheviks. The takeover resulted in the brutal dissolution broadly against anyone Lenin considered counter-revolutionary, involving banishment or later, executions. With the revolutionary movement consolidated under one revolutionary

party, and one revolutionary leader, the fourth stage of Thermidor occurred. Albeit the civil war continued for four more years eventually the Soviet Union was formed under Lenin's leadership. Lenin reestablished the state, enforced strict anti-revolutionary policy against reactionaries, and cemented the regime as the new "true" state of the Soviet Union. However, taking into account James Meisel's Addendum the last stage of the revolution can be said to occur with the consolidation of Joseph Stalin's control over the Soviet Union. As an authoritative figure Stalin reverted the revolution and set the Soviet Union's course toward a totalitarian regime that would last for decades after Lenin's death. Therefore, the revolution did not end with Lenin's unification of the Soviets but with Stalin reactionary reformation of the Soviet Union.

## Case Study 2: French Revolution

Alongside with the Russian Revolution, The French Revolution was analyzed in Brinton's "Anatomy of a Revolution", allowing us to draw certain comparisons and contrasts between the French Revolution and Crane's breakdown of revolutions. Crane breaks revolutions down into 5 basic uniformities of the revolution, which we broke down earlier.

### Anatomy of the French Revolution's Uniformities

Starting with the first uniformity, societies are usually prospering economically before revolutions. Leading up to the French Revolution, France was doing quite well financially, but assisting the future United States with their revolution as well as the 7 Years War with England began to drain their treasury (McPhee 2002). Alongside this, they had a horrible tax system, which began to really



widen the class gap between the rich and the poor once the new King Louis XIV began to tear through livres like candy. And seeing as the clergy and nobles were mostly exempt from taxes, this unfortunately placed the tab on the lower class, who began to grow tired of picking up the check for the bourgeoisie year after year (McPhee 2002).

Bitter class antagonism also plays a role. France had long established beef between the estates, which came to a head during the Tennis Court Oaths, when the third estate met at an impromptu courthouse on a tennis court to lay their grievances and establish what they wanted. Aside from this, the class tensions were always at a high with the third estate, seeing as most of the clergy and nobles did not have to pay any taxes so the poor were having to pay far more than their fair share of taxes (McPhee 2002). This flaw in their tax system is one of the things that widened the gap between the upper and lower classes to a point of no return.

At the time, many modern French thinkers were aligned with the side of the revolutionaries, such as star lawyer and statesman, Maximilian Robespierre. Robespierre, along with help from others, started the Jacobin party, a group oriented around ending the monarchy and King Louis the 16th's regime. The Jacobins had formed long before the heads went flying, and in their early days advocated for mass education, women's suffrage, and the separation of church and state. This transfer of sides and mass push of intellectuals were able to inspire the masses so well that they succeeded in their goal of killing King Louis and semi-successfully ending the monarchy.

One of the staples of elementary school history classes is the phrase "let them eat cake", and while this phrase was never actually said (it was more along the lines of let them eat brioche), it highlighted the idea that leading up to the French Revolution, the nobles of France did not really care for anything but themselves and their lavish lifestyles. They had a wide disconnect from the famished and frustrated peasant class that was paying for their lavish lifestyles. In a feeble-minded attempt to make up for the fact

that he had spent essentially all the livres in the French National Treasury, King Louis XIV ordered a new currency be printed and donated to the hungry masses of Paris. Noticing that the people of Paris had quite literally no money, the crown printed way more of this currency, assignat (McPhee 2002). By the end of the year, they had been introduced to the economy, the money French people were using was worth next to nothing, the spending power going down 99% (Ebeling 2007). Hence, these actions are all instances of inefficient government uniformity.

The last non-chronological uniformity is the growth of distrust between the ruling elite. One strong example of this occurring the French Revolution comes in the form King Louis re-shuffling his cabinet. As the revolution began to build, King Louis felt the pressure rising, and began to shed some previously well-liked members of his circle, such as Jacques Necker, his only non-noble in the cabinet. Necker's replacement would be replaced by Joseph Fouché who would be beheaded by peasants (McPhee 2002).

The French Revolution can easily be explained by Crane Brinton's theory of the Five Stages of Revolution. In the preliminary stage, the Old order, France was economically weak due to the state being in debt from assisting in the American Revolution. Class antagonism was similarly there as well as a government that was unable to enforce their rules. These concerns were seen in the formation of the National Assembly. The first stage, moderate regime, typically has large protests that the government cannot suppress, this was seen in the peasant uprising against the first and second estates. A characteristic of the second stage of a revolution is moderates gaining power. The moderates gained power in France by accepting taxes and giving up their more upper-class benefits. This led to a fairer government; however, this government was certainly still not completely fair. The third stage of the revolution, radical regime, is when the radicals took over and there were roots to radicals all over France. Radical Maximillien Robespierre gained power through a coup d'état terrorized the rich by killing over 40,000 people in a single year often by guillotine. The fourth stage, Thermidorian

reaction, occurred between the execution of Robespierre and Napoleon Bonaparte's coup. The death of Robespierre ended the reign of terror period and Napoleon's ascension as the leader of France brought national order. He created a national bank and mandated taxes for all while promoting equality which caused an uptick in pride in French citizens. The French Revolution stages, however, do not end with Napoleon's rise in power. Based on James Meisel's addendum to the stages. After consecutive years of war lead Napoleon to become the authoritative figure that reverts the revolution and establishes an empire, now known as the First French Empire (Brinton 1965). Overall, Brinton's theory of the Four Stages of Revolution provides a groundwork for how a revolution can fail and this can be seen through the lens of the French Revolution.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, while these revolutions have definite differences, they still share simple uniformities that allow the revolution's conceptualization. Crane Brinton compiles these uniformities into what he calls 'The Anatomy of Revolution.' Brinton explains the necessity of studying men's deeds and men's words as there is not always a logical and straightforward connection between the two. Men sometimes say something yet have differing actions from what they said. Humans have dispositions that cannot be rapidly changed by 'extremists/revolutionists.' The enforcement of rapid change through any means may have the opposite result. A 'scientific way' of identifying when and where a revolution may occur can lead to peaceful alternatives that minimize damages, bring positive change, and shed light on citizens' struggles and discontent.

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# 5. Ted Gurr: Relative Deprivation



Protesters gather in Times Square for Occupy Wall Street protests by TenSafeFrogs is licensed under CC by 2.0

“In static terms, Relative Deprivation is a discrepancy between value expectations and value capabilities, its intensity and scope determinable in any accessible population by the use of survey and other techniques.”

-Ted Gurr 1970

The previous chapters have explored the occurrence of revolutionary situations through the lenses of Brinton, Marx, and Moore. This chapter will examine Dr. Ted Gurr’s works with an emphasis on the theories outlined within his 1970 text *Why Men Rebel*. In contrast to the theorists mentioned above, Dr. Gurr attempts to forge a theory out of nearly all the written works published at the time. By doing so, he introduces two crucial concepts: Relative Deprivation (RD) and Frustration-Aggression theory. This chapter will explore both concepts in order to create a better understanding of, at least in the mind of Gurr, why revolutionary situations occur.

Before exploring these concepts and theories proposed by Gurr, this chapter will highlight his background and influences that helped form his theory proposed in *Why Men Rebel*. Gurr attended Reed College in Portland, Oregon, where he earned his bachelor’s degree in psychology, which provided a framework on why humans behave the way they do and gave him a foundation to build upon during his Ph.D. studies. Upon completing his undergraduate degree, Gurr attended New York University, where he received his

Ph.D. in government and international relations, which ultimately led to a teaching position at Princeton University. (American Academy of Political & Social Science, 2020) During his time at Princeton, Gurr studied an array of theories surrounding human violence and political strife that would be influential in generating his own theories on why men do rebel.

## Relative Deprivation

Gurr's work's most critical takeaway is the concept of "Relative deprivation" (RD). Relative deprivation is a term Gurr uses to denote tension that develops from what one "ought" to have and what one "does" have, which can lead men to violence. Gurr asserts that the deprivation does not have to be real for a revolutionary situation to occur. It just has to be seen as real by enough people (Gurr, 1970: p. 27). Perception matters in the theory of RD more than objective facts. When discussing RD, two central questions need answers for a proper examination of a potentially revolutionary situation: What is being deprived, and how is it being deprived?

Gurr defined RD as the perceived discrepancy between value expectations and value capabilities. Value expectations are the goods and lifestyle an actor believes they are entitled to obtain. On the other hand, value capabilities are the goods and lifestyle an actor believes they are capable of achieving. (Gurr, 1970: p. 27) That is to say, if an actor believes they should be able to feed a family of four with one job but is unable to, then he or she will feel frustrated. Similarly, what might be seen as "abject poverty" may not be considered unjust by the actors living in those conditions. The emphasis here is placed on perception, not objectivity. If an actor sees no hope of escape from their conditions, they are more likely to accept them. Because of this, RD and the frustration that comes with it becomes more common when one or both of value

expectations and value capabilities are changing, particularly when the gap between the two begins to widen.

Now getting back to those questions. When an actor experiences RD, it can stem from a lack of various values. In this case, values are defined as goods, conditions, or events that an actor wants and can strive to obtain (Gurr, 1970: p. 25). How many values there are and how those values are categorized is beyond the scope of this text. Gurr notes three general categories: welfare values, power values, and interpersonal values, which this chapter will discuss.

## Values

Welfare values are the most straightforward of the three categories. This category describes values that directly provide for an actor's well-being. Food, shelter, medicine, physical comforts, education, and work all fall under this umbrella. (Gurr, 1970: p. 25) Economic values and values related to self-actualization also can be included among welfare values, but these are also somewhat intrinsically tied to the other two categories.

Power values are defined as those values that allow an actor to have a meaningful influence on their surroundings. These values are often political in nature, including voting and participating in the political machine. (Gurr, 1970: p. 25) The desire for security and self-actualization falls partially under this umbrella as well. It may seem redundant to say that being unable to participate in government peacefully would lead to revolutionary situations, but this links between deprivation of power and frustration, which is essential for Gurr's other theory.

Interpersonal values are defined as a softer psychological satisfaction an actor receives from his or her personal life. These values include things like the desire for status, family, or friends. It emphasizes the importance of societal norms and the belief that an actor has a place within society (Gurr,1970: p. 26).

Understanding the values that an actor can be deprived of only makes up half of Gurr's theory application. The other half involves how the value expectations and value capability of an actor diverges. Again, Gurr gives three different instances of how Relative Deprivation comes about. They are Incremental deprivation, Aspirational deprivation, and Progressive deprivation.

## Scope and Intensity

For a proper understanding of relative deprivation, one must also analyze the scope and intensity at which this deprivation occurs. Scope refers to the prevalence of deprivation among individuals. Narrow scope classifies deprivations that mainly occur on a personal level (Gurr, 1970: p. 29). Instances of infidelity or a lack of job promotion affect people sporadically and without a collective manner. Wide scope deprivation, however, has a level of pattern that affects members of a community all together (Gurr, 1970: p. 29). For example, the banning of a political party will forge an environment in which whole groups of people will simultaneously feel the same deprivation at the same time.

Intensity is another factor that comes into play when discussing relative deprivation. Intensity refers to the amount of anger that deprivation inhibits on the individual. Not every instance of deprivation will constitute the same amount of intensity. Therefore, the feelings that deprivation forges such as anger, betrayal and unfairness will depend on the situation. Someone's inability to afford a nice car, which they believe they should financially deserve, will cause a different level of anger compared to a scenario in which one believes they are feeling cheated and oppressed because their political party has been outlawed (Gurr, 1970: p. 29). Overall, these two factors provide analysts a glimpse at the possible outcome of relative deprivation and whether it has "potential for collective violence (Gurr, 1970: p. 30).



# Types of Deprivation

Decremental deprivation is the most straightforward of the three cases. In this case, an actor's value expectations do not change, but their value capabilities fall over time. (Gurr, 1970: p. 46-46) This deprivation may be the case in countries affected by war or natural disasters. Aspirational deprivation is the inverse, where an actor's value expectations rise over time even though his or her value capabilities do not. (Gurr, 1970: p. 50-51) In this situation, the actor is not losing anything but feels frustrated regardless due to higher expectations. This situation is often the case in civil rights movements where one class or people demand rights already available to another class or people.

Progressive deprivation is a mix between the previous two. In this case, both value expectations and value capabilities are or have been on the rise. However, neither value capabilities have been able to keep up with value expectations, or value capabilities have suddenly decreased. This deprivation falls in line with other theories where revolution is more likely to happen during a period of economic and social prosperity. As an example, sudden economic depression in a booming economy would cause Progressive deprivation in many citizens.

Different types of values and different types of deprivation defined above allow theorists to use a bit more granularity when talking about societies as they go through social and economic change. A country may be experiencing decremental deprivation with respect to power values and progressive deprivation with respect to welfare values. In addition to this, different groups may feel RD more than others, given the circumstances. In the end, however, if the scope and intensity of deprivation are great enough, it will lead to frustration and later violence.

# Frustration-Aggression Theory

To better understand how frustration stemming from the previously mentioned forms of deprivations can lead to a revolutionary situation, it is crucial to explore the various concepts surrounding the origin of humanity's aggressive tendencies. This analysis can be achieved by examining what Gurr calls the three generic sources of human aggression, which encompass instinctive, learned, and frustration induced aggression.

As the name suggests, instinctive aggression centers around the concept that humanity is inherently prone to aggressive behavior from birth. This form of aggression promotes the position that all men have a deep-rooted aggressive trait exhibited in scenarios that can affect their well-being.

On the other hand, learned aggression is the concept that humanity is born not possessing aggressive tendencies but instead gains these characteristics through various situations encountered throughout one's life. This learned aggression is then employed to bring about changes in a system in which one feels fails to fulfill their expectations. Frustration induced aggression is the concept that man will exhibit aggressive behavior as a byproduct of frustration (Gurr, 1970: p. 30-34).

While the various sources of aggression outlined above contribute to humanity's overall aggressiveness, it is the latter of the three that plays the most significant role in the rise of revolutionary situations. The frustration-aggression theory was originally proposed by Dr. John Dollard and his colleagues in the late 1930s. This theory promotes the idea that aggression stems from frustration and that whosoever is frustrated will direct this subsequent aggression towards the party perceived to be responsible for their frustration (Gurr, 1970: p. 33-34). Through the relationship of the frustration-aggression theory and relative deprivation that bring about the potential for collective violence to occur. However, due to RD's

individualist nature, the form of political violence that is generated depends on the intensity and scope of RD on a particular group.

These forms of political violence come in the form of turmoil, conspiracy, and internal war, each of which stems from specified groups' feelings of deprivation within a system. For Gurr, society is composed of two major groups, the masses, and the elites. When RD is relatively low in both groups, the potential for political violence is low, and the system's status quo is maintained.

Turmoil occurs within a system when RD is experienced by a collective of individuals from the masses. The turmoil is considered to be somewhat spontaneous, unstructured, and carried out by the masses. During times of turmoil, RD is high for the masses while low for the elites and results in minor political violence levels. When the feeling of RD shifts from that of the masses to that of the elite, you encounter the potential for conspiracy. Unlike turmoil, conspiracy consists of a small number of elites that are well organized in their attempt to upset the status quo through various means but exhibit small scales of violence. The last and most effective type of political violence comes in the form of internal war, which is generated through an expansive feeling of RD through both the masses and the elites. This widespread feeling of RD combines elements of turmoil and conspiracy that subsequently create a volatile environment primed to erupt into either internal or revolutionary war (Gurr, 1970: p. 334-335).

To better understand the concepts and theories proposed by Dr. Gurr, the following will examine real-world scenarios that embody various traits associated with the concept of relative deprivation and the frustration-aggression theory and how in some cases, prompt the occurrence of revolutionary situations.

## Ukrainian Orange Revolution

This chapter's first case study will focus on not one but multiple

revolutions within Ukraine. The Orange Revolution in the early 2000s began due to the failures and widespread corruption of Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma's regime. In 2004, there was an election between Viktor Yanukovych, a pro-Russian replacement to Kuchma, and Viktor Yushchenko, a pro-Western candidate. Yushchenko was favored by the Ukrainians, mostly the young, based on his progressive and pro-democracy. As the election progressed, it became evident that something was afoot. Yushchenko was barred from campaigning in certain cities and, at some point, poisoned along the campaign trail. The poisoning resulted in the disfigurement of his face, which affected his ability to speak, and was thought to have come at the hands of either Russia or Yanukovych. When Yanukovych won the election, supporters of Yushchenko declared foul play, donned Yushchenko's signature orange campaign color, and took to the streets in protest.

The Orange Revolution was not much of a revolutionary situation because it did not turn violent. All the protesters wanted was a recount of the election, but demonstrations in the streets, civil disobedience, and workers went on strike. Ultimately, the people got their recount, and Yushchenko was elected. In reality, the Orange Revolution was more of a democratic demonstration where the people of Ukraine showed they wanted free and fair elections. A leader was able to change the status quo. Despite not being much of a revolutionary situation, the Orange Revolution led to a revolutionary outcome in a pro-democracy leader. According to Gurr's theory, the mass dissatisfaction among Ukrainians following the election should have triggered violence. However, through the Orange Revolution events, the state was pushed to conduct a recount before large scale violence occurred.

During the early 2000s, Ukraine was on its way towards western democratization and away from the Russian authoritarian democracy style. As Gurr is quoted in *Ethnic Tensions and State Strategies: Understanding the Survival of the Ukrainian State*, "democratization is likely to facilitate both protest and communal rebellion. The serious risk is that the rejection of accommodation by

one or all contenders will lead to civil war and the reimposition of a coercive rule.” (D’anieri, 2007: p. 8) This interpretation fits Ukraine very well. Ukraine was an autocratic government working towards a fair democracy, and when the Russian-backed Yanukovych initially won, protest and communal rebellion broke out. Once again, Ukraine got lucky as there was a high potential for civil war over a nationalistic identity split along Russian and Ukrainian identity lines (D’anieri, 2007: p. 4-29).

In this instance, the people in Ukraine were deprived of participating fairly in government, a power value, and became frustrated. The citizens had lost faith in their government and protested as a way of expressing that frustration. Ukraine stands as an example of mass frustration that did not break into a violent revolutionary situation thanks to a responsive government. Put in Gurr’s words while the scope of the orange revolution affected a whole ethnic group the intensity was soothed by the response of the Ukrainian courts. In contrast, the Haitian Revolution demonstrates what happens when this frustration is left to build unchecked.

## The Haitian Revolution

The other case study that this chapter will explore is the Haitian Revolution, which took place at the end of the 18th century. What began as a massive slave revolt resulted in a complete revolutionary outcome that entirely changed Haiti’s government. There were four main groups of people in Haiti, which then can be split into two categories. The first category is those who owned land and were often better off economically: wealthy white plantation owners and also free people of color who served in the militias and occasionally owned land. The second group consisted of impoverished whites and slaves.

Each of these four groups had grievances towards one another, which led to widespread frustration between the groups. The poor

white citizens of Haiti, or *petits Blancs*, were frustrated over their seeming inability to climb the nation's social and economic ladders. Under French colonialism, they were mostly artisans and craftsmen with no real opportunity. Slaves were fed up with their oppression from the beginning, and their revolt eventually led to the real outcome of the Haitian revolution. The wealthier blacks, freedmen, were frustrated due to years of constant economic and social discrimination and oppression even after earning enough to become free from slavery. This frustration would continually build up until after the French Revolution. Slaves wanted to be free, and the *petits Blancs* were frustrated due to their inability to afford slaves like that of the wealthy landowners. (Geggus, 2014)

Following the passage of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, free people of color became legal citizens in Haiti. This declaration further upset the poor whites who began to spread violence through the island. Before this point, Haiti's slave population acted as bystanders despite making up roughly 90 percent of the population. This obedience changed in 1791 when the slaves of Haiti revolted. With their superior numbers, the slaves were able to overpower and kill their masters. The revolt began years of fighting in which the British, Spanish, French, and former slaves all fought for control of Haiti. France reclaimed Haiti under Napoleon's rule and tried to reestablish slavery; however, one final slave revolt led to permanent Haitian independence (Baptist, 2015).

The Haitian people, mainly slaves and poor whites, had many of the hallmarks of groups experiencing aspirational or progressive deprivation that would lead to violence and revolution. This deprivation existed in Haiti before the revolution as people of the lower-class felt no way to bridge the gap between the wealthy landowners and their current situation. This gap widened after the French Revolution when all but the most well off saw others as improving while they stagnated. According to Gurr's theory, the Haitian revolution should have been a surprise.

In terms of welfare values, Haiti provided a strong incentive to revolt. Many whites lived in destitute and could not afford to own

land or slaves. The free people of color were not any better off. Slaves and free people of color did not have a place in society, and many felt worthless, demonstrating a lack of interpersonal value. Power values were the most extreme in Haiti. Nearly the entire population of Haiti were slaves, poor whites and slaves had no way to influence the government, and free blacks were denied citizenship before the French Revolution. When the French gave citizenship to wealthy black people, the whites on the island had no say in the matter, and when the French declared slavery illegal, the plantation owners refused to cooperate. In a textbook case of progressive deprivation, slaves were given freedom before having the decision reversed on them by their masters. Frustration quickly boiled over into open revolt against the former slave owners. Like Ukraine Haiti's scope was wide as slaves made up 90% of the population. However, the differentiation occurred in the intensity as Haiti's government failed to ease the tension leading to a greater collective violence.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, Haiti provides a distinct example of what can occur when multiple groups feel the effects of relative deprivation. On the other hand, Ukraine demonstrates how a government can potentially maneuver to entirely avoid a revolutionary situation. Individuals in Haiti felt deprived of welfare, status, and the powers in France and Haiti were unable to respond and avoid a revolutionary situation like seen in Ukraine. Gurr's theory of RD and Frustration-aggression explain how people become willing to commit acts of violence. However, the theory does not provide for the spark that turns mass frustration into a revolutionary situation. That said, Gurr's theory still has broad application to all types of political movements, which are discussed further by the likes of James Defronzo and Charles Tilly. Additionally, it can be used directly

to examine social climates to determine whether it is primed for revolution.

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# Image Attribution

Protesters gather in Times Square for Occupy Wall Street protests  
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# 6. James Defronzo's Theory of Revolutions



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"The primary function of revolutionary ideology is to provide as many people as possible with the same or compatible viewpoints on the need to change society so that they will be motivated to cooperate in the revolutionary struggle"

-James Defronzo

Over the course of a person's life, they are at some point going to learn about revolutions in their academic career. Revolutions have been occurring throughout human history for hundreds of years. But what is a revolution? Or why do revolutionary situations end up having a revolutionary outcome, while others do not? Mass frustration, relative deprivation, identifying the revolution as liberal and conservative or rightist or leftist, all help identify a revolution and figure out why this revolution occurred, in addition to unifying motivations, state crisis and elite dissidence and permissive world context. These terms are all terms James Defronzo uses to identify a revolution, and answer the question, why do revolutions happen, and how does a revolutionary situation turn into a revolutionary outcome. These concepts from James Defronzo will be applied below to explain two case studies, the Hong Kong Protests and the Bolivian Revolution.

According to Defronzo's theory, there are five critical factors that influence the development of a revolutionary movement. Of these

five, a salient factor would be popular uprisings among a large proportion of the population, including urban and rural societies. This factor, known as mass frustration, is depicted in both Bolivia and Hong Kong, in which the extent of popular discontent highly influenced the success of the Bolivian revolution and the ongoing Hong Kong protests. The relevance of this factor in each of these case studies further validates the accuracy of Defronzo's theory.

Mass frustration essentially stems from the phenomenon known as relative deprivation. A historical process in the nation is needed for such a factor to occur. A rapid decline in the nation's economy that limits their material living conditions and capabilities could lead to a gap between people's expectations and the government's ability to meet those expectations (Defronzo, 2011, 13). This decline of capabilities may occur from an economic depression, or if a country is invaded and is defeated. On the other hand, populations may develop an expectation that functions as the people's belief on what the level of material existence should be (Defronzo, 2011, 13). This expectation is based on the people's contact with other societies, and their belief that their economy should improve and redistribute wealth just like similar countries (Defronzo, 2011, 14). These populations may not be economically incapable or limited, but they are expectations of how the government should enhance the economic condition has been strongly influenced and optimistically altered (Defronzo, 2011, 14). The populations affected by such living standards now have an incentive to participate on a massive scale in protests or rebellions against state authorities.

The Bolivian revolution of 1952 experienced a successful and drastic political, economic, and social change. The landlocked Latin American country had an agricultural and natural resource dependent economy. Bolivians were largely rural, as 72 percent of the economically active persons in 1950 were engaged in agriculture (Goldstone, 1999, 45). With the majority of the population included in the agricultural sector, they gained very little from the economy. Furthermore, in accordance with Defronzo's theory, the Bolivian people endured both forms of relative deprivation. To elaborate,

Bolivia suffered a military defeat in the Chaco War (1932-1935), which essentially resulted in a loss of large parts of the southern territory to Paraguay, and the Chaco generation which focused on indigenous communal rights. The Federated Union of Mineworkers with the MNR coalesced their efforts and distributed arms to the populace as they believed a civil war with the aid of the people is the only chance to restore the nation's condition (Goldstone, 1999, 45). This action fundamentally came as a result of the relative deprivation that the vast majority of the population experienced, in which Bolivia was the poorest nation of South America with the lowest standard of living prior to the revolution. Rural violence erupted in 1952, which resulted in the destruction of the hacienda system by the peasants due to the need of an agrarian reform (Goldstone, 1999, 46). Due to the armed syndicates of peasants, and the popular uprising and rebellion they had to the overseers and landlords, their actions resulted in a redistribution of wealth and land which warranted a control over their unions. Notably, Defronzo mentions that in agricultural societies, the success of a revolution essentially requires the presence of rural rebellions (Defronzo, 2011, 12).

Hong Kong residents are experiencing their version of mass frustration, as they are continuously forming mass protests against the Chinese government. Due to Hong Kong being a special administrative region in China since 1997, they are well aware of the different economic and judicial systems the two regions possess. This would incentivize Hong Kongese to be segregated from mainland China. Their frustration was sparked by the forceful expansion of law to include extradition to mainland China (SCMP, 2020). This public backlash derived from the people's knowledge of the situation, in which the extradition would hinder civil liberties in Hong Kong, including its autonomy and standard of living. Ultimately, if not for the mass protests outside the legislature building, the extradition bill would have been approved and all people in Hong Kong would now be tried in mainland China (SCMP, 2020). Though these mass protests led to a victory, the Hong Kong

people were not satisfied with how they were treated and viewed by the Chinese government and media. Similar to Defronzo's notion that a society's contact with others would influence the people's expectations of their government, the Hong Kongese not only looked at other democratic nations, but also looked at the country they are a part of. The protestors of Hong Kong were not fed up with the Hong Kong government, but the Chinese government. To elaborate, their frustration is outlined by their five demands, each of which represents a clear desire to maintain and enhance their standard of living, relative to mainland China (BBC News, 2019). The first is for the protests not to be characterized as riots as riots convey violence and destruction, and they are, to a certain extent, peacefully protesting. Their second demand is amnesty for arrested protestors, in which protestors should not fear the action of speaking against the government. The third demand is an independent inquiry into alleged police brutality and their aggressive retaliations in protests. The fourth and most critical of demands is the implementation of complete universal suffrage which would differentiate the two regions and allow for greater democratic freedoms. The fifth demand, being the only successful outcome, is the extradition bill to be withdrawn, which has already occurred. Notably, the Hong Kong pro-democracy lawmakers have resigned en masse to protest the expulsion of four fellow lawmakers, that have been deemed as secessionist by Beijing (Feng & Neuman, 2020, 1). Though most demands have yet to be met by Chinese authorities, mass protests have to a certain extent proved to be successful in Hong Kong, depicting the effects of mass discontent and imperative popular uprisings.

The Bolivian Revolution and the Hong Kong Protests can be better explained by applying some of James Defronzo's theories and ideas to it. In his work *Social Movements and Revolutions*, he talks about how a social revolution can be classified as leftist or rightist or even liberal or conservative. Before these theories can be applied to The Bolivian Revolution and the Hong Kong Protests. These terms must be defined, a leftist revolution is a social revolution in which

the main goal is to change political and social institutions to alter economic, political, and social relationships (Defronzo, 2011, 10). A rightist social revolution is a revolution in which traditional norms are being pushed and social order and traditional authority is being maintained (Defronzo, 2011, 11). It is important to note when these classifications are given to a revolution, it will not fit perfectly, many revolutions share characteristics from both classifications of leftist and rightist (Defronzo, 2011, 11). In addition to the leftist and rightist revolution, a social revolution can be classified as liberal or conservative, what this means is that a revolution can be change oriented (liberal) or change resistant (conservative) (Defronzo, 2011, 9). What makes being able to identify a movement as liberal or conservative important, is that this makes identifying the central goal of a movement simpler (Defronzo, 2011, 9). Once the revolutionists are defined as either leftist or rightist and primarily change-oriented (liberal) or change-resistant (conservative) the Bolivia revolution can be better understood (Defronzo, 2011, 1).

Before diving into the Bolivian revolution James Defronzo's ideas must be applied to it, this will include classifying the revolution as leftist or rightist, and if the revolution is liberal or conservative. The Bolivian revolution is a liberal social revolution by the MNR because the introduction of universal suffrage and establishing a national labor federation was breaking the tradition previously followed in Bolivia (Goldstone, 1999, 45). In addition to being a liberal social revolution, the MNR supporters could be classified as leftists because they seek to shatter the traditional political, economic, and social rules and enact radical change. An example of this in action would be in 1952 when the MNR was enacting reformation of land back to the indigenous people due to violent revolts. Before this is all explained, a brief overview of the Bolivian Revolution will follow.

Prior to the 1952 Bolivian Revolution, Bolivia was at war with Paraguay. In the 1930s Bolivia went under hardships of the great depression and lost a lot of southern territory to Paraguay. A lot of Bolivians died during the war with Paraguay, this caused many to feel alienated from the traditional political system when they

returned home (Goldstone, 1999, 44). These veterans began to take up Marxist ideas and began to push for a number of causes, which can be summed up by their slogan “lands to the Indians” and “tin mines to state ownership” (Goldstone, 1999, 44). This slogan was used for many of these veteran radical groups, the most notable one was the MNR or the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (Goldstone, 1999, 44). During the 1940s there was a radicalization of middle-class whites and labor groups. In 1942 the Catavi Massacre was a huge rally around the flag effect for all the nationalist groups and labor groups, during this massacre gained strength for the MNR (Goldstone, 1999, 44). The MNR gained the support of the mine laborers and worked with the RADEPA (Secret Police) to take over the government in 1943 (Goldman, 1999, 44). Once 1949 came around, the MNR became the poster party for progressive change. This caused the government to lose support, in addition to also the lowering of tin prices which hurt the economy. Because of the loss of allies and support, the government weakened, and the MNR through a revolt was able to take control and win the 1951 election with 72 percent of 54,000 votes. (Goldman, 1999, 44). The current administration denied the MNR the election and that led to another revolt in 1952. The MNR took a lot of casualties but managed to return to power as a populist movement. From 1952-1956 (Goldman, 1999, 44).

The Bolivian revolution and history during this time are a lot more than the quick summary above. But with an understanding of the Bolivian revolution and how the MNR came to power, which is a crucial factor, applying James Defronzo’s classifications of a revolution is easier to apply. The first classification that will be looked at is a leftist social revolution, which is defined as a social revolution that is very change-oriented that seeks to dismantle traditional political or social institutions, to alter the political, economic, or social relationships in society (Defronzo, 2011, 10). Using this definition of a leftist social revolution, the 1952 state of the MNR would fit. Bolivia was an extremely poor country, in 1950 the majority of people made their money from agriculture

(Goldman, 1999, 45). With this, there were a lot of estates that were exploiting their workers, Tin mines began to run low and in 1950, the cost of production went up and caused economic distress (Goldman, 1999, 45). The Bolivian Revolution is a leftist revolution because of the economic, social, and political changes implemented by the MNR during this time, which ultimately led to drastic changes. The social changes that make this revolution a leftist revolution are the dismemberment of the army and police, with the wholesale of weapons to militias. This change caused Bolivia to go under this massive economic, social, and political transformation (Goldman, 1999, 45). Bolivia in 1952 enacted universal suffrage by dismantling the literacy requirement, this change was breaking the tradition of only having a select portion of the population vote. This leftist social revolution act led to a jump in the Indian population being able to vote. From that population, the voting went from 200,000 people to one million (Goldman, 1999, 45). This social change made it possible for a large portion of a neglected population to be able to participate in politics.

The changes did not stop there, that year there were also massive economic changes, which support the claim that this is a leftist social revolution. Economic change is the implementation of labor groups and the nationalization of mines. To better understand the importance of this change, one has to have a quick understanding of why this is so important. Prior to 1952 workers were being exploited on plantation and estates (hacienda system). Furthermore, there was the latifundia system which is when there is a lot of land that only a small percentage of people own (Goldman, 1999, 44). With this understanding, it is not hard to see that when the MNR created labor groups and nationalization mines; it was a very impactful economic change. This economic change of the mines was the Bolivian government nationalizing the top three mining companies and merging them together to form the Bolivian Mining Corporation (Goldman, 1999, 46).

James Defronzo's classification of a leftist social revolution fit the Bolivian revolution due to the fact the MNR was making changes



that went against the traditional social, political, economic norms (Defronzo, 2011, 10). The MNR through making universal suffrage, labor groups and nationalizing mines, created new social, economic, and political institutions that helped the MNR carry out as a leftist social revolution until its overthrow. It is important to note that the MNR in addition to being a leftist social revolution, the movement itself is going to be liberal, rather than conservative. This is based on how the MNR was very change oriented rather than re-institutionalizing traditional institutions.

James Defronzo's classification of a leftist or rightist social revolution can be applied to other revolutions as well. An example could be the Hong Kong protests that are currently going on in Hong Kong. This revolutionary situation started in March 2019 and is still continuing in 2020. Hong Kong China currently does not follow the same rules as mainland China, this means that the citizens have more freedom and are not oppressed by mainland China. The reason for this is Hong Kong was once a British Colony that was returned to China but has always remained separate from China. The cause of the revolutionary situation was the Extradition Bill, which makes Hong Kong Citizens able to be prosecuted by mainland China (Symmes, 2019). This revolutionary situation would classify as a Rightist Revolution, and Conservative. The reason why is because for most of the citizens in Hong Kong, it is their tradition that Hong Kong was separate from mainland China or that it was a British colony most of their life. That is all most people will know, once mainland China has power in Hong Kong, that will break this tradition. The protests are being conservative and want to keep the tradition of Hong Kong being separate from mainland China, which makes this a rightist social revolution since they want to keep Hong Kong's economic, social, and political institutions and not go under the radical change of giving mainland China prosecuting power in Hong Kong.

Defronzo describes unifying motivations as motivations that fuel the revolution and unite the major classes. In order for a revolution to succeed, it will need the support of multiple major classes.

Classes need to work together, an example of this would be redistributing wealth. People who share the same ideas can rally together to fight the oppressor (Defronzo, 2011, 16). Hong Kong was a British colony until 1997. Ever since then, Hong Kong has been under Chinese control. A lot of citizens do not agree with this due to the current government in place in China. The government in China heavily restricts free speech. The government of the People's Republic of China is anti-democratic. Some citizens, students, and activists have been advocating for full democracy in Hong Kong. They have been pleading for this by doing demonstrations and protests which recently began after June in 2019 (Ives, 2019). Another key factor leading to this frustration was China imposing an extradition law to mainland China. Citizens started fearing that this could undermine judicial independence and endanger objecting protestors. Opponents of this extradition bill argued that this action risked exposing Hong Kongers to unfair trials and possible violent treatment. They also argued the bill would give China greater influence over Hong Kong and could be used to target activists and journalists (BBC News, 2019). This would give China all the power over Hong Kong while the citizens would be left with nothing. Talking out against the government would become prohibited for example. The protests have become increasingly violent. But because of those ongoing protests, the leader of Hong Kong Carrie Lam said the bill would be suspended indefinitely. Protestors still feared this bill could be revived so the protests continued to try to eliminate the bill completely. In September, this bill was finally withdrawn. Unfortunately, protestors believed too many lives were lost against the police and the government. The violence then erupted between the government, Chinese officials, protestors, and even innocent people. In November, the territory held local elections to vote for a pro-democracy movement. It won with an almost unanimous vote. Protests supporting the Hong Kong movement have spread across the globe, with rallies taking place in the UK, France, US, Canada, and Australia. In many cases, people supporting the demonstrators were confronted by pro-Beijing

rallies. This is a very dividing and controversial issue. In response to this issue, Chinese president Xi Jinping has warned against separatism, saying any attempt to divide China would end in “bodies smashed and bones ground to powder” (BBC News, 2019). Defronzo argued that the type of motivation that would fuel a revolution would have to unite the major classes. This is exactly what has happened in Hong Kong. Not only this but support from all over the world. In order for this revolution to succeed, it will need the support of multiple major classes, some who have already come together. These classes will need to work together. The motivations that should share in common is the promotion of democracy. These Hong Kongers who share the same ideas, can rally together to fight the oppressor, China’s government.

Bolivia prior to revolution was a country slowly getting economically worse as time went on. The Great Depression affected the country in a particular way. The government went to war with Paraguay over land disputes. After the loss, Bolivia’s economy just continued to become worse. The country would become one of, if not the poorest country in South America. These factors all motivated people including the middle class and even the elites to want a change, specifically a change in government. The agricultural part of the country was very populous, but it did not bring in enough money overall to both the people and the government. The government in place was not adapting as fast as people wanted.

Defronzo describes a state crisis as a political crisis that hurts the state’s ability to function. This happens when a revolution might occur. An example of this could be a natural disaster or a loss in war (Defronzo, 2011, 12). During the Great Depression, Bolivia’s conservative government made the decision to go to war with Paraguay to dispute the lands in Gran Chaco. Bolivia was the poorest country in South America. Land distribution was very unequal among the population, one of the most unequal latifundia in Latin America. The elite royally butchered the war which decimated the traditional politics of Bolivia. Ever since then, Bolivia’s politics have always been problematic Since Bolivia lost the land to Paraguay and

had a less than ideal outcome, many veterans who fought in the war were ousted from the traditional political system. This signaled more trouble for Bolivia's politics. The Nationalist Revolutionary movement or the MNR decided to create a plan to overthrow the government and take control since they won the elections at the time but were not yet given power. MNR knew that only a civil war would allow them to finally be in power. MNR finally was able to take control, but their party platform changed and was now a populist movement. This change sparked a revolution. The government armed civilians created new rural and urban militias, while also neutralizing the police. This would change Bolivia politically forever. The MNR party also got rid of literacy requirements for voting, which allowed more people to vote in Bolivia. Established the national labor federation, the COB 1952-1953: Rural violence erupted in Bolivia as peasants were trying to dismantle the Hacienda system. The government had to comply due to the violence and gave the land back to the indigenous populations. Essentially, the Bolivian government armed their people, which eventually helped them when they rose against their own government. COB and the alliances made with other workers' unions survived rightist regimes and the eventual loss of power of the MNR. A revolution might not be that successful if the government still has strong administrative capabilities and a strong-armed presence to suppress the dissident (Defronzo, 2011, 11). MNR stripped the government of its strong administrative capabilities, that is why MNR had so much control. MNR even gave the people more power.

This situation has gained a lot of support not only from many Hong Kongers themselves, but also worldwide. Democratic states have backed the protests pro-democracy and have even condemned the actions of China's government. This issue is not going away any time soon. Chinese President Xi Jinping has admitted that this issue is a controversial one and that China will not back down. This statement has not only proved that this is a crisis but also that this issue could get worse with no end in sight.

Elite Dissidence can only be understood through that of looking at

the elites in a country that control political, military, and the leaders that possess technical and managerial skills where these elites can be pitted against one another. Using Bolivia as a prime example we can see multiple figures that we would identify as being the social elite. When we identify these elites, we can begin to understand the weight in which they hold in order to sway the governing body one way or another. “The seizure of power by “military socialists” under David Toro and German Busch (1936-1939) led to the first nationalization of a foreign oil company; the YPFB” (Goldstone, 44, 1999) With this push into establishing an oil company it fueled profits to allow change in the government. Following this you see the political elites start to have a rallying of the middle class and later the miner also began to be radicalized.

In 1946 the MNR developed a problem with an uprising and had to remove some of the fascist ideas they portrayed and needed to establish themselves as more of a radical and progressive party of change. This however did not last too long as a shift after WWII caused a fiscal crisis and elections began to see corruption. In a last-ditch effort to win the political elites, the MNR backed Victor Paz in his choice to arm all the civilians in order to fight the Miners. This set a MNR back on top to control the government once again. However, Paz Esstensoro realized the dangers of the middle class getting restless and created the alliance of COB, and as an Elite transitioned to a new party the old party was not spared and the MNR was destroyed shortly after. The Bolivian revolution had many examples of how certain elite organizations can affect one another if they are at each other’s throats showing the power of what Elite Dissidence does.

Permissive world context is when there are outside forces in the international system, suppressing a revolution of a country or supporting a revolution of a country (Defronzo, 2011, 13). An example would be if a nation intervenes in another country’s revolution or does not intervene. This could be because of economic issues, or sanctions. In Bolivia post revolution, the MNR was not doing so well, the militias they armed previously were tired with economic choices

the government had made. From 1952 to 1956 the burden to pay for the revolution was put on the middle class, the MNR in 1964 was on track to losing power (Goldstone, 1999, 46). An example of permissive world context would be during the cold war, the Bolivian government allied with the United States so it can receive foreign policy support. Because of the foreign aid from the U.S. Bolivia's economy and social institutions began to grow. This is an example of permissive world context because Bolivia used the United States to stop the overthrow of their party (the MNR). If it were not for the support of the United States, Bolivia's economy would still suffer and the MNR would have been overthrown much sooner. In addition to Bolivia being a good example of permissive world context, the Hong Kong Protests are a good example as well. The Hong Protests have gathered support from a lot of private organizations in the United States, but for the most part the U.S. government has not shown support for the protests or sided with China. There was a bill introduced that never made it through congress called the "be water act". This act allowed the president to put sanctions and freeze assets on corporations that were suppressing freedom in Hong Kong, even though the bill was only introduced (116th Congress, 2019), this is a good example of permissive world context because it shows a situation where an outside actor in the international system, would be able to influence a revolution or revolutionary situation in another country.

In both cases of Hong Kong and Bolivia, mass frustration, relative deprivation, and the identification of the revolutions as liberal and conservative or rightist or leftist all help identify these as examples of revolutions. In addition to those ideas set out by James Defronzo, unifying motivations, state crisis and elite dissidence and permissive world context are also found with these two examples. All of these terms Defronzo uses first to identify a revolution and then to answer why they happen. In doing so gives us the necessary insight to further our understanding on what causes the problems that lead into revolutions that can change a country for the better or sometimes for the worse.

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# 7. Charles Tilly's Revolutionary Process Theory

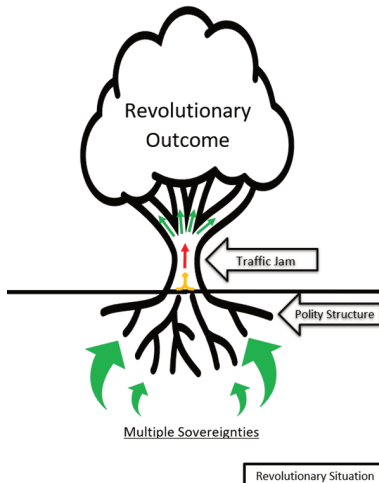


Diagram of Tilly's Theory by Mateusz Leszczynski licensed under CC BY 4.0

"We made the state, and the state made war."

-Charles Tilly

Charles Tilly, born on May 27th, 1929, in Lombard, Illinois, graduated from Harvard University in 1950, where he earned his doctorate in sociology. He went on to teach at multiple universities in North America, including Columbia University and the University of Delaware. He spent his academic career studying and critiquing theories of revolution and, in the process

producing his theory (Martin, 2008). Tilly studied under Barrington Moore as a Ph.D. student. Moore's teachings heavily influence much of Tilly's theory. Tilly's theory also draws from Karl Marx, as it points to society's structure as an incubator for revolution. Through his structural lens, he asserts that state structures like the economy, politics, and a state's culture widely affect the circumstance of revolutions (Martin, 2008).

In Tilly's book, *European Revolutions 1492-1992* (1993) his broad conception of revolution argues that:

Great revolutions do not develop *sui generis*, subject to laws that separate them entirely from more routine forms of political change. Take the difference between solar eclipses and traffic jams. Revolutions do not resemble eclipses of the sun, which because of

the regularities of celestial motion repeat on a precise schedule under specifiable and perfectly comprehensible conditions – those conditions and no others. Instead, revolutions resemble traffic jams, which vary greatly in form and severity, merge imperceptibly into routine vehicular flows, develop from those flows, and happen in different circumstances for a number of reasons (Tilly, 1993: p. 7).

His theory does not accommodate for “invariant necessary and sufficient conditions for all times and all places” (Tilly, 1993: p. 8). He does, however, lay out some causal mechanisms that are seen across several revolutions such as “the dramatic demonstration that a previously formidable state is vulnerable and the partial dissolution of existing state powers that commonly occurs in post-war demobilization” (Tilly, 1993: p. 8). In Tilly’s theory he defines two conditions of understanding the cause and outcomes of revolution: revolutionary situation and revolutionary outcome. He draws on these two components to better understand revolutions through the years of 1492-1992 and to explain a state’s motivation to mobilize. While he defines the two as “close kin,” the distinctions between the two are vital to his theory of revolution.

The concept of a revolutionary situation derived from Leon Trotsky’s belief in dual power. Trotsky’s belief “implies that a destruction of the social equilibrium has already split the state superstructure” (Trotsky, 1932). Tilly’s definition of the revolutionary situation “entails multiple sovereignty” (Tilly, 1993: p. 10), meaning two or more parties are needed to be successful in making claims to control the state or by the state. If an existing polity is in place, the parties exercise control over a significant part of the state. Through his structuralist point of view, he signifies that change within states’ structure creates revolutions. With a revolutionary situation, the structure is represented as the root, and what matters is the states’ environment. Such as the social process, according to Tilly, is the best predictor of what is bringing critical change which consists of multiple factors, like economics, political structure, and state culture. Further, he notes three crucial causes of convergence in a revolutionary situation (Tilly, 1993, p. 49-50):

- 1) Appearance of a contender or a coalition of contenders advancing competing control of the state or at least parts of it.
- 2) Committing to those claims by a significant segment of citizenship.
- 3) Incapacity or unwillingness of rulers to suppress the alternative coalition and their claims.

According to Tilly, a revolutionary outcome centers around the transfer of state power. Specifically, from the “old regime” that held power before the period of multiple revolutionary outcomes represents the transfer of power from the state to the challengers who declared polity and came into control with the means of armed force. There are four causes for these outcomes as identified in Tilly’s theory (1993, p. 49-50):

- 1) Defections of polity members.
- 2) Armed forces acquired by revolutionary coalitions.
- 3) Neutralization or defection by the regime’s armed force.
- 4) Control of the state by members of a revolutionary coalition.

However, in Tilly’s theory, the two conditions of revolution must be separated in order to understand revolutions extensively. The differentiation between the two are as follows:

- 1) A basic split in polity which is represented as a deep revolutionary situation
- 2) A large transfer of power which represented a serious revolutionary outcome

With these circumstances relevant to a better understanding of Tilly’s revolutionary theory, further examination of two case studies, The Iranian Revolution and The Arab Spring is necessary to understand his theory fully. These two revolutions use Tilly’s theory to understand better how both states experienced a revolutionary situation and the revolutionary outcome that followed or did not materialize.

# The Iranian Revolution

According to Tilly's theory, revolutions manifest under different circumstances that he refers to as "traffic jams" (Tilly, 1993: p. 8) because of the diverse components that lead to competition over control. The Iranian Revolution occurred from 1978-79. The revolution erupted over a deal the Iranian government made with Britain. Specifically, the British initiated the change of dynasties from Qajar to Pahlavi (Defronzo 1991). This alliance between the Pahlavi dynasty and the United Kingdom and the United States was perceived to weaken Muslim culture, and many feared it would lead to corruption. The Pahlavi Dynasty was responsible for this controversy by distributing wealth unevenly among classes with its large oil boom and land reform. The assumption held by Shah was that the reforms would forge a population favorable to his ruling. However, the opposite occurred and not only did his policies anger the traditionalists, led Ayatollah Khomeini, with secularization and land reform but also leftist organizations who were more in favor of democratic agency rather than denationalization of various government held companies (Defronzo 1991). The worsening condition of Shah's assumed corruption and tone-deaf policies sparked frustration that led to revolution.

Under Tilly's theory, the Iranian Revolution can be understood through great lengths because it follows the two essential conditions that Tilly notes, revolutionary situation, and revolutionary outcome. During the Iranian Revolution, The Shah Regime, the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini and the growth of leftist movements were the three sovereign movements that mobilized for total control of the state. The Shah regime and its moral corruption led Ayatollah Khomeini to mobilize against the Shah. The authoritative grip of the Shah also angered much of the middle class which favored political reform. In general, the disruption of social and economic patterns from the wealth of oil being disproportionate to the classes, difficulties for citizens to

participate in politics, and the absence of Islam religion contributed to the mobilization (Defronzo 1991). As noted in Tilly's theory, a state's structure alters revolutions (Tilly 1993). Under the Iranian Revolution, the social and economic circumstances indicated what could become of this revolution.

Following Tilly's theory, to meet his revolution definition, an outcome must occur to be considered a revolution. During the Iranian Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini launched what he called a "moral attack" on the Shah's regime's armed forces, as well as an economic drought through the protest of oil workers that would call for the neutralization of the regime's armed forces. Four causes contribute to revolutionary outcomes. As seen under Ayatollah Khomeini, he used demonstrations to attract these results. In regard to him implementing a "moral attack," he supported his strategy by explaining:

We must fight the soldier within the soldier's hearts. Fight through martyrdom because the martyr is the essence of history. Let the army kill as many as it wants until the soldiers are shaken to their hearts by the massacres they have committed. The army will collapse (Defronzo, 315).

Ayatollah Khomeini's peace-intended tactic delivered results as soldiers surrendered and joined the revolution. Along with Ayatollah Khomeini's oil protests that were then crippling the economy, ensured the fallout of Shah's regime and led to Ayatollah Khomeini taking control of the state. Using Tilly's revolutionary outcome, the neutralization of armed forces is a characteristic that aligns with Tilly's understanding of what revolutions represent. The Iranian revolution began because of social and economic issues that were disrupted due to political corruption that pushed people to demand and mobilize for change. As Tilly compares revolution to a traffic jam, different systems of the state were part of different circumstances that inevitably resulted in a revolution.

With the Iranian revolution behind it eventually led to another revolution, known as the Green Revolution. The Green Revolution took place in 2009, just after President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad won

the election. Tensions rose from this election after citizens believe that votes were fraudulent and began large protests. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's opponent believed that the new president's interests and views did not appropriately serve modern Iran. Thus, the revolt against President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad persisted. The Mojeh Sabz (also known as The Green Revolution) began to occur.

As stated in Tilly's revolutionary theory, two conditions must occur for this revolution to be legitimate. First, the revolutionary situation. In the Green Revolution, the Mojeh Sabz campaign developed and later grew into a great social movement. This social movement was rooted in citizens demanding reform and improved civil liberties. The Green Revolution had two sovereign parties, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the Majeh Sabz fighting for control of the state, a condition Tilly defines as multiple sovereignty.

Still, this revolution lacked a revolutionary outcome. In Tilly's theory, for a revolution to meet his definition, it requires four causes. Unfortunately, the Green Revolution meets none. As citizens demanded reform and leveraged social media as a platform that ultimately changed the state's structure, the Mojeh Sabz never gained control, and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's regime did not neutralize or defect.

However, the Green Revolution aligns more with the next chapter's theorist, Theda Skocpol, and her social revolution theory. As Skocpol theorized, social revolution peaks after social and political structures are redesigned and occur together. The Green Revolution follows this theory because of the mobilization that took place against President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad due to his inadequacies to maintain a modern Iran. The uprising occurred because this generation grew up under a new age of globalization that left Iranians well educated and in a position to demand change in their socio-political infrastructure with new reforms. Social media platforms were massive in this revolution, gaining momentum because of new-age technology that was crucial to Iran's modernization because it increased attention towards the

oppressive aspect of Iran. This revolution follows Skocpol's theory more so than Tilly's because it was framed around social and political circumstances challenged by the opposing classes calling for changes. However, similar to Tilly's revolutionary outcome, the Green Revolution falls short of being successful under Skocpol's theory of revolution. This failure is due to the circumstance that failed to lead to a successful charge for change, and there is little evidence that changes advocated for have become significant to consider it a successful social revolution under Skocpol theory.

## The Arab Spring

The Arab Spring spread throughout several Middle Eastern and African countries between 2010-2012. In Tunisia, the uprising sparked due to popular demand to remove long-time leader Zine El Abidine Ben Ali from office and the economic deprivation most of the Tunisian population faced (Schraeder, Redissi, 2011). These events then ignited an uprising across several Arab and African states to remove leaders from positions of power. It is important to note that while Tilly's theory effectively explains many of the revolutionary situations that occurred during the Arab Spring, however, he also falls short in several areas.

Tilly's revolutionary outcome applies to the events in Tunisia and Egypt. In response to the "Jasmine Revolution," which sparked due to the self-immolation of street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi, the Tunisian government incited violence against protesters. The components of Tilly's revolutionary situation are present in Tunisia as "contenders advancing toward competing control of the state" and "incapacity of rulers to suppress the alternative coalition and their claims" (Tilly, 1993: p. 10). It is important to note that when the state uses violence in response to peaceful protesters, it is more than likely that otherwise neutral supporters will gravitate towards the opposition (Tilly, 1993). For example, the police brutality

demonstrated against peaceful protesters during the 1960s civil rights movement in the United States caused major controversy nationwide. The brutality, shown in the form of police dogs and fire hoses against peaceful protesters, led many citizens previously neutral to shift their support to the civil rights cause. The violence first issued against demonstrators is evidence of the state's incapacity to contain the demonstrations, which ultimately led to stepping down from power shortly after. In terms of Tunisia, Ben Ali ordered the state's military to repress the protestors with deadly force as the movement grew. However, the military refused to do so and instead supported the peaceful protests. The Ben Ali family was only left with a meager sized presidential guard which was incapable to take control of the situation (Schraeder, Redissi, 2011). Thus, the situation yielded a revolutionary outcome as the citizenry removed the "old regime" of power and controlled the state. This transition follows another factor of Tilly's theory of revolution. He states that gradual transition occurs between the old regime and the revolutionary coalition (Tilly 1993) and that is what exactly occurred in Tunisia. After the removal of the family and before the election of non-associated politicians the transition government was formed by old regime politicians. It would take a two-month gradual process before proper elections were held to elect members from the revolutionary coalition.

While what occurred in Tunisia alone is considered a revolution by Tilly's definition, the Jasmine Revolution signified the beginning of the Arab Spring. In the days following Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's exit, protests broke out in Egypt. The factors of a revolutionary situation present in Tunisia were also present in Egypt; however, the path to a revolutionary outcome looked different. Similar to Tunisia much of the Egyptian population already felt economic deprivation and mass poverty (Korotayev, Shishkina, 2019). The state responded first by offering concessions to stop protests and used violence against demonstrators. Still, when protests persisted, President Hosni Mubarak lost the military's support and left office 30 days later. His replacement would be a military junta (Korotayev,



Shishkina, 2019). According to Tilly's theory, the defection of armed forces signified a revolutionary outcome. A military council then assumed the responsibilities of government. However, unlike in Tunisia, the military council that assumed power was resistant to transferring power to an elected government and assumed violence against protestors. Ultimately, despite the outbreak of violence, the government was in the hands of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces and not democratic elections such as in Tunisia (Korotayev, Shishkina, 2019).

Beyond Tunisia and Egypt, Tilly's theory falls short when looking at the other Arab Spring states such as Yemen, Bahrain, Libya, and Syria. While components of his revolutionary situation are present across the countries, revolutionary outcomes do not manifest. In Yemen, power was transferred from president Ali Abd Allah Salih to the vice president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi without any change to the "old regime" of government. Similarly, the uprising in Bahrain did not result in a revolutionary outcome as the state stifled the revolution successfully. In Libya, the demonstrations against Muammar al-Qaddafi quickly escalated into a violent civil war. In the Egyptian and Tunisian, governments it did not because the military took the side of the protestors rather than the regime during the upheaval. Defection of the military is the radical difference between these regimes. With many different contenders or as Tilly would state the various sovereignties contending with one another (Tilly 1993), these groups created a drift based on diverse goals that resulted in a further violent revolution in Libya and Syria.

While Tilly's theory can explain the revolutionary situation, his theory does not extend to explain why the revolution took place across several states. Theda Skocpol's social revolution theory better explains each of these states' international connections and why revolution spread throughout several Arab countries. She states in her work *States and Social Revolutions* that (SKOCPOL, 1979: P. 3)

Nor have social revolutions had only national significance. In some cases, social revolutions have given rise to models and ideals

of enormous international impact and appeal – especially where the transformed societies have been large and geopolitically important.

Skocpol draws on the importance of transmission of revolution. In *States and Social Revolutions*, she quotes El Baki Hermassi in saying that revolutions “exert a demonstration effect beyond the boundaries of their country of origin, with a potential for triggering waves of revolution and counterrevolution both within and between societies” (1979,4). Her theory describes the wave of revolution that transcended one state’s boundaries, sweeping across several different countries within a short period. Tilly’s theory falls short in this manner by only explaining the revolution within the context of a single state structure.

## Conclusion

Tilly’s theory of revolution contains many factors required to mobilize and define a revolution adequately. Revolutionary situations and outcomes are two defining factors that represent the significance of a proper understanding of revolutions’ causes and effects. These two components stand as a model of how revolutions form through a series of systems that inevitably lead to what is known as a revolutionary situation that then is followed by a revolutionary outcome. The chosen case studies represent Tilly’s connection to “traffic jams.” Each state had different structures that ranged in severity and circumstance that Tilly’s theory highlights. Tilly’s theory of revolution accounts for the nature of shifts in states’ power by examining the states’ systems that lead to the cause and effect of revolutions.

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## 8. Theda Skocpol: States and Social Revolutions



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“The occurrence of revolutionary situations in the first place and the nature of the new regimes that emerged from revolutionary conflicts depends fundamentally on the structures of state organizations and their partially autonomous and dynamic relationships to domestic class and political forces as well as their positions in relation to other states abroad.”

-Theda Skocpol 1979

In an increasingly globalized world, what constitutes a revolutionary outcome? Theda Skocpol's book, *States and Social Revolutions* (1979) introduced a groundbreaking idea to the world of structural revolutionary theory: revolutions are rare. According to Skocpol, “Revolutionary causation and outcomes are necessarily affected by world-historical changes in the fundamental structures and bases of state power” (Skocpol, 1979, pg. 288). Skocpol theorized that events 1) shaped by international politics and 2) that change the fabric of society constitute revolutions. Events that both contour international politics and alter deeply society are the revolutions most worth studying.

## Theda Skocpol's Early Life

Skocpol, born in May 1947, grew up during the time of the civil rights movement and the anti-Vietnam war protests in the United States. These tumultuous world events influenced Skocpol's path towards studying revolutionary theory. After receiving her B.A. in Sociology, Skocpol acquired her M.A. and Ph.D. at Harvard, studying under her mentor, Barrington Moore (Skocpol and Schinckler, 2019). Moore's ideas on Marxist revolutionary thought influenced Theda's views on class structure and relations (Skocpol, 1979). The Communist Revolution in China and the Nazi Revolution in Germany examined in this chapter will act as case studies for the structural conditions that lay the groundwork for Skocpol's writings on revolutions.

## Defining Social Revolutions

By arguing that the most important revolutionary situations and outcomes completely change society's fabric, Skocpol holds a view of revolutions different from other theorists in this book. Social revolutions are different from other conflicts in that it changes the social and political fabric of a society in a mutually reinforcing way (Skocpol, 1979, pg. 5). A change in either the social or political structure likely will result in a change in the other. In her own words, Skocpol describes social revolutions as the "rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structure, accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below" (Skocpol 1979, pg. 287). Skocpol points out social revolutions as uniquely crucial. Revolutionary situations need to be looked at holistically, looking at all groups competing for power in the state. This definition also allows for identifying a complex social event that has happened rarely throughout history. For Skocpol to consider something a social revolution, there needs to be a

deliberate and sustainable change in state and class structures. Thus, the realm of the state and class organizations will always be central to revolutions: something that does not result in tangible change in those realms would not qualify as a social revolution (Skocpol, 1979, pg. 5). Given this, the Russian Revolution would be classified as a social revolution because the state and classes' structure completely changed when the Communist Party took over (DeFronzo, 2011, pg. 55). The American Revolution would not be classified as a social revolution because American life or government did not substantially change; instead, just the British were kicked out. The Virginia House of Burgess that worked under the British royal government still operates today; it is now called the House of Delegates and acts as one of two parts of the Virginia General Assembly (House History, Virginia.gov). The state structures need to be examined to determine how and when class members will organize themselves to engage in a struggle for their interests effectively. Essentially, revolutionary situations develop due to state political crises and class domination. The obstacles in place determine revolutionary outcomes during the revolutionary situation. In addition to this definition, Skocpol also believes that to understand social revolutions; there needs to be an understanding of international and world-historical contexts (Skocpol, 1979, pg. 14).

## International Influences on Social Revolutions

Revolutions do not happen in isolation. An event in one part of the world can have drastic impacts on events in another. The interconnectedness of revolutions is seen in the 2011 Arab Spring. A push for democracy in Tunisia quickly spread around the rest of the Arab world ended in mass pro-democracy protests—reflecting many of Skocpol's ideas regarding international impacts on and

of revolutions (Anderson, “Demystifying the Arab Spring”). Skocpol considers the most relevant transnational relations to be the structures of world capitalism and the international state system (Skocpol, 1979, pg. 19). Countries that will experience revolutionary situations likely are the most economically and politically disadvantaged in the world (Skocpol, 1979, pg. 23). One country placing economic sanctions on another can result in a change in policy by the government of the sanctioned state, making life worse for their people—thereby creating the necessary preconditions for a revolutionary situation. Economic sanctions that contributed to a revolutionary situation can be seen in the liberal economic demands called for in Bolivia by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Many indigenous groups in the nation were outraged by the privatization of government services like gas and water and the unfair burden these structural adjustments placed on indigenous groups. The government action on the IMF demands prompted an indigenous social revolutionary situation that demanded the government act more in line with the Bolivian people’s wants and needs (Webber, 2005). A state with both the will and capacity to withstand domestic and international fluctuations will be less likely to experience a social revolution; thus, a flexible state structure is essential to help a state reduce the likelihood of a revolutionary situation (Skocpol, 1979, pg. 22).

Skocpol also attributes the influence of the international sphere to global capitalism. Capitalism spread unevenly throughout the world, and the transnational economic relations that have since developed have and will always influence national economic developments, according to Skocpol. Capitalism created an international system of competing states that shaped the uneven state development course—leaving some states behind (Skocpol, 1979, pg. 23). Economically disadvantaged states will more likely experience revolutionary situations because of global capitalism disparity.



# The Potential Autonomy of the State

Unlike other theorists, Skocpol does not consider a state's government to be under complete control of the dominant class. Instead, she sees the government's goal as the preservation of the existing class structure and modes of production as a whole (Skocpol, 1979, pg. 27). In achieving this preservation, she argues that the government may be free from specific control of dominant class groups, so long as it implements policies that serve the dominant class's fundamental interests (Skocpol, 1979, pg. 27). For example, a state could implement reforms to satisfy a subordinate class so long as, in doing so, it does not undermine the general will and goals of the dominant class. Skocpol's class struggle reductionism theory holds that state structures are shaped by the class struggle between dominant and subordinate classes and that many social revolutions have been kickstarted by direct contradictions centered in the structure of the old regime (Skocpol, 1979, pg. 28). The state's ability to withstand a revolutionary situation is mainly dependent on the structure of the state. Even after the loss of legitimacy, a state can remain stable and unmoved by mass revolts if the state's coercive organizations remain coherent and effective (Skocpol, 1979, pg. 32). The role of state structure demonstrates that the success of a social revolution becomes contingent on the state being too weak to withstand mass revolt. In this sense, Skocpol is most prominently a structuralist when analyzing revolutions.

## Social Revolution as a Tree

Perhaps an easy way to think of Skocpol's theory is to compare social revolutions to a tree. Throughout the year, a tree changes as the seasons change – some especially dramatic such as when the leaves fall off in the fall. These changes are analogous to a

reform effort by a government. The appearance will change, but the foundational aspects of the tree (and for the purposes of this analogy, the government, and society) are still present. However, once the tree gets chopped down and turned into something completely different, like a wooden rocking chair, the tree's foundation changes entirely. The critical foundational change would be what Skocpol describes as a social revolution. Completely changing the foundations of a government and society is the only thing that constitutes a social revolution. Those little changes that alter a government's appearance, like leaves falling off a tree, are not all that consequential, and only chopping down the tree should garner attention.

Skocpol's theory of revolution is a new lens for examining revolutionary situations and outcomes. Skocpol asserts that revolutions are shaped and even caused by international politics and events around the world. Skocpol pioneered the idea that the most important revolutions, the ones worth looking closely at, completely change society's fabric. For her innovative work, Skocpol won the Johan Skytte Prize in political science ("Johan Skytte Prize," 2020). In an ever-increasing globalized world, where one can see cause and effect more clearly from one state to another, Theda Skocpol laid out a roadmap for what to look for in a revolutionary situation to determine its overall outcome. Skocpol's road map becomes particularly useful in examining two case studies: the Chinese Communist Revolution and the Nazi Revolution. At first glance, one might question why the Nazi takeover is considered a revolution without the civil unrest in the streets that so often characterizes revolution. Skocpol cares about the complete overhaul and changing of the government to constitute a revolution. The transformation of a democratic Weimar Republic to a fascist dictatorship illustrates the complete overhaul of government.

# The Chinese Communist Revolution

The Chinese Communist Revolution embodies Theda Skocpol's social revolutionary theory by illustrating a revolutionary situation, a crisis of state, and a revolutionary outcome that alters the nation's political and social structure. The revolutionary situation began with the Qing Dynasty's disintegration wherein, warlords controlled most of the Emperor's former territories. High taxation and the peasant class's exploitation by the warlords fueled discontent, furthering the revolutionary fervor. The Communist and Nationalist parties utilized discontent from peasant, middle, and elite classes, initiating a political dominance struggle. Civil War broke out, beginning a state exacerbated the crisis by international forces in the form of a Japanese invasion (Brown, 2008). The crisis of state diminished after the Communist party garnered enough peasant support to declare a government in the name of the people. Effectively overcoming the obstacle of popular support, a determination necessary in defining the revolutionary outcome and causing a massive overhaul of the former regime (Skocpol, 1979). This revolutionary situation forever changed China's political and social structure (Office of the Historian, 2018).

Beginning with the Qing Dynasty's disintegration, the opportunity for political change arose. Nationalist Kuomintang Party (KMT) forces immediately seized power under Dr. Sun Yat-Sen's leadership. By the autumn of 1911, Dr. Sun's revolutionary coalition deposed the Emperor and declared the Republic of China (Office of Historian, 2018). However, by the end of 1911, China remained a mainly agrarian society. Under the agrarian system, the Nationalist coalition retained few resources to unify China. The Republic of China inherited a social system that lacked the structural means necessary to be a prosperous state. Due to resource scarcity, China was slow to reform and alienated most laborer and peasant classes (Brown, 2008). Additionally, warlords in the northern territories maintained control over the peasant class. The warlord elite class

exploited the lower class through high taxation. The lack of structural conduciveness coupled with high taxation left most of the population in discontent and deprivation, pushing the masses toward radicalization and mass mobilization. Radicalization and mobilization illustrate Skocpol's theory by provoking a revolutionary situation wherein a lack of government unification allows multiple actors to seize power. Failed states give social and political restructuring opportunities by providing the critical situation for change (Brown, 2008).

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) utilized discontent and disorganization in the Republican government to delegitimize the KMT. In doing so, the CCP created a partisan split culminating at the beginning of a Civil War. By the beginning of the Civil War, the Nationalists' support had diminished among the peasant class who began looking to the Communist Party for agrarian reform and industrialization (Skocpol, 1979). This paradigm shift illustrates an obstacle for both the Communist and Nationalist parties, the ability to coerce the masses into subordination to maintain power (Brown, 2008). The social revolutionary theory holds that revolutionary outcomes are determined by obstacles in the organization of classes (Skocpol, 1979). That obstacle being either actors' ability to coerce then mobilize China's massive peasant and lower-class population alienated from the political system by years of oppressive feudal rule. The obstacle of popular support reinforces Skocpol's argument by implying that an effective class organization is a determinant factor in defining the revolutionary outcome (Skocpol, 1979: p. 14).

After 1937, Japan's invasion interrupted the Civil War, causing detrimental harm to urban centers where the Nationalists party drew most of its support from upper and middle-class Chinese citizens, undermining popular support for the KMT. The Japanese invasion enlarged the support base for the CCP among the poor and rural areas due to their ability to mobilize the peasant class under their promises of reform (Brown, 2008). Exemplifying Skocpol's theory, the Japanese invasion and the Chinese Civil War created a state crisis, initiating movement of the majority peasant class and

the remaining elite class toward the Communist party (Skocpol, 1979). The peasant class and the remaining elite class's movement toward the Communist party would crystallize with the Civil War's re-ignition following the end of WWII. Mass-mobilization of loyal peasantry gave the Communist Party resources and manpower that the KMT lost during the Japanese occupation. After the occupation, the now quasi-military government of the Nationalist Party became corrupt and ineffective due to the lack of an appropriate support base (Brown, 2008). Between 1947 and 1949, Mao Zedong assumed command of the Communist forces. During this time, the Communist party accumulated a massive stockpile of weapons taken from the retreating Japanese. With the addition of grassroots support from the rural peasantry, by 1949, the CCP shifted the tide of the Civil War in their favor. After a string of victories, Mao Zedong—the leader of the CCP at the time— declared the People's Republic of China (Office of the Historian, 2018).

Mao Zedong utilized his popular support to establish a social revolution. The Chinese Communist Party rebuilt Chinese society from the ground up. The CCP reformed agrarian society, industrialized rapidly, bringing their rural peasant supporters to the forefront of economic development and political discussion (Brown, 2008). The transition from a mainly agrarian to an industrialized society illustrates Skocpol's idea of a revolutionary outcome. The Chinese Communist movement overcame the obstacle of maintaining popular support of the peasant masses and delegitimizing their nationalist counterparts through comparison to the weak imperial regime. As stated by Theda Skocpol herself, "Successful Revolution accomplishes the resynchronization of the social system's values and environment that... old regime authorities were unable to do" (Skocpol, 1979: p. 12). In China, the social system's resynchronization refers to the agrarian reform, industrialization, and opportunity for participation the CCP enabled. Overall, The CCP mobilized the peasant class in China, changing Chinese Society for years to come (Office of the Historian, 2018).

An alternative to Skocpol's structural explanation of the Chinese

Revolution is Chalmers Johnson's revolutionary equation. Johnson highlights the importance of an x-factor or "spark" in launching a revolution (Johnson, 1966). In the context of the Chinese Revolution, Johnson's x-factor refers to the military organization and popular appeal of Mao Zedong, the Chinese Communist Party leader, as the prime determinant for the outcome of the revolution. The argument's basis holds that mitigating these factors would result in an antipodal conclusion to the Chinese Communist Revolution. The next chapter merges actor-oriented and structural theories under Chalmers Johnson's theory to uncover the x-factor, which is pivotal in understanding revolutionary outcomes.

## Nazi Revolution in Germany

The Nazi Revolution taking place in Germany following the Great Depression exhibits the necessary structural international conditions sufficient for revolutions to occur, according to Skocpol. After World War I, Germany was left devastated. The Weimar Republic found itself in a bad state that showed rapid deterioration due to the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. The Treaty of Versailles decimated Germany's entire economy and weakened the political system, ultimately culminating in Hitler's rise to power. Beginning with the Beer Hall Putsch in 1923, this failed coup d'état in Bavaria hinted that a revolutionary situation might occur. Hitler led the Beer Hall Putsch and, after being convicted of treason, "...served barely eight and a half months of a five-year sentence" (King, 2018). Hitler's menial amount of time in jail could be attributed to mass corruption within the Weimar Republic's political system. At the time, it was commonplace for the Communists to be targeted and persecuted heavily, whereas those that allied with the Nazi party were treated as much less of a threat. Because of the lack of punishment inherent in the Weimar Republic's system, Hitler used those nine months in jail to pen *Mein Kampf* (Bergen, 2003, p. 51). Through his writings,

Hitler gained even more supporters, furthering the growth of the Nazi party. By the early 1930s, the Nazi party grew large enough to hold nearly 200 seats in the German parliament, all while remaining powerless. At this point, Hitler felt that the Nazi party had climaxed, growing as large as it ever would, causing him to contemplate suicide. Then, in 1933, President Paul von Hindenburg appointed Hitler, Germany's chancellor. Article 48, previously enacted by President Hindenburg, eventually allowed Hitler to rule by decree (Bergen, 2003, p. 66-67). Hitler used his power as chancellor to ban all opposing political parties whose views did not align with those of the Nazi party. Additionally, Hitler enacted the Reichstag Fire Decree and the Enabling Act, paving the way for the Nazi party to gain full power in Germany without outright violence toward the incumbent government (Bergen, 2003, p. 71-72).

The mostly corrupt, as well as economically and politically deteriorated Weimar Republic came to a point where its failures allowed for a revolutionary situation to occur. It started first with a political overhaul. Just weeks after Hitler's chancellorship appointment, the aforementioned Reichstag Fire Decree was enacted. The decree revoked many civil liberties of Germans, justifying the imprisonment of anyone who opposed the Nazi party. The decree's main target was the communists because they held the second-largest number of seats in the German parliament. In 1934 President Hindenburg died, creating a clear path for Hitler to morph his chancellorship and the newly opened presidency into one. Next came the social overhaul, wherein mass persecution of groups of people occurred, including but not limited to Jewish communities, gay men, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Roma. The most infamous form of persecution that any of these groups faced before systematic genocide occurred was the Nuremberg Laws' passing. They aimed to separate Jews from the 'Aryan' Germans. A later portion of the laws stated that an individual need not be Jewish to be stripped of the rights associated with their German citizenship, instead "People with three or more grandparents of the Jewish faith counted as Jews" (Bergen, 2003, p. 74). These sudden and drastic

changes allowed Germany's Nazi Revolution to be classified under Skocpol's theory of social revolution. The entire social system structure crumbled and grew back as Nazi Germany. A state that looked and functioned differently from the progressive Weimar Republic. The structural conditions included weakened institutions and rampant corruption in the Weimar Republic. These conditions became the perfect recipe for a third party's structural conduciveness to come in and take over. In the case of the Nazis, they capitalized on these conditions. The government rapidly moved from the progressive, democratically run Weimar Republic, to the extreme nationalist dictatorial Nazi regime.

Skocpol has a structurally oriented approach to analyzing revolutions. Opponents to her theory may say because of her rigid structural lens; she missed important ideas posed by action-oriented theorists, like Chalmers Johnson or Ted Gurr. One of the particularly applicable theories she left out was the Great Man theory, which claims that Great leaders are born possessing traits that enable them to rise and lead on instinct. Great leaders arise when needed most. Many theorists like to use this theory to explain Hitler's rise to power. Where the ideas collide is that when looking at the Nazi revolution through Skocpol's structural lens, the Nazi revolution can be attributed to much more than just Hitler. However, when looking through an actor-oriented lens, it becomes more focused on how it was Hitler's rise to power. Great Man theory is indeed well rounded enough to explain the significance of Hitler's role in the Nazi Revolution. Many will argue, however, that Hitler would not have been able to accomplish this feat alone, and without his inner circle of men like Himmler, Göring, and Goebbels, he would not have been able to accomplish what he did (Bergen, 2003, p. 74). Accurate as that may be, it does not nullify his classification under the Great Man theory because he was still the foremost actor in the movement and played a large role in executing the revolution.



## Conclusion

Theda Skocpol maintains that revolutions are rare. Social revolutions change both state institutions and state structure. This change will be carried out with purposive action by class-based revolts from below. Social revolutions have both a substantive national and international impact. Going a step beyond her mentor Barrington Moore and other revolutionary theorists before her, Skocpol articulates an exciting aspect to revolutionary situations and outcomes—an international lens. The Chinese Communist revolution's case study exhibits the complete overhaul of a governmental system through peasant mobilization and the surrounding world conditions that made its outcome possible. Similarly, the Nazi Revolution in Germany details how the structural conditions of a government unable to respond to its people's needs after an international affair like World War I predetermines a revolutionary outcome. Skocpol articulated a new way to look at revolutionary theory, one that will be important going forward in a globalized, interdependent world.

While Skocpol's theory is a sufficient theory for explaining the structural causes of revolution, she does not include the actor-oriented sides of a revolution. Skocpol misses the 'spark' that organizes people against their state's structural issues. This fault can be seen in Skocpol's failure to account for the roles that Mao and Hitler played in their respective revolutions. The Great Man theory highlights the importance of a person in a revolution. However, whether it genuinely be that Hitler was a "Great Man" or that it was merely the Weimar Republic's failures that allowed the Nazis to rise to power is still up for interpretation. Hitler's role as an individual in the Nazi uprising is clearly something that Skocpol would have overlooked due to her structural focus. Chalmers Johnson refers to an x-factor or "spark" as a determinant in the revolutionary outcome. Under this theory, Mao represents the x-factor in provoking the Chinese revolution and ensuring its

outcome. It can be argued that the absence of Mao's military organization and popular appeal would alter the outcome of the Chinese Revolution. In the next chapter, Chalmers Johnson delves further into the idea of an 'x-factor' that starts a revolution. The 'x-factor' has explanatory power when thinking about revolutionary situations and their ultimate outcomes. Chalmers Johnson will explore and bridge structural and actor-oriented theories to connect some pieces of the puzzle this book has examined thus far.

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# 9. The Theories and Praxis of Chalmers Johnson



*Anti\_Vietnam\_war\_demonstration.\_Vancouver,\_BC.\_1968 by John Hill is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0*

“Even an empire cannot control the long-term effects of its policies. That is the essence of blowback.”

— Chalmers Johnson,  
*Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*

Chalmers Johnson’s theories nominally emerged following a period of political and social upheaval across the global stage during one of the many periods of acceleration in regard to the Cold War. On top of the many global revolutionary situations to have emerged following the First World War, the Cold War saw a new breakout of both political discourses, with Marxist-Leninism’s ideologies taking the forefront of much of the social and political overturns. The nations representing these ideologies and their offshoots became the primary focus of NATO nations’ defense and foreign policies.

While not the first socialist revolutionary movement, the October Revolution within Russia, led to the creation of the Soviet Republic, later known as it was consolidated before, during, and following the Second World War as the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR). In this capacity, the USSR represented perhaps the greatest existential threat to the western powers of Europe and the Americas. This threat led to the creation of the Warsaw Pact and NATO, existing both as opposing political forces in terms of influence and control. The Cold War represented perhaps the most

significant single period of military spending and arms buildup in human history. As the Soviet Union was formed on the ideology of the revolution, and not only internally, but a revolution which was to be exported and brought to the world. Therefore, it is natural that many revolutions characterized the Cold War period.

The Chinese Civil War, having been put on a temporary hold on account of the Second Sino-Japanese War, came to a decisive end in 1949, with the communist leader, Mao Zedong, becoming the leader of the newly formed People's Republic of China (PRC), and continuing the wartime connection with the Soviet Union which had been in place since before the war with Japan. For as long as Stalin was alive, this relationship was relatively stable, and the two powers were seen as the two principal communist states in the world. On this, China similarly aided in global revolutionary situations, for a time, with Soviet backing. The Korean War arose out of multiple revolutionary situations in the Korean peninsula, which in turn, had their roots in both pre-Japanese occupation strife, as well as post-war insurgency and civil strife.

When reunification became an impossibility, the Korean Peninsula became two nations: the US-aligned Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Soviet-allied Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). With the separation of the Korean Peninsula and the DPRK, the invasion ROK came perhaps the single most explicit example of direct conflict with the PRC and USSR. Having supported the DPRK logistically before, China became directly involved in the conflict in 1950, with forces from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) engaging US and US-allied troops from then until the cessation of the open conflict. Though never explicitly sending ground troops, the Soviet Union both provided training to the Korean People's Army (KPA) and directly sent fixed-wing aerial platforms piloted by Soviet personnel, which engaged US forces throughout the conflict. Civil War and a clash between the great powers of the world were but a small step in the course of the Cold War as far as revolutionary situations and their proclivity for inviting intervention by greater powers.

Though a vivid display of arms between the Soviet Union and the United States, Korea would soon be overshadowed by a different conflict similar to a revolutionary situation. The Vietnam War, nominally a civil conflict between the capitalist Republic of Vietnam (RVN) and the communist Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), came about as a direct result of the earlier Vietnamese Revolution, which resulted in the ousting of French colonial rule over Indochina and creation of the two nations. The Vietnam War, as it was called, began almost immediately following the end of the First Indochina War. Though it is nearly two-decades-long, existence came to redefine the state of US and Soviet foreign policy, as well as the academic literature regarding revolutions.

Amidst the many dozens of revolutions and revolutionary situations that had taken place following the October Revolution, the western literature regarding the topic of revolutions and revolutionaries naturally went through multiple shifts along with global trends and changes. It was amidst this great intellectual upheaval that Chalmers Johnson emerged as a political scientist and scholar. Serving as a Naval Officer during the Korean War, Johnson experienced firsthand the Cold War at its peak, as well as the resolve of the United States' enemies in the form of PLA prisoners of war, which were transported via the ship on which he served. Following this service, he would attain his advanced degrees at the University of California-Berkeley and become noteworthy for his subsequent works, mainly focusing on China and Japan.

Existing both as a work of political theory and historiography, one of his most notable works, *Revolutionary Change*, published in 1966 when the Vietnam War was nearing its most extensive period of US involvement, was written directly in the center of much of this socio-political plateau. In this work and subsequent works, Johnson examined both the prevailing theories of revolution and revolutionaries, which had dominated the previous landscape of political theory and science. Crucial to understanding Johnson's work in this period is understanding other prevailing theories. This was expanded upon in *Theories of Revolution*, where, among others,

Johnson identifies a series of prevailing theories and theory groups, notably actor-oriented theories, and structural theories. Of the latter, he explicitly identifies Theda Skocpol's work *States and Social Revolutions* as being an exemplar of a structural theory that colored the intellectual landscape at the time.

For Skocpol, as well as structural theories in general, Johnson points out his belief in both actor-oriented theories and structural theories as equally missing the grand picture of a revolution. In Skocpol's case, missing the bar on the actual revolution process, which affected the outcome. The three examples used by Skocpol, Russia, France, and China, became the focuses of Johnson's revolution processes as they focus on revolutionary classes. (Johnson, 1966, p. 175) For China particularly, the revolutionary vanguard, in this case the Communist Party and those of Mao Zedong's personal circle, exercised control over the revolutionary classes during the revolution and attempted to do so after with mixed results. Revolutionary support by the urban and peasant classes waned in some cases due to increasingly extremist policies by the revolutionary leadership. Consequently, control over the classes became enforced increasingly by the state's control rather than by ideological security.

Johnson argued this could not be explained merely by looking at the results nor at the individual figures within the revolution. Mao Zedong as a man was undoubtedly important to the Chinese Revolution as Vladimir Lenin was vital to the October Revolution, but looking at the two men does not give a complete intellectual view of either event. The results of the two revolutions, the creation of two new states, the founding of communist bastions in the east, and the beginning of the two great opposition powers to the west, are of great importance to study, but once again do not detail the whole of the matter. Least of all, how the processes altered the outcome within the revolution, these in turn not being wholly related to or owed to the revolutionary leaders.

Much of the Vietnamese Revolution was as driven by internal decision making and individual groups as it was driven by Ho Chi

Minh the man, and simply looking at the ousting of French colonial control over Indochina does extraordinarily little to examine exactly how the processes of the revolution created not only the outcome but the nature of the outcome. To this, Johnson presented an alternative. One of the prevailing concepts in *Revolutionary Change* is the theory as to why humans rebel in the first place and how revolutions form. Wallace's steps to revolution are mentioned in tandem with this, but perhaps no single portion of the work rings more profoundly than the notion that a nation is immune from revolutions when both the values of a society and the conditions within which it exists are kept in harmony (Johnson, 1966, p. 60).

It is often the case that urban or rural citizens will support or ignore revolutions and revolutionary situations purely due to their security and position. Much of the rural support for the Bolsheviks during the October Revolution came not necessarily due to ideological support, as much as the Bolsheviks represented a form of security and value that was not being represented by the reigning Russian Republic, led by Alexander Kerensky. The Chinese communists during the Chinese Civil War found themselves frequently beaten back by the nationalist Kuomintang, who enjoyed widespread urban support for similar reasons. The Kuomintang had more or less ended a long period of warlordism in China and brought social values and security to many Chinese civilians who would otherwise exist without it. Furthermore, while change naturally precipitates a revolution, it is rarely a neutral or positive change that creates any revolutionary situation. (Johnson, 1966, p. 63) In turn, this came as a reaction to another theorist, that of James Davies, who presented that "The background for political instability is economic and social progress. A populace in a static socio-economic condition is very unlikely to listen to the trumpet or siren call to rebellion. . . . Progress in other words is most of the time a necessary but insufficient cause for violent political change." (Davies, 1962, p. 350) Simply put, change within a synchronized society does not necessarily create a revolution, while change that desynchronizes that socio-economic sphere can and does.



# The Revolutionary Mindset and Formation

As Johnson puts them, the notion of revolutions comes with a particular focus on societal needs and means. In nearly every revolution in history, the government or status quo against which the revolution is aimed has been established and a fixture for some time. The American Colonies were not unaware of the broader British governance of their homelands, yet the revolution occurred in 1775 and not earlier. The question as to why a revolution occurs and when it occurs is central to Johnson's process-oriented analysis of revolutions and revolutionaries. Back to the concept of immunity, the American colonists, put simply, did not rebel against their colonial ruler earlier because up until the tumultuous period following the Seven Years' War and the many acts which sparked the revolution, their societal values, and overall status were kept in harmony. Limited autonomy was granted in the form of the colonial government, while disagreements over this indeed existed; as a larger societal situation, both the values that the society held dear and how they existed were secure. The American Revolution began when these ceased to be in harmony as perceived by the revolutionary class.

Similar concepts may be seen in the French Revolution. The French Monarchy did not become unpopular overnight or to a degree to create a revolutionary situation. Years of political and societal turmoil created a situation where ultimately, France's security and societal values were no longer at a place where the government could guarantee them. Thus, as Johnson further elaborates in breaking the revolutionary process down into three major sections, the revolution begins with social distortion, before there is even a question of violent overthrow, where there is simply a disruption of either the status quo or the societal norm and harmony. (Johnson, 1966, p. 187) This first level is followed by a period in which the revolutionary movement's exact ideological nature is decided. In the Indonesian National Revolution, the

movement took the form of an anti-colonial revolution targeted at Indonesia's Dutch rulership.

In the American Revolution, this stage was characterized by the previous status quo of the colonies and ideologies quite similar to existing notions of liberty and personal sovereignty, which were viewed as no longer being provided by their previous rulers. In this period of a revolutionary process, the revolutionary movement's leadership emerges. As Johnson viewed it, the actor-oriented theory was fundamentally flawed in its view of a movement being owed to one man. In this case, the movement creates the man rather than the man creating the movement. Often it is the case that a revolutionary movement or otherwise a societal group of disaffected citizens will find a leader, or a leader will emerge during this period to form a central leadership of a growing movement. Adolf Hitler did not create the ideas of National Socialism from anything. Instead, he took them from existing views held by many dissatisfied veterans of the Great War, such as himself. Hitler did not create the Freikorps that formed the basis for many of his earlier supporters. He did not generate the antisemitic sentiment and betrayal narrative as to what led to Germany's disgrace in the war. Hitler merely formed a synthesis around a charismatic persona. The Nazi Revolution, in this case, was formed as a revolutionary group and its leadership and ideology consolidated following the gross disruption of the previous German status quo following the defeat in the First World War.

The final and most overt stage of the revolution, as Johnson outlined it was that of the violent revolution, the step of strategy and tactics, where the revolution reaches a point-of-no-return in that the movement can no longer remain a peaceful one after (Johnson, 1966, p. 191). This stage emerges and forms an ideological crucible of sorts in that the revolutionary leadership, in this case, is now not merely holding heraldship over a social movement but a military one as well. Many of the figures who would characterize the USSR leadership emerged during this period of the Russian Revolution and subsequent Civil War. Just so, many figures found

themselves falling out of favor and dispelled from the revolution either during or immediately following this period as a result of the ideological strengthening and absolutism which naturally came about from a victorious vanguard who sought to control the revolutionary class further directly.

In this stage, Johnson provides a form of revolution rarely discussed. That is to say, the Military Coup, a form of revolution that emerges in an enlightened state that is otherwise at a certain societal equilibrium. In this case, the revolutionaries may achieve victory but often at the cost of that same societal equilibrium, subsequently resulting in a similar control. On the other side, it is similarly possible for the anti-revolutionary force to emerge victorious in an entirely socially disrupted nation. At this point, to prevent future revolutions and make up for societal harmony with state force, the population takes on a form of concentration camp, as was seen in Czechoslovakia following the Prague Spring of 1968. (Johnson, 1966, p. 192) It is also worth noting that Johnson's interpretation of revolutions at this stage also notes the existence of terrorism. Terrorism and terroristic actions are not uncommon at this stage of a revolution, especially when the revolutionary group's military power is significantly ineffective compared to the counter-revolutionary force.

Therefore, the existence of military power often proves to be the difference in a revolutionary outcome, though not necessarily from peer forces fighting it out conventionally. The forces of the DRV were nominally that of an insurgency force until the end of the Tet Offensive, at which point the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) took over most operations. When considering actions in the Indochina War, Viet Minh forces were far from equaling French ground forces in equipment, training, or organization. However, victory was achieved against France and similarly against RVN and US forces in the subsequent Vietnam war. In this instance, it is not always sheer military superiority that ensures a victory or a defeat for a revolutionary movement as much as it is how the conflict is carried out. The entire concept of indirect counterinsurgency

is not to defeat the opposing insurgent force but to make them obsolete by providing security and harmony to the populace that would otherwise support the insurgency. However, direct counterinsurgency is not without failings and has been used quite effectively. The British Army's use of repression in Operation Anvil effectively ended the Mau Mau rebellion and prevented the chance of it coming about again.

Though the British government did hand over control of Kenya to Kenyan nationalists led by Jomo Kenyatta, Kenyatta himself, despite accusations to the contrary, was never himself directly a member of the Mau Mau insurgency, though he did lionize those who were in his subsequent government. In this sense, the revolution may both fail and succeed based not on simple military superiority but on how the war is conducted regardless of strength or manpower. An understrength and undertrained revolutionary group may defeat a comparatively superior force depending on leadership and how their war is conducted. Additionally, a well-armed, trained, and organized counter-revolutionary force may very well lose if fighting the revolution is not conducted accordingly. Revolutionary war, especially insurgency and counterinsurgency warfare, is frequently a drawn-out and costly affair where people's support frequently alters the outcome, regardless of any tactical advantage on one side or another (Nagl, 2002, p. 23).

## The Revolution and its Continuation

In this sense, the Vietnamese Revolution truly shines as a praxis of Johnson's work. Ho Chi Minh did not invent the anti-colonial sentiment, nor was it significantly expanded upon by him or his revolutionary leaders, as they did not create what was not already present. An actor-oriented view of the Vietnam Revolution might focus exclusively on Ho Chi Minh or Vo Nguyen Giap, but in truth, the Viet Minh were not formed because they were told to do so

by these actors. Following a Japanese occupation in the Second World War, the harmony provided by French rule was lost and not adequately maintained after. This disruption of the social values and living conditions created a desynchronized society. The change had come to Indochina and directly disrupted the existing socio-economic structure and state. While urban elites might have enjoyed the same values and comfort as always or to a slightly diminished degree, it was seen by much of the early supporters of the Viet Minh that their societal values and means of living were no longer guaranteed by or provided by the French government. In addition to this was the already widespread anti-colonial nature of much of Indochina's peasant class.

As existed in China, communism as an ideology, or at least communism as presented by the revolutionary class, formed a rope by which many societal woes could be bundled to form a mobilizing force among the rural peasantry. (Johnson, 1962, p. 84-85) Much of South Vietnam had been the seat of the French colonial government and naturally formed the basis of RVN political power following the end of French rule. Urban support for the Viet Minh and later DRV was limited, as shown by the far later Tet Offensive. However, this ultimately did not matter so much for the revolutionary leadership. Rural support and peasant mobilization fueled both the conventional and unconventional arm of the DRV military apparatus following the end of the Indochina War. In this capacity, the military formed the basis by which the revolution was concluded. The outcome of Vietnam's total control by the revolutionary group cannot be taken simply as an outcome but as a result of the revolutionary process. This process was shaped both by the revolutionary and counterrevolutionary forces.

The US and US military response to the PAVN invasion of the Republic of Vietnam was one which failed to curtail the invasion on the operational stage insofar as that, while tactical situations often fell in favor to the US and ARVN forces, the course of the conflict was one that was not aided by US intervention as much as it was stalled for some time. Militarily, both the guerilla Viet Cong

(VC) and conventional PAVN forces maintained peasant mobilization and continued striking into the South despite staggering losses. With the withdrawal of US forces from Vietnam, the revolutionary military force, in turn, acted with the lessons learned throughout the conflict and inflicted a swift and crushing defeat of the remaining counterrevolutionary military and government. While internal strife existed within the DRV politburo and military apparatus, the political stability of the South was comparatively dismal. Subject to change quite frequently and often based entirely on the power of the military, the Republic of Vietnam's government often failed to provide both military superiorities over the revolutionary forces and failed to provide social security and harmony.

In the end, ARVN forces were defeated, and Saigon fell in 1975. The revolutionary movement originally began to oppose French Colonialism being finally completed as Vietnam's entirety fell under the Democratic People's Republic of Vietnam flag. Following the war, the revolutionary leadership exerted control over those classes, which still presented a threat. Thus, the concentration camp-like society as seen in Czechoslovakia was seen in part with many urban elites, particularly those who occupied the recently taken South.

## Conclusion

Chalmers Johnson was a political theorist who looked at revolutions as a continuous process that began and ended long before and after all violence had halted. His almost historiographical view of the revolutionary theory created a theory base whereby the circumstance and process behind everything were always taken into account. This led to the creation of a theory of processes and societal movements that can be seen exemplified in the Vietnamese Revolution case study where disruptive change created a

desynchronized social situation in Indochina, which spurred a revolutionary movement that became a violent revolution. Similarly, his view of the process of a revolution and the military's importance to the revolution's outcome can be seen as exemplified in Vietnam, where both military power and military theory played the decisive role in creating the outcome and conclusion to the Vietnamese revolution. By looking back so as to look forward, Chalmers Johnson created a theory base that examined and analyzed a world where social harmony and social values were often a precious commodity outside of the global superpowers who were frequently called upon to respond to or react to the resulting revolutionary situations. As both a Cold Warrior and as a critic of US foreign policy, Chalmers Johnson and his theories represent the growth and synthesis of political theory in reaction to global revolution and thus will remain relevant for much of the foreseeable future.

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SECTION III  
REVOLUTIONS



# 10. French Revolution



*Storming of the Bastille and arrest of the Governor M. de Launay, July 14, 1789 is under public domain. Artist: Anonymous.*

“The secret of freedom lies in educating people, whereas the secret of tyranny is in keeping them ignorant.”

— Maximilien Robespierre

To this point, the focus has been on theorists of revolution each of whom contributed significantly to contemporary understanding of revolutions, their origins, and outcomes.

This chapter will apply the theories presented in this book’s first part towards the French Revolution. The French Revolution began in 1789; whether one believes that the Bastille storming of the monarchy’s dissolution is the events that began the Revolution is a matter to debate. However, the problems that led to this seminal event occurred decades if not centuries before (Popkin, 2019, p.101). The French Revolution manifests the French people’s ire over the increased taxation that the privileged aristocracy of the feudal Ancien Régime placed upon them. King Louis XVI and his aristocrats’ extravagant spending caused the people to go into poverty, which led to a state of civil unrest after having their taxes continually increased (Popkin, 2019, p.101). Though the last king of the Ancien Régime, Louis XVI cannot be entirely accountable for the unrest in France. Preceding 1789, poor harvests gripped France and brought about starvation and suffering to the French people. This famine, coupled with the system of privileges that the aristocrats enjoyed, placed the financial burden of running France onto the businessmen and peasant classes (Tocqueville, 2008, p.44). When the American Revolution occurred, Louis XVI’s financial and military

investments in assisting the Americans led France to an unavoidable financial collapse (Popkin, 2019, p.69).

The French Revolution is one of the most frequently cited accounts of revolution. The actions by the French revolutionaries set a precedent for revolutions to come. Many that endeavor to formulate theories on revolutions cite and study the French Revolution's events to build a stable theory. In this chapter, Crane Brinton and Barrington Moore's theories are applied to the French Revolution. Amidst France's financial strain, hunger, and anger is where the story of the French Revolution begins.

## Barrington Moore

To revisit the earlier chapters, theorist Barrington Moore claims three routes for an agrarian society to transition to an industrial society. Moore claims a strong bourgeoisie acts as a necessary precondition to determine which route a revolution may take, emphasizing the importance of social classes in a revolution. The three routes include the Capitalist-Democratic Route characterized by the rise of a strong bourgeoisie, the Capitalist-Reactionary Route where the bourgeoisie joins forces with the aristocracy, and the Communist Route with the rise of the peasantry as actors for social change (Moore, 1966). The French Revolution takes the Capitalist-Democratic Route. In this route, class struggles define the Revolution and the revolutionary outcome (Moore, 1966). The French Revolution began because the Third Estate, made up mainly of the peasantry, faced unjust taxation and the brunt of the food shortages and rising prices (Popkin, 2019, p.102). The intellectuals also began to doubt society's religious context and began to embrace Enlightenment Ideals. The Third Estate representatives drafted the Tennis Court Oath, which sought to achieve greater equality in the Estate system because the First and Second Estates voted together during gatherings of the Estates-General, rendering

the Third Estate powerless (Moore, 1966). The peasants, led by intellectuals and the middle class, called for liberalism and nationalism ideals. These events display Moore's conception of the middle class bringing about a revolution.

## Crane Brinton

A large gap existed between what the people had versus what they wanted. This gap ultimately led to the Revolution, which follows Brinton's theory (Brinton, 1938, p. 251). Brinton claims there are many similarities between the French, Russian, British, and American Revolutions. These nations' economies were relatively well-off, and their people were not suffering to a great extent but were rather displeased with what they had versus what they needed. The governments also failed to reform their institutions to fit the times and expand their economies (Brinton, 1938, p. 250-252). An example of this was the frustration generated by Louis XVI's financial decisions. Brinton claimed that each revolution made promises to the common man; in the French case, after granting further equality, regimes claimed to grant stability (Brinton, 1938, p.262).

Brinton also describes five stages of a revolution, beginning with the first stage where moderates come to power. The moderates did not want to abolish the monarchy but instead get more representation for the Third Estate. The second stage is the radicalization of the Revolution as characterized by the Jacobin rule, radical revolutionaries known for leading the terror (Brinton, 1938). However, these radical regimes rarely maintain power (Brinton, 1938, p.256). The third stage is the reign of terror, as discussed towards the end of this chapter, where a radical group attains power and enacts a campaign of violence (Brinton, 1938, p.255). The fourth stage is a return to moderates in power. In the French Revolution, this occurred from the period when the terror ended to Napoleon's

rise in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Furthermore, Mizel's Addendum to Brinton's stages of revolution argues that the last stage of a revolution occurs when an authoritarian leader comes to power, shown by the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte and the First French Empire (Brinton, 1938).

## Background

The Estates General in France broke the population into three Estates before the French Revolution (Popkin, 2019, p.103). The clergy and the nobility made up the First and Second Estate. They owned a large sum of the land and did not have to pay taxes. The peasantry, who bore the burden of incredibly high taxation and suffered from food shortages, made up the Third Estate (McPhee, 2002).

The First and Second Estates benefited from the pre-revolutionary status quo. They held large sums of land and did not pay taxes allowing them to live comfortable, lavish lifestyles. However, the tides started to change when intellectuals in France began to embrace Enlightenment ideals and questioned whether the power of the King justifies his supposed divine right (Collins 2001, p.xix).

The Revolution partly came about because financial decisions by King Louis XVI left France in debt, while still relying on Third Estate taxation to keep the country afloat. The debt, combined with the food shortage and rising prices, created a hungry and restless Third Estate. This conflict came to a head during the meeting of the Estates General which Louis XVI convened amidst growing frustration with his rule. Frustrated by the fact that their voices were still not heard, the members of the Third Estate left the Estates General and assembled to establish the Tennis Court Oath calling for a constitution (McPhee, 2002).

Early revolutionaries aimed to abolish the Ancien Regime and do

away with unequal taxation that plagued the Third Estate. They called for liberty, property, and security under a constitutional monarchy (Censer & Hunt, 2001). However, things escalated during the Terror, which will be expanded upon later. (McPhee, 2002).

During this period of time, the clergy and nobles lost much of their power. However, after the Terror, Napoleon Bonaparte became the first Consul of France and appointed nobles to hold power under him yet again, though with significantly less authority and privilege than before 1789 (McPhee, 2002). This event resulted in a big move towards greater equality in French society and a movement towards the ideals of representation and nationalism.

## Storming of the Bastille- July 14,1789

To this point, the focus has been on theorists of revolution, each of whom contributes to the accumulated knowledge regarding the revolution. The storming of the Bastille on July 14th, 1789 does not stray from the pattern of violence that characterizes the French Revolution. It is one of the first major acts of violence by the revolutionaries of the French Revolution. The tumult of the period preceding the Bastille storming motivated the revolutionaries to act. Tensions between the peasantry of the Third Estate and the tyrannical rule of the French Monarchy came to a head when a mob of over 1,000 consisting of shopkeepers, artisans, and other disenfranchised members of the Third Estate descended on the Bastille prison in central Paris (Popkin, 2019, pp. 136-139).

The Third Estate viewed the stationing of royal troops in Paris in June 1789 as an attempt to both intimidate and bully. This sentiment exploded when the mob armed themselves by raiding a local military hospital, the “Hôtel des Invalides” and acquired over 3,000 weapons and five cannons (Platon, 2014). Following the seizure of armaments at Les Invalides, violence significantly escalated. The mob set its sights on the Bastille, for it contained an armory with

enough gun powder to arm the mob (Platon, 2014). The Bastille symbolized the repressiveness and absolute control of King Louis XIV and its function as a prison for political prisoners (Popkin, 2019, p.137). The mob descended on the Bastille, entered through an unguarded drawbridge, and occupied the courtyard. Commander of the Bastille, Bernard-Rene de Launay, subsequently offered the surrender of him and his troops, so long as the mob let them live. The mob refused his surrender and commenced battle in the innermost courtyard. Ultimately, over 100 civilians and eight prison guards died (Platon, 2014). Eventually, the mob freed the seven prisoners in the Bastille and subsequently beat and decapitated Bernard-Rene de Launay and three of his officers and paraded their heads through the streets. After the violence ceased, the mob destroyed the Bastille (Popkin, 2019, p.142). The destruction of the Bastille further exemplifies its function as a symbol of oppression and the Third Estate's commitment to ridding France of the monarchy while establishing the concepts of liberty, equality, and fraternity as the new basis of government.

According to Barrington Moore and Crane Brinton, the storming of Bastille has different implications. Per Brinton, the Bastille fits well within the confines of the uniformities of revolution (Brinton, 1938, 251-252) as bitter class antagonisms ran rampant since the majority of the Third Estate struggled with a lack of food and an inability to access basic provisions (McPhee, 2002). While Brinton stipulates that revolutions generally occur in countries with upward trending economies (Brinton, 1938), the French economy continued to decline, which contributed heavily to class antagonism between the peasants of the Third Estate and the monarchy. Furthermore, the failures of the government concerning taxing the citizenry justly (Popkin 2019, p.101), as well as their inability to effectively command and direct troops to suppress the rebellion (Toohey, 2017), convey similarities to Brinton's fourth condition, the failure of government (Brinton, 1938, p.251). The principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity guided the French Revolution and related heavily to the wider uniformities of revolution observed by Brinton, such as



commitments made to the common man (Brinton, 1938). They afford both vague commitments such as fraternity and more material commitments such as the end of the monarchy and increased social and economic equity. These are clear commitments to the “common man” as the Third Estate desperately needed these problems to be addressed.

On the other hand, the storming of the Bastille applies differently to Moore’s philosophy of revolution. Moore stipulates that the French Revolution is a bourgeois revolution as one independent economic group attempted to assert their vision of democratic capitalism against inherited, non-democratic obstacles (Skocpol, 1973, p.5). Moore also argues that the bourgeois’ existence is a prerequisite for developing the revolution. The bourgeoisie’s necessity in developing the revolution is evident as the First and Second Estates relied on the taxation and incessant exploitation of the Third Estate, which heavily contributed to their discontent. The Bastille storming is an example of the phrase “no bourgeois, no democracy” (Moore, 1966). The storming of the Bastille characterizes this well, as the Third Estate’s exploitation proved to be necessary to support the bourgeois. Thus, the Third Estate’s discontent materialized in the Bastille’s destruction and storming, which represented the regime that oppressed them (Popkin, 2019, p.137). Regarding Moore’s philosophy, the storming of the Bastille exemplifies the importance of understanding the varied economic development of different classes and their role in the “development of a group in society with an independent economic base, which attacks obstacles to a democratic version of capitalism that have been inherited from the past,” (Skocpol, 1973, p.5). Moore enables one to understand the Bastille’s storming and the French Revolution in total as the consequences of class struggle and capitalist democracy.

## October Days- October 1789

During the early days of the French Revolution, on October 5th, 1789 after facing the consequence of a fairly barren harvesting season, the peasant women of Paris began protesting. The women, in a bout of civil unrest, met at the City Hall in Paris to demand bread to feed themselves and their families (Schwartz, 1999, p.1). After those at City Hall ignored and denied the pleas of the women, they took their efforts to the streets of France; the women began to march the long 12-mile route to Versailles (Schwartz, 1999, p.1).

The Parisian women's endeavors appeared fruitful once they reached Versailles where the King resided. King Louis XIV, at the requests of the protestors, agreed to send the grain they needed to Paris (Garrioch, 1999, p.235). Even after this victory, the women, armed with spears, were not fully satisfied. They demanded that Louis and his wife, Marie Antoinette, return to Paris where revolutionary sentiments continued to grow. The royal family obliged, and the crowd escorted them back to Paris (Schwartz, 1999, p.1).

Barrington Moore's theory provides insight into the importance of this event. Moore believed that the strength of the revolutionary class predicts the outcome of a Revolution (Moore, 1966). The actions of the Parisian revolutionaries during the October Days demonstrated their strength. The women, refusing to settle, got the members of the French monarchy to bend to their will. The actions taken by the nobility after this protest set a precedent for what the revolutionaries could expect from the nobility throughout the Revolution; the revolutionaries came to seek their complacency. Moore also operates under the belief system that if there is no middle class, then there can be no democracy (Moore, 1966). The French revolutionaries recognized that in order to force change on the part of the nobles, it required direct action. Without acting, their voices would not be heard, and they could not make their situation better. Therefore, to achieve their goals they had to turn to

revolution to develop a sustainable democracy, including a middle class.

The revolutionary theorist, Crane Brinton, makes claims about the series of events that occur during a revolution which are shown by the actions of the Parisian women on October Day. The actions that the revolutionary women took are exemplary of Brinton's second condition of revolution. The second condition claims that people of all social classes feel restless; that the government is forcing them to accept less than what one deserves (Brinton, 1938, pp.20-251). This condition applies to the women in the October Days who felt restless in their position, confronting the government that oppressed them, denying them their basic needs. The women felt forced to accept less than what they deserved. This situation also applies to Brinton's fourth condition, which states that the government will inadequately respond to the demands of the people (Brinton, 1938, pp.251-252). The government's initial response left the women unsatisfied and they demanded more, which pertains to Brinton's fourth condition of revolution.

In summary, the actions that the Parisian women took during their protest are revolutionary in more ways than one. The women created a status quo for the French Revolution in which the citizens were unwilling to settle for the unsatisfactory solutions that the monarchical government had to offer.

## The Reign of Terror (1793-1794)

The Reign of Terror during the French Revolution, though only lasting a year, marked a period of great turmoil and chaos during the Revolution. The Reign of Terror saw the mass execution of close to 20,000 civilians and the imprisonment of tens of thousands (Britannica, 2020). Debates among scholars still rage over the events leading to the Terror and the motives of its leaders. However, all agree that this is the point in the French Revolution that shifted the

Revolution to a dangerously radical state. Nevertheless, the Terror is a crucial part of Crane Brinton's theories and the focus of his third stage of revolution (Brinton, 1938, 255). Brinton writes, "This pervasiveness of the Reign of Terror in the crisis period is partly explicable in terms of the pressure of war necessities and of economic struggle..." (Brinton, 1938, 255). Since it has been well established that during the late 18th century France dealt with severe economic, agricultural, and political turmoil all while simultaneously fighting wars with multiple European states, which Brinton's analysis suggests set the stage for a Reign of Terror.

In early 1793, the Revolutionary Government in Paris established a constitution based on the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen formed the basis of an egalitarian republic. However, the government quickly suspended and abandoned the constitution (Palmer, 2017, p.15). Fear and suspicion acted as the leading causes of the constitution's suspension. In the Revolutionary Government, the various factions, though all were claiming to speak in the name of the revolution, bickered amongst themselves, accusing each other of trying to subvert the people's will (Popkin, 2019, p.382). Crane Brinton referred to this in his fourth condition of revolution in which he argues that revolutions start, in part, because of the failure of a government to meet the needs of its citizens (Brinton, 1938, 251-252). During this period, the fear and suspicion were heightened due to the rumored threat of a foreign plot. This foreign plot suggested that foreign countries had sent spies to destroy the revolution. In order to counter the foreign plot, Robespierre and the Revolutionary Government suspended the constitution. They began to crack down on their citizens to prevent anything that may overthrow the government (Popkin, 2019, p.351).

At this time in 1793, France was at war with numerous European countries, including England, Prussia, the Dutch Republic, and the Austrian Empire (Palmer, 2017, pp.22-23). During this period, France's leaders faced a critical decision; ignore the threat of a foreign plot and hope that it is not real, which may later destroy the revolution, or actively root out those conspiring against the

revolution and neutralize them in order to maintain the Revolution (Palmer, 2017, p.113). The Jacobin leaders chose the latter opinion, subsequently establishing a Committee for Public Safety, which had extensive influence and power to preserve the French Revolution (Popkin, 2019, p.329).

The Reign of Terror concluded after its most brutal and deadly period, which took place in 1794, the Great Terror. The Great Terror came about because of a law that Couthon, one of Robespierre's allies, proposed, which made Revolutionary Tribunals much more efficient. Those accused of being anti-revolution would not be able to present a defense, call witnesses, or aid themselves in any other way. Instead, the judges would simply declare citizens' guilt or innocence, sparing or killing them based on the verdict (Palmer, 2017, p.366). This law, known as the Law of 22 Prairial, led to more deaths and imprisonments than in any other time since the revolution began. Furthermore, during this time, Robespierre eliminated all opposition factions, including the Dantonists and most of the Hebertists, and began ruling France as a de-facto dictator (Palmer, 2017, p.377). Robespierre's dictatorship would eventually come to an end. Other deputies, annoyed at Robespierre's egocentric leadership, conspired against him and his followers and issued warrants for their arrest and execution. After executing Robespierre and his followers in July of 1794, the Reign of Terror ended.

The Reign of Terror is tremendously essential to Crane Brinton, who named one of his revolution stages after it (Brinton, 1938, 255). During this period, Brinton argued that the revolution's goals were corrupted, causing fear and chaos to spread throughout France. (Brinton, 1938, 251-256). Brinton's four conditions of revolution, all contribute to the revolutionary context that led to the Terror. These conditions highlight the economic, social, political, and philosophical conditions that allowed rulers like Robespierre to gain power and shape the Terror as he and the rest of the Committee of Public Safety saw fit (Brinton, 1938, 250-252). Brinton's recognition of the Terror as a critical moment in the stages of revolution

highlights how central this event is in influencing the rest of the Revolution (Brinton, 1938, .255). The fall of Robespierre and the subsequent end of the Terror leads into Brinton's next stage of a revolution, which is when the moderates return to power (Brinton, 1938, 258-259). Brinton writes, "... none of our Revolutions quite ended in the death of civilization and culture. The network was stronger than the forces trying to destroy or alter it..." (Brinton, 1938, 258). While the Terror marked arguably the darkest period in the French Revolution, the return of moderate leaders helped refocus the revolution and led it toward its ultimate conclusion.

## Conclusion

Scholars debate the exact end date of the French Revolution; however, Napoleon Bonaparte and his French Empire's rise represents a clear shift away from the republican government of the French Revolution. The revolution, characterized by the rise of a strong bourgeoisie, represented Moore's Capitalist-Democratic Route of Revolution. The revolution detailed under Crane Brinton's stages of revolution ended with the rise of a right-wing authoritarian leader, Napoleon Bonaparte (Brinton, 1938). However, his rise would not have been possible without the French Revolution. Napoleon, not a true member of French nobility, arguably would never have the chance to lead if not for the revolution. Due to nobles' emigration, new high-ranking posts and opportunities became available for people. The French Revolution took down the monarchy and replaced it with principles of equality, representation, and nationalism. The ideas put forth in the French Revolution established that citizens had the right to contribute to laws, vitally altering the political sphere for ages to come (Collins, 2001).

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Storming of the Bastille and arrest of the Governor M. de Launay, July 14, 1789. is in the public domain. Author: Anonymous



# II. The Russian Revolution: History and Theory



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“Without revolutionary theory, there can be no Revolutionary Movement.”

— Vladimir Lenin

The Russian Revolution fundamentally altered Russian society and global power dynamics held between nations. While the most visible events of the rebellion occurred in 1917, decades of previous unrest and societal tension laid roots to the eventual revolt. Throughout this chapter, the origins and milestones of the Russian Revolution will lead into the discussion of two theorists—Karl Marx and Barrington Moore—and situate those theories to answer the question of what leads societies to revolt. Some of the factors that Marx and Moore specify in their theories directly apply to the Russian Revolution in terms of its development and outcomes, while other aspects of the Russian Revolution continue to challenge theorists’ postulations.

## History & Revolutionary Context

Though the Russian Revolution’s main events commenced in 1917, the origins of this rebellion trace back to 1649 with the establishment of serfdom in the state. Under serfdom, the lowest social class of Russian society, the serfs, experienced severe poverty,

hunger, and other maladies (DeFronzo 2019, 40). Because of this system, Russia was impoverished and lagged behind other industrialized European countries throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, creating a society of hyper-inequality (Lindert and Nafziger 2014, 767-798). It was not until 1861 that serfdom was officially abolished in Russia, making it seem like modernization, industrialization, and freedom was near. Abolition of serfdom did not provide these things, especially that of freedom, as former serfs paid sums of money so large that many fell into more difficult economic hardships than they were facing before the abolition of serfdom (DeFronzo 2019, 42). The abolition of serfdom, however, did provide peasants with a newfound freedom to organize and become better educated about the world around them, which would later aid in creating a successful revolution. Also, the peasants' extreme discontent and anger from 1861 forward and their neglect by the Russian government would play a crucial role in the revolution that would break out in 1917.

As Russian industrialization began to take place at the end of the nineteenth century, many elites decided to attain a modern education, which meant an introduction to many new socio-economic concepts greatly influenced by Western Europe (DeFronzo 2019, 242). These concepts and ideas would contribute to the development of new organizations and groups that would challenge the rule of Czar Nicholas II. Despite the consensus regarding the poor treatment of Russians at the hands of Czar Nicholas II and his government, no concrete agreement as to how the social injustices should be dealt with existed. Many of the elites involved in the movement towards revolution suggested that peasants required education about the benefits that revolution promised. Other revolutionary elites thought that violence and organized attacks against the Czar's government would prove to be more effective. Neither of these efforts were successful in bringing about revolution. Peasants lacked receptiveness to elites trying to educate them, while the violence that groups like the "People's Will" carried out only led to more brutal police repression and further

alienation of citizens who did not condone the use of violence (DeFronzo 2019, 43).

The first attempt at revolution in Russia came in 1905. This attempted revolution was a result of rising discontent regarding the Czar's dictatorship. An increase in strikes, protests, riots, and assassinations of government officials, led to Czar Nicholas II deciding to enter into war against Japan. He believed that war would bring an end to these domestic tensions concerning wages and working conditions. However, Czar Nicholas' choice to enter into war backfired as Japan defeated Russia, leading to Russian humiliation (DeFronzo 2019, 46-47). The intensification of the people's discontent with the government led to even more demonstrations to voice their discontent. One peaceful protest in particular recognized as "Bloody Sunday" saw many unarmed protesters killed by Russian police, which sparked the attempt at revolution in 1905 (DeFronzo 2019, 46). The 1905 revolution did not succeed because there was a lack of coordination among the mobilized three revolutionaries. Most government forces remained loyal to the Czar's government, and the movement lost the necessary support of the elites after Czar Nicholas II promised reform to the dictatorial style of government that existed (DeFronzo 2019, 47-48).

In 1912, the Social Democratic Party of Russia split into the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. The Bolsheviks supported Vladimir Lenin, who believed that socialism could be implemented in Russia directly following the overthrow of the Russian government. The Mensheviks, meanwhile, opposed Lenin and believed that socialism would occur over time as society was ready for change (DeFronzo 2019, 45). By August of 1914, Czar Nicholas II decided for Russia to join in on World War One. Entering into World War One proved to be a terrible mistake, with Russian casualties extremely high, food and fuel shortages all too common, and the economy further devastated. These factors contributed to the reignited anger and resentment that the Russian people had against Czar Nicholas II and the Russian government. Even soldiers and sailors began to defect

and join the revolutionary movement, which shows just how far-reaching the Czar's government oppression and injustice occurred. Although the Bolsheviks did not support Russia's involvement in World War One, the group accurately saw it as an opportunity for success in revolution because of the discontent and vulnerability that it would create in Russia's citizens (DeFronzo 2019, 48).

In 1917, Russians carried out the February Revolution, which saw Czar Nicholas II abdicate his throne. The throne was then quickly taken over by leaders from Russia's bourgeois capitalist class. Not long after, the October Revolution of 1917 transferred power from the bourgeoisie to the Bolsheviks and Lenin (DeFronzo 2019, 49). The 1917 Russian Revolution was successful because of three factors. The people's ability to coordinate and establish new four government structures. Two, Russia's weakened state due to World War I, compounded by the support of sailors, soldiers, and other elite, also aided in victory. Third and finally, Czar Nicholas II's refusal to provide the Russian people with other freedoms allowed a successful revolt (DeFronzo 2019, 84). Lenin called for the creation of a government consisting of soldiers, peasants, and workers. However, in the end, Lenin betrayed these values and became the first dictator of a communist state. After the Bolsheviks seized power, a civil war ensued. The Red Army and the White Army fought over what type of government Russia would become. The Red Army defended Lenin's Bolshevik government, while the White Army favored a democratic socialism form. This civil war in Russia concluded in 1923 with the Red Army defeating the White Army and officially establishing the Soviet Union (DeFronzo 2019, 55).

The Russian Revolution was not a spontaneous event. Over centuries, political and social structures developed that allowed for tensions among the populace to mount and ultimately lead to the events seen from 1917 to 1923. World War I and Czar Nicholas II's fallible leadership catalyzed the outbreak of violence and upheaval, though, with the rising tensions seen in events like 1905's Bloody Sunday, a revolution was perhaps inevitable. Theorists, including Karl Marx and Barrington Moore, provide specific postulations on

this predestination. Furthermore, the Russian Revolution's outcomes highlight the victories and shortcomings of the six-year power struggle.

## Revolutionary Outcomes

Although the Russian Revolution is considered the first successful Marxist revolution, political outcomes following the hallmark events betray original values and pursuits. Vladimir Lenin was a primary orchestrator of the Russian Revolution and subsequently became the first leader of the new Soviet Union. Under Lenin's leadership, the revolution appeared successful, and the new regime seemed to be on a path towards growth and economic prosperity. However, on January 24, 1924, Lenin's death sowed chaos and discord in the Communist Party over the future of leadership. By the time of his death, Lenin had failed to name a successor, leaving a vacuum of power with many scrambling to assume Lenin's role. Yet, Leon Trotsky stood out as the most obvious successor. Trotsky was a revolutionary who served as Lenin's right-hand man, although Trotsky's personality starkly contrasted with Lenin's. Moreover, Trotsky had political experience under Lenin as Commissar of Foreign Affairs, starting in 1917 (Rubenstein 2011, 105).

Despite Trotsky's accolades and previous recognition within the party, it was Joseph Stalin who ultimately succeeded Lenin and completed the transformation of the Communist Party into an authoritarian regime. Stalin, whom Lenin had appointed as General Secretary of the Party, used political strategy and internal party alliances to overtake Trotsky's succession. Two theories attempt to explain why the Russian Revolution failed to guard against the authoritarian takeover under Stalin. One theory posits that the new government's political structures were weak and prone to exploitation, allowing for a seamless takeover upon the arrival of determined figures. The other theory suggests an actor-oriented

idea, describing the transition as a struggle between supporters of Stalin and supporters of Trotsky, where continued wrangling for power allowed usurpation to a totalitarian reign. Though neither of these theories are definite, nonetheless, they provide possibilities for how Joseph Stalin altered the political affairs of Russia.

With the creation of new governments, divided politics consume the state. The Soviet Union was no exception to this rule. Early in the transition process, two of Lenin's revolutionary counterparts—Gregori Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev—emerged in opposition to Trotsky, fearing his military record and ambition. Zinoviev and Kamenev allied with Stalin, who had quickly ascended through the ranks of the Communist Party and was then appointed as General Secretary of the Party. This rise to power came despite Lenin, in his final days, expressing deep regret over Stalin's appointment (Dawsey, 2018). From this high-ranking party position, Stalin appointed supporters to influential positions, and built a base from which to stage his opposition against Trotsky. Stalin, who is also often described as charismatic and ambitious, used these traits to his advantage. Trotsky by comparison lacked charisma and had created several political enemies during his time since the revolution. With his carefully crafted influence, Stalin set out to redefine the USSR's future, a vision that garnered considerable support.

Stalin appealed to a broad sense of nationalism within the party by announcing a plan of “socialism in one country” in 1924. This plan committed the USSR to the pursuit of socialism, despite the international context that disfavored such a system. Under Stalin's proposal, ideas of a worldwide Marxist revolution were largely abandoned and then associated with Trotsky. This new plan also alienated his former allies Zinoviev and Kamenev, who then pledged allegiance to Trotsky against Stalin. Stalin's grip on political absolute authority grip, demonstrated as he exiled Trotsky in 1929 (Dawsey, 2018). Moreover, in the following years of Stalin's reign, other calamities overtook Russia. The Great Terror commenced in the later 1930s, a governmental effort to repress and eliminate lower-

class people, ethnic minorities, and anyone else considered unfavorable to the regime (Kuromiya 2007, 713). Stalin was the central and lead figure over this brutal campaign. These events directly contradicted previous aspirations envisioned by Lenin.

Evident by his disagreements with Stalin towards the end of his life, Lenin had envisioned a more egalitarian-socialist society than the one offered up by Stalin. This final revolutionary outcome demonstrates the vulnerability of new revolutionary states to ambitious power actors if no political structures are established with particular care and safeguards. This particular emphasis on the influence of actors lends credence to the validity of the aforementioned actor-oriented theory. Nevertheless, the outcomes of the Russian Revolution in following decades show the fragility of the newly developed government, and how projections by rebels can shift into new realities over time.

## **Karl Marx: Theory Application**

The theories of Karl Marx apply to the events leading up to and consisting of the Russian Revolution. This is largely due to the fact that the writings of Marx had much influence over the Russian Revolutionaries who carried out the socialist overthrow. Marx's theories spoke directly to these revolutionaries because they perceived many of the concepts and events that Marx described happening in the world around them. Concepts and issues such as class antagonism, capitalism, and poverty drove Russian citizens to the writings of Marx as they searched for solutions to solve the injustices in their society. (Marx 1955, 3).

Marx built his theories around the idea of class antagonism and how the disparity between economic classes is the driving force behind revolution. Capitalism and the inevitable inequality that results from it split the populace into two groups: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The bourgeoisie represents the elites and the

Czar while the proletariat consists of the oppressed peasants, sailors, and soldiers (DeFronzo 2019, 40-42). Marx outlines in his theories how capitalism forces the proletariat to be a slave of labor and wages, while the bourgeoisie controls the means of production and therefore keeps the proletariat in a cycle of economic oppression. With the arrival of the industrial revolution in Russia, the proletariat problems worsened as the means of production became all-consuming in the actions of the bourgeoisie. As machines become advanced, it becomes easy to manufacture products through the exploiting. Additionally, as proletariat efficiency increased, more of the proletariat population became unnecessary, limiting the availability of work. These problems inevitably cause an uprising among the proletariat as it is their only option to liberate themselves in a situation such as the one Marx has laid out.

The nature of capitalism forces the bourgeoisie to shrink its own numbers, by suppressing some of its own members to the proletariat class, further stratifying the populace. Once the bourgeois is small enough, and the proletariat has grown large enough, an uprising will be impossible for the bourgeoisie to stop. Factors like these support Marx's claim of revolution being inevitable, as the more time passes and the more powerful the proletariat become, the weaker and smaller the bourgeoisie will be. Marxist theory suggests that the proletariat should spread its message to individual laborers, uniting them and spreading the proletariat's message to others in the working class about how a socialist revolution could benefit their own lives and the country as a whole (Marx 1955, 6).

In the context of the Russian Revolution, we can see how the people of Russia were unhappy under the reign of the Czars and the elites. Industrialization occurred in Russia simultaneously with mass food shortages and poverty that the Russian government continuously ignored. By 1917, mass bloodshed at Bloody Sunday, the Russo-Japanese War, and World War I was fresh in Russian citizens' minds (DeFronzo 2019, 46). Much of the proletariat was dissatisfied



with the continuation of poverty, unacceptable working conditions, and the Russian government's inability to meet the people's needs. These are key points that Marx would point to in developing a revolutionary situation. Something that Marx would not have foreseen in contributing to the Russian Revolution's revolutionary situation is how Russia was a peasant state at the time of revolution (DeFronzo 2019, 41). Figures such as Lenin had traveled and learned of the theories of Marx and saw how he could use them to overthrow the rule of the Czars in his own country. Many of those who were elites in 1905 had now become part of the proletariat class in 1917 as problems have only worsened since the first uprising. Eventually, as the bourgeoisie shrunk in 1917 and Russia was weakened from the WW1 war effort, the tipping point was reached, and the February Revolution took place and Czar Nicholas abdicated the throne ending Czar rule in Russia. The provisional government would not last long though, as in November of that year, Lenin would lead an almost bloodless coup against the Dumas government and put in place a system that placed him as its dictator (DeFronzo 2019, 54-55).

## Barrington Moore: Theory Application

In addition to Karl Marx, the theories of Barrington Moore apply to assessing how the Russian Revolution formulated and transpired. Moore expanded on Marx's ideas, fashioning himself as a neo-Marxist. However, Moore positioned himself as more materialistic than Marx, which draws distinctions into perceptions of how the Russian Revolution unfolded. Yet, even with the differences between the two political theorists, their general ideas are in alignment. As discussed in previous chapters, Moore's theories explore how agrarian societies do or do not transform into industrialized settings; Moore continues on this idea by situating how various states establish democratic governance, under the slogan of "no

bourgeois, no democracy.” Another wording of this phrase could be “no middle class, no democracy” (Moore, 1966).

Moore’s theories establish three trajectories for how societies emerge in the modern world. The influence of Marx is prominent when observing Moore’s work: both theorists put forth the idea of natural tracts and how societies will, by default, follow them. The first track Moore ascribes is the “Capitalist-Democratic,” the second “Capitalist-Reactionary,” and the third as “Communist” (Pavone, 2016). The Russian Revolution directly aligns with the tract of the Communist route (as does the Chinese Revolution). At the inception of this route, the peasantry (working class) catalyzes bringing about social change and revolution, within a state that has failed to modernize/industrialize. Critical to an effective peasantry is the ability to unite and dissolve stratification levels. If the peasantry has any caste system or varying degrees of power within, unity is unattainable. From this, the peasantry unites based on a dislike or disapproval of an overarching central figure (whether that figure is an individual or a set of government infrastructure): an elite. The peasantry then can issue demands or proceed with a revolution of the state. Disapproval could originate from economic struggles, social power discrepancies, or a combination of many factors. Often, there is a disconnect in communication and relatability between the assumed peasantry and the assumed elite. Since the elite lacks a connection with the peasantry to suppress insurrection, the elite crumbles as the revolt continues to gain influence and momentum (Pavone, 2016). What results is a Communist state, fueled from the bottom (economically and politically) levels of society (Moore, 1966).

From reading the history of the Russian Revolution, this Communist track fits neatly into how events manifested. First, under the reign of the Czars, dissatisfaction permeated Russian culture. Failure to modernize in the early twentieth century aggravated the general populace, leading to protests (this frustration unfolded further with embarrassment following Russia’s loss in war against Japan). Following mass bloodshed of citizens

in 1905, in which troops helmed by Czar Nicholas II massacred hundreds of protesting Russian citizens, the government promised reform, but lacked substantive execution. Russian workers continued protesting en masse, fomenting social disruption and economic turbulence across the empire. Over the next twelve years, heightened frustration with the Czar mounted, as Nicholas opted to become involved with World War I, further straining resources and national pride. Leading into the 1917 Russian Revolution, these previous events exhibit an appetite for overthrowing the elitist Czar institution. Extending to 1917, workers still found the Czar regime unresponsive to their basic needs: food, economic stability, political reforms. Yet, the Czar's response was inadequate for the demands of a disconnected people, leading to his abdication of power (and execution later on). Continuing the path of the previously mentioned history, Russia's demolition of the old government establishments led to the birth of a Communist state, as Moore predicted would happen when a state followed the third trajectory.

## Conclusion

The Russian Revolution was not spontaneous; decades of tension and resentment towards the Czar regime led figures like Lenin to demand a radical change of Russia's government. Events like Bloody Sunday, Russo-Japanese War, and World War One only solidified resentment that continued occurring over the following decade. Theorists like Marx and Moore posit different routes for how Russian society reacted. Marx creates the dichotomy between the elite bourgeoisie and the working class, the proletariat. As the bourgeoisie oppressed the proletariat, the working class rises and takes back power. Meanwhile, Moore situated a similar path: a sharp disconnect between the elite and the peasantry, with the peasantry demanding reform, lest rebellion ensues. Together, both theorists suggest that societies, given certain conditions, will inevitably rebel.

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St. Petersburg - Museum ship Aurora - symbol of the October

Revolution of 1917 – Museum ship Aurora – symbol of the October  
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# 12. The Nazi Revolution, Great Man Theory, and Theda Skocpol



*Hitler at Reichstag by unknown in the public domain.*

“First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out because

I was not a Jew. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.”

–Martin Niemöller

In 1919, Germany was recently defeated in World War I, leaving Germans frustrated and upset with the outcome. The Treaty of Versailles ended World War I and was not in favor of Germany. Germany was held responsible for starting the war, giving them punishments like loss of territory, demilitarization, and reparations. The Treaty of Versailles was detrimental to Germany, leaving the German people angry and in economic distress. This distress led to political parties basing their platform on nationalism, ultimately leading to Hitler’s rise to power and the Nazi Party (History.com 2009).

Adolf Hitler was an army veteran of World War I, later becoming a German politician and eventually the leader of the Nazi Party. Germany became unstable as a result of the outcome of World

War I. Hitler joined the German Workers' Party, frustrated by the instability that plagued the country.

The German's Workers Party, founded in 1919 by a small group of men, promoted nationalism and anti-Semitism. This group believed that the Treaty of Versailles was unjust to Germany and quickly tried to spread their beliefs across the country to gain followers. Hitler became a public speaker and was seen as very charming and charismatic. His speeches blamed Jews and Marxists for Germany's defeat in World War I and preached the idea of the Aryan "master race" (History.com 2009).

By 1921, he was named leader of the political party, renamed the Nazi Party. Once Hitler took leadership of the Nazi Party, he continued to make speeches explaining that Jews and communists were the reason for Germany's failing economy, inflation, unemployment, and hunger. Hitler claimed that Jews and communists must be driven out of the country in order for Germany to thrive again. Young, economically struggling Germans fervently absorbed this message.

In 1923, Hitler and his followers attempted a failed coup, the Beer Hall Putsch. The plan was to kidnap the state commissioner of Bavaria, a state in southern Germany, to spark a more significant revolution against the national government. The coup failed, Hitler immediately fled the scene and went into hiding. Two days later, Hitler was found and convicted of treason, sentencing him to five years in prison (Discovery UK 2009). However, he spent less than a year in jail, and during this time, he wrote *Mein Kampf*, his autobiographical manifesto. In this book, he blamed Germany's struggles on the Jewish population and stated he wanted Germany to regain its strength and seek new territories in the East.

The Beer Hall Putsch and Hitler's trial gained a following and publicity, which by default gave Hitler a platform and made him a national figure. Even though it was a failed coup, it still showed that Hitler was an influential leader willing to fight for Germany. Once Hitler was released, he was determined to gain political power and grow the Nazi Party through Germany's elections.

The Great Depression of 1929 caused a significant economic downturn in Germany. Unemployment jumped from 1.4 million to 2 million in mere months (BBC). The Nazi Party used these issues to critique the government and preach that they would change the country, which ultimately led the Nazi Party to win elections because people were angry and wanted change. In the 1932 German elections, the Nazi Party won 230 of the 608 seats in the German parliament, or the “Reichstag” (History.com 2009). By 1933, Hitler is appointed chancellor of Germany, kick-starting the wave of the Nazi Revolution.

Once appointed chancellor, Hitler created the first concentration camp, which was first defined as a place to keep their political prisoners but transformed into a death camp. At this first concentration camp in Dachau, Germany, Jewish people were dying from malnutrition or overworking, killing thousands of Jews. Hitler started to expand his definition of “unfit” for Germany’s new image, including groups like members of the LGBTQ community, Jehovah’s Witness, and Gypsies (History.com 2009). Four weeks after Hitler was appointed chancellor, the German parliament, Reichstag, burned down. Hitler and the Nazi Party claimed that this act of arson was the doing of the Communist Party. They used the Reichstag fire to gain President von Hindenburg’s approval for implementing the Reichstag Fire Decree. This order took away German citizens’ rights, like the right to protest, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and removed all restraints on police investigations. This decree allowed police officers to arrest any person politically challenging the German government without any specific charge (History.com 2009). It also gave the central government power to override local laws and even overthrow local governments. The newfound power in the central government made it simple for Hitler to ban all political parties other than the Nazi Party. The Reichstag Fire Decree was in place until the end of Nazi Germany in 1945.

The Enabling Act of 1933 allowed Hitler, as chancellor, to enact laws without the laws having to go through the parliament first



(History.com 2009). To make this happen, Hitler and the Nazi Party, again, used fear and intimidation to secure votes in parliament to make sure they could pass the Enabling Act. This act was the turning point of Hitler's power, giving him full control of Germany's government. Officially, Hitler named himself the Führer of Germany's Third Reich or the leader of Germany.

On August 2nd, 1934, President von Hindenburg died of lung cancer. The vacancy needed to be filled, and a plebiscite vote was held. A plebiscite vote is similar to a referendum but with an important distinction. Both are methods to ask the public's opinion, but while a referendum makes concrete changes to a law or constitution, a plebiscite does not. Effectively a plebiscite asks the citizens if they agree with a decision the government is going to make. The German government held a vote of approval on August 19th, 1934. The Nazi Party's use of intimidation, as well as a national fear of communist, led Hitler to win the vote, with 90% of voters saying "yes" (Birchall 1934).

He then becomes president and chancellor of Germany, giving him ultimate executive power in the country. By 1938, under Hitler's rule, Jews were banned in most public places in Germany. Then, On September 1st, 1939, Germany invaded Poland, starting World War II. During this invasion, Germany killed thousands of Polish Jews or sent them to other death camps in Poland. This action began the Holocaust, a World War II mass genocide of European Jews led by Adolf Hitler (History.com, 2009).

Nazi Germany and the Nazi Party then commenced a systemic state-sponsored genocide (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum 2020). Nazis used concentration camps, forced labor camps, prisoner of war camps, and killing centers to commit mass genocide. The Nazis deported thousands of Jews to death camps across Europe and were brutally executed by gas chambers and tortured. At the height of Auschwitz, a huge concentration camp complex in Poland, 6,000 Jews were being mass murdered by gas chambers each day. By the end of the Holocaust, there were over

44,000 camps around Europe and over 6 million Jewish people murdered (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum 2020).

In April 1945, Hitler realized his defeat in World War II and committed suicide. Hitler's death sent shockwaves through his patriotic supporters, leading them to realize that their time in power was over; they had been defeated (History.com 2009). The man they saw as utterly invincible had taken his own life. Nazi Germany officially fell after the Nuremberg trials, where prominent Nazi leaders were convicted of crimes against humanity and subsequently executed. The Nazi party no longer had representation in the German government and slowly faded back into society's background. Anti-Semitic Nazi sentiments continued to linger, as they do today, but the Nazi party had been dismantled for all intents and purposes.

## Great Man Theory

The Great Man Theory was developed in the 19th century by Scottish philosopher Thomas Carlyle to explain the impact of "heroic" men on society. This theory analyzes the unique psychology of influential leaders and how their leadership causes notable historical effects. A "Great Man" is a man who is intelligent, charismatic, and a persuasive leader, his courage sparks inspiration among his followers. He is born a natural leader, not bred to be one, giving his followers reason to believe he is destined to lead them.

Under this theory, it is believed that a Great Man's leadership will lead their followers to safety and stability. This theory has been used to describe strong and successful leaders like George Washington and Mahatma Gandhi. However, it has also been used to describe the rise of dictators such as Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. Due to the extreme differences of men under this theory, there is debate and controversy surrounding it. The Great Man Theory is the foundation of Trait Leadership that emerged in the 1930s to 1940s

(Cherry 2019). Unlike the Great Man Theory, Trait Leadership acknowledges that people can be successful leaders without impacting history (Cherry 2019). Carlyle's Great Man Theory laid the basis for studying and analyzing future leadership traits and styles.

Adolf Hitler fits into the Great Man theory because he formulated his campaign to appeal to lower-class citizens' wants and needs in Germany. The lower-class people of Germany idolized him, as he gave them a strong and resilient leader to look to that could help the country repair itself from its debt. Germany was left in a disadvantaged position after World War I. The country faced massive debt, which destroyed the economy due to the Treaty of Versailles that demanded Germany to pay 132 billion gold marks as financial restitution (Blakemore 2019). The Treaty of Versailles especially humiliated the country and German leaders because it disarmed their military. Because of this loss, Hitler gained the support of German patriots who wanted to bring the country back to its former greatness and revive the army. Patriots flocked to Hitler, finally feeling a sense of representation in the government. Hitler gave a new voice to the patriots who long felt ignored by the rest of the country. Through propaganda, symbolism, and speeches empowering the German patriots, Hitler gained the support of Germany. The patriots felt emboldened by the newfound recognition and representation of their social class. Many scholars, one being Howard Zinn, have debated whether his success was based on the psychology of his leadership techniques or his agenda (Carpentier 2016). This debate does not necessarily mean he was a strong leader, as he had no prior experience with the military or government leadership. He failed to make decisions that would benefit or provide resources for the citizens and he was dismissive of others' decisions, which was entirely the fault of his neurotic personality. Being a man of instinct over logic, Hitler made his decisions meticulously, based on his personal beliefs of right and wrong. While this may be a deterrent for many, his supporters adored his flippant decision-making and clear decisiveness. He

violated the Treaty of Versailles as he disregarded any beliefs or opinions that were not his own.

The Germans felt humiliated by their global status, and they created a “blame game” for the issues that plagued Germany. Hitler helped them find somewhere to place their anger and frustration. He used his power to direct their humiliation elsewhere, as he believed that the country’s greatest threat was through internal traitors. Hitler demonstrated the Great Man theory as he was able to direct a revolution under his leadership. His first demonstration of this theory was the Beer Hall Putsch. He declared a revolution during this event and established himself as a national leader (History.com 2019). He was able to gain this momentum through his platform with the German Workers Party. Through the Enabling Act, Hitler was able to single-handedly run the country without guidance or outsiders’ help. Under Hitler’s regime, the country used groups of people as scapegoats and tortured, belittled, and killed those deemed unworthy to gain back a sense of respect and power that they had lost from the war. By preying on those who felt the most attacked and vulnerable from the shifts in Germany’s political and economic sphere, Hitler incited one of the most immense revolutions in global history. The same “charismatic” person that the people had elected to office is the same man that brutally imprisoned and murdered millions of people.

This theory fails as while many men and women might have been born with the qualities of a “great leader,” that does not necessarily mean that they have the potential to be a leader. Although Hitler possessed the qualities of a strong and charismatic leader, he failed to be one for the people as his regime brought harm to the citizens of Germany. The Great Man Theory also fails to recognize the historical context in which the leader rose to power. The context surrounding Hitler’s rise to power is crucial to understanding how he became the political leader who greatly influenced history. Hitler is considered to be “great” in the interpretation that he was able to bring significant change to a country without much help. For example, would Hitler have been able to gain control of the Nazi

Party if Germany had a more robust democracy? No, Hitler was able to take power when Germany was weak and vulnerable. He appealed to the country's weaknesses. While Hitler was imprisoned, Germany recovered some of its economy and restored faith in the Weimar Republic (History.com 2019). Support for the Nazi party seemed to dwindle. During the short-lived span of German strength, Hitler spent his time building a small army of followers that would eventually help him grasp political control when the stock market crashed in 1929, causing Germany to appear in shambles once again.

A Great Man should be able to capture the hearts of the country and cause a profound change within without manipulation or propaganda. Thomas Carlyle recognized Great Men as heroes, something that is utterly controversial in regard to Adolf Hitler. Under this theory, Hitler can be described by how he exemplifies how dangerous a single man can be to the world. The actions of one ignited a revolution and an era of violence. The only understandable reason to explain Hitler's political power is his displayed charisma and patriotism to Germany's vulnerable citizens. The intentionalist perspective of Nazi Germany has an emphasis on Hitler's intentions, long-term planning, and Hitler's direct hands-on decision-making in Nazi actions.

The intentionalist perspective would be applicable if there were evidence of a "master plan" created by Hitler outlining the holocaust. Intentionalists would argue that Hitler's hands-on decision-making within the Nazi party shows his apparent involvement in a predetermined end goal. The intentionalist perspective emphasizes the long-term planning of group action, as exhibited in Hitler's planning of the holocaust (Schiöth 2018).

The functionalist perspective focuses on evolving and improvising developments. Functionalists believe that the driving factor behind Hitler's decision-making was the Aryan race's welfare rather than an extensive plan for the holocaust. The functionalist perspective believes that Hitler's anti-Semitic actions came from lower-ranking officials and the German people (Schiöth 2018). They argue that Hitler's plan was not initiating mass genocide, but instead, he did so

out of necessity for pleasing the Nazi party. This argument would negate the idea of a “master plan” and instead show a pattern of evolving and improving developments to suit his followers’ demands. Overall, the functional perspective would be considered “haphazard” decision-making, whereas the intentionalist perspective would be described as having a “primary motivating factor” (Schiöth 2018).

Marxist scholars argue that fascism was used to formulate the Nazi Party, and one person, Hitler, decided to be the leader. Outside of Nazi sympathizers, no one would refer to Hitler’s travesties as “heroic.” Adolf Hitler could never objectively be considered a “Great Man” due to his manipulative tactics, violent actions, and evil beliefs. Referring to someone or something as “great” now does not necessarily mean that the person or thing is fundamentally good. It means that it is effective in achieving what is sought and can direct the revolution rather than the society being the director. Germany’s government was completely restructured during Hitler’s rule, and the people of Germany faced a tremendous shift in social stratification.

#### Theda Skocpol’s Theory of Revolution

Theda Skocpol is a political science professor at Harvard who studied under Barrington Moore when obtaining her Ph.D. at Harvard. Her theory of revolution builds upon Moore and Charles Tilly’s theories. Skocpol makes a distinction between social revolutions and political revolutions. A political revolution results in a change to a state’s structure but does not change the country’s social fabric. However, a social revolution produces both a change in the country’s political and social structure (Skocpol 1979: p. 4).

To demonstrate this point, one can compare the American Revolution to the French Revolution. Skocpol would classify the American Revolution as merely a political revolution because American society’s nature did not undergo a massive shift following the conclusion of the Revolutionary War. American society remained relatively unaltered after the American Revolution. However, the French Revolution can be classified as a social

revolution. Not only did the structure of the French government change, but French society underwent a massive shift after the revolution. Social classes were recategorized, and democracy was introduced to the country. The French Revolution was a multi-tiered event that spread throughout all facets of French life.

Skocpol argues that there are two conditions necessary to produce a revolutionary situation and outcome. Both conditions rely heavily on class distinction. They also rely on the frustrations of one or more social and economic classes. The first condition needed to create a revolutionary situation is called a Crisis of State. A Crisis of State occurs when the government fails to meet their middle to lower class citizens' needs, creating a divide between themselves and the elites (Skocpol 1979: p. 32). This divide also tends to include a division of the army from the lower class, unifying them with the elites. The second condition refers to a pattern of class dominance that will determine the leader of the revolution. This division tends to result in one socioeconomic class rising above their opposition and exploiting the revolutionary situation at hand. According to Skocpol, revolutionary outcomes are shaped by two different distinctions.

The first distinction refers to the obstacles and opportunities mentioned in the above conditions for a revolutionary situation. The lower class is faced with more economic obstacles and fewer opportunities to improve their lives than the elite class is. Anger arises among the lower class due to the increased number of obstacles they face, prompting them to rebel and create a revolution to fight for their equality.

The second revolutionary outcome proposed by Skocpol is the idea that socioeconomic and international constraints will affect how the new revolutionary regime will establish itself. As the French Revolution was occurring, capitalism was on the rise in the United States and England, which were the most powerful country globally (marxists.org). When a new government formed following the revolution, it was founded in liberal capitalism because there was international pressure for governments to adopt capitalism.

Additionally, the revolutionaries fought for increased economic equality in the country, which pressured the new government to adopt liberal capitalism. This revolution demonstrated Skocpol's theory that international and socioeconomic conditions greatly influence the post-revolution regime.

The Nazi revolution can be categorized as a social revolution because the rise of the Nazi party in Germany led to a fundamental shift of the country's government and social fabric. Following the death of President Hindenburg in 1934, Hitler became president of Germany following the plebiscite vote, while he was also Chancellor. These events led to Hitler becoming the dictator of Germany. There was no other person with power in the government aside from Hitler, allowing him to rule the nation at his will.

At the same time, Germany suffered exceedingly from the Great Depression that began in the United States in 1929. Unemployment was extremely high, and hunger was pervasive across the country (BBC 2011). In a country where extremist political groups had not gained much traction, people were now looking to them for answers during a time of incredible suffering. It was believed that the extremist views, including those of the Nazi party, offered concrete solutions to the problems at hand. Because extremist parties were not in power as the country fell into economic distress, they evaded negative criticism during the time of suffering. Extremist parties blamed the moderate political parties in government and gained public support through these criticisms.

Aside from the failing economy, other changes to German society began to occur. Between 1930-1933, the Nazi Party promoted propaganda advertising Jewish people's national hatred (Snell 1997: p. xiv). Through their propaganda, the Nazis made Jewish people a symbol of "evil" and the Aryan race to be a symbol of good (Snell 1997: p. xiv). Hateful rhetoric towards Jews took root in Germany. In 1933, the Nazi Party passed several laws limiting Jews and other minorities' rights. It was illegal for Jews to hold public or civil office, they were denied employment in the press and radio, and they were excluded from the stock exchange and brokerages (Bradsher 2010).



The SA began to target gay men, as well as Afro-Germans and other minority groups. In 1935, the Nazi Party passed the Nuremberg Laws. The Nuremberg laws were race-based legislation that deprived Jewish people of legal rights in Germany. It also created a legal distinction between Germans of different ethnicities, so that “Aryan” Germans were given full legal privileges, and Jews and other racial minorities were denied their legal rights.

A massive change in German society had occurred – the division between Jewish and minority Germans and Aryan Germans. Never before had such racist and anti-Semitic beliefs and practices been introduced and engrained into German society as they were during the Nazi revolution. Being Jewish, gay, or Afro-German was no longer just an aspect of one’s identity. It became their entire identity, and they were persecuted for it. The SA was also weaponized against the Jewish community in Germany and would cause lots of harm and physical intimidation. It was made clear that non-Jews would be putting themselves at a safety risk if they were to ally themselves with Germany’s Jewish people, and they were encouraged to see themselves as superior to the Jews. These race claims were the class dominance aspect of Skocpol’s theory. The Nazi government quite literally built antisemitism and racism into German society’s fabrics – a change that would alter German society for years to come (Bradsher 2010).

The Nazis began to grow in popularity, gaining much support from the Germans that were coming of age throughout these ten years and could now vote in elections (Snell 1997: p. xiii). For once, the Nazi party had many supporters from the younger generation of Germans, giving them more respect and power within the country. They also had the upper hand over the moderate political parties in power because the country’s citizens blamed those in charge for the economic suffering. These events were the crisis of the state that Skocpol believes is the beginning of a social revolution. The current government was unable to provide for its suffering citizens. It could not save the collapsing banks, could not pass policies that would

offer more aid to the hungry and homeless, and the government could not solve the global economic crisis, the Great Depression.

Additionally, the Prussian Junkers played a massive role in the Nazi Party's rise to power. The Prussian Junkers were the land-owning nobility class from the time of the Prussian kingdom. The Junkers were strong supporters of the Prussian royal family, which meant that it was the Junkers' interests that were represented in government, not the interest of the kingdom as a whole. The power of the Junker class translated over into modern-day Germany. The Junkers were the "leaders of German industry" as well as leaders of "German militarism and the army" (Snell 1997: p. xiv). President Hindenburg was a Junker himself, and Hindenburg's support of Hitler and the Nazi Party in the Reichstag echoed with the Junkers. Hitler, as he ascended to the position of Chancellor, destroyed political parties in the Reichstag and destroyed all forms of representative government (Snell 1997: p. xiv). The Junkers wanted to restore a German monarchy because that would give them back the firm grip on the government as they did in Prussia. The Junkers saw this as their opportunity to support a dictator who would be their key to restoring Prussian nobility.

The German patriots were searching for a leader to represent them and their beliefs on a larger scale. Hitler's rise to power gave them confidence in their government that they had been lacking. In contrast, the Great Man Theory's intentionalist perspective places the responsibility of the Nazi revolution and the events that ensued onto Hitler. The intentionalists believe that Hitler had a predetermined end goal of the holocaust; the events leading up to the holocaust were steppingstones. Theda Skocpol's theory concludes that the Nazi revolution was a product of the German government's structure. Hitler was able to rise to power because of the weakened state and lack of structure within Germany's government and economy.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, the Nazi Revolution is seminal example of a reactionary revolution. While the previous revolutions discussed involved progressive ideals, the Nazis' goal was to strip away the reformation that occurred with the establishment of the Weimar Republic. Further this revolution is quite unique for its emphasis on individual leadership and its success in upending the established social norms of the Weimar Republic. That said, two theories that best suit the Nazi Revolution are the Great Man Theory and Theda Skocpol's social revolution. The Great Man Theory explores the impact of a single individual's ability to successfully lead a community toward their goal. In this revolution the focus falls on Adolf Hitler's leadership. There are many historical and political scholars who claim that without Hitler the Nazis trajectory would have seen so much success in gaining power as it had. On the opposite side of the debate there are those like Theda Skocpol who take the analysis on broader scope and focus on the social and institutional aspects of the prelude to the Nazis that allowed them to thrive. This comes in a variety of events from international intervention to an all-out crisis of the state in the Weimar Republic. It was this environment that allowed the Nazis upend the social fabric of the state rather than a single human being. Overall, the claims for both theories and their strong points and flaws in explaining exactly why the Nazi reactionary revolution was able to go as far as it had.

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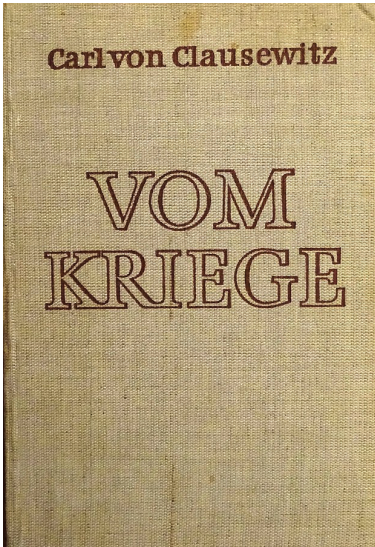
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# 13. The Ins And Outs Of Insurgency And Counterinsurgency



*Vom Kriege by Carl Von Clausewitz by Rabe.dd is in the public domain*

“War is nothing but a continuation of politics with the admixture of other means.”  
— Carl von Clausewitz, On War

The ideas that inspired insurgency and counterinsurgency theory have accompanied revolution since the beginning of time. Only in

the past two hundred years have theorists begun to formalize and consolidate these ideas, a process primarily inspired by an increase in the popularity of nationalist sentiment around the world and a relative decline of imperial powers that caused a significant mutation in conventional warfare. By first understanding the nature of insurgency and the cultural context of the country under analysis, counterinsurgency theorists can attempt to predict the specific tactics necessary to successfully dissipate revolutionary atmospheres. Throughout history, there have been notable outliers that have subverted expectations of revolutionary potential, grand incompetencies on the part of governments have paved the way for an understanding of the people as a homogenous actor that must be appeased or dismembered. This chapter will analyze both the Algerian conflict and the Surge in Iraq as instances in which counterinsurgency has been successfully implemented and those that have not. We will look at previously discussed theorists to



“File:Denkmal für Antoine-Henri Jomini in Payerne.jpg” by Spyridon, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0, is a photograph of Jomini Memorial by Raphaël Lugeon.

synthesize the characteristics that made or broke these revolutionary situations.

## Theoretical And Ideological Basis Of Counterinsurgency Theory

To discover the beginnings of the theory that would shape revolt and response in countless situations throughout the late 19th and entire 20th century, military general Carl von Clausewitz provides an essential basis. This military leader and theorist chronicled his experiences fighting Napoleon and recognized the unprecedented nature of the warfare style he utilized. Through his Napoleonic Wars experiences, Clausewitz made one fundamental discovery – the citizenry’s incredible importance as a wartime commodity. Mobilizing the people in support of the war effort allowed the opposing groups to create a rich source of hatred that would fuel the army to make a continual commitment to the fight. This new relationship between the general population, the armed forces, and the government established the idea of a “wonderful trinity,” where each group has a role to play in providing essential functions like hatred and animosity, probability, and chance, and becoming a subordinate institution in the scheme of warfare (Clausewitz 2006).

However, it became clear that this raw resource of the people’s anger could be harnessed by insurgent groups as well. With this new understanding of warfare came theories for how best to utilize or divert this anger, with Clausewitz positing that governments needed to be systematic and timely about how they dismantled revolutionary social activity in the same spaces that they sprung up, and another theorist, Antoine-Henri Jomini, suggesting that only complete military annihilation of the insurgent forces could quell the insurgency.

Either way, most theorists agree that the increased instance of



unconventional warfare requires flexibility and innovation on the part of governments. The United States Government described this well in their Counterinsurgency Guide, saying:

Irregular warfare is far more varied than conventional conflict: hence the importance of an intellectual framework that is coherent enough to provide guidance, and flexible enough to adapt to circumstances. Counterinsurgency places great demands on the ability of bureaucracies to work together, with allies, and increasingly, with nongovernmental organizations.

## Counterinsurgency Guide, 2009

As the two theories diverged, they developed into new, broad categories, upon which military figures have based action and demonstration in conflicts like the Algerian conflict, the Vietnam War, the conflict in Malay, and many others. These categories are known as Direct Counterinsurgency and Indirect Counterinsurgency – the former being based on Jominian ideology and the latter upon Clausewitz's theories. These theories would continue to be shaped by theorists such as Mao Tse-tung and Robert Thompson, who emphasized each method's strengths and weaknesses through an analysis of uprisings and revolutionary situations.

## Development Of Counterinsurgency Theory

To begin, the discussion of insurgent scenarios provides an essential context in understanding why indirect and direct counterinsurgency has been implemented in various revolutionary

situations throughout history and how each method's strengths and weaknesses have been developed and reinforced.

## **Indirect Counterinsurgency:**

Although it began rooted in military strategy, indirect counterinsurgency in its modern form focuses on social strategy – winning over the people's hearts and minds. Of course, the advantages and disadvantages of each method affect conflict differently. For example, turning the people's loyalty allows for a citizenry that supports the government during and after the dismantling of the insurgency. Proponents of indirect counterinsurgency mention how governments run the risk of alienating the population when they take overt military action against small groups of insurgents, as this extreme action can appear predatory or out-of-touch (Nagl 2009). Detractors of indirect counterinsurgency describe the difficulties of identifying cells in the local populations as they arise, as having a stable and robust bureaucracy often makes mobilization and communication more difficult. In the time that it takes to identify the cell and the leader, the government runs the risk of experiencing military defeat, further promoting the administration's supposed incompetency.

Mao Tse-tung of China significantly influenced the standardization and understanding of indirect counterinsurgency. Mao very profoundly understood the value of the people's loyalty. In turn, he mobilized the mostly uneducated and politically disinclined Chinese peasantry – a unique event in the history of insurgency, as most revolutionary situations develop from the industrial and urban population's mobilization. In his book, *Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War*, Mao details exact characteristics of leadership and insurgent forces that instill confidence in the movement among the people, going so far as to create a code of conduct for military individuals when they engaged with the citizenry (Mao, 1968). By

emphasizing the social aspects of revolution, currency was given to indirect counterinsurgency ideas – to witness a potent insurgency built upon these foundations emphasized the need for the government to apply similar methods. The people's importance as a fuel for the insurgents is best exemplified by Mao's famous metaphor where the insurgents are the fish, and the people are the water in which the fish swims. To successfully counter an insurgency is to remove the fish from the water.

Along these lines, Robert Thompson created his Five Principles of Counterinsurgency, which describe the commitments that the government should make to the people to maintain or secure their loyalty and reinforce the imperative of building rapport over establishing military superiority (Thompson, 2005).

#### Five Principles of Counterinsurgency:

1. "The government must have a clear political aim: to establish and maintain a free, independent and united country which is politically and economically stable and viable,"
2. "The government must function in accordance with law."
3. "The government must have an overall plan."
4. "The government must give priority to defeating the political subversion, not the guerrillas."
5. "In the guerrilla phase of an insurgency, a government must secure its base areas first."

## Direct Counterinsurgency:

Perhaps the more traditional approach to insurgency are the ideas of direct counterinsurgency. This theory is wholly based on the idea that military might is paramount and that, at the core, as American Army Colonel Harry Summers put it, "war is war is war." Proponents of direct counterinsurgency claim that the only way to ensure one

has snuffed the flame of revolution is to exhibit military prowess overwhelmingly. Detractors of direct counterinsurgency recognize that warfare trends have mutated over time and that this more conventional approach may be ineffective against guerrilla tactics. As described by William Rufus, when this complete annihilation tactic is repurposed for guerilla warfare, it is acceptable to take direct counterinsurgency down to the destruction of citizens and even domestic animals. However, it may result in a humanitarian crisis, pulling global watch dogs' attention to the situation and further compromising conditions that would drive a successful counterinsurgency, like a supportive global context (Nagl, 2009).

## **Hybrid Counterinsurgency:**

Although most theorists argue that indirect insurgency has a higher degree of efficacy, in some contexts, just as DeFronzo details in his categorization of movements as a mixture of conservative and liberal motivations, a mixture of indirect and direct counterinsurgency may end up being the correct strategy to quell an insurgency effectively. We see evidence of this combination strategy in the Malayan Emergency, primarily discussed in the next chapter.

## **The Algerian Conflict**

### **Introduction:**

The pressures placed upon states in Africa when imperialism began to collapse in the mid-20th century created an environment of

increased corruption within the imperial governments. These pressures translated down to the people who experienced increased marginalization and ethnicity-based crime and discrimination. French Algeria serves as a poignant example of these changes in the administration of government and services. This country was nominally content during the first century of its imperial rule. The discontent that these modifications sowed led to the Algerian Revolt (1956 – 1962) and a desperate attempt on the French government to regain control and the respect of the people.

## **The Progression From Discontent To Spark:**

During the 1920s and 1930s, the French started treating Algerians poorly by taking back land owned by Algerians, refusing to grant Algerians French citizenship, and favoring Europeans in elections – actions that caused Algerians to become angry and begin organizing protests. In 1936, the French attempted to appease the Algerians by implementing the Violette Plan, which extended French citizenship to Muslim “elites” like university graduates, elected officials, professionals, and army officers (American University 1985). The *évolués*, a group of Algerians educated under European academic institutions and a group that directly benefited from this plan, declared this a significant progress.

The conditions inspired by the Violette Plan continued tenuously until May of 1945 when a celebration held for the French liberation from the Nazis in the Algerian city of Sétif transformed into a march for Algerian liberation. Despite attempts by the police to de-escalate the situation, massive riots ensued. In the five days following this event, Algerians indiscriminately targeted Europeans living in Sétif and wreaked havoc upon the city until French police finally regained control. In retaliation, the French police arrested mass groups of Muslims, even going so far as to carry out public executions. The crisis in Sétif became a significant turning point in public regard for

the French government and is now recognized as one of the critical events in the path to war.

On All Saints Day 1954, tensions boiled over. The National Liberation Front (FLN) launched attacks against military institutions, police posts, and other public utilities, effectively beginning the revolution. These violent attacks continued incessantly for the remaining months of 1954 and set the tone for the rest of the revolution. In August of 1955, the Pieds Noirs' massacre reinforced the hostile nature of the conflict and further established a foundation for the revolutionary situations that developed between 1956 and 1962.

## French Response:

The FLN continued to utilize non-traditional tactics throughout the conflict, employing maquisards (guerrillas) to strike military and civilian targets (American University 1985). This radical activity startled the French government, who stumbled into creating a counterattack plan for the conflict's opening months. However, the French ultimately came up with several counterinsurgency tactics, the most famous and successful of which were quadrillage, dividing the country into a grid and surveilling those grids individually, and ratisage, raids instituted by the police (Lilley 2012). The French created camps designed to separate innocent civilians from insurgents, hoping to distinguish between those involved and those not easier and prevent unnecessary torture and death. However, the French's counterinsurgency tactics' direct nature only increased anti-French sentiment among Algerians and emboldened the FLN. The group continued to carry-out guerilla warfare, like grenade attacks on cafes and door-to-door attacks on entire families (Lilley 2012).

Following these attacks, the French instituted a policy of killing 10 Algerians for every Frenchman killed, resulting in 1,273 insurgent

deaths (Lilley 2012). After this retaliation, civilians were much more likely to voice support for the insurgents, making the already blurry line of insurgents vs. non-insurgents that much more difficult to distinguish, reinforcing the idea espoused by Clausewitz and developed by Mao that the people are just as avid participants in the war effort as the formal armies and government.

The events between 1956 and 1962 done by those fighting for Algerian independence and the resulting reactions from the French oppositional forces offer clear examples of direct and indirect counterinsurgency. Varying degrees of counterinsurgency effectiveness occurred for both sides of the conflict. By using tactics that the French had never witnessed in war before, the Algerians proved themselves to be dedicated to their cause and willing to go about obtaining their desired revolutionary outcomes by whatever means necessary. Additionally, by using these unconventional tactics, the French were at a disadvantage, and by using such extreme counterinsurgency efforts to stop the Algerian forces, they ultimately hurt their chances of winning the conflict. The Algerian Revolution serves as a prime example of guerilla warfare's effectiveness and the consequences of various counterinsurgency methods. Overall, it can be argued that the French generally used more of a "direct coin" approach when it came to trying to fight off the Algerian insurgents. Rather than trying to gain the people's trust and win the conflict more peacefully, the French executed many potential threats instead of taking the time to distinguish between insurgents and non-insurgents, thus demonstrating a clear case of direct counterinsurgency. While the French may have used other counterinsurgency methods, including indirect coin cases, the majority of their attacks fall under the category of direct counterinsurgency.

Additionally, the five principles of counterinsurgency aid in illustrating why the French were so unsuccessful in Algeria. For example, the fourth principle states that "the government must give priority to defeating the political subversion, not the guerillas," and in the case of the French, they targeted the guerillas solely in such

a divisive manner and failed to address the political subversion at all (Thompson 2005). In a slightly less extreme controversy, the French failed to adhere to the fifth principle, which states that “in the guerilla phase of an insurgency, a government must secure its base areas first” (Thompson 2005). Rather than securing their bases first, the French acted erratically and tried to destroy any hint of guerilla action, making this another major factor in their failure in Algeria. Overall, when looking to explain the causes of the French failure in Algeria, counterinsurgency theory offers necessary insight and information.

## The Iraqi Conflict

### Introduction:

The increase in globalization and global Superpowers' involvement in other countries' political affairs over the past century has created unique conditions for the development of insurgency and counterinsurgency. The Surge in Iraq exemplifies indirect counterinsurgency that evolved from this context. Unlike the insurgency in Algeria, which developed due to popular discontent with the colonial government, the insurgency in Iraq resulted because of conditions that stemmed from international war between the United States and Iraq. This initial conflict resulted in Saddam Hussein's overthrow and his government by the US, which enraged the citizenry and led them to organize.



## A Unique Context:

The Iraq War began in 2003 with the US invasion titled 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' ("Timeline: Iraq War" 2016). Despite efforts on the part of the US to gain international support and the eventual naming of 30 members to the 'Coalition of the Willing,' many more countries did not approve of this war. No Arab countries announced support for the United States in this matter, and the invasion caused favorable opinion of the US to decline around the world (Schifferes 2003). The international community's criticism stemmed from a lack of faith in the United States' motivations as reasons for the invasion, such as the claim that Saddam Hussein had access to weapons of mass destruction. Whether or not the Bush administration believed in those claims or had evidence to back them up has been questioned intensely over the years because no Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) have ever been found in Iraq, and many analysts of the situation believe there was no intelligence to imply otherwise ("The Iraq War").

The exact causes of the war cannot be neatly explained in one sentence, and there remains much debate about whether or not the Bush administration had other reasons for going to war. According to historians, those reasons range from appearing strong on the 'War on Terror' for political reasons at home, capitalizing on access to oil that region has in excess, or it could have been a result of lousy intelligence that informed the Bush administration's belief that Saddam Hussein had access to weapons of mass destruction (Kessler 2019). However, it is agreed upon that one of the primary motivations for the invasion was to oust Saddam Hussein's regime and install a democracy in the region.

Although President George W. Bush declared "mission accomplished" on May 1, 2003, the war in Iraq did not end with the destruction of Saddam Hussein's regime ("Timeline: Iraq War" 2016). While Hussein was captured on December 13, 2003, the absence of his regime created a power vacuum in the region and ultimately

led to a civil war. The United States and other coalition members, therefore, became the responsible actors. The parliamentary elections held in 2005 were thought to be a step toward democracy for the country. The Shia, who made up approximately sixty percent of the population, won the majority, the Kurdish population, who made up twenty percent of the population, came in second, and the Sunnis, who made up fifteen percent of the population, but had held political control until this point, protested the election (“Timeline: Iraqi Elections 2016). This election was not the crucial step toward democracy that the United States was hoping for, as it ended up exacerbating tensions between the Sunni and the Shia. This tension led to the rise of Sunni extremist groups, Shia extremist groups, and Al-Qaeda. While the first few months of the war were an example of traditional warfare between two nation-states, the focus quickly turned to counterinsurgency.

## **The Dynamic Nature Of Counterinsurgency:**

Before 2007, the strategy in Iraq was based on direct counterinsurgency. As a result of this, violence on behalf of Sunni extremists, Shia extremists, and Al Qaeda became more prevalent. Frequently, these insurgent groups would use the violence the US military enacted to create propaganda and recruit more extremists (Baker 2006). In December of 2006, the US government published the Iraq Study Group report (Baker 2006). This report designated Iraq’s situation as “grave and deteriorating” (Baker 2006, 6). It warned that if the United States continued with their current strategy, the Sunni/Shia conflict could spread throughout the region, and there could be a humanitarian crisis (Baker 2006) on a scale similar to those detailed by William Rufus. This report provided context to analyze the failures of direct counterinsurgency as a military strategy and prompted the Bush administration to change course (Abramowitz 2007).

On January 10, 2007, President George W. Bush announced the Surge (Abramowitz 2007). This “Surge” was a plan to increase the number of troops in Iraq to 200,000 (Abramowitz 2007). As a result of this campaign, the United States military’s goal became protecting Iraqi civilians (Schiffrin 2018). When pressed to describe the purpose of the campaign, George W. Bush claimed, “daily life will improve, Iraqis will gain confidence in their leaders, and the government will have the breathing space it needs to make progress in other critical areas” (Schiffrin 2018). This increased focus on the wellbeing and support of the people is a clear example of indirect counterinsurgency in terms of changing the opinions of the people. The goal of indirect COIN as developed by Mao focuses on “changing hearts and minds” and clearly outlined the Bush administration’s goal. The strategy in Iraq shifted from trying to defeat the insurgents with military power to convince Iraqi civilians that the United States’ way of governing was a better option than the one provided by Islamic extremists. Once those civilians had been convinced, the US could focus on transferring power to the new, more westernized Iraqi government.

While violence increased in the first year of this strategy’s implementation after 2007, Iraq’s violence experienced a sharp decline (Biddle 2012). Critics claim that the Sunni awakening or merely a coincidence resulted in this decline (Biddle 2012). However, this strategy allowed the United States to begin withdrawing troops from Iraq in 2013 under the Obama administration (Fordham). Other criticisms of the surge strategy include arguing that the temporary solution allowed violence to continue after the United States left (Kingsbury 2014). This idea does hold some credibility as violence continues in the region for over a decade since the strategy was revealed (Awadalla 2020). Additionally, American citizens disliked the Surge as it caused increased spending on an already unpopular war (McHugh 2015). This anger back home is a common criticism of indirect counterinsurgency. It costs much more than direct COIN, making it unpopular to the country, which would rather see tax dollars spent on benefits for themselves. Scholars dispute if the Iraq

war occurred because the Bush administration wanted to spread democracy throughout the Middle East, capitalize on the oil readily available in the region, or appear tough on terror. However, by the end of the war, the United States military clearly expressed their goal; to install a westernized democratic government through indirect counterinsurgency.

## Conclusion

Forged from the battlefields of the Napoleonic Wars, Henri-Antoine Jomini and Carl von Clausewitz's theories regarding how war should be conducted would influence army tactics more than a century in the future. While Jomini promoted the adoption of total annihilation Clausewitz advertised the key role of the "holy trinity" consisting of governance, people, and the army. Unlike Jomini which called for total war, Clausewitz visualized the importance of stabilizing the politics and people of the occupied in addition to just battling the opponent's army. These ideas would evolve overtime especially during the post-World War II era as war moved away from battles consisting of established armies to a standard army typically fighting a paramilitary force. Two of conflict examples that consist of these two distinct strategies, now known as direct and indirect counterinsurgency, are the Algerian Revolution and the Surge of Iraq. Both wars see the conventional armies, France, and the United States, use direct and indirect counterinsurgency overtime and reveal the general flaws and benefits that come with their usage. Similarly, the two case studies provide evidence of the advantages that paramilitary forces exploit weaknesses when fighting a uniform force. Further legitimizing these two counterinsurgency theories, future chapters will explore military tactics as a key aspect of a revolution's success.

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Monument of General Jomini in Payerne by Spyridon is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0. Sculpture by Raphaël Lugeon

# 14. The Malay Insurgency



*In Memory of the Malay regiment at Bukit Chandu by Soham Banerjee is licensed under CC BY 2.0*

“...to let the military direct the entire process...is so dangerous that it must be resisted at all costs.”

— David Galula,  
Counterinsurgency Warfare:  
Theory and Practice

The gradual end of European colonialism and the advent of the modern international system following the second

world war led to a significant change in the nature of war worldwide. In particular, there was an unprecedented rise in the frequency of asymmetric wars between global powers and local insurgencies. Especially in the period immediately following World War II, many of these conflicts were anti-colonial revolutionary wars, as was the case in British Malaya from 1948 to 1960, the Malayan Emergency. These changes necessitated new schools of revolutionary theory, and in the case of insurgency and counterinsurgency. Two have developed. The first – based initially in the writing of Antoine-Henri Jomini – holds that a guerilla war should be treated like any other, that military and political goals are distinct, and that success even against an insurgency is contingent on destroying the enemy. While some notable examples of success in what has come to be known as “direct” counterinsurgency, most historical examples point to “indirect” counterinsurgency as the more effective strategy. This philosophy, attributed originally to Carl von Clausewitz, holds that guerilla war is not like any other physical conflict because the goals are just as political as they are military. Moreover, victory in an insurgent war hinges on winning the support of the people. Though both members of this



Clausewitzian school of thought, the theories of John Nagl and Mao Zedong, come from opposite sides of a conflict to help explain the British counterinsurgency success during the Malay Insurgency.

## Historical Background

The Malayan Communist Party formed from the remnants of the Chinese “South Seas” Communist Party in 1930, which had been established in Singapore six years earlier. One of the main reasons the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) began this fight for independence was that they wanted to establish a socialist economy, in part a response to the significant economic problems which existed following World War I. In particular, the Malayan economy was very vulnerable to shifts in the world market due to its reliance on the export of primary commodities, especially tin and rubber (Economic History Association).

When the British first took control of the economy, they had imposed significant taxes on Malayan goods, affecting traditional industries. This block caused an increase in poverty for the people of Malaya, as many of the ethnic Chinese subsequently found employment in tin mines or fields of trade of materials, and Malay people were in turn forced into the rubber industry, which was particularly sensitive to volatile world prices. Many impoverished Malays felt as if the Chinese people had replaced them in the only good jobs available, making finding work difficult for them. The only jobs left for the Malay people were in the rubber industry, which aggravated ethnic tensions between the two communities.

Malaya’s economy took an even greater turn for the worse during World War II during the Japanese occupation. Beginning in 1941, the occupation created significant limitations on the export of primary products, which led to many instances of rubber plantations being abandoned and mines closing. Limited trade also resulted in a shortage of imported rice, a significant portion of the Malayan diet,

forcing the population to concentrate simply on subsisting and further harming the economy. Even the Japanese withdrawal at the end of World War II further contributed to this economic disorder. The Japanese left Malaya with a range of problems, including high food inflation, unemployment, and low wages.

This disorder resulted in labor unrest in Malaya, and many strikes occurred between the years 1946 and 1948. The reestablished British government struggled with addressing these underlying economic issues, and the communist party was able to take advantage and promote its agenda. The mostly Chinese party, inclined towards ethnic-nationalism elements, successfully rejected the first British program for decolonization—the Malayan Union intended to provide all citizens with equal rights. In response, the British replaced it with The Federation of Malaya in 1948 to reduce Chinese influence. However, this caused a feeling of betrayal from many in the Chinese community in Malaya. These ethnic tensions combined with economic instability led people from all sides to view British control negatively.

Thus, the MCP had enough support to engage in a protracted insurgent war with the British, in the form of their military wing, the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA). On June 16th of 1948, the British declared a state of emergency in several districts after the Sungai Siput Incident in 1948, which involved the murder of three British Plantation owners by the MNLA. Two days later, a state of emergency was declared for all of Malaya by Malayan Governor Sir Edward Ghent, marking the beginning of The Malayan Emergency. Within a week, the MCP and affiliated organizations were declared illegal. (Australian War Memorial) The first MNLA military campaign took place in 1948-1949, as did the initial terrorist activity and guerilla fighting, primarily against Chinese civilians. 1949-1951, the MNLA launched successful assaults on government outposts, plantations and created 1195 government security force casualties.

The MCP and MNLA intended to follow the example of Mao's Chinese Communist Party and defeat the British through a strategy

of protracted insurgent warfare. (Shaw, 1993) Their early strategy involved striking the British revenue sources, which they hoped would cause the British to tire of counterinsurgency. They first focused primarily on destroying the means of production, but over time they began to realize this was alienating the people whose support they needed to win the war. Popular support was required both because it would grant prestige and honor the MNLA and because they relied on the people, especially in rural squatter villages, to give them resources such as food and information. (Shaw, 1993)

## The Briggs Plan

A lack of coherent strategic plans defined the beginning of the counterinsurgency for the British. The British's strategy first focused on conventional strategies founded on their experience fighting the Germans in World War Two. The resulting tactic, known as "Jungle Bashing," was virtually worthless against insurgents on their home turf in the jungle.

However, after identifying Malaya's political climate, the British found their strategic direction with Harold Briggs. Briggs, a British lieutenant-general, had served as a key figure in Britain's counterinsurgency efforts in the Burma Campaign against the Japanese in WWII. Nagl describes him as having an "unusual grasp of the political nature of the insurgency and measures required to defeat it" (Nagl, 2002, p.71), ultimately introducing the idea that winning over local support was paramount to success. The "Briggs Plan" involved dominating the populated areas and building up a security feeling in them, which would then isolate the insurgents from food and information supply. This plan worked for some time, but the rising success of Communist movements in China further inspired the Malayan Communist Party to continue their guerrilla efforts. The British concluded that they needed to get the local

Chinese population on their side to win and further separate this population from the Malayan insurgents and China's influence.

An in-depth analysis of the seven key points of the "Briggs Plan" is crucial to understanding British success in Malaya. First, the British needed to prove that public security could be guaranteed by democracy and convince the Chinese population in Malaya that a transition to a communist government would prevent that security. A vital aspect of the British strategy was to re-settle the Chinese villagers in "new villages" they could secure. As will be explained, the new villages effectively separated the insurgents from the people – the 'fish' from the 'sea'. Secured by an ethnic Chinese police force, the insurgents were prevented from moving in and out of the villages under cover of night, and therefore lost much of their effectiveness. The second point covers the expansion of security to the rest of Malaya, using a section-by-section removal of insurgents starting in the South and moving North. Once a populated area such as a city had all insurgents removed or deported, the third point centered on maintaining security in that area. Starting at the fourth point, the "Briggs Plan" becomes more specific to the Malaya insurgency. The counterinsurgency agreed to concentrate first on insurgents in populated areas, such as the Min Yuen factions. This specification would cut the rest of the insurgents off from access to supplies and reinforcements (Shaw, 1993, p.4).

The fifth point is that once the security has been established, it should be maintained by ethnic Chinese police forces rather than the British military. This alteration is an important distinction: a strong military presence, especially a foreign military presence, promotes fear, involving associations of weapons, tanks, and danger. On the other hand, a police force is normal and expected in communities. It is ultimately more successful at providing a sense of security than would a military presence. This heavy presence of ethnic Chinese police in highly populated areas allowed the British to maintain control and security while not instilling fear in the Malayan people that would alienate them and drive them into the insurgents' arms. It was easier to convince the general public to

go against the insurgency if the communists were brought in for criminal charges by the police (Shaw, 1993). In contrast, the military against insurgents glorified and justified their cause and portrayed their violence as military rather than criminal. This psychological component of counterinsurgencies is critical to prevent the insurgents from growing in number.

The Briggs Plan's sixth point created the "Federal War Council," designed to implement the plan effectively by overseeing both the military and the police force (Shaw, 1993, p.5). This precise organization of the counterinsurgency campaign would benefit both the military and police force to act effectively, helping the British provide security to the general public and prevent Malaysians from joining the insurgents. The seventh and final point created an intelligence effort led by Sir William Jenkins. Jenkins' experience came from time spent running the "Indian Police Special Branch," which was extremely useful, as he was able to bring professional intelligence training to the British effort in Malaya (Guan, 2009, p.193). This third branch of the British counterinsurgency efforts held the responsibility for gaining information about guerrilla movements and became a sub-branch of the police force to maintain a low profile and prevent further public fear (Shaw, 1993).

While this plan is lengthy and detailed, the British identification of the Malayan political climate and preparation for potential problems contributed significantly to their success. Early on, the importance of patience was recognized because they were essentially fighting two fronts: the military fighting the guerilla insurgents in the jungle and the police maintaining security in highly populated cities while preventing the number of insurgents from growing. This sense of security was ultimately obtained by creating "new villages" in the dense jungle to provide safety and security to the local population, which further isolated the guerillas from resources and reinforcements.

# Mao and the Chinese Communist Insurgency

Most of the theory surrounding this type of war – going back to Clausewitz and Jomini and including Nagl – has come from the side of the counterinsurgency. However, there have also been significant revolutionaries like Mao Zedong who work on a strategy for insurgency success. Mao's ultimately successful Guerilla war for China's control began as early as 1927 and did not end until his declaration of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. Over the course of Mao's over two decades fighting a Marxist-Leninist insurgency against the Kuomintang-led government of the Republic of China and the Japanese during WWII. He developed sophisticated theories on revolution, which have come to be known collectively as Maoism (Schram, 2020).

Mao divides a successful "people's war" into three stages. He described the first stage as "organization, consolidation, and preservation." It begins with acknowledging that the revolutionaries have a massive disadvantage in terms of power and resources and is focused primarily on winning the people's support. Without this support, surviving in the later stages is extremely unlikely, and success is impossible. The Clausewitz idea that popular support is paramount to success in a revolutionary war is shared by both Mao, Nagl and shows that despite coming from opposite sides, they both have the same fundamental philosophy: whoever wins the most hearts and minds is likely to win the war (Nagl, 2002).

The second stage is the Guerilla campaign, which Mao referred to as "progressive expansion." The idea fundamentally is to weaken the people's faith in the government's ability to provide security. During this stage, the insurgents remain weaker in an immediate sense than government forces, but they nonetheless have significant advantages. The first is their ability to hide from government forces; Mao famously described the insurgents as fish swimming in the people's sea. This assumption argues that the revolutionary force

chooses the battlefield. They can attack poorly supported outposts and weapons stores while avoiding direct engagement with the army's strength. By doing this carefully, insurgents theoretically can avoid defeat altogether. A string of victories like this, primarily if they successfully draw widespread attention to them, can simultaneously increase the prestige of the revolutionary force while displaying the government's weakness (Nagl 2002). Mao believed this would start a positive feedback loop in which a victory would increase the insurgency's popular support and boost its arms and resources, making the next victory easier, and over time they will be able to strike more and more valuable targets.

Once the revolutionaries had gained enough support, and enough weaponry and other resources, and had sufficiently weakened or demoralized the army, phase three would begin, in which the revolutionaries could engage in an actual direct battle with the state and defeat them (Nagl 2002). To Mao, the critical mistake made by revolutionary leaders who fail is skipping two quickly to stage three. Amid a revolt, with passions and emotions running extremely high, it can be difficult not to overestimate one's abilities after a string of successes. Avoiding this, to Mao, was critical.

The story of the Malayan Communist Party is "almost entirely a Chinese one" (Nagl, 2002). As such, the party was undoubtedly aware of Mao's history and theories and fully intended to follow his example. The MCP recognized that people's support, especially the Chinese people, was critical to its success. At least in principle, they understood that this first stage was necessarily the foundation of later stages.

The revolutionaries' ultimate failure is thus a result of their failure in this stage. While Mao focused on indoctrination rather than intimidation, the MCP did not have the same success with indoctrination. Arguably by necessity, they relied primarily on their ability to intimidate the Chinese peasants. This intimidation provided the British (and the British-employed Chinese) with the opportunity to play the role of protectors through strategies such as the secure new villages. Though the MCP made significant efforts to

move to Mao's second stage and prosecute a guerilla war against the British, their lack of popular support hamstrung their efforts and led to a British victory- just as both Mao and Nagl would predict.

## **Nagl's Analysis of British Counterinsurgency Efforts in Malaya**

John Nagl examines the British colonial government's new counterinsurgency methods in Malaya between 1948 and 1951 as a learning institution for the future. Fresh from their victory against Japan and Germany's conventional armies, British army commanders at first focused their attention on battalion sweeps aimed at the insurgent forces. The British soon realized that the insurgents were not partaking in conventional style warfare instead using small blitz attacks common in guerilla-style warfare. The British military needed a new strategy to tackle the unpredictable nature of guerrilla warfare and lack of formal intelligence about the insurgents' strategy. Two competing schools of thought were combined as a foundation for British involvement in Malaya; the obvious nature that a military solution was needed and the less conventional nature of the insurgents' political ideology. Innovative younger officers then developed more effective techniques to defeat the guerrillas at their own game by gaining the local people's support; flexible senior officers emphasized analyzing political and military goals and encouraged the creation, testing, and implementation of more effective counterinsurgency doctrine.

A vital component of the British counterinsurgency plans recognized Mao's influence and the Chinese population. As noted in the previous section, the Malayan Communist Party was guided by the example set by Mao's Chinese Communist Party, with their plan centralized on getting the British to tire of their counterinsurgency efforts by striking at their revenue sources. The British quickly



recognized this influence, and they immediately sent in troops to protect the general public from the campaign of terror by deporting Chinese supporters when they were captured. Without this clear identification of Mao's influence in Malaya, the later efforts to reestablish democracy would have been unsuccessful.

The counterinsurgency in Malaya experienced many ups and downs throughout the efforts to convince the Malayan local population to go against the Communist insurgents by implementing the Briggs Plan. The high commissioner of the Federation of Malaya, Sir Henry Gurney, created "new villages," which were rural villages set up for the local population with protection from the police force and a new security force called home guards (Nagl, 2002). These villages became a crucial aspect of the Briggs Plan, creating a safe area for Chinese squatters and allowing them to live a safer and more peaceful life. This shift in Chinese squatters' support made it more difficult for the guerilla forces to hide in jungle villages, forcing them towards the shore. The creation of "new villages" continued to allow for the British to connect politics, military, and police in Malaya by trying to create safe environments for the locals opposed to killing them, eventually trying to sway the local population to support a democratic political shift.

In October of 1951, Gurney was murdered by communists, and Briggs retired due to illness. Oliver Lyttelton took control of implementing his plan. A large hurdle the British faced was still trying to convince the Chinese population not to support the Chinese Communist efforts. To win over the Chinese population, Lyttelton explained that the home guards need to have a larger Chinese population because Chinese home guards only took up only a small proportion of the force. Lyttelton continued putting in police-heavy policies which worked to sway local Chinese and Malayan populations against Communism.

From 1952 to 1954, Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer built on Briggs plan, and by 1955 "the back of the Communist insurrection was broken," the British were able to get the support of the Chinese

people and cut off the insurgents from the support they needed, effectively rendering them irrelevant (Shaw, 1993, pg. 127). By 1957, the Malay Insurgency was nearly over, with only 3,000 communist guerrilla fighters left in 1956. The period between 1957 and 1960 included consistent government effort, and finally, the communist party was deemed defeated by 1960 (Shaw, 1993). This success was a product of the British forces carrying out Briggs plan, using indirect COIN to patiently turn the local population against the Communist insurgents, rather than the juxtaposing method of direct COIN through strong military and quick actions. Although ultimately successful in stopping the insurgents, British efforts had much pushback on being both too costly and timely inefficient (Nagl, 2002).

Although the methods provide a successful outcome, in theory, the counterinsurgency results were surprisingly mixed. Nagl concludes that this British doctrine on counterinsurgency was not wholly successful. The geographical and jungle-dense nature of Malaya put a strain on the military, and the British failed to identify whether Communist supporters still existed in Malaya in the end. Additionally, Nagl reveals that this effort in Malaya was not an effective learning institution. The British forces in Malaya were divided and all over the place, and perhaps a single commanding officer with a united force could have changed this outcome (Nagl, 2002). In terms of just monetary value, this counterinsurgency can be seen as outrageously expensive and financially harmful to the British. On the other hand, others believed that the British's implication of the counterinsurgency principles are highly effective and resulted in a significant victory in Malaya.

The ineffective side of learning from this effort in Malaya is shown clearly through the vastly different outcome of the American Counterinsurgency efforts using the Briggs Plan in Vietnam. In response to the recent success in Malaya, the United States attempted to follow along with the Briggs plan's indirect COIN strategy in their counterinsurgency efforts in Vietnam. Nevertheless, the United States both had a complete lack of "an

overarching strategy” and quickly became impatient, making unorganized and more militarized decisions (Shaw, p.118). Indirect counterinsurgency requires a significant investment in time, troops, and money, and this American impatience led them back to a much more Jominian strategy, and arguably their counterinsurgency failure.

## Conclusion

Mao's insurgency efforts in China and Britain's counterinsurgency actions towards implementing a secure democracy in Malaya prove how vital patience and well thought out strategy is in a guerilla war. Both Mao and Nagl agree with Clausewitz's emphasis on guerilla warfare's political goals, minimizing the military's use, and creating better thought-out strategies when engaging in warfare. British actions in Malaya prove how successful the use of indirect COIN can be in counterinsurgency actions. Through the Briggs plan's execution, Britain slowly gained local Malayan populations' support, isolating, and rendering irrelevant the Communist insurgents. The use of indirect COIN in Malaya took a long time and proved to be very expensive but was ultimately successful.

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## Image Attribution

In Memory of the Malay regiment at Bukit Chandu by Soham Banerjee is licensed under CC BY 2.0

# 15. The Vietnamese Revolution



*Photograph of Private Fred L. Greenleaf Crossing a Deep Irrigation Canal during Operation Bang Dong by Lafoon, Robert C. , Photographer is within the public domain*

“One cannot fashion a credible deterrent out of an incredible action.”

— Robert McNamara

The Vietnamese Revolution represents one of the most interesting and insightful examples for studying revolutions in the modern era. Namely, the allure of this conflict is due to its somewhat rare revolutionary outcome and the many clear characteristics of the state that preceded its political violence as its

revolutionary situation. Consequently, the Vietnam conflict offers valuable conclusions about the nature of revolutionary outcomes, especially as they pertain to theory. In particular, this revolution invigorates the utility of Counterinsurgency Theory and Mao's Theory of Revolutions. It catalyzes Counterinsurgency Theory by providing several examples of unsuccessful counterinsurgent strategies. Additionally, the Vietnamese Revolution displays the outcome of a conflict when a force painstakingly adheres to Mao's Theory of Revolutions in order to supplant a ruling power. As such, this prolonged period of political violence in Vietnam holds a strong position in history that is indispensable when analyzing the common features of revolutions.

## Overview

Vietnam consists of a long narrow country on the Indochinese peninsula in Southeast Asia. The land consists of heavily forested mountains and plateaus with two major river deltas: the Red River Delta, Near Hanoi, North Vietnam, and the Mekong River Delta, near Saigon, South Vietnam. The country consists of a mostly rural population with about 85% of people concentrated on 20% of the land mass (Defronzo, 2011: p.149). People of Vietnam are mostly ethnic Vietnamese, holding a high percentage of the total population. Culture in Vietnam lived to be heavily influenced by 1000 years of Chinese domination: Confucianism, clothing, writing system, technologies. The language holds a strong Chinese influence. Before the unification in 1802 under Emperor Gia Long, a period of time characterized the country as being a mix of conflicting groups and an inability for unification to occur in Vietnam.

The build to the Vietnamese Revolution began when the presence of the French became more prevalent. The Vietnamese invited the French because of both countries' interests. The French focused their attention on Christianization and colonization of the Vietnamese people, while Vietnamese gained access to advanced weaponry, technology, and products. Initially, the people of Vietnam tolerated Christianization and colonization; however, this tolerance did not last. Conflict began to arise more frequently between Vietnam and France due to Vietnamese campaigns against Christian missionaries, as well as British gains in China with the overall race of colonization. In 1847, France achieved naval victory and concessions from Vietnam. Then in 1883, after more concessions, the French completed their conquest of Vietnam (Defronzo, 2011: p.152). The French had a great impact: economically, socially, and politically. The Vietnamese economy turned into one that focused heavily on exports and saw an increase in income and land ownership inequality. Additionally, Paul Doumer became known to exploit the

populace of Vietnam with the sale of opium (Defronzo, 2011: p.152). Socially, French teachers and Vietnamese French loyalists taught values of liberty, equality, and fraternity to Vietnamese students, but Vietnamese peasantry continued to suffer under unequal and unfair treatment from the colonial power. In Cao Dai and Hoa, traditionalist religions fought assimilation, and Vo Nguyen Giap became a military icon for the Indochinese Communist Party (Defronzo, 2011: p.155). Politically, the Emperor of Vietnam began to serve only as a figurehead and creation of a Vietnams revolutionary elite took place (Defronzo, 2011: p.157).

During the period of 1883 to 1900, a tradition-based rebellion took place, where rejection of French cultural impositions became more prevalent through cultural resistance and protection. From 1900 to 1925, more organized independence movements occurred and rebellion leaders, Phan Boi Chau and Phan Chu Trinh, gained more support. Phan Boi Chau advocated for the violent replacement of French rule, while Phan Chu Trinh favored a peaceful transition into Vietnamese independence. From 1925 to 1940, The Vietnamese Nationalist Party (VNQDD), Indochinese Communist Party (ICP), and University Rebellion Groups took action. The VNQDD had no official platform on redistribution and prioritized violence that utilized assassinations and small unit attacks. The ICP acted as a good parallel with Mao in China. They made independence from French colonial rule paramount and established the mass organizations network known as the Viet Minh (Defronzo, 2011: p.158-162).

The main revolutionary period came with Ho Chi Minh and the formation of the Viet Minh. Ho Chi Minh, meaning “he who enlightens,” held the title of being the third child in an anticolonial family. He had about 76 aliases used in many political writings and analyses and traveled the world for about 30 years to gain knowledge before coming back to Vietnam. At the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, Ho Chi Minh became disillusioned with his desires for peaceful change. There, he established the Viet Minh. The results of World War II had a large impact on the revolutionary period. The Japanese defeat of French on multiple occasions encouraged

uprisings. Additionally, Viet Minh expansion due to western support weakened the French global status. In March of 1945, Japan seized French colonial forces, leaving the Viet Minh unimpeded for five months and became the most important period for the ICP. August of that same year, the Japanese surrendered and left a 'power vacuum' that drove out French and Japanese influences in Northern Vietnam (Defronzo, 2011: p.166). Consequently, the French military reentered Vietnam to prevent Chinese imperial threats.

The French-Indochina War took place between 1946 to 1954. Primary tactics used in this war included guerilla warfare, simultaneous assaults, and large campaigns on drained areas. During this time, the Viet Minh delayed land redistribution to avoid splitting the base of support. On May 7, 1954, after an unbroken siege, the French finally ceded. After the French ceded, the Geneva Accords took place in Indochina. The Geneva Accord resulted in a split between North and South Vietnam along the 17th parallel. The North became referred to as the Nationalist Communist Viet Minh North and the South as the Nationalist Absolutist Diem Regime South (Defronzo, 2011: p.174). The Geneva Accord also resulted in a compromise despite major victory because they had received little support from Russia and China.

The end of the French-Indochina War led to the United States getting involved in relations with Vietnam. President Ngo Dinh Diem, seeking absolutist rule and a Christian religious extremist, utilized United States resources. A Denunciation of Communist's Campaign initiated to arrest, detain and torture peacefully transiting Vietnamese communist supporters. Consequently, the National Liberation Front (NLF), or "Viet Cong," formed with the purpose of reunifying Vietnam. Viet Cong utilized a strategic hamlet program that consisted of the relocation of citizens in an attempt to reduce them as an NLF resource. This tactic became unpopular to peasants and radicalized them against the government in the South. The United States took it upon themselves to intervene in 1965 with the initiation of a bombing raid over North Vietnam. An assumption formed that the Vietnamese would quickly and surely



cease to the United States. However, as the Tet Offensive formed, this assumption proved to be false. The Tet Offensive resulted in large amounts of NLF casualties that pushed the United States and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam out of their stronghold areas (Defronzo, 2011: p.181). This, however, did not work as the United States and Army of the Republic of Vietnam regained those strongholds. In the United States, the military involvement in Vietnam caused demoralized support and uprising because the war turned out to be a grave site for U.S. soldiers. The aftermath of the war between the United States and Vietnam led to a peace agreement in 1973 (Defronzo, 2011: p.183). As Vietnam eventually reunified, these peaceful terms became violated. Additionally, Southern Vietnamese loyalists forcefully relocated to “reeducation camps” and the ICP dominated in politics. This time, however, the United States did not intervene once again because of the social unrest brought about the first time around.

## Counterinsurgency Theory

Counterinsurgency (COIN) theory is a moving target whose development is rooted in centuries of thought, but Antoine-Henri Jomini and Carl von Clausewitz served as the first major pair of theorists to bring COIN philosophy to the forefront of revolutionary theory. As intellectual rivals, these two theorists had polar opposite approaches to addressing the problem of revolutionary insurgency. During their rise to philosophical prominence, political change (rather than simple combat victory) became a possible function of Guerilla warfare tactics. Consequently, a need to combat the newfound political dimension of insurgency arose. For Jomini, addressing these new tactics required attacking the enemy force directly and completely eradicating opposition through use of superior force. As an approach, the statement, “A war is a war is a war” (Nagl, 2009: p.27), serves as a brief foundational concept for

this philosophy. The core of this ideology eventually became known as direct counterinsurgency. With Clausewitz, addressing insurgent forces relied on focusing on the structures that supported them, or as Mao Zedong would define it centuries later, “Separate[ing] the fish from the water” (Nagl, 2009: p.28). Typically, this strategy implies more of a war of ideas between opposing forces over the minds and support of the people, and Clausewitz explained this war of ideas by describing an inter-reliant trinity between the government, the people, and the military (Glascott, 2017). If insurgent forces can maintain the support of the people, they can survive indefinitely and eventually outlast a government of wavering strength. If a current government or administration can sway the support of the people away from insurgent forces, they can quickly exhaust revolutionary capabilities; a concept that eventually developed into the current philosophy of indirect counterinsurgency.

As an extension of counterinsurgency theory Robert Thompson emphasizes five critical principles of counterinsurgency and an accompanying five questions to evaluate the extent to which a revolutionary outcome favors the administration fighting the insurgency. The five principles consist of the government: having a clear political aim, acting in accordance with the law, creating an overall plan, establishing a priority of defeating existing political subversion, and securing its bases during the guerilla phase of an insurgency (Nagl, 2009: p.29). In a mirrored fashion, the five questions that Thompson poses to evaluate counterinsurgent success require assessing the: doctrine and how it achieves national goals, army’s contribution to setting realistic goals, military’s acceptance of subversion to political goals, minimal force required in relation to actual force used, and military structure itself (Nagl, 2009: p.30).

Applying the concepts of direct and indirect counterinsurgency theory to the Vietnamese Revolution can offer explanation and insight into the revolutionary outcomes that followed this prolonged period of political violence. From an overall perspective,

both the French and US/South Vietnam approaches to combat insurgency were primarily Jominian and direct. The French regularly demonstrated this direct method in their use of the French Expeditionary Force to combat the guerilla warfare employed by the People's Army of Vietnam, as well as in their drastic response of decisive military force at the Yen Bay Mutiny and their utilization of decidedly traditional warfare tactics during the Battle of Dien Bien Phu. French Expeditionary Forces rarely responded to Vietnamese aggression with unique or extraordinary measures, which suggests that much of their strategy relied on the assumed superiority of their force. At Yen Bay before the main period of revolution, direct COIN quelled the uprising of the Vietnamese Nationalist Party (VNQDD), which spiraled into political disarray following the decimation of the majority of its upper leadership in the Yen Bay Mutiny (Defronzo, 2011: p.160). However, many of the results of conflicts following this proved the ineffectiveness of France's direct strategy. This inadequacy became particularly apparent in the Battle of Dien Bien Phu, wherein the Vietnamese defeated French forces in a traditional military battle that challenged the original assumption that this colonial power actually had a stronger force (Yu, 2017). Similarly, the United States used direct COIN as its primary method for dealing with the situation in Vietnam following French vacation. The primary tools exercised by U.S. forces included high altitude bombing raids, an exponential influx in troops, air and artillery strikes, search and destroy missions into the jungle, and the use of chemical weaponry (Palmer, 2018). All of which, indicate attempts to destroy the enemy force rather than attacking political motivations, and much like with France, were ultimately inadequate measures that did not defeat the National Liberation Front (Viet Cong). These methods were so ineffective in fact, that they often resulted in radicalization of the local populace against the United States and the South Vietnamese administration.

Despite the clear favor of direct COIN methods for U.S and French forces alike, they still occasionally attempted to attack the Vietnamese uprising and the Viet Cong at their political roots using

indirect COIN. One such response that contributed to United States infamy among the local Vietnamese populace, was the forced relocation of Vietnamese peasants into hamlets. Initially an attempt to physically separate the Vietcong from the civilian populations that were instrumental to their sustainment, this strategy backfired because the civilians just continued to support the Viet Cong and allow them into these “loyal areas”(Palmer, 2018). The Combined Action Program, which was an attempt by the United States Marine Corps to integrate with the local populace and teach them how to combat Viet Cong forces, represents another unsuccessful indirect counterinsurgency effort. French and U.S. forces executed many of these indirect COIN endeavors without the proper support or training to really have an impact on the outcome of the conflict and they are aptly described as “portentous” (Palm, 2020: p.180) and too little too late.

With respect to Thompson’s five principles, the courses of action of counterrevolutionary forces fall well short of winning the critical battles identified. The government of South Vietnam was decidedly split between its political goals of either maintaining South Vietnamese independence or pushing for reunification of Vietnam under the South Vietnamese administration (Yun, 2019: p.71). Brutal campaigns spearheaded by President Ngo Dienh Diem like the Denunciation of Communists—an endeavor that involved the murder and imprisonment of many peacefully emigrating Vietnamese—portrayed the willingness of the counterrevolutionary regime to violate laws (Randolph, 2019). Additionally, the exponential escalation of forces over the course of the war signaled that the U.S. continually underestimated the resources required for a counterinsurgent effort, which clearly illustrates the incoherence of United States military strategy from the onset of the conflict (Huei, 2006). Most significantly, the priority of counterinsurgency operations rarely prioritized defeating political subversion over defeating guerillas, and the Tet Offensive proved that government bases and strongholds were not secure (Defronzo, 2011: p.181). Accordingly, the answers to the five questions that Thompson poses

when evaluating successful counterinsurgencies are similarly bleak for the Vietnamese revolutions. South Vietnamese doctrine did not achieve national goals. The Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) did not contribute to the setting of national goals because the external influence of the U.S. often predetermined South Vietnamese military strategy (Leff, 2006). Furthermore, military objectives superseded political goals, the military employed massive force measures with large campaigns, and the military structure of both the ARVN and the United States did not equip or adapt itself well to counteracting the guerilla tactics of the North Vietnamese.

## Mao's Theory of Revolution

Mao Tse-Tung, also known as Mao Zedong, was a revolutionary theorist and leader of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Born in the late 19th century in Hunan, China, Mao went on to be one of the most influential revolutionaries in human history. In 1921, he started the CCP in Shanghai. China at this time was deeply corrupt, with multiple groups claiming power and fighting for supremacy (Nagl, 2009: p.20). Mao's new party took advantage of the chaos and began attempting to organize the lower classes into labor unions. After a few losses at the hands of the National Revolutionary Army, he quickly realized that the party needed to focus on rural peasants rather than the urban lower class in order to form a revolutionary force that had a chance against the larger, more dominant contenders in the race for power in China. On the run from the National Revolutionary Army, Mao wrote his book detailing his theory of revolution, *Guerrilla Warfare* (Nagl 2009: p.21).

Mao's theory of revolution covers both the indirect and direct forms of insurgency that the Communist army successfully carried out in China. Mao writes not only of how to conduct a successful direct insurgency against an opposing army, but also how to wage the "People's War" and rally the local populace alongside the troops

(Nagl 2009: p.22). Mao viewed political mobilization as “the most fundamental” piece of a victorious army (Nagl 2009: p.23). In a speech compiled in his book *On Protracted War*, he declares that “the Japanese aggressor, like a mad bull crashing into a ring of flames, will be surrounded by hundreds of millions of our people standing upright, the mere sound of their voices will strike terror into him, and he will be burned to death” (Tse-tung, 1938). This indirect warfare focuses on cultivating relationships with the citizens around the revolutionary force. The “Three Rules and Eight Remarks” were the guidelines Mao set for his army’s conduct among the citizens they encountered (Nagl, 2009: p.22). It reads as a combination of the bill of rights and a cotillion primer, with rules such as “Do not, without authority, search those you arrest” and “roll up the bedding on which you have slept” alongside one another on the list (Nagl, 2009: p.22). Nagl argues that these rules “emphasized to the common people that the Communists were on their side and that the Nationalist armies were not much better than the Japanese” (Nagl, 2009: p.22). Mao’s indirect insurgency allowed the Communist army to win over the hearts and minds of the civilian population for 15 years as they battled the Nationalist army and the Japanese army (Nagl 2009: p.23).

The “People’s War” is indispensable in Mao’s revolutionary theory, but he also writes about the process of revolution in a more direct way. Mao believed that revolutionary war is a meticulous, three step process, which begins with the hearts and minds and ends on the conventional battlefield. In the first step, the revolutionary forces first organize and train their forces, in Mao’s case, the rural peasants (Nagl 2009: p.23). This phase limits military operations and focuses on preparing for the battles of the second phase. This second step is waging small, swift battles against “isolated enemy outposts and patrols” (Nagl, 2009: p.23). These attacks erode the local citizenry’s trust in the government, and more conventionally, allow the revolutionary forces to seize equipment, weapons, and other tools of war to form the “storehouse of the revolution” (Nagl 2009: p.23). Finally, the guerilla fighters take on the government

in conventional, large scale battles, using the strength they have gained through their protracted, unconventional warfare. Mao urges revolutionaries to carry out these stages simultaneously when possible, so that continual support from phases one and two aids the open battlefield in phase three (Nagl, 2009: p.23). Through this process, revolutionary armies can recruit members, gather tools, and finally face the government head on over a period of years.

The Vietnamese revolution shares many similarities with Mao's blueprint. The Vietnamese Nationalist Party (VNQDD) carried out small scale attacks against the French, including assassinations and terrorist attacks, which they believed would drum up support from the Vietnamese citizenry (Defronzo, 2011: p.159). However, this party was pretty much defeated after an attempted mutiny against the French in 1930. When inspecting this revolutionary attempt through Mao's lens, it becomes clear that the VNQDD skipped the first step of gathering and training the masses, winning hearts, and minds, and establishing themselves as a legitimate force. As a mainly urban movement, they failed to gain the support of almost any of the 90% rural peasant population (Defronzo, 2011: p.159). This created a lack of reinforcement, spirit, and leadership, and the party ultimately fell apart after the French arrested over 1000 party members and put over 80 revolutionaries to death (Defronzo, 2011: p.160). One could reason that if Mao had been leading the party, he would have urged the VNQDD to slow down and take root in the soul of the nation, before attempting to wage large, decisive battles on the colonial forces.

As crushing as the defeat may have been, communist revolution in Vietnam was far from over. In the same year as the VNQDD's failed mutiny, a few academic, urban Marxist-inspired parties joined forces with peasant revolutionaries to form the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) (Defronzo, 2011: p.160). Opposite to the VNQDD, the ICP consisted of mainly peasant workers, with a small number of urban representation (Defronzo, 2011: p.160). The ICP participated in uprisings during the depression in 1930 and 1931, after a rapid drop in export prices (Defronzo, 2011: p.161). This rapid

relative deprivation caused some revolts in rural communities, but the national leaders of the ICP did not support these revolts. Keeping with the first phase of Mao's revolutionary blueprint, the ICP leadership believed the insurrections were premature, because "most peasants in Vietnam were not yet politically committed to revolution" (Defronzo, 2011: p.161).

Patience rewarded the ICP greatly. By the mid-1930s, a new coalition government formed in France, which included influence from the socialist and communist parties (Defronzo, 2011: p.162). This new coalition released many ICP members from prison, and the party grew until the late 1930s. In 1939, when the French government again tried to crack down on the ICP, much of the party managed to go underground, and escaped imprisonment. This protracted approach allowed for the healthy growth of the ICP, with some members even being elected to city council in very pro-communist regions (Defronzo, 2011: p.162). At this point the ICP had been around since 1930. This time allowed the ICP to flesh out support and slowly grow to be a formidable force in Vietnam. The first stage of Mao's revolutionary blueprint was in full swing. Ho Chi Minh brought new military and leadership power to the ICP by combining forces with the Viet Minh. This new organization took another step towards mobilizing mass amounts of people, by conglomerating revolutionary organizations and spreading Chinese Communist ideologies to members of both the ICP and the new groups which joined the organizations (Defronzo, 2011: p.165). The ICP quickly absorbed all sorts of organizations and gained mass amounts of new members. Ho Chi Minh centered his movement around independence, and not necessarily communism, and in turn was able to garner an incredible level of public support. Some members even directly opposed communism but viewed the ICP as "the only viable means for establishing an independent Vietnam" (Defronzo, 2011: p.166).

As education continued and the Viet Minh and ICP kept expanding, they began to carry out small scale attacks and assassinations against the French, reminiscent of Mao's second



stage of revolution. These attacks won support from Vietnamese who were directly hurt by the French colonial forces, giving the Viet Minh small victories to boost morale (Defronzo, 2011: p.168). In 1945, French forces, battled back by the Japanese who feared an American invasion, left massive swathes of land open that Japanese forces did not bother to secure (Defronzo, 2011: p.168). For five months, the ICP and the Viet Minh captured six provinces in Tonkin, north Vietnam (Defronzo, 2011: p.168). Their membership kept growing, and by the early 1950s, the ICP had 350,000 men and women under arms (Defronzo, 2011: p.168). By taking 15 years before engaging in mobilization, the ICP was able to fully realize their strength and wait for a perfect time to strike. This is the type of strength that Mao envisioned when he encouraged a protracted grassroots movement alongside direct insurgency.

The Vietnamese Revolution was clearly defined by Mao's theory of revolution. Leaders such as Ho Chi Minh were able to fully execute his ideas just as they were prescribed and capitalized on the grassroots people's war to battle back the French and Japanese forces. The Vietnamese leaders who had read Mao clearly believed in patience, building strength, and winning hearts and minds alongside battles. By using the power of small-scale attacks, they built morale and strength. This allowed them to take mass amounts of land and train a formidable number of soldiers to fight for their homeland. Mao's writings were instrumental to this revolution and allowed the ICP to rectify the issues that led to the VNQDD's downfall.

## Conclusion

The study of the revolutionary outcome of the battles in Vietnam and the milestones in the country's history that built up to this situation are important to recognize when discussing revolutionary situations because the uprising itself cannot simply be explained by

one theory. There are many angles at which a political scientist, or anyone interested in revolutionary theory, can approach the August Revolution and the events preceding it. The many attempts at rebellion within the state of Vietnam display that there is not one single, defined way to lead a revolutionary situation. There are many different pathways that a revolt can take, and that is why it is important to observe and learn from a country that seems to have so many opportunities for political reform.

Another important aspect of Vietnam's revolution is being able to distinguish the aftermath of such a situation on a country's society. Not only did the Vietnamese demand change within the political system, but an entire culture shift came with the implementation of this new government. Communism is an ideology that affects a country's economy, philosophy, and overall government, not to mention that it completely altered Vietnamese international alliances once they completely adopted the system in 1975. This country is one prominent example of how revolutionary outcomes affect much more than just the political operations in a sovereign state.

The counterinsurgency (COIN) theory is important to the study of Vietnam in relation to revolutionary situations because it gives an understanding of what kind of tactics were used to persuade citizens on both sides of the revolt and what the main priorities of these tactics were. The Vietnam war saw a change in war tactics that not even the U.S. military was prepared to fight against, this counterinsurgency theory explains the thought process that went into how the U.S. decided to respond to these tactics and how the Vietnamese went about structuring their strategies. COIN and its connection to the revolutionary situation in Vietnam is able to display how these tactics can relate to past, present or, future rebellions and what kind of responses can generally be expected as the tactics evolve.

Revolutionaries in Vietnam accepted the influence of Mao's Theory of Revolution from neighboring China and found success. The application of this theory to this time period is significant

because it details the events going on around Mao as he continued to develop his theory. Mao's role in the Chinese communist revolution can explain why he detailed specific events or steps a party must take in order to initiate a revolutionary situation, and the similarities between the two countries in regard to politics and the goals of the revolutionaries can explain why this theory suits the Vietnamese so well. His theory helps detail that some aspects of revolutionary situations may be predictable, which is helpful for future revolutionary theorists, but also explains that just because a situation may meet these requirements, does not mean it will result in the same outcome.

The lengthy Vietnamese revolution is one that will be studied for years to come because of its complexities and ability to validate and test multiple theories within the revolutionary realm. From war tactics to complete changes in culture, this revolutionary outcome was relatively unique, but the events leading to this revolt may not have been as unpredictable as they seem. Studying this duration of time and understanding just how crucial each event was to the revolutionary situation helps highlight that each revolution may be heading the same direction, but no path to true revolutionary change is identical.

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## Image Attribution

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# 16. Algerian Revolution



Algeria 312 – 9th Anniversary of the Algerian Revolution  
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“The Algerians were revolutionists, they wanted land. France offered to let them be integrated into France. They told France, to hell with France, they wanted some land, not some France.”

— Malcolm X

Following the end of World War II, cries for freedom against the French escalated into a long and drawn-out war of violence and terror before the French would grant Algeria their independence. But even after French departure, the violence re-emerged when various groups within Algeria violently expressed their hatred for the repressive regime leading the newly established country.

Seemingly endless violence and hostility between French colonizers and Algerian insurgents throughout the fifties and sixties, followed by violent uprisings against an oppressive Algerian government in the nineties, led to a lifetime of uncertainty, deception, and violence for both Algerian Muslims and French colons.

The conflict happening inside of Algeria would come in two different stages. First, the Algerian War for Independence, which lasted from 1956 to 1962, would lead to Algeria’s liberation from French rule. Roughly thirty years later, the Algerian Civil War took place from 1990 to 1999, playing out many of the tensions that still

remained in the country. While both stages of conflict in Algeria could be summarized by the sheer violence and terror they brought, each stage had its own unique characteristics that contributed to a roughly sixty-year timeline of brutal guerilla war. For example, in the war for Algeria's independence, the insurgent group known as the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), used brutal – but strategic – forms of guerilla warfare to effectively combat the French colonial power and gain political autonomy. But in the case of the Algerian Civil War, strong dissent against the by-then oppressive FLN grew amongst fragmented groups, creating an ultimately unsuccessful variety of insurgency efforts to overthrow the regime.

Many comparisons exist between the two main Algerian conflicts in Algeria. Most notably, all groups involved in either conflict resorted to shocking and indiscriminate violence as a primary tactic for achieving their political goals. While this shaped the blueprint for what would be a cathedral of never-ending violence, some of the violence was effective against the standing regime, while in other instances, it was not. In Algeria's insurgency against the French, the FLN adopted Carlos Marighella's theory of militarization, which proved to be an invaluable philosophy in their fight against the French. It is also important to understand John Nagl's theories, which help explain why the two stages of conflict were similar, but ended with different outcomes.

This chapter seeks to detail an overview of each stage of the Algerian revolution, in addition to relating the events that took place to specific revolutionary theorists. After analyzing both stages of the Algerian revolution, it is clear that each insurgency saw the use of violence as the most effective way to get their ideologies recognized. In the first case, the FLN used Marighella's militarization strategy to combat the French, who in turn used indirect counterinsurgency strategy as described by John Nagl. Thirty years later, the FLN was able to outlast Islamist insurgent uprisings, despite relatively ineffective warfare tactics. While the use of violence is surely not a failsafe method for creating desired policy and results, this chapter will show, in the context of Algeria,

that insurgencies can face different outcomes despite similar methods of warfare.

## The Algerian Independence War, 1956-1962

On May 8, 1945, the day of Allied victory in Europe and long before true war in Algeria broke out, the violence that would characterize the conflicts began. In the Algerian town of Sétif, thousands of demonstrators gathered to protest continued French possession of Algeria and the economic and agricultural struggles the Algerian Muslims faced. Indeed, French and Algerian relations were becoming increasingly unsteady on both sides. But when police fired several shots into the crowd, the demonstration quickly surged out of control. For five days, rioters overran the French and Europeans of Sétif and its surrounding countryside, indiscriminately murdering Europeans in retaliation; ultimately, they killed 103 Europeans (Lilley, 2012, p.2) and mutilated many more.

The violence at Sétif was a culmination of political and cultural frustrations that had been building in the country for years. The Algerian Muslims had been vocal in their desire for French withdrawal since at least 1926, when a number of liberal and leftist reform groups emerged in the public sphere (Metz, 1985). These movements grew along with demands for Algerian representation in Algerian governance. In response, the French government proposed the ill-conceived Violette Plan of 1936, which hoped to pacify the demanding masses and would have allowed French citizenship only to elite classes of Algerian Muslims. The masses, in return, became increasingly disillusioned with their French rulers, and shifted further from a cooperative French-Algerian end goal. Likewise, the French colons living in Algeria soundly rejected the proposal, deepening political polarization. But while the colons dominated political power, the Algerians constituted a vast and threatening



population majority, limiting France's options for political reconciliation. Leading up to World War II, Algeria was already fragmented and increasingly unstable, which combined with France's perceived weakness and occupation during the war would lead to the outbreak of violence and growth of Algerian nationalism for years to come.

French police responded to Sétif with mass arrests, extrajudicial executions, and aerial bombing which killed anywhere from 1,300 to 15,000 Algerians (Metz, 1985). They sought to control the nationalist sentiment in and around Sétif with fear, but their inability to adapt to the Algerians' demands ultimately led to the growth of the Algerian nationalist movement and, by 1954, to outright war.

The Algerian Independence War officially began on November 1, 1954, with a guerilla attack by the FLN. In the following years, Algerian insurgent tactics frequently involved brutal killings and mutilations, as well as a "triangular" organizational format that was designed to outlast the French government's best counterinsurgency methods. While the FLN's use of violence against Europeans in Algeria was brutal and shocking, the French response was no more humane, and continued the tone of disproportional violence that had been set after Sétif. Ultimately, French counterinsurgency efforts were unsuccessful because, according to John Nagl's lessons of insurgency, they failed to address the entire problem of the Algerian revolution.

## Nagl and the Algerian Independence War

Nagl's theories are based on the comparison of Antoine-Henri Jomini, who advocated for massive conventional warfare even against the most embedded insurgencies, and Carl von Clausewitz, who believed that insurgencies could not be defeated simply by military might. Clausewitz wrote on the basis that war acts as an extension of politics, that once a political situation no longer

requires a war, it will end. At the root of this political situation is his “remarkable trinity” (Nagl, 2002, p. 17), which he identifies as the people, the government, and the army. According to Nagl, a counterinsurgency must address each of these elements: it must provide political satisfaction, physical protection, and good faith in the military in order to remove the political need for violent insurgency. Once this is done, Maoist counterinsurgency theory asserts that an insurgency must be separated from the people that provide it resources, to “separate the fish from the water” (Nagl, 2002, p. 28). By addressing the war-causing trinity, the insurgency becomes unnecessary to the general population, which in turn will stop harboring it.

In Algeria, the French could not make the FLN irrelevant simply by beating them into submission; they needed to address the political needs of the Algerian people, as well as implement military and police reforms that would deprive the FLN of support and resources. As it was, the French conducted a brutal counterinsurgency operation involving extreme, punitive executions that killed ten Algerians for every European death. Rather than scare Algerian Muslims out of revolution, this doctrine of “collective responsibility” increased anti-French sentiment among them (Christopher and Clarke, et. al, 2013, p. 79). In a Maoist sense, the French sought to starve out the FLN by scaring Algerian Muslims into rejecting the insurgents – to separate them from the resources that sustained them. But by using fear and violence, rather than protection and provision, as a motivator, they failed in their political pursuit of the hearts and minds of the Algerian people. Rather, even their best attempts at indirect counterinsurgency were misguided and overly violent, leaving the Algerian people no choice but to support the insurgency.

At their most Clausewitzian, the French implemented a system called quadrillage, under which Algerians were garrisoned into small sectors, each of which was under heavy surveillance and control. These sectors were intended to isolate the people from the dangers of the insurgency and the insurgency from the people’s resources

(Lilley, 2012, p. 4). But by Nagl's assertion of the importance of the counterinsurgency trinity, the French barely managed to address the FLN's political reliance on the Algerian people; rather than provide for them within these garrisons, they inflicted collective responsibility on them, fueling support for the revolutionaries. Additionally, French military carried out brutal, indiscriminate punishments to any villages suspected of supporting the insurgents and forced large rural populations into camps. The punishments resulted in the neglect and destruction of crops, which fueled an agricultural crisis and further disrupted Algerian life. In terms of military and police, the French conducted Jominian tactics based on total annihilation of the enemy (Nagl, 2002, p. 17) and failed to win over the people who made the FLN's survival possible.

## Marighella and the Algerian Independence War

The rebels' use of insurgency tactics was able to overwhelm the French forces. For Carlos Marighella, the route to a revolutionary outcome involves the guerillas encouraging an over-response from the government forces to give legitimacy to your cause (Marighella, 1969). The FLN achieved these types of over-reactions and atrocities that effectively reduced the French's hold on power. The brutal force of the police and military on the French side alienated their legitimacy. Marighella talks extensively of small group street tactics and the importance of quick, small attacks that the guerilla can escape swiftly (1969). The rebels were organized into small, disconnected cells and conducted quick, segregated attacks against French infrastructure during November 1954 (Lilley, 2012) (Christopher and Clarke, et. al, 2013). That paradigm is wholly consistent with the tactics outlined by Marigela as they were against strategic French assets like law enforcement posts, communication

infrastructure, and security force assets (Christopher and Clarke, et. al, 2013). The FLN and forces used against the French-run government were in line with small but impactful attacks that prompted fear and overreaction from the opposition. These quick-in, quick-out attacks allowed the FLN to remain on the offensive side using short-range tactics integral to the urban guerilla according to Marighella (1969).

The small-scale attacks were insufficient to earn popular support and the FLN began to create recruitment cells. By 1956, the FLN had enough popular support to form civil communities that collected taxes and provided a form of governance (Christopher and Clarke, et. al, 2013). As their numbers grew, the FLN had begun to use larger-scale attacks directed at French settlements and even Muslim areas if they were thought to be at all sympathetic to the colonial power (Lilley, 2012) (Christopher and Clarke, et. al, 2013). The FLN attack on civilians around Philippeville resulted in more than 120 deaths, but the government's response killed 1273 as a "conservative estimate" (Lilly, 2012, p. 4). The pattern of violence is easy to predict. France responded with significant force in the Battle of Algiers, 1957. The Battle of Algiers was nine months of the 10th Parachute Division executing, rounding up, and torturing insurgents (Christopher and Clark, et. al, 2013). The French imposed brutal direct counterinsurgency tactics like quadrillage and ratisage which lost the support of the people that the FLN then gained.

## Revolutionary Outcome

Amid swelling support for the FLN, France found that they could not continue to trust the police and the military to protect their interests. The torture and otherwise morally questionable methods police used for interrogation were gaining more attention in and outside of Algeria, and the violence was becoming expensive and

unsustainable (Metz, 1985). By 1961, de Gaulle had abandoned the hope of keeping Algeria French, and even feared an Algerian takeover of the military in France (ibid.). On March 18, 1962, talks in Evian, France, concluded, with an agreement on a ceasefire and a subsequent vote on Algerian independence. Thus, the French counterinsurgency tactics failed to address the political demands of the Algerian people and failed to suppress the Algerian revolution.

## The Algerian Civil War 1988-1999

The Algerian Civil War of the 1990s came about after the 1988 Black October Riots spurred on from economic distress. (Lilley, 2012). The populace's discontent included rising unemployment, inflation, and government mismanagement in addition to the drop in the price of oil (Tlemcani 2008). Violent repression by the FLN government followed the events of the 1988 Black October Riots and became the inciting incident for the upcoming Civil War. Out of the frustration and dissent, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was created in 1989. Previously, the only party authorized was the FLN, but the National People's Assembly rescinded the one-party rule paving the way for the FIS to gain almost 200 seats in the general election of 1991 (Lilley, 2012). The FLN saw this electoral success as a threat to their monopoly on power and so the military cancelled elections and installed Mohammed Boudiaf, a founder of the FLN, as president. The post-coup government declared a state of emergency to use what is effectively martial law and disbanded the FIS. However, the FIS had an armed wing, Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) and other anti-regime groups became active (Lilley, 2012). One group in particular, the Armed Islamic Group or GIA contended that violence was the only way to de-platform the FLN (Lilley, 2012). They used largely symbolic targets for sporadic terror and eventually graduated to targeting all foreigners and non-Muslims (Lilley, 2012).

## FLN Response and Atrocities

The FLN succeeded as an insurgent force once but now the regime faced one. They opted for a more Clausewitzian indirect approach by installing officers in security forces as informants for intelligence gathering and for stirring divisions among the fighters (Tlemçani, 2008). The FLN attempted to push the GIA to be more radical in order to make the population side with the state for protection. Additionally, the FLN trained its forces in anti-guerilla warfare tactics as the conflict brought the number of insurgents to over 20,000 by 1993. (Lilley, 2012). The state authorized harsh interrogation methods and instilled fear in the general populace to prevent cooperation with the insurgencies (Lilley, 2012). The FLN attempted to push the insurgents into being more extreme in theory and praxis not so much as a Marighellian coercion into overreaction, but in order to alienate allies and divide the groups (Lilley, 2012). It seemed to be taking up similar tactics that the French Colonial forces were using in order to split the insurgents from the regular populace as a resource.

Eventually, infighting and disagreement among the armed groups' use of violence led to their factionalizing and resultant loss of effectiveness (Lilley, 2012). The army was able to infiltrate enough of the GIA to force division and work with local militias to extend their counterinsurgency efforts (Tlemceni 2008). In 1995, the state was able to hold elections where General Zeroual was elected President (Lilley, 2012). Unfortunately, this did not, on its own, restore legitimacy to the FLN government, but they did maintain the upper hand militarily. The GIA and other groups began losing ground. The Armed Islamic Group was thought to be the most ideologically extreme of the anti-regime groups (Mass Atrocity Endings, 2015). Ultimately, this would lead to its demise. Between 1997 and 1998 the GIA committed enough atrocities to lose support on account of its indiscriminate use of violence against civilian targets without a political end (Lilley, 2012). The GIA's loss of legitimacy resulted in

negotiations between the AIS and the government (Lilley, 2012). In 1999 Abdelaziz Bouteflika was elected President and he successfully fostered enough civil discourse and military supremacy to make the last remnants of the GIA largely obsolete as a threat (Lilley, 2012).

## Nagl and the Algerian Civil War

The FLN's tactics to discourage FIS members from becoming insurgents were strikingly similar to the French tactics in the Independence war. Following the political disenfranchisement of the FIS and the subsequent rise of the GIA and AIS, the FLN interrogated suspected insurgents with inhumane treatments such as sexual abuse, water torture, and electrocution (Lilley, 2012: p.9). As with the Independence War, these were Jominian means to a Clausewitzian end; by using brutality against suspects, they sought to frighten Algerians out of supporting the insurgents. This period of time marked an intense campaign of indirect counterinsurgency strategy in Algeria of ambiguous success. Although the FLN's tactics were not strictly Jominian, neither did they address Clausewitz's counterinsurgency trinity. Rather, constant encounters with random killings, severe stress, and intense scrutiny kept the Algerian people on edge and uncertain of their surroundings (ibid. p.9). And while the constant threat of suspicion polarized Algerians either towards or away from the insurgent groups, it also allowed those groups to demand legitimacy from the Algerian government. Ultimately, the insurgents' own dissonance led to their downfall.

The Clausewitzian notion that war is a continuation of politics means that these various groups naturally banded together to achieve their political goals (ibid. p.11); however, their fragmented ideologies kept them from combining for collective strength. The addition of the FLN's heavy use of fear tactics, which kept noncombatant Algerians close to their homes and disconnected from each other, meant that the insurgencies had little network

among the people. When the GIA, specifically, failed, it was because their doctrine of never-ending terror no longer served the interests of the people, and instead lost legitimacy in their eyes.

The FLN's similarity to France's tactics did not lead to the same results in the civil war. According to Mao's "fish in the sea" counterinsurgency theory, which simply says that an insurgency survives because it stays connected to the communities that give it resources, the FLN conducted a successful indirect counterinsurgency. (Nagl, 2002: p. 28). Under these strategies, the AIS and the GIA became increasingly fragmented and, in the GIA's case especially, alienated from the interests of the people. But this shift cannot be credited in large part to the FLN, when the insurgents did so much to harm their own case. The exceptional brutality conducted by the GIA contributed heavily to the FLN's ability to turn the populace against the insurgencies and win their political support. While the FLN did not necessarily defeat the insurgent groups, they simply outlasted them, allowing them to become disconnected from their own support bases and eventually become irrelevant.

## No Revolutionary Outcome

The GIA and other armed groups did not overthrow the FLN government. They ultimately ended up conceding to the negotiations via the FIS (Lilley, 2012). There was not a significant revolutionary outcome since the insurgent groups did not come to power over the existing government. The FLN applied Marighellian thinking as he advocated for guerilla fighters to be hyper conscious of infiltration and spying (Marighella, 1969). However, it appears the FLN was able to infiltrate and cause divisions and infighting within and among the groups anyway. The legacy of the war for independence the decades prior may have had the regime at the advantage since they were familiar with recent asymmetrical



warfare and applying Marighella. The armed groups were not able to capitalize on the advantages of being more mobile and they were up against a regime that consisted of the institution that conducted a successful insurgency campaign prior. In this case the insurgents were fighting an entity that had already fought a guerilla insurgency and thus were at a disadvantage. Marighella's ideas were present in both sides of the civil war, but the GIA could not hold onto legitimacy long enough to drain the states' political will.

## Conclusion

Algeria's tumultuous history presents a pair of similar revolutionary situations with vastly different revolutionary outcomes. In both cases, all sides used some level of violence for their political goals, but only in the first case was the opposition against the state successful in overthrowing the status quo. In both cases, Marighella's influence was apparent particularly with the FLN against the French in the Independence War. In terms of Nagl's theories of counterinsurgencies, the ruling governments in both cases failed to conduct truly effective operations; it just so happens that the FLN was able to outlast the multiple insurgent groups that hoped to overthrow them. The incredible brutality used on both sides, in both the Independence War and the Civil War, followed Jominian tactics to achieve their own political ends: ultimately, both wars followed Clausewitzian patterns in which the war ended when the political goals were in sight.

Still, these two main conflicts of Algeria's contemporary history present striking examples of revolutionary situations with vastly different outcomes, despite the similarities of the conduct. Amidst shocking violence, indiscriminate guerilla tactics, and state-sponsored torture, two Algerian insurgencies met vastly different fates against the governments they opposed.

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# 17. The Czechoslovak Revolutions



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“You do not become a  
”dissident” just because you  
decide one day to take up  
this most unusual career. You  
are thrown into it by your  
personal sense of  
responsibility, combined with  
a complex set of external  
circumstances. You are cast  
out of the existing structures  
and placed in a position of conflict with them. It begins as  
an attempt to do your work well and ends with being  
branded an enemy of society.”

— Vaclav Havel

The revolution in Czechoslovakia offers a unique case study for many reasons, one being that it was a revolution experienced in two stages. The first stage, the Prague Spring of 1968, ended when the Soviet Union sent Warsaw Pact troops to invade Czechoslovakia and take back control of the country. The second stage, the Velvet Revolution of 1989, resulted in a peaceful separation from the Communist Soviet Union. Although the Prague Spring may have ended in a “complete re-Sovietization” of the country, it should not be seen as a failure or as wholly separate from the Velvet Revolution (Schwartz, 1970). The efforts made by citizens and political leaders alike during the 1960s were essential to the success that the country reached in 1989. The earliest student-led protests set a precedent for the “relatively spontaneous and peaceful nature” that marked the revolution as a whole (Goodwin, 1995: p. 588). Although the protests played a major role in both parts of the revolution, the Prague

Spring likely would not have come about without some support from prominent political leaders such as Alexander Dubček. Thus, the Prague Spring established another important factor that contributed to the country's eventual revolution: the need for simultaneous top-down and bottom-up revolutionary efforts.

Although both stages of the revolution contributed to the country's eventual success, it is important to examine them as separate revolutionary situations. Looking at each movement critically provides insight into what causes a revolutionary situation to result in a revolutionary outcome and what can cause it to stagnate. This chapter will apply two main theorists to guide our analysis of the revolution: Theda Skocpol and Chalmers Johnson. Skocpol's theories on revolution examined the structural forces behind a revolution. Skocpol's writing focused on "social revolutions;" this type of revolution must have "basic changes in social structure and political structure [occurring] together in a mutually reinforcing fashion." (Skocpol, 1979: p. 5) Skocpol's writings help to explain the nature of the Czechoslovakian revolution and how both movements played out. Chalmers Johnson wrote extensively on the "Communist World" and the stages commonly found within Communist regimes. Johnson's process theory states that a revolution depends on three conditions: disequilibrium, intransient elite, and a contingency factor. This chapter will apply those conditions to the Prague Spring and Velvet Revolution to explain how the Communist regime affected Czechoslovakia and why it eventually fell in the country.

## The Prague Spring

The Prague Spring began in 1968, but the Czechoslovak people had a growing frustration for the Soviet Communists in the years leading up to the revolutionary situation. The Soviet's control over Czechoslovakia began in 1945 when they freed the country from

Nazi occupation. In February of 1948, the Soviets formally seized control over the country when the Communist Party rose to power and forced all other coalitions out of office. The Czechoslovak people fought against the idea of Communists taking full control of the nation from the beginning; they turned to then-president Edvard Beneš “to stand firm against the ever-rising flood of Communist intimidation and terror,” but he could not stop them from seizing power (Lukes, 2011: p. 442). In the years following, the Communist Party implemented many policies that only exacerbated the Czechoslovak people’s distrust of and frustration with the party. The Communists’ planned economy played a crucial role in creating mass frustration within the country. By the 1960s, the system created a “deep crisis” in the nation that affected the country’s population on all levels (Gliniecki, 2018: p. 2). By 1967, the majority of Czechoslovak citizens, from the working class to the elite, were ready for a change in government.

In January of 1968, the Soviet Union appointed a new leader to Czechoslovakia: Alexander Dubček. While he may have been a Communist, he offered a more humanitarian approach to the ideology. Dubček believed in “socialism with a human face” and advocated for “both decentralization and liberalization” within Czechoslovakia (Goodwin, 1995: p. 593 and Bandow, 2020) Although he advocated for more human rights than previous Communist leaders did, he only pushed the government for “reforms within strict limits” (Gliniecki, 2018: p. 7). Although his efforts may have had little significance in terms of policy, his words created a symbolic change in the minds of the Czechoslovak people. Following his rise to power, “the free press flourished, artists and writers spoke their minds” (Santora, p. 2018). Students and other intellectuals played a major role in the rest of the Prague Spring. In the months leading up to the Soviet’s invasion, the country saw a steady rise in peaceful student-led protests, demanding the liberalization of their country. These protests became a greater threat to the Soviet Union as the months wore on and the students got increased support from disparate groups like workers unions and intellectual elites

(Gliniecki, 2018: p. 8). By August of that year, the Soviet Union realized how dangerous these peaceful protests were. Knowing that if the protesters got their way and Czechoslovakia became a more liberal country, it would be a “threat to [the Soviet Union’s] regional power and could signal weakness on the world stage” (Kopsa, 2019). On August 20, 1968, the Soviet Union sent Warsaw Pact troops to invade Czechoslovakia, detain Dubček, and stifle the peaceful protests with force, ending the Prague Spring.

Although the Prague Spring may have ended in August of 1968, the efforts towards democratization continued throughout the 21-year period between the two revolutionary situations. On January 16, 1969, less than five months after the Warsaw Pact troops invaded, a Charles University student named Jan Palach set himself on fire in order to protest the “erosion of Czechoslovakia’s reforms” under Soviet rule (Amstutz, 1969). Palach died shortly after his self-immolation, but he remained as a symbol for Czechoslovakia’s freedom for decades after. Dissent continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s while Communism still reigned in the country, but it did not exist on a large scale until the start of the Velvet Revolution.

## The Velvet Revolution

The Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia lasted from November to December 1989 and marked the beginning of a new democratic era for the people of the modern-day Czech Republic and Slovakia. The phrase “Velvet Revolution” is credited to Czech dissident Rita Klímová, and signifies the idea that the revolutionary outcome was obtained without the use of violence (Kopsa, 2019). Looking at it from a larger context, the Velvet Revolution occurred around the same time other Eastern European countries struggled towards freedom from communist rule. While Communist party factions negotiated themselves out of power over a period of several months in places like Poland and Hungary, the collapse of Communism

in Czechoslovakia happened much faster – occurring over several weeks instead. As a result, the supporters and leaders of the Velvet Revolution had to take responsibility for the government almost immediately after Communism fell (Wolchik, 1990: p. 414). They were led by the longtime dissident and human rights activist Vaclav Havel, the first non-Communist government emerged in Czechoslovakia for the first time in 41 years.

In the late 1980s, Czech and Slovak citizens began to openly challenge the Communist system: dissident groups formed, the number of unauthorized protests and demonstrations increased, relationships were formed between longtime opposition figures and new activists, and citizens became radicalized to the oppositional cause (Wolchik, 1990: p. 414). In 1989, protests began, occurring as early as January, marking the 20th anniversary of the self-immolation of Jan The Czechoslovak Revolution 5 Palach. The turning point, however, came on November 17th with the largest protest in 20 years. On this first night of protests, thousands of students marched peacefully through Prague’s city center until they were stopped by riot police conducting a cordon of the area. The two sides came face-to-face, and though the protests were nonviolent, the police cracked down hard on the protesters by sealing off escape routes and attacking them physically (Steinzova, 2019). Word of the authorities’ brutality from the first night of protests spread, and rather than help to quell the demonstrations, it instead fueled their rapid growth and continuation. On November 21st, the fifth consecutive day of protests, crowds of demonstrators numbered around 200,000 people in Prague’s Wenceslas Square. On November 24th, the crowd grew to around 300,000 people. By November 26th, the protests had grown so large that they were forced to move to a larger space to accommodate the incredible numbers; about half a million people crowded together in Letna Park in Prague to hear addresses from Havel and other opposition leaders (Steinzova, 2019). On November 28th, after constant protests and workers’ strikes, the Communists announced they would cede their power. On December 29th, 1989, the revolutionary

situation ultimately resulted in a revolutionary outcome when Havel was appointed as interim President of Czechoslovakia (Kopsa, 2019 and Steinzova, 2019).

## Skocpol's Theories on Revolution

Theda Skocpol's theory of revolution aptly explains both the Prague Spring as well as the Velvet Revolution. Skocpol's theory of revolutionary situations revolves around structural forces leading to revolutionary situations. She also presents the idea of a "social revolution." A social revolution, as defined by Skocpol, is a change in social structure as well as government institutions led by a class-based revolt from below (Skocpol, 1979). To differentiate from a normal revolutionary situation, in a social revolution, it is important that the government The Czechoslovak Revolution 6 institutions are not the only things that change, it has to include the change in social structure as well. Skocpol also put forward two necessary conditions for a revolutionary situation: a crisis of state that the government cannot meet leading to a division in either the elites or the army, and patterns of class dominance that determine which social class will take advantage of the revolutionary situation to lead said situation. (Skocpol, 1979). International context is also important in Skocpol's theory, as observation of the events in the international community serves as an important piece of revolutionary situations. Both the Prague Spring and Velvet Revolution exhibit the qualities Skocpol describes to be classified as social revolutions. It is important to note, however, that the outcome of the Prague Spring functioned more as a precursor to the Velvet Revolution than a normal revolutionary outcome as described by Skocpol. Understanding how and why both revolutionary situations came to be in Czechoslovakia and how they resolved is better understood when applying Skocpol's theory to both.



Following World War II, the Soviet Union quickly took over control in Czechoslovakia. Although there were hopes within the country that leadership would come from within, a bureaucracy quickly formed taking control of the power, as well as the economy. The hopes for a worker-led economy were dashed by the lack of a worker-led democracy (Gliniecki, 2018). By establishing a distinct class of the wealthy bureaucracy led by Soviet rulers, the beginnings of a class struggle were in place. Quickly thereafter, some civil unrest began. The working class wanted control of this new society and wanted a democracy that the people were behind, but the Soviet bureaucracy stopped this from happening and, instead, implemented a planned economy. At the start of the 1960s, the Czech economy began to falter. Since their industrial sector failed to function well, the average member of the working class experienced a loss in quality of life, adding to the already established frustrations of lack of autonomy (Thompson & Llewellyn, 2020).

Thereafter in 1967, intellectuals and students began to express discontent with peaceful protests and attempted discussion with the local Communist party (Gliniecki, 2018). This, as well as observations of the fall of Poland, Hungary, and Eastern Germany serve as important international context for Skocpol's theory since Czechoslovakia could observe other societies able to break free from the Soviet grip. Following Skocpol's theory, there was international context and reasons to revolt, as well a pattern of class dominance which led to the workers becoming inspired to ask for social and institutional changes. This leads into Skocpol's other necessary condition for a revolutionary situation since the local Communist party began to differ in action and belief from the Soviet Communist party. Dubček agreed to reforms within the country, and although they were meek, the bureaucracy was split (Gliniecki, 2018). Both of Skocpol's necessary conditions for a revolutionary situation were met during the Prague Spring. The structural forces within the country began pushing for social and institutional reforms. The bureaucracy was not able to take immediate control of the situation, so the Czech workers were able to secure reforms

to allow other parties to be a part of the government and economic change. This, by Skocpol's definition, was a social revolution. The outcome was determined by the struggles the workers had in their revolt, since Warsaw Pact troops were sent into Czechoslovakia to push back said reforms. The working class were not able to secure complete autonomy, but they still succeeded in achieving social and political reform via a class-based movement from below. Skocpol's theory lends itself well to understanding the proceedings of the Prague Spring, from the revolutionary situations to the revolutionary outcome.

The application of Skocpol's theory for the onset of the Velvet revolution is rather similar to that of the Prague Spring. Similar to that time, the world context was permissive for a revolutionary situation. Gorbachev, the president of the Soviet Union at the time, was calling for reforms of the Communist party. On top of this, the Berlin wall fell merely 8 days before a particularly large protest within the Velvet Revolution. (Kopsa, 2019). The global context loaned itself to the ideology that the Czechoslovak people could fight against the bureaucracy and gain independence, on top of the partial success they had following the Prague Spring (Glenn, 1999). With the permissive global context already loaning itself to a revolutionary situation, both of Skocpol's necessary conditions were on their way to being met. On November 17th, 1989, during a student demonstration for the 50th anniversary of a student's death at the hands of the Nazi party, the military police intervened. The day after, an alleged report came out that a student had been killed during said intervention (Glenn, 1999). This led to a student group as well as many theatres calling for strikes, quickly leading into another call for reform from the government, as previously desired during the Prague Spring.

Mass protests against the state broke out through the end of 1988, with over 10,000 people in attendance (Luers, 1990). This fulfilled Skocpol's other necessary condition, a crisis that the state could not control. Sure enough, it led to a dissonance between those in power. The state attempted to use the military to quell the rebellions,

which led to the arrest of Havel, who was a spearhead for the revolutionary group. Havel's arrest became a strong unifying factor for the Czech people. A petition to get him out of jail garnered support from not just the students and theatres leading the protests, but from other groups within the country as well. At the same time, draft bills were put forward in Parliament for social reform and change. On November 27th, following a relatively successful protest by the Civic Forum, that established themselves as the The Czechoslovak Revolution 9 revolutionary group, as well as the spokespeople for negotiations with the state. (Glenn, 1999). The establishment of the Civic Forum meets the criteria for another one of Skocpol's necessary conditions of revolution. The pattern of the bureaucrats dominating over the working class gave rise, once again, to a class-based movement from below which took advantage of the situation and was a general displeasure with the Soviet bureaucrats and took control of the revolutionary situation.

On November 28th, the Communist party announced it would give up its control over Czechoslovakia. Following this, Havel became the Interim president of Czechoslovakia on December 29th, 1989 (Kopsa, 2019 and Steinzova, 2019). The revolutionary outcome observed in the aftermath of the Velvet Revolution would be expected, as per Skocpol's theory. The people had support from the international community in securing a regime change, there was dissonance from the Communist party, and Dubček was willing to bow under pressure; all of these factors led to a social revolution. The Czechoslovak people were finally able to have their own economy controlled by their own as well as their own democracy, free from the rule of bureaucrats. The social system changed as well as the government institutions, and the revolutionary outcome of the social revolution that was the Velvet Revolution resulted in the people gaining freedom from Soviet control.

## Chalmers Johnson and Changes in the

## Communist World

Chalmers Johnson expanded on actor-oriented, structural, and conjunction theories of revolution with his idea of process theories. As discussed in Chapter Eight, Johnson's process theory requires disequilibrium, intransient elite, and a contingency factor. In the revolutionary situation of the Czechoslovakian revolution, the Prague Spring, the disequilibrium that led to mass protests and demonstrations for reforms was the planned economy. Under the Stalinist planned economy, the Communist bureaucrats in each state determined which industry they wanted to focus on. In Czechoslovakia, by focusing on heavy machinery, rather than consumer goods, the economic growth rate fell to 0% (Gliniecki, 2018). With the Communist regime refusing to reform the economy to limited capitalism, this equates to a disequilibrium that the state refuses to fix for the people. Even though Alexander Dubček was forced to roll back his plan for political, economic, and social reforms, the desire to fight disequilibrium followed the masses until the next revolutionary situation, the Velvet Revolution of 1989.

As for Johnson's intransient elite condition, these were bureaucrats in the Communist party who either fought to keep Stalinism as the population began demonstrating for reforms, or bureaucrats who reinforced normalization policies after Warsaw troops rolled into Prague and Dubček repealed his reforms. Antonín Novotný, the First Secretary of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia before Alexander Dubček was a hard-lined Stalinist. He and his supporters in the bureaucracy are the intransient elite in the first revolutionary situation. Once Dubček took Novotný's place in office, he relaxed censorship of the media so they could openly criticize Novotný and his supporters in hopes of eliminating their ideas from the bureaucracy (Kalvoda, 1978: p. 356). Clearly this open criticism only lasted until the reforms were reversed and Dubček was taken out of office in 1969. Dubček was replaced by Gustáv Husák, reinitiating the intransient elite in the Czechoslovak

bureaucracy. In order to buy the passivity of the population, the normalization process, initiated by Husák, allowed for slightly more availability to consumer goods (Pierce, 2009). While this intransigent elite's plan of normalization held off demonstrators for a few decades, they were not able to hold control forever as other elites within the party, intellectual elites, and artist elites began defecting.

Johnson's final condition in his process theory is contingency, or something that ignites the public to attempt a revolutionary situation. Many contingency factors can be argued for both the Prague Spring and the Velvet Revolution, but only a few will be focused on in this chapter. As previously discussed, Dubček eliminated censorship of the press in hopes of having the masses criticize Novotny and his supporters. Journalists did this at first, but then began using their new freedom to criticize the whole Communist system (Kalvoda, 1978: p. 356). The removal of censorship is a contingency factor that allowed people to spread revolutionary ideas against the dysfunction of the state to the masses. Dubček coming into power can also be seen as a contingency factor. His reforms to the communist system sparked nationalist liberalization.

In terms of the Velvet Revolution, one of the most profound contingency factors was the "Sinatra" doctrine presented by Mikhail Gorbachev. In October 1989, Gorbachev announced that the Soviet Union, "had no right, moral or political right, to interfere in the events..." (Keller, 1989). Without fear of Soviet intervention, the people of Czechoslovakia felt safe to demonstrate, protest, and strike. Although it did not stop the police from cracking down on demonstrators during Jan Palach week, it did prevent large-scale military terror from the Soviet soldiers, which encouraged the masses to continue protesting for their rights.

Along with the process theory, Chalmers Johnson's theory on changes in Totalitarian Communism also applies to the Czechoslovakia revolution. In 1966, a committee of scholars, the Planning Committee for Comparative Communist Studies, was appointed to discuss new models for explaining changes in

Totalitarian Communist systems (Johnson, 1970: p.1). The ideas that came from these meetings were composed into a volume, *Changes in Communist Systems*, with Chalmers Johnson as the editor and writer of the first chapter. In his chapter, Johnson outlines four changes that are sometimes observed in Communist regimes. The first being changes in the political system, specifically from a one-party system to multi-party system (1970: p. 3). Second, when there is a change in the state dependence on terror to force a desired behavior from the public (1970: p. 3). Third, when there are changes in the economic structure. Last, when there is an externally imposed Communist regime, there can be changes in the freedoms of the formerly independent states (1970: p. 3). Johnson argues that when one of these changes occur, there is a domino effect in which the population now has expectations of change in other areas (1970: p. 3). These changes can lead to revolutionary situations in Communist regimes, unlike in other totalitarian regimes.

When the Communist revolutionary ideology is injected into new states, there are two components in the party's strategy. The first is called "goal culture", which is the ideology's "image of the ultimate utopia, its idealized contrast to the present" (1970: p.7). The second component is called "transfer culture", and it gives the steps to policy formation that will progress the society towards the goal culture (1970: p.7). In the case of Czechoslovakia, the goal culture of the Soviet Union and the Communist party was to have control over the industry, economy, and social affairs within the state. Under Soviet rule, Czechoslovakia added to the spread of Communist control, along with the neighboring Eastern European states. In order to obtain this goal culture, the Soviets used a transfer culture of coercion, threats of repression, forced industrialization, elimination of property sovereignty, and others to maintain their monopoly on Eastern European states. When the mobilization of the transfer culture is not supported by the people, they become alienated (1970: p.11). After the Red Army saved Czechoslovakia from Nazi occupation, they were forced into Stalin's idea of a planned economy. This tactic of transfer culture made the Czech and Slovak

people alienated from the Communist party because they were not prepared for, or informed of, drastic revolutionary changes both politically and economically. It can be argued that the persistence of transfer culture in Czechoslovakia, after the threat of Germany died down, became unnecessary in the eyes of the population.

Anything distracting from the overarching goal culture—in this case the goal mobilization was rapid industrialization of Czechoslovakia— is automatically condemned out of fear that the Communist regime could fall. Johnson explains that mobilizing only the economic sector leads the public to demand mobilization in other sectors, specifically the political and social sectors. This is why the reforms presented by Dubček made masses of the population so hopeful, with his policies of personal freedoms. In 1989, the main protest groups, including the Civic Forum were pushing to have negotiations with the Communist party. This negotiation went against the Communist goal culture, so during the Jan Palach demonstration week, the police cracked down on the protestors. The Communist party finally gave in to the Civic Forum. When Civic Forum was finally invited to negotiate with the Communist party, they were granted seats for representation alongside the Communists.

Moving to multi-party representation was Johnson's first change in Totalitarian Communist regimes. Additionally, in November, after being attacked on the 17th by police forces, a mass strike was planned for the next day. During this strike, the police forces were told not to interfere (Kopsa, 2019). Giving up the use of terror is the second change in Johnson's theory of Communist systems. The third change came along with the negotiations with the Communist party; they moved from a centralized economy to a more market focused economy. The final change embodies the whole revolution in Czechoslovakia. They were able to become an independent nation, apart from the Soviet Union.

## Conclusion

The revolution of what is formerly known as Czechoslovakia is a rare case, but in this chapter, we used the theories of Theda Skocpol and Chalmers Johnson to better understand why the Prague Spring and Velvet Revolution occurred the way that they did. Defining the revolutionary situations as “social revolutions,” as according to Skocpol, explains why both movements came about. The political, economic, and social structures of Czechoslovakia made it possible for the revolutions to occur, but those structures were not weak enough to allow for a successful revolutionary outcome until 1989. Johnson’s writing examined many of the factors that were essential to a Communist regime’s success or defeat and why, after more than a 40-year period of control over Czechoslovakia, those conditions no longer made them successful in the country.

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## 18. The Iranian Revolutions



*Ali Khamenei speech during Iranian revolution – Imam Reza hospital , Mashhad photo posted by Khamenei.ir is in the public domain*

“We are the generation of Social Media; our biggest Revolution is a Tweet of 141 Characters.”

– Sandra Chami Kassis  
(Twitter, 2013)

In order to understand the theories of revolution outlined in this book, several cases of revolution around the world need to be looked at.

This chapter will focus specifically on the revolution that Iran endured in 1979 and then the Green Revolution that later occurred in 2009. Before providing an analysis of the Iranian Revolution through the lens of Brinton’s stages of revolution and Skocpol’s theory of revolution, it is important to understand a brief background of Iran leading up to the country’s revolutionary situation.

The religious composition of Iran plays a major role in the analysis of the Iranian revolution, and by the 1700s, 89% of Iranians identified as Shia Muslims (DeFronzo, 1991). Fast forward to the 1900s, during this time the Qajar Dynasty ruled over the Iranian region (DeFronzo, 1991). Under this dynasty, Iran had strong international relationships with Russia and Britain (DeFronzo, 1991). Often Iran would provide economic favors to these countries and as World War I occurred, these relationships only strengthened due to advancements in technology and the switch from coal to oil. The Iranian people already disliked that their government seemed to cater to the Russians as well as the British. Then, in 1921, those feelings intensified even more when the Qajar Dynasty was overthrown. At this point in history, Russia and Britain were not on

the best of terms, so the British intervened in Iran to help replace the Qajar Dynasty with a regime that would be better suited to British interests, thus starting the Pahlavi dynasty in 1926 (DeFronzo, 1991).

With the change to the Pahlavi dynasty, Iran immediately started trying to modernize their country (DeFronzo, 1991). The Pahlavi Dynasty aimed to expedite the growth of their new middle class. However, in the process of all of this modernization, the Pahlavi Dynasty started restricting the power of the clergy (DeFronzo, 1991). As the Pahlavi Dynasty worked to achieve reforms, some believed that the Shia influence within Iran would only slow progress towards social change. The Iranian people did not agree with these actions. Rather than modernizing, Iranians viewed this more as westernizing. However, The Pahlavi dynasty, particularly Mohammad Reza Shah, strategically implemented his policies. The Shah countered new policies with actions to appease the Iranian people even though he had a liberal agenda (DeFronzo, 1991). For example, he renegotiated the oil agreement between Iranians and the British. The new agreement awarded Iran with more favorable terms (DeFronzo, 1991). Through this action, the Shah aimed to be viewed as a strong, independent leader rather than a puppet to the west.

Despite the Shah's best efforts at appeasing his people while also modernizing Iran, the Iran he created had one fatal flaw. Two distinct cultures existed within Iran, each with far different values. One culture within the Iranian people consisted of a new middle class that conformed to western ideals and did not adhere strictly to religious values and traditions. The other culture within the Iranian people stringently followed the ulama and their religious guidance no matter how much the Shah tried to separate religion from his policies. The individuals adhering to this culture saw the Shah's decisions as a complete disregard for the tradition of the Islamic religion. Between these two cultures, discontent among the Iranian people only grew stronger which set the stage for the revolutions in this chapter.

In addition to the distinct cultures, the Iranian people also faced worsening living conditions as well as a lack of ways to participate in the political process. All of these things together contributed to the mass frustration that fostered the revolution. The Iranian people were already frustrated with their government for the reasons mentioned above, so when Ayatollah Khomeini, the main figure head of the opposition during the Iranian Revolution, started speaking out against the Shah regime, the alternative path for the future of Iran he offered was at least considered rather than shunned right away.

## Brinton As It Applies to the 1979 Revolution

Revolutions are not caused simply by unrest and disagreement within a country. Often countries can face revolutionary situations but never truly face any revolutionary outcomes. Instead, revolutions are a process that comes from change and various influential factors.

Crane Brinton's *Anatomy of a Revolution* presents an understanding of this process. Brinton established the consistencies and stages that are applicable to revolutions overall. All of Brinton's stages, including Meisel's addition, are crucial to explore when studying Iran: moderates coming to power, radicals coming to power, the crisis period, thermidor, and the subversion of the revolution to the right wing. This section of the chapter will explore how the Iranian revolution of the late 1970s falls almost directly into line with Brinton's *Anatomy of a Revolution*. Applying Brinton's understanding of revolutions to Iran can help to identify and analyze the factors that can drive revolutionary situations and outcomes.

Brinton established his ideas on revolution from English, French, Russian, and American, revolutions in 1938. However, the process

and characteristics of revolution that he presented reflect the events experienced in Iran with surprising accuracy. The Iranian revolution in 1979 ended the reign of the Shah and resulted in the emergence of the Islamic Republic. Before the revolution, Iran experienced prominent changes regarding the economy and democracy, the country came closer and closer to facing a revolution. The head of Iran, Mohammad Reza Shah implemented many changes within the country that led to damaging effects on citizens. The consequences of the changes implemented were never addressed by Reza Shah, causing Iranians contempt for their government to grow significantly, ultimately leading to the Iranian Revolution (DeFronzo, 1991).

Crane Brinton's *Anatomy of a Revolution* outlines the process by which revolutions occur. He explains the timeline of revolution in terms of power shifts between opposing groups eventually leading to a violent crisis and a resurgence in support for moderate political governance to restore peace. Brinton claims that in the first stage of revolution moderate reformers gain political power. The decision to label the first stage of revolution as the first change in political power is interesting because, especially in the case of Iran, it implies that the unrest and organization before the formal transfer of power is not part of the revolution but pre-revolution. Using Brinton's stages, the 1979 Iranian revolution began after the Shah traveled to the US to receive lung cancer treatment (Milani, 2012). Immediately following his departure his political rival Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran from his exile in France and founded the Islamic Revolutionary Council (Abrahamian, 1982; Abrahamian, 2008). Khomeini's transitional government was supported by an anti-Shah coalition which included Marxists as well as religious hardliners, effectively creating a politically moderate government that came together to craft a new constitution and remove the Shah (DeFronzo, 1991).

The moderate coalition began to fray in 1980 when the Shah died, Iran held free elections, and Iraq invaded. The two main political groups, the Islamic Revolutionary Party (IRP) and the Mujahideen,

had completely different goals and ideas about post-revolution governance. While Khomeini retained power, Bani Sadr, a candidate supported by the Mujahideen, became the first president of Iran. In 1981, Khomeini removed Bani-Sadr from office and consolidated power for himself and religious conservatives (DeFronzo, 1991).

Brinton posits that after moderates have lost power over a country, radicals take advantage of the weakened government and rise to power themselves. This is the second stage of a revolution. When radicals enter into power, the revolution reaches a stage that consists of radical ideologies and reforms. Ayatollah Khomeini's political ascension marks Iran's entrance into this stage. With the Shah's death, Khomeini took full advantage of the weak government that was in place. After removing Bani-Sadr from power, Khomeini called on his supporters to confront the Iranian military in order to gain full power. Eventually, members of the military either aligned with Khomeini or chose to safely remain impartial (DeFronzo, 1991). In 1979, Khomeini put into place a new constitution that officially named him as the rahbar (Iranian Constitution), or political leader of Iran (DeFronzo, 1991). This stage of the Iranian revolution demonstrated how powerful radicals take advantage of weak, moderate governments in order to push a radical agenda forward.

Although the public supported Khomeini, his reign was no more peaceful than the Shah's, and there was popular opposition to the political party he led: the Islamic Revolutionary Party. Following the election of the opposition party candidate, the Mujahideen supported Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, Khomeini began to crack down more forcefully on political opposition. While Khomeini maintained power, he continuously violated human rights and pushed Iran into a crisis period (DeFronzo, 1991). Khomeini's abuse of power and violent repression marks the third stage of the revolution as the country experienced a reign of terror. Brinton established that during this stage, radical leaders attempt to solidify the power that has been gained. When the newly established radical government works to centralize power, leaders often resort to using state power against anyone who opposes it, even its own citizens.

Although Khomeini denounced the corruption of the Shah, it was under his power that human rights were constantly abused. Thousands of citizens were imprisoned for having supported the previous government (Brannigan, 1979). Countless political prisoners were then executed for their connection to the Shah. To note, the number of prisoners executed has never been disclosed to the citizens of Iran (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

The political divide and the internal state in Iran worsened in 1980 when Iraq invaded the country and began supporting the Mujahideen in opposition to Khomeini. This provocation by Iraq lengthened the crisis period within Iran and the conflict lasted eight years, leading to the continued terror against the Iranian people from both sides. The opposition organized bombings across the country and killed many high-ranking political officials. The revolutionary guard put in place by Khomeini's regime committed executions and other human rights abuses in order to repress political opposition. When the two sides finally agreed to a cease-fire in 1988, the internal political polarization between the religious conservatives (IRC) and the secular liberals (Mujahideen) remained, but the appetite for violence did not (DeFronzo, 1991).

Before Khomeini's death in 1989, he named Ayatollah Ali Khomeini to succeed him as rahbar (DeFronzo, 1991). For Iran, Khomeini represents the Thermidor and the return to political moderates in power. The first president elected after the war, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani was an immensely popular and well-known Iranian congressman who created a coalition which included many factions and touted a pragmatic approach to rebuilding the Iranian economy (Parsi, 2007). Due to its diversity, the government under Rafsani remained moderate even as radical groups on either side became agitated. While this government was effective in helping Iran to rebuild from the near decade of violence and repression, it remained relatively weak. However, in 1997, when the liberal president Mohamoud Katami was elected, the conservative religious faction leaned into the power of Khomeini to thwart Katami's attempt to liberalize politics and the media (DeFronzo, 1991). The

religious elite orchestrated the arrest, execution, or disqualification of reformist politicians in the 2005 elections and a conservative president was elected. The election of Mohamoud Ahmadinejad indicated the subversion of weak government by the conservative ruling class. Although Miesel's addendum to Brinton's stages specifies subversion by an authoritarian figure (i.e., Hitler), the 2005 election solidified the power grab by the conservative religious oligarchy in Iran. Despite being created forty years prior, Crane Brinton's stages of revolution describe the political tumult between moderates and radicals of the 1979 Iranian revolution very accurately.

## Skocpol & The Green Revolution

Although the Iranian revolution proved successful and Iran was voted by the people to be an Islamic Republic, Iran had not yet faced all of its opposition. On June 13th, 2009 then-incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad claimed victory over his opponent Mir Hussein Mousavi in the 2009 presidential election (Dagres, 2012). However, the people of Iran believed the election had been far from a fair and free election. Outraged by the election results, Iranians took to the streets to protest the election in response to their new President, (Rouzbeh, 2013). Iran faced the largest demonstration in their country since the overthrow of the Shah regime in 1979. The Iranian government suppressed as many of the protests as possible in response to the public outcry, killing more than 30 Iranians in the process (Dagres, 2012). This course of events is what led to what the world understands as the green wave which, in this chapter, will be analyzed through Theda Skocpol's theory of revolution.

To summarize Skocpol's theory from earlier in this book, Skocpol explains the differences between social revolutions and political rebellions, specifically that social revolutions tend to have national and international effects (Skocpol, 1994). In addition, revolutions



are influenced by structural forces. These structural forces can lead to social revolutions that tend to originate from class-based discontent and the revolutionary outcomes from these uprisings will determine how the regime in charge at the end of a revolution will organize itself (Skocpol, 1994).

Leading up to the Green Revolution, Iran's middle class was growing which resulted in many young, educated individuals that felt as if their country lacked opportunity (Rouzbeh, 2013). This small part of the Iranian population made demands that seemed to align with Western ideals, which through the lens of Skocpol could be considered a change in the social structure of Iran. For example, a few of the demands included an increase in the shrinking economic opportunities, fair political participation, as well as having the freedom of having a dissenting opinion. As a contender for the presidency in Iran, Mir Hossein Mousavi ran for office on a promise to make these reforms and increase civil liberties for young Iranians. The Islamic Republic did not allow for these types of freedoms, and Skocpol's theory of revolution would see this as the inability of the Iranian government to meet the needs of the people. This treatment of the Iranian citizens was quickly displayed on a global platform for the world to see via social media (Rouzbeh, 2013). The green wave turned into what some call a twitter revolution. Unlike anything the world had seen before, many young Iranians encouraged student reform movements by taking to social media platforms, such as Twitter, to show the world via pictures and videos, demonstrations in real time. Skocpol predicts that patterns of class dominance determine which class will rise up to call for change. In the case of Iran, young Iranians, such as students, became the class of individuals calling for that change. Demonstrations and testimonies of the events happening in Iran led to the repressive aspects of Iranian life being put in the spotlight.

Skocpol theorizes that revolutions can transform state organizations, class structures, and dominant ideologies (Skocpol, 1994). However, one of the leading questions when looking at the green wave or the green revolution is this: Was this a revolution at

all? In the eyes of Theda Skocpol, this would be considered a social revolution and Skocpol believes that social revolutions should be analyzed from a structural perspective. Using Skocpol's structural theory, analyzing international contexts and developments at home and abroad affect the breakdown of the state organizations and old regimes and the buildup of new revolutionary state organizations (Skocpol, 1994). In the case of the Iranian Revolution and the Green Revolution, the system implemented in Iran by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini granted absolute and executive power to whoever the supreme leader was (Dagres, 2012). Thirty years after this system was established, the Islamic republic had a boom in youth that demanded certain rights, such as education. Skocpol's theory of revolution outlines that basic changes in social structure and political structure occur in unison which occurred during the Green Revolution in Iran (Skocpol, 1994).

Additionally, technology had advanced tremendously between 1979 and 2009. New technologies allowed for instantaneous communication, and protesters connected with people all over the world and within their own country. Advancements in technology and social media allowed for protesters to spread the word of their movement and mobilize faster. In addition, the spread of technology connected Iranians to expatriates all over the world that fled their own countries (Rouzbeh, 2013). More specifically, "The Student Reform Movements and 2nd of Khordad Front are also products of this period and were equally a result of Iranian society's exposure to neoliberal globalization (Rouzbeh, 2013)." Technology played a major role in decentralizing the revolution which in turn allowed Iranians to connect and mobilize in more discreet, undetectable ways. Since 1999, many protests and movements took place that eventually helped pave the way for Iranians to break the historical silence during the Green Revolution. Globalization did not stop there, it spread new ideas to all spheres of life and Skocpol's prediction that a social revolution would have national and international impacts rang true for Iran. The Green Revolution

paved the way for the use of technology and social media platforms in future revolutions, such as the Arab Spring.

Following Skocpol's structuralist approach, changes in social systems give way to new class interests (Skocpol, 1994). For the case of Iran, people started to consider religious life to be private and should remain personal and outside of the government (Rouzbeh 2013). Furthermore, changes in the way Iranians protested shows the influence of neo-liberalization in Iran (Rouzbeh 2013). Rather than using walls to demonstrate, Iranians took to social media (Rouzbeh 2013). The young, educated Iranians calling for more economic and political opportunity demonstrates the new class interests Skocpol theorizes about. Skocpol also theorizes that rebellious masses will act on their own without influence from external forces (Skocpol, 1994). The revolutionary situation occurred in Iran because of the crisis of the state which created a challenge the state could not meet. The government was not adapting its policies to the growing needs of the people of Iran, ultimately leading to the protests and demonstrations in 2009. Between the dire economic situation and high inflation rates in Iran, as well as the government's inability to address the social needs of its people, the government created an environment where the social and political structure of Iran was strained. By boldly suppressing these protests claiming election fraud, the Iranian government widened the gap between the government and the people, thus blocking any way for the people to express their grievances in the political structure of their own country.

Skocpol believes that another factor in creating a revolutionary situation is that patterns of class dominance determine which group will rise (Skocpol, 1994). However, when looking at the Green Revolution, a regime change did not occur after the green wave of protests. Although many Iranians saw the election as fraudulent, it is also important to note that protesters were not calling for a regime change in the first place. They simply wanted their voices heard and allowed involvement in the political process (Dagres, 2012). Although Skocpol theorizes that social revolutions change both state

institutions and social structures of society, the institutions of Iran did not change when the protests emerged (Skocpol, 1994). In some ways, this was not a successful social revolution because the protests and demand for civil liberties were repressed by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the previous revolution did not resolve the class relations in Iran. After the protests, the outdated monarchists and the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), which had lost credibility, tried joining in the movement. It was too late for the elite and the people felt as if they could not relate to the revolution (Dabashi, 2013). Many expatriate Iranians from all over the world still encouraged democracy.

Ultimately, Skocpol notes that a revolution will happen when the individuals in a society do not share the same values as the institutions of their society (Skocpol, 1994). For the case of Iran, the Green Revolution was an instance where the members of society had differing values from their government that they wanted their institutions to recognize. However, the members of society also still shared many other values with their government, such as the importance of the Islamic religion (Rouzbeh, 2013). So, in June 2009, a full-fledged revolution with a regime change was simply not going to happen. In addition, when it comes to Iran, Skocpol predicted correctly that a social revolution would have both national and international impact. The world had never experienced a revolution that relied so heavily on social media. Through their use of social media platforms, protesters were able to gain international attention to their support that not only put the events unfolding in Iran on the international radar much more quickly than they would have in the past, but this also allowed the entire world to make their judgements about Iranian life from a much more personal perspective.

The Green Revolution was unique for its time. The revolution happened quickly and was quashed by the governing regime swiftly. Although the Green Revolution did not dismantle the regime that the revolution was fighting against, it encouraged people to start speaking out against their government to share with the world what

life in Iran was genuinely like (Dagres, 2012). Ultimately, the future of Iran is uncertain, and it is unknown where and when things in Iran will change. The region could be altered by regional geopolitics which could change the state of affairs in Iran (Dabashi, 2013). Social media allowed for Iranians to connect with others and understand that their frustrations were not singular. For now, though, the Iranian people are biding their time to see what their future holds.

## Final Thoughts

Overall, the Iranian Revolution proves to be a useful case when trying to understand Brinton's stages of revolution. In addition, the Green Revolution shows that Skocpol's theory of social revolutions are more relevant than ever as technology continuously advances, and countries develop. Iran has an immense respect for religion in their society, but many Iranians also want more liberal rights. This clash of cultures plagues the Iranian government and this question still remains today: Can an Islamic theocracy still provide civil liberties to its citizens without sacrificing its religious beliefs or being seen as too pro-Western? As long as this question exists without any resolution, Iran may very well experience more social revolutions in the future.

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## 19. Bolivian Revolution



*Evo Morales 2 year Bolivia by Joel Alvarez is licensed under CC BY 3.0.*

“We cannot have equilibrium in this world with the current inequality and destruction of Mother Earth. Capitalism is what is causing this problem and it needs to end.”

– Evo Morales

Bolivia, like many countries in Latin America, experienced revolutionary movements that changed the political institutions and systems in place forever. A unique aspect of the revolutions that took place in Bolivia is the mobilization of Indigenous populations to get involved in the electoral system and social movements. Indigenous populations for years had little to no political power in Bolivia, but all that changed due to Evo Morales and his control of the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) party. Historically, revolutions in Bolivia were born out of citizens being frustrated with their government and certain neoliberal economic policies that benefited few and hurt many. It can be difficult to explain why revolutions happen, and how to measure their outcomes. Due to the dedication and scholarly work of James Defronzo, there is some explanation as to why these revolutions happened in Bolivia. Collective frustration and citizens being passionate about making their political system more just propelled these revolutions forward. Revolutions in Bolivia have been mobilized by people with little power, but they were able to make historical change.

Starting in 1932, the Bolivian government made it their goal to reclaim land previously lost during a war with Chile; however, it was Paraguay who were currently using the land as a farming area. For



this reason, the Paraguayan government would not allow Bolivia to reclaim their lost land. This led to a war between the two countries and resulted in Paraguay holding onto the land. Not only did this devastate Bolivians for they had lost more land than they started with, but 100,000 soldiers were killed in the process. The people, losing trust in their government, began creating the Revolutionary National Movement (MNR) party.

The MNR party led a coalition putting a heavy focus on Indigenous communal rights, which brought a large following. The organization became prominent in politics, ultimately taking over by 1943. Soon after, Bolivian society began to change. The party provided arms to civilians for their own personal protection, disposed of literacy requirements for voting, and established the National Labor Federation. While the growth of the MNR party appeared to be a turning point in society, there is persistent pushback from opposition groups. Following the 1951 election, in which the MNR party won, their power continued to be compromised. After not winning a clear majority of the vote, General Hugo Ballivian and his military junta ruled the victory invalid. In response, civilian-led armed militias began to rise around the country (Otherwise known as the COB 4 Prominent Bolivian Military during the mid-20th century). Served as president from 1951-1952 members of the national army turned against their leadership. Fights quickly broke out in La Paz over a span of a few days, the military junta was forced to surrender. This short conflict cements the results of the 1951 election and proves to be a precursor to future uprisings.

For the following three decades, Bolivia remained relatively stable; however, their political stability did not overshadow growing grievances within the country. Starting in 1985, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank began to implement loan policies within the country, and these neoliberal policies drove the privatization of many Bolivian institutions. While privatization turned out to be a net benefit for the wealthy elites of Bolivia, it did little to help the impoverished majority. In fact, privatization

only led to greater levels of resentment towards the government. Growing unrest reached new heights in 1999 when Sociedade de Investimento e Gestão, a municipal water supply company, took over the water industry in Cochabamba. SEMAPA'S policies increased the water prices drastically and forced the people to get government-issued licenses to collect their own rainwater. The privatization of water had pushed the Bolivian people to their breaking point.

While the privatization resulted in escalated prices, it also marked the beginning of a new revolutionary situation, the first water war. On February 4, 2000, thousands of Bolivians took to the streets protesting SEMAPA. These protests were met with an equally large police force. For two days, protesters and police battled in the streets, leading to numerous arrests and injuries. This resulted in Bolivia declaring a 'state of siege' (McFarren, 2000). This declaration gave police power to detain protesters without a lawful warrant and shut down group gatherings. While they thought this would subdue protesters, it only worsened conditions. Protests had begun to take place all over the country and as they increased, the government's ability to keep order began to dwindle. Ultimately, this led to the de-privatization of the water industry.

The water wars may have ended in a victory for the people, but another issue quickly arose when Gonzalo "Goni" Sánchez de Lozada, the President, began exporting large quantities of cheap natural gas to the U.S. This subsequently led to a gas shortage and gave Bolivians a reason to label him as a 'pawn of the United States'. Once again, violent protests erupted. Protests began to blockade major roads making it difficult for gas exports to travel across the country. In addition, Bolivians demanded Goni's resignation. Goni's initial response to the protest is similar to previous leaders, where the military is sent in for intervention, but only intensifies the conflict. Civilians were killed with 60 Pershings in a single protest in El Alto (Farthing 2016). Goni realized his aggressive strategy was failing, forcing him to halt exportations. Initially Goni thought this might curtail public animosity, but the deaths caused irreversible

damage to his political career. Goni was forced to flee to the U.S. under impending charges of mass murder.

Sanchez de Lozada's demise would make way for the rise of Indigenous leader Evo Morales. Before his run for the presidency, Morales had already gained a following from his fight to maintain coca production going against the U.S policies attempting to eradicate it. In addition to fighting for the production of coca, Morales ran on a platform of nationalization. He pledged to nationalize the gas, oil, and communications industries. In the 2005 election, Evo Morales, part of the MAS party and the first Indigenous candidate running, was declared President of Bolivia. Shortly after Morales took office, a constituent assembly convened during which a new constitution was written. In 2009 the new constitution was put into practice cementing Bolivia's revolutionary outcome.

Today, the revolutionary situation seems to have reignited. Evo Morales the once popular revolutionary leader was forced to flee Bolivia after protests erupted over a potentially illegitimate election. However, the MAS party regained power in the most recent election. While the MAS party has held power for over a decade, many people within the country believe their reign should end. Moreover, the election victory for the MAS party has allowed Morales to return to the country. Due to the controversy surrounding Morales, his return will likely be divisive. The country could see the continuation of protests and civil unrest that took place when Morales was still in power. Following the ratification of the 2009 constitution, Bolivia had seemingly ended their revolutionary situation, but with the MAS party regaining power and Evo Morales coming back to the country Bolivia's revolutionary outcome remains ongoing.

## Stages of a Revolution

In chapter one of *Explaining Social Revolutions: Alternatives to Existing Theories*, James Defronzo outlines critical factors that drive

social and revolutionary movements. Within this chapter, Defronzo states that:

It is likewise too apparent to everyone that revolutions proceed through struggles in which organized political parties and factions are predominantly involved, [a]nd it is recognized that they culminate in the consolidation of new state organizations, whose power may be used not only to reinforce socioeconomic transformations that have already occurred but also to promote further changes (Defronzo, 1991, pg. 12).

For this process to occur, revolutionary situations progress through five distinct stages. First, a society's intellectuals turn against the previously supported regime, followed by the old regime's attempts at reform in order to prevent revolutionary situations from failing. The third stage is marked by internal conflict within the revolutionary group attempting to overthrow power. The fourth stage notes that the post-revolutionary government is moderate. The fifth and final stage indicates the moderate government fails and radicals take power (Defronzo 1991).

Defronzo's first stage of revolution- a society's intellectuals turn against the previously supported regime- directly relates to the 1998 formation of the MAS political party. The MAS party and its leaders represent Bolivia's politically left intellectuals (Defronzo 1991). The party serves as "another expression... [of] discontent with the neoliberal governments" (Shoaei, 2012, 38). Finally, the MAS and its dissident intellectuals would gain the teeth needed to be a legitimate force after gaining the support of Indigenous people. The foundation of the MAS party and its alliance with Indigenous people form a common enemy of the Bolivian government's neoliberal policies and widespread privatization (Webber, 2005, 2-3). Their rise to power and the growing civil unrest of Indigenous communities leads into Defronzo's second stage, and the need for governmental reform.

Defronzo's second stage of a revolution says that the old regime's attempts at reform in order to prevent revolutionary situations fails (Defronzo 1991). The first attempt at change was led by President

'Goni' Sanchez de Lozada after the Water War in 2000. As a result of protests over privatization of Cochabamba's resources, the government promised to review the situation (Schultz, 2003, 35). After there was a failure to act, protests escalated and the revolutionary groups' demands increased from simply lowering water prices to complete nationalization (Schultz, 2003, 35). Ultimately, Goni's failure to act haunted his political career. In 2003, during the first Gas war, Goni's yet again faced with civil unrest and mass protests. His slipping capacity to govern resulted in fleeing the country (Webber, 2005, 4). This marked the beginning of a dispute within the government.

The third stage of revolution included that there is typically an internal conflict in the organization that is attempting to take control of power (Defronzo 1991). For Bolivia, this meant addressing the oppression and prejudice against Indigenous groups. The central problem with trying to gain political power whilst still actively facing barriers placed by the government required them to generate a loud enough voice for those inequalities to be heard. Indigenous groups faced discriminatory laws banning voting, having access to natural resources, and growing specific plants that surrounding communities relied on (Wood 2019). With stark social differences, there was a necessity for mass protests to be well-organized and aggressive enough for recognition as legitimate and equal.

Defronzo's fourth stage of revolution notes that in the beginning, the post-revolutionary government's moderate (Defronzo 1991). During Black October in 2003 and the second Water War in 2005, citizens stopped the economy to object to the neoliberal government selling newly found natural gas deposits to the US, prompting protestors to block entire streets. As the President continued to order violence against his own people, activists countered their force and demanded for him to step down. Though he actively denied it prior, Sanchez de Lozada resigned from office and was replaced by Carlos Mesa. Mesa continued Goni's economic and social policies leading into the second Water War. The

protesters' main goals were the "naturalization of gas, the shutdown of parliament as a show of popular force and determination, the renunciation of Mesa, older themes of the October agenda like holding a trial for Goni, and primarily focusing on the dignity of the citizens" (Goldstone, p. 11). New waves of protests plus the growing support of numerous groups within the country created a re-birth of social movements. Over half a million people hit the streets, many of whom walked from El Alto to La Paz and engaged in street battles with the police. In June of that year, President Mesa resigned, meaning the government went through the line of succession to find a replacement. Eduardo Rodriguez, the chief justice of the Supreme Court, was sworn into office (Webber, 2005, 8). His position was seen as moderate because of his unanimous support from Congress and willingness to compromise with Indigenous groups and search for bipartisan support. Under his Presidency, there was a condition of holding elections within one year of being sworn in. With little plans for his time in office as well as being the 'placeholder' for the next candidate, the election was moved to 2005 and Morales eventually became President (Webber, 2005, 9).

The fifth stage of revolution proclaims once the moderate fails, more extreme leaders seize control (Defronzo 1991). Evo Morales and the MAS party granted Indigenous people the voice and power necessary for change. Morales' amplification of their rights and struggles put them on the map nationally, while simultaneously continuing to fight for citizen rights in regard to possessing their own lands and resources. His involvement prior to his Presidency exemplifies conflicts leading to his success. This begins first, with moderate views coinciding with a focus on naturalization and human rights, and then evolving into more radical viewpoints and policies. In efforts of creating a post-revolutionary government, his main focus shifts onto eradicating the neo-liberal regimes that had previously ruled for decades. Many communities were growing frustrated with how the government prioritized profit over life, which in turn, brought out increased bipartisan support, starting with a moderate approach that connects to Indigenous populations,

coca farmers, and the lower economic class. Since Bolivia's population primarily consists of these groups, his success is heightened by civil unrest and desire. Arguably, despite Evo Morales and the MAS party not achieving formal power yet, they proved capable of dictating the government's actions.

## Guerilla Foco and the Bolivian Revolution

Che Guevara's Foco theory can be aptly applied to the Bolivian revolution, and more specifically, the social unrest beginning in 2000. Che Guevara's theory of revolution consists of three fundamental aspects (Guevara, 1960, 47). First, the corruption of capitalism creates the conditions for revolutions. Second, partisan warfare coupled with psychological warfare produces a successful revolution. And finally, the third aspect consists of Guevara's three lessons of revolutionary movements. Those lessons in order; popular forces can win a war against the army, not all necessary conditions for a revolution must be met, the insurrection can create them, and finally warfare must take place on favorable ground (Guevara, 1960, 65). Working through the steps backwards assists with explaining the Bolivian revolution.

Guevara's third lesson is that the warfare of the insurrection must take place on favorable ground. The warfare during Bolivia's revolutionary situation, if it can be called warfare, took place in urban areas, and thus served as the favorable ground. The two main urban areas of the Bolivian revolutionary situation were Cochabamba and La Paz. Both partisan and psychological warfare waged by the Bolivian protestors were conducted via strikes and blockades. Moreover, the partisan warfare, the warfare against the enemy, directs at the Bolivian government with Gonzalo "Goni" Sanchez de Lozada serving as the government's president. The Bolivian protestors successfully waged psychological warfare through their widespread social unrest. According to Guevara, this

would be supplemented via the urban setting (Guevara, 1960, 77). Most importantly the urban setting allowed the indigenous people to paralyze the industrial portion of Bolivia's economy by implementing widespread general strikes and road blockades (Schultz, 2003, 35). Paralyzing Bolivia's industrial sector proved successful during both the gas and water wars. The urban setting would prove to be the favorable ground for the revolutionary situation and was conducive to the revolutionary conditions.

The favorable ground for the Bolivian revolutionary situation would prove to fulfill Guevara's second lesson that not all necessary conditions need to exist for a revolution to occur, but the insurrection can create them. The two main unfavorable conditions for the Bolivian revolutionaries were battles not occurring on traditional favorable ground and the government coming to power through a popular vote (Guevara, 1960, 48). As noted, the primary warfare of the revolutionary situation took place in Cochabamba and La Paz. However, this is not Guevara's favorable ground. He insists the countryside should be the "basic area" for revolution, though this was not possible for Indigenous people, who make up most of the revolutionary force (Guevara, 1960, 47). This is for two reasons; First, Indigenous people were not armed, and instead had to find other ways to inflict damage against the Bolivian government. Second, the people would have been unable to address their cause for revolution- the privatization of Bolivia's natural resources. Yet, without the jungle setting being an option, the insurrection created its own favorable ground: urban centers.

The revolutionary situation successfully overcame the obstacle of the government's legitimacy (achieved via popular election) by forcing the resignation of the President. The blockades and strikes demonstrated Goni's "absolute incapacity to govern through consent" (Webber, 2005, 4). Goni would ultimately flee the country in 2003, allowing Goni's vice president Carlos Mesa to assume power. However, Mesa would continue to push Goni's neoliberal policies and the privatization of Bolivia natural resources (Webber, 2005, 4). As a result of the continuous protests in Bolivia widening in



2005, the second water and gas war began. This prompted President Mesa to resign from his position, allowing for new presidential elections to be held (Webber, 2005, 7). Indigenous people were then able to elect Evo Morales, one of the key leaders of their movement, as President by popular vote.

Finally, Indigenous groups won their political war after creating all the necessary conditions for revolution. According to Guevara, “the capitalist system (is) destroyed by its own contradictions” (Guevara, 2005). In the case of Bolivia, these contradictions or corruptions are marked by the implementation of neo-liberal policies. These policies resulted in the privatization of national resources and harmed the ones who are supposed to be benefiting from increasing water and electricity prices to the destruction of the national train system (Shultz, 2003, 34). The people responded by calling for the re-nationalization of their once public resources, and eventually, the citizens achieved their goals. President Evo Morales appeased the people’s demands and nationalized their natural resources once again.

The corruption of capitalism in Bolivia manifested itself through neo-liberal policies which resulted in privatizing the country’s natural resources, thus showing the cause for revolutions theory to be successful. The Indigenous people used the country’s urban centers and favorable ground for ‘warfare’ conducted through strikes and blockades. These protests overcame hostile conditions for revolution, like facing a popularly elected leader, by forcing the President’s resignation. Finally, the people achieved success through the election of Evo Morales, who re-nationalized Bolivia natural resources.

## **The Mark Evo Morales Left on Bolivia**

The highly anticipated 2020 Bolivian election marked a significant turning point in government and global interest. The Movement

for Socialism Party (MAS), which for many years was led by Evo Morales, was able to win the election. This election and transition of power back to the MAS party came at a crucial time. In 2019, a turbulent, alleged-illegitimate election process declaring Morales victorious resulted in thousands of protestors taking to the streets. Evo Morales later resigned and fled the country, leaving the highest office in Bolivia vacant. Shortly after Morales' resignation, Jeanine Anez was granted the Presidency and a new conservative government held power in Bolivia.

This was not an easy transition from the MAS party to a conservative leadership, therefore this government was met with opposition and political unrest. The lack of a bipartisan relationship between the interim government and the people led to devastating consequences once COVID-19 reached Bolivia. Jeanine Anez had corruption scandals levied against her, creating mistrust between her and the citizens. Anez's response to the Coronavirus pandemic was unpopular and highly contested by medical professionals. "Anez is not recognized as a legitimate leader, which makes it extremely difficult to coordinate a complex response that the pandemic requires" (Trigo, 2020). Bolivians suffered through high cases and high death tolls. The people wanted a chance to choose their own government and it was finally time for the elections to be held.

Protests continued to break out because the interim government used the coronavirus as reason to delay the election. Many people in Bolivia saw this as an attempt to continue holding power. "Nearly 150,000 miners, labor unionists, coca leaf farmers and Indigenous activists took to the streets last week after the national electoral council delayed the presidential election for the second time" (Faiola, 2020). The time finally came for the people of Bolivia to choose their next President, and the MAS party came out victorious.

After a year of being exiled from his home country, Evo Morales returned to Bolivia to celebrate the MAS parties' success and was welcomed with both glee and suspicion from supporters and political allies. Morales' controversial return shows how he is still a beloved figure to the citizens. Upon his return, Morales was greeted

by an 800-vehicle convoy that led through the regions of Bolivia that aided him in gaining power and notoriety. “For Morales, 61, the homecoming is a chance to celebrate a remarkable political revival by Mas and make a powerful statement about his own political relevance in a profoundly symbolic region”<sup>29</sup> (Phillips, 2020). Morales still remains an integral part of the political identity of Bolivia and still holds a lot of support from the people of Bolivia.

There was clear support across the population, “but many, even within Morales’ party, are thought to be uneasy about the reappearance of a charismatic but deeply divisive figure” (Phillips, 2020). Bolivia was already experiencing high levels of political tension due to the timing of the election, and some feared what Morales’ return would do. Even though Morales had made a triumphant return to Bolivia, there was now a new leader of the MAS party.

Luis Arce, who was handpicked by Evo Morales to take over the MAS party, won primarily with his leadership qualities. Arce’s inauguration was a large event and many celebrated his win and showed their support. For Arce and the people, him winning symbolized a shift back to democracy. Arce stated, “we have reclaimed democracy for Bolivia, and our message is that we will not tolerate any kind of de facto dictatorial regime or coup in Latin America” (Phillips, 2020). The interim conservative government put in power after Morales fled the country in 2019 was picked by the Senate, not voted in by the people. Therefore, after the lack of an adequate response to COVID-19 and accusations of corruption, people were ready to vote this government out.

The government was no longer in power and Luis Arce was now able to start leading the country during a polarizing time and a raging pandemic. While Arce and the MAS party do have a lot of support from the Bolivian people, there is a growing movement of opposition by right-wing and conservative groups against them. Days before the inauguration, people went on strike due to the belief that the results were fraudulent. “Several hundred right-wing protesters in Santa Cruz called on the armed forces to mobilize to

prevent Arce's Movement for Socialism (MAS) party from assuming power. (MercoPress, 2020). While this was not an exceptionally large movement against Arce, it shows the continually growing resistance. These groups, inspired by Luis Fernando Camacho (Creemos), hit the streets in protest.

Camacho, who has long opposed the MAS party and even led protests against Morales in 2019, has become an influential figure for conservative groups in Bolivia. Camacho single handedly created an anti-Morales movement in Bolivia that continues to gain continual support. This began after the 2019 election, where Camacho began his attack on Morales and the MAS party. "Camacho argued that Morales should resign for clear authoritarian overstep—a claim bolstered by the fact that, by running for a fourth term in the first place" (Nugent, 2020). Morales' attempt to stay in power fueled the opposition groups and continue to plague the legitimacy and integrity of the MAS party. This attempted power-grab by Morales stained the MAS party and inspired opposition groups to protest the election results.

Bolivia has long dealt with regime change ranging from military dictatorships to left wing socialist parties. Now that Bolivia has swung back into left socialist control, it begs the question; will these right-wing opposition groups continue to grow? Does it have the potential to be a large-scale new social movement in Bolivia? According to Guevara, "when the forces of oppression come to maintain themselves in power against established law, peace is already broken" (Guevara, 1960, pg. 48). These conservative groups believe that the MAS party is attempting to stay in power by tampering with election results, assuring a MAS party win. However, there is no concrete evidence of fraudulence and the MAS party has campaigned itself on the side of democracy, but right-wing groups continue to fight.

An important thing to continually examine is if the right-wing groups continue to grow and what impact that will have on Bolivian politics. According to the stages of revolutions articulated by Defronzo the leaders of the conservative groups may be the key

to a potential conservative revolution in Bolivia. One of Defronzo's critical pieces of a revolutionary movement is the elite population defecting against the government in power. "Divisions among elites (groups that have access to wealth and power of various types or are highly educated) pit some elite members against the existing government." (Defranzo, 1991, pg.12). Camacho is among one of the elites to turn against the status quo of the MAS party having power in Bolivia and has led opposition groups against this status quo.

Camacho has already gained significant political support and holds a place in the elite population. "Luis Fernando Camacho is a lawyer and former President of the "Comite Pro Santa Cruz," an organization of businesses, unions, and neighborhood associations based in Santa Cruz" (Blansett, 2020). Before Camacho began gaining political momentum, he was a lawyer and a powerful stakeholder in the Santa Cruz community. This powerful position served him well and he was able to gain support from people in Santa Cruz in order to oppose the MAS party. "Santa Cruz is the country's wealthiest region and a bastion of opposition to Morales and his Movement for Socialism (MAS). MAS's support base lies in the west of Bolivia, which is home to most of the country's Indigenous population." (Nugent, 2020). These two regions are close geographically, but politically are worlds apart, and Camacho has been able to capitalize on that divide.

In this scenario the elites in Santa Cruz already oppose the MAS party and are following the lead of Camacho and his right-wing party. Camacho's stance and politics lean far-right and is often compared to other right-leaning leaders in Latin America. "Some Latin American media outlets dub Camacho 'the Bolivian Bolsonaro', in reference to Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, a far-right provocateur" (Nugent, 2020). Camacho was able to inspire the wealthy and powerful in Santa Cruz to essentially oppose the MAS party and everything they stand for. Will this opposition in Santa Cruz grow to a full-blown conservative revolution in Bolivia? Will these right-wing groups one day change the current status quo of Bolivia and possibly be a movement toward a conservative Bolivia?

## Conclusion

The Bolivian revolution of the 2000s traces its roots back to the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement party of the 1940s. The MNR introduced accessible democracy and nationalized resources for Indigenous peoples of Bolivia. Fast forward to the 1980s and the external pressure of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank resulted in neoliberal policies manifesting in Bolivian politics. These neoliberal policies threatened the nationalized resources of the country, cherished by Indigenous peoples. The election of Gonzalo “Goni” Sanchez de Lozado in 1993 finally saw neoliberal policies implemented in Bolivia and the privatization of many public resources from water and oil to the country’s national airlines. These privatizations saw little benefit and instead served to the detriment of the citizens of Bolivia, such as water prices doubling.

The resulting privatizations set the stage for a revolutionary situation in Bolivia. The privatizations sparked a series of protests from 2000 to 2005 backed by the Indigenous peoples of Bolivia, dubbed water and gas wars. And ultimately resulted in the resignation of two presidents, Goni de Lozado and Carlos Mesa, before revolutionary leader, Evo Morales, took office backed by the MAS party. The new government implemented a new constitution and cemented the revolution as a success in their favor.

Two revolutionary theories can be aptly and successfully applied to the Bolivian revolution. First, James Defronzo’s theory and its five stages successfully outlines how Bolivia’s revolutionary situation progressed. From the first stage, society’s intellectuals turned against the regime in power. Marked by the formation of the MAS party in 1998 to combat Bolivia’s neoliberal government. To his fifth and final stage whereby the moderate government fails, and radicals take power. Marked by the MAS’ Evo Morales being elected president.

The second theorist, Che Guevara with his Guerilla Foco theory and its three critical aspects were successfully realized in Bolivia.

The corruption of capitalism occurred due to the implementation of neoliberal policies which failed. Indigenous people successfully utilized both partisan warfare and psychological warfare. With a clearly partisan target, Bolivia's neoliberal policies and the actors who perpetuated said policies. And the psychological warfare waged via the mass social unrest organized into general strikes and road blockades widely visible across the country. Finally, the urban setting proved to be the favorable ground of the revolution, providing the people with a means to implement their psychological warfare.

However, current events in Bolivia indicate that the revolutionary outcome cemented through a new constitution in 2009, might not be the end of the revolution. Since 2009, Evo Morales successfully abolished term limits for public office. And in 2019 he fled the country amidst protests sparked over a potentially illegitimate election that would have resulted in Morales' fourth term as president. In his place the government of Bolivia instituted a conservative interim president, Jeanine Avrez, reminiscent of the previously ineffective conservative neoliberal presidents. Despite the MAS party eventually regaining control of the government through the election of Luis Arce, the party's public image has been damaged by Morales. And a conservative movement is now thriving in Bolivia, led by Luis Fernando Camacho, and is seeking power.

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## 20. Che Guevara and the Guerilla Foco



*File:Che SClara.jpg by Anonymous is within the public domain*

“I am not a liberator. Liberators do not exist. The people liberate themselves.”

— Ernesto “Che” Guevara

Ernesto “Che” Guevara de la Serna (June 14th, 1928 – October 9th, 1967) touted as the reason why the Cuban Revolution succeeded. Described as “iconoclastic, a dreamer, and prone to go his own way” (McCormick & Berger, 2019), Che is one of the most recognizable figures

in revolutionary history. Before he was known to the world as a great initiator of change, Guevara went to the University of Buenos Aires and became a doctor. In 1953, Guevara set out on a trip around Latin America, where he made his way to Guatemala, “on the eve of the overthrow of the reformist President Jacobo Arbenz” (McCormick & Berger, 2019). This trip marks the start of his political presence and radicalization, and once he meets Fidel Castro, he adopts the Argentinian nickname “Che” and begins to use his talents in the Cuban Revolution (Guevara 2

# La Guerra de Guerrillas

After the Cuban Revolution, Guevara writes *Guerrilla Warfare*, in which he breaks down the six principles of conduct for warfare: the essence of warfare, guerilla strategy, guerrilla tactics, warfare on favorable ground, warfare on unfavorable ground, and suburban warfare (Guevara, 1961, p.47). These principles are the root of Guevara's guerilla foco theory, which essentially states that as long as the movement has the hearts and minds of the people behind the movement, it is unnecessary to wait for the perfect conditions to make the revolution happen.

For Guevara's first principle of guerrilla warfare, he writes three fundamental lessons essential to warfare. The first being that popular forces can win a war against the army, the second says that "it is not necessary to wait until all conditions for making revolution exist; the insurrection can create them," and the third states that "in underdeveloped America, the countryside is the basic area for armed fighting" (Guevara, 1961, p. 47). He places great emphasis on the fact that in guerrilla warfare, the guerrilla fighter is wholly dependent on the people. The guerrilla fighter's primary goal is to be a "social reformer, that he takes up arms responding to the angry protest of the people against their oppressors, and that he fights in order to change the social system that keeps all his unarmed brothers in ignominy and misery" (Guevara, 1960, p.50).

Guerrilla warfare is an all or nothing affair, and battles should not be engaged in without the fullest intention of winning. Guevara states that the true essence of the guerrilla fighter is his readiness to die. The guerrilla fighter does not have to come close to death in every battle that he engages in, but rather that if he should face death, he faces it not with intentions to "defend an ideal" but to "convert it into reality" (Guevara, 1960, p. 54).

In his section on guerrilla strategy, Guevara describes strategy as "the analysis of the objectives to be achieved in the light of a total military situation and the overall ways of reaching these

objectives” (Guevara, 1961, p. 54). Guerrilla fighters have to consider many factors: they must consider their numbers and capabilities, how they will mobilize, the support they have behind them, and armaments. Attacks must be continuous in order to ensure that the enemy does not become too comfortable. The formation of columns becomes of the utmost importance when the guerrilla reaches the appropriate amount of both arms and men; Guevara compares the act of column formation to that of a colony of bees, where the hive “at any given moment releases a new queen, who goes to another region with a part of the swarm” (Guevara, 1961, p. 57). The deployment of new columns allows for the infiltration of other territories while the head of the guerrilla stays in a less dangerous area.

Guevara describes guerilla tactics as the “practical methods of achieving the grand strategic objectives” (Guevara, 1961, p.58). Tactics complement strategies while allowing for more variety and flexibility, allowing the band to respond to any potential action made by the enemy. Mobilization is one of the many tactics employed by the guerrilla and should cover large land areas in a short amount of time. The ability to swiftly mobilize at night is just as crucial because the guerrilla must keep its numbers high. Another tactic used by the foco is flexibility. Guevara states that the guerrilla fighter must have “the ability to adapt himself to all circumstances...against the rigidity of the classical methods of fighting, the guerrilla fighter invents his own tactic at every minute of the fight and constantly surprises the enemy” (Guevara, 1961, p. 61).

The guerrilla relies on acts of sabotage and the treatment of the people as a tactic as well. When dealing with people who live in a warzone, the guerrilla fighter must not take any prisoners; they must free any survivors and care for the wounded in the surrounding area; and they must treat civilians with respect, always being mindful of the local culture and traditions. All of these tactics give the guerrilla fighter the means to be an efficient actor in war.

Guerilla warfare theory says a revolutionary situation can occur

on favorable ground, unfavorable ground, or suburban landscapes. When warfare takes place on favorable ground, the warzone is typically on land that is difficult to reach. Features like deserts, forests with dense vegetation, and steep mountains are considered the best conditions for the foco. The guerrilla must maintain its adaptability, fighting aggressively and consistently once it knows that its survival will remain intact. On a favorable landscape, the guerrilla can better establish camp and access resources like livestock and communication. If it is well established, the guerrilla can even take the time to set up manufacturing for ammunition and shoes. (Guevara, 1961, p.65-69).

Warfare on unfavorable ground typically takes place on land that does not provide the guerrilla with adequate coverage. The lack of mountain ranges and forests combined with increased roadways makes for a less than ideal warfare setting. Despite this geographic disadvantage, guerrilla fighters must maintain the same level of hypervigilance, adaptability, and mobility as before, but must now increase the quantity of warfare that it engages in. When battles occur in more open areas, the combatants must increase the frequency of attacks, ensuring that most attacks occur at night and only last for a short time.

Guevara's sixth principle of guerrilla warfare explains what guerrilla strategy and tactics should look like should fighting occur near the suburbs. He writes that discipline and sabotage are two essential qualities of suburban warfare; the guerrilla cannot be overly dependent on the surrounding area. According to Guevara, "The function of the guerrilla band will not be to carry out independent actions but to coordinate its activities with overall strategic plans in such a way as to support the action of larger groups situated in another area" (Guevara, 1961, p.76).

Guevara's theory of guerrilla warfare was born out of his own experiences in the Cuban Revolution, but the theory, unfortunately, fell short when applied to the Bolivian Revolution. Both revolutions can serve as case studies on guerrilla theory's effectiveness regarding revolutionary situations and outcomes.

# Che and Cuba

## The onset of the Cuban Revolution

The armed victory of the Cuban people over the Batista dictatorship shifted the world's perception of revolutionary movements by showing how the masses have the ability to free themselves utilizing Guerrilla warfare. (Guevara, 1961).” The Cuban Revolution cannot be discussed without speaking about the charismatic leaders that lead the revolution: Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. However, it would be a mistake to attribute the revolution's success to just these two, rather than the several critical elements, including the support of the masses, that allowed this revolution to succeed.

In 1950, Fidel Castro worked for a small law firm in Havana, defending the poor and politically oppressed. Castro had aligned himself with the Orthodox Party, which was in opposition to Cuba's leader at the time, Fulgencio Batista. The Orthodox Party, led by Eduardo Chibas, believed that the Batista Administration had abandoned the 1940 Progressive Constitution (Prevost, 2007). Batista no longer held up the constitution, which guaranteed labor rights and allowed for corruption from the U.S. to run rampant. After a canceled election in 1952 in which Castro was projected to run against Batista, Castro charged the dictator of violating the constitution. The case was rejected and birthed a revolutionary leader. (Prevost, 2007, p.19).

During this time, Guevara experienced his own political scandal, witnessed abuses of power, and the overall influence that the United States (U.S.) had over Latin American politics. In Guatemala, Guevara witnessed the overthrow of an elected progressive government and realized, like many other Latin Americans, that the country's weak and poor state put itself in a position to have unstable and corruptible elections. “Guevara concluded, and emphasized to Castro, that a revolution could not be secure until

the armed forces were purged of conservative, corrupt, and unreliable officers and soldiers and brought firmly under revolutionary control” (Defronzo,1994, 217).

## The Cuban Revolution

To understand the Foco Theory by way of guerrilla warfare documented in Guevara’s warfare manual *Guerrilla Warfare* (1961), it is essential first to understand the genesis from which this theory is derived. The Cuban Revolution sets the stage for and influences the nature of guerilla warfare tactics and revolutions throughout the world.

On July 26, 1953, Castro, along with 165 men and women, carried out an armed attack on the Moncada army barracks. The attack intended to spark a divide throughout Cuba. The attack failed, resulting in the deaths of half of Castro’s combatants; Castro and his brother Raul were jailed. The attack dated July 26th influenced the name of the revolutionary movement. While on trial for the failed attack, Castro gave a historic speech on the mistreatment and political corruption of the Batista dictatorship. It called for social and economic liberties, motivated and influenced by the people of the July 26th Movement. This speech is famously known as the “History Will Absolve Me” speech. “It became the rallying cry of the July 26th movement” (Prevost, 2007, p.20). Batista granted general amnesty to Castro and his brother, which prompted the two to travel to Mexico and organize the 26th of July Movement for their next attack. It is here that Guevara, a young doctor at the time, joins the revolutionary movement.

On December 26th, 1956, 82 members of the 26th of July Movement set sail from Mexico to the Oriente Province. Simultaneously, Santiago’s insurrection was led by key organizer and guerilla leader, Frank Pais. The attacks failed, with only 12 members surviving. However, it proved to be beneficial in the

efforts of remaining members to retreat into the Sierra Maestra mountains. It is here that Guevara and other revolutionaries are exposed to one of three fundamental lessons in conducting guerrilla warfare. “In underdeveloped America, the countryside is the basic area for armed fighting” (Guevara, 1961, p.47). The 26th of July Movement knew that because the government had surveillance and a stronghold over the city, that the countryside served as a ground in which they could have the advantage. “From the mountain stronghold La Plata, the revolutionaries built a base camp that included a primitive radio transmitter and went about the task of organizing a movement against Batista. The movement reached out to the local peasantry promising land reform, education, and democracy. Literacy classes were conducted for the local population” (Prevost, 2007, p.20). A prerequisite to conducting guerilla warfare, according to Guevara, is to earn the hearts and the minds of the masses. “The guerrilla fighter needs full help from the people of the area. This is an indispensable condition” (Guevara, 1961, p.59). The 26th of July movement worked with the rural community to provide them with amenities that the government failed to give; in turn, they gained their trust, support, and allegiance. Each day, the small insurgent army grew, recruiting countryside peasants who knew the land made it difficult for local army outposts of Cuba. “Most attacks were successful, and the needed additional weaponry was stolen from the army” (Prevost, 2007, p.20). The 26th of July movement grew more recognition, including an article in the New York Times which noted Castro as a modern-day Robin Hood.

Guerilla armies may have various ideologies that they fight for, but according to Guevara, the economic goal is always the same: aspiration towards land. “The guerilla fighter is above all an agrarian revolutionary” (Guevara, 1961, p.59). The land serves as both the motivation and tactical ground for the guerrilla revolutionaries of the Cuban Revolution. While the guerrilla band’s overall goal is to obtain land, Guevara advises that an excessive territory increase should be avoided. Rather, as seen in the introduction of this



section, Guevara's new columns or colony of bees allows for a part of the original hive to move to another region. New columns will seek out to penetrate other or new enemy territories.

## Guerrilla Warfare Tactics

To the Cuban public and outside nations, it became clear that the 26th of July movement was a force, making conditions for successful rebellion where there originally were none. This is the second of three fundamental lessons in conducting guerilla warfare "It is not necessary to wait until all conditions for making revolutionary situations exist; the insurrection can create them" (Guevara, 1961, p.50). The guerrilla band should not be seen as inferior to the state and their professional armies. While they may have less firepower, they are still supported by the majority and have the best understanding of the land in which they fight. Because of the minimal number of firearms, the guerrilla armies of Cuba utilized sabotage: "paralyze entire armies, to suspend the industrial life of a zone, leaving the inhabitants of a city without factories, without light, without water, without communications of any kind" (Guevara, 1961, p.59). By doing so and utilizing continuous 'hit & run' tactics, the 26th of July movement was able to break the morale and support of the Batista army.

Guerrilla warfare should be considered only an embryo or prelude, a beginning phase that does not have enough opportunities to gain complete victory; a guerrilla army can have steady growth and acquire all the characteristics of a regular army. The 26th of July movement had an established alliance with the Revolutionary Democratic Civic Front, with the goal of taking down Batista. This alliance and the weakening of the Cuban army ruined U.S.-backed government support. The U.S. in 1958 then placed an arms embargo on Cuba. The revolutionary outcome raised Fidel to the position of Prime Minister in 1959. "...agricultural reform limited the size of

most farm holdings to under 1,000 acres. This measure destroyed the largest holdings, including U.S.-owned sugar properties, several of which exceeded 400,000 acres. Land was distributed to thousands of rural workers, and the government moved to improve conditions on the large farms it now controlled” (Prevost, 2007, p.22). The support for the revolution and its new policies included: a Rent Reduction Act, a literacy campaign, building new schools, and extending access to health care; these reforms only increased the revolution’s popularity.

## Che and the Bolivian Case

Leading up to the Bolivian National Revolution, the country’s land distribution and ownership were among the most unjust in Latin America (Klein, 2015). In 1950, most of the population worked in the agricultural sector, kept powerless and poor because of the exploitative techniques of the latifundia, i.e., large estates. The situation declined even more due to the nation’s falling mining production. After numerous coups and overthrows over the next decade, Che Guevara, after strategizing with Fidel Castro, entered the country on November 7th, 1966 (Rodriguez, 2018).

Staying true to his own manual, Che was encamped in the Bolivian countryside with a modest contingent of soldiers imported from Cuba. The rebel group began meeting with locals deemed sympathetic to the cause; those disheartened with the system’s inequality and the seemingly endless turmoil and regime changes plagued the country over many decades. Winning the hearts and minds of the peasantry in Bolivia proved to be an uphill battle. The newly elected President, Rene Barrientos, was involved in an earlier military coup and served as co-president until he was elected by the people in 1966. To the rebels’ disadvantage, Bolivia’s peasantry already thought very highly of Barrientos. This is primarily because he implemented land reforms, rural education, and welfare

programs (Klein, 2011, p. 222). The new president was not loved by everyone, but he was not an outsider like Che. The reality that the rebels would be hard-pressed to win the hearts and minds of the people in Bolivia, an essential tenet of Guerilla Foco Theory, will set the tone for the remainder of Che Guevara's time in the country.

On December 1st, 1966, Che insisted that he be the rebel forces leader in Bolivia in an introductory meeting with Mario Monge, the Bolivian Communist party leader. Monje accurately predicted that Bolivians would have trouble warming to an outsider advocating for a communist system (Guevara, 1969, p. 59). Soon after, in early spring, the incumbent Bolivian government was alerted to the rebel presence. Due to a careless rebel reconnaissance mission, suspicious activity was reported to the Bolivian army and later confirmed by an interrogation conducted by local police (Salmón, 1990, p. 55; Salmón, 1990, p. 67). Per Foco Theory, rebel forces should recruit to a certain troop level before they challenge an incumbent regime's army (Guevara, 2002). Because the rebel presence was detected so early, this became nearly impossible. In deviation from his own field manual, Che chose to engage in combat with the Bolivian military, confident that not all conditions need to be met to engage in a successful revolution (Salmón, 1990, p. 80; Guevara, 2002).

## An American Response

By 1967, The Bolivian government received close to 3 million USD annually from the U.S. Government (Morales, 2010, p. 166). Up until this time, the United States had been distracted by the War in Vietnam. By April of '67, it was clear that the Bolivian army, led by General Ovando, was struggling with the rebel insurgency. In response, the United States deployed Green Berets and several CIA operatives to train counter insurgency and intelligence gathering techniques (US Army, 1967; Kornbluh).

## Diminishing Prospects

The prospect of a successful revolution in Bolivia was quickly deteriorating. Locals continued to report rebel movements to the Bolivian government; in theory, providing replenishment to rebel ranks in the form of manpower and logistical support, the Bolivian peasantry often worked against the revolutionary cause, opting instead to support their elected leader's government (Guevara, 2002; Salmón, 1990, p. 32). The Cuban success could not be replicated in Bolivia. Even though Che's own Guerilla Warfare manual lauded the advantages afforded to revolutionary encampments based in inhospitable terrain, it was these same conditions that turned against Che in the Bolivian case (Guevara, 2002). Doves of insects consistently terrorized rebel camps. Moreover, since the rebels could not rely on local support for food because their movements were likely to be reported, what little vegetation could be foraged in the region was often nutritionally inadequate (Guevara, 1969, p. 59; Salmón, 1990, p. 32).

## Conclusion

The Cuban Revolution shocked the world; governments stood in awe of the power that guerilla warfare can command. That said, the conditions for a foco movement were expressed in exemplary fashion in the Cuba case by having unstable and unfair elections, support of the masses, and the hindering of state resources.

The situation was not ideal for Bolivia's revolutionary situation: the people had just fairly elected a new president when Che arrived; they were not interested in a revolution (Rodriquez, 2018). The extreme terrain that Guerilla Warfare describes was present in Bolivia, but it in fact, ended up being too extreme for the poorly equipped outfit. Che's theory states that not all conditions are

necessary to incite a revolution; this did not prove to be true (Guevara, 2002). Guevara wanted to use Bolivia as a macrocosm for revolution in Latin America (DeFronzo, 2011). He dreamed that the entire country would be the remote terrain as illustrated in his manual; with it, rebel forces could begin insurrections across the continent. The dream died with the man. There were many flaws with his strategy in Bolivia, but the gravest was that his outsider-rebels did not have the support of the people; thus, a revolutionary outcome was not achieved, for Bolivia or elsewhere.

“They washed, dressed and arranged him following instructions from the forensic physician. . . We had to prove his identity and show the world that we had defeated . . . Che” (Castañeda, 2009).

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## 2I. The Cuban Revolution



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“A revolution is not a bed of roses. A revolution is a struggle between the future and the past.”

— Fidel Castro

Cuba’s history as a Spanish territory created a lasting effect on the culture and identity of the island. After Cuba’s independence from Spanish colonialism, Cuba struggled to find a consistent form of government and leadership. Although the Cuban Revolution does not

depict Cuba’s struggle for independence, it demonstrates the fight for a working government and system in Cuba, which can be dated back to their initial independence. The Cuban Revolution can be adequately explained through the use of two prominent theorists and theories: Crane Brinton’s *Uniformities* and Marx and Engel’s depiction of communism and dialectical materialism. Marx’s principles inspired Castro’s lead of the Cuban Revolution, and it must be considered in accordance with the principles and direction of the movement. Through the framework of Brinton and Marx, we can begin to understand the key causes for the Cuban Revolution, and the lasting impact it has had to this day.

## Pre-Revolution

Upon the 'discovery' of Cuba in 1492, Spain quickly laid claim to the island, establishing mining and agricultural communities through the forced labor of indigenous peoples and slaves (DeFranzo, 205). Spain was able to maintain control of Cuba despite multiple slave revolts until 1898, in which American and Cuban forces succeeded in winning the Spanish-American War (DeFranzo, 208). The United States lifted control over Cuba in 1902, but not before ensuring Cuba include the Platt Amendment in their constitution, effectively ensuring the United States right to intervene in such a case as "for the preservation of Cuban independence and for the maintenance of a government capable of protecting life, property, and individual liberty" (DeFranzo, 208-9). The United States' continued entrenchment in Cuban politics, particularly surrounding the passage of the Platt Amendment, gave rise to the burgeoning independence movement within Cuba.

Before reviewing the actual revolution, it is often helpful to review the situations that caused the revolution to emerge when it did. While the Cuban Revolution did not officially start until 1953, anti-Batista sentiments began to spread long before that (Argote-Freyre, 23). Batista was formerly president of Cuba from 1940-1944, leaving office after his 4-year limit (DeFranzo, 210). However, he reclaimed the office of the Presidency again in 1952 via the execution of a military coup (DeFranzo, 210). Batista's lack of democratic legitimacy forced him to crack down on his political opponents to maintain power, therefore limiting any other party's claims to power and ability to contest Batista's role (DeFranzo, 212). During this time, Batista also strongly became anti-communist, having not gained Communist party support in his first elected term (DeFranzo, 214).

Batista's politics must be analyzed here, too. Due to his illegitimate rise to power, Batista did not have to answer to the whims of the people, and therefore implemented little legislation aimed at pacifying Cuban citizens (DeFranzo, 210). During Batista's



rule, there were high levels of unemployment and inflation, with little moves by the government to remedy these problems (DeFronzo, 211). Additionally, mass frustration arose due to lowering prices of sugar, which in the 1950s accounted for 80% of Cuba's exports. Further frustrating was the fact that United States investors owned more than 40% of sugar production in Cuba, with 637 million dollars earned by the U.S. in sugar sales alone in 1955 (Cushion, 52). Sugar prices dropped shortly after, with Cuba signing on to several international sugar agreements (Cushion, 46). There were efforts by the government to grow the economy following these price reductions, but little was aimed at the diversification of economic sectors, and, therefore, was ineffective overall (Cushion, 21).

## Cuban Revolution

When Batista instilled an authoritarian government before the 1952 democratic elections, it led to the rise of the M-26-7 group led by Fidel Castro and his brother, Raul (DeFronzo, 241). This revolutionary group was formed from the rebels who tried to storm Moncada military base on 26 July 1953 (DeFronzo, 215). Batista's troops intercepted the group before they could reach the base's center, and all of them were eventually captured and imprisoned. However, after one year and seven months, Batista pardoned these prisoners, and the Castros fled to Mexico in 1955 (DeFronzo, 216). During their exile is when the Castro brothers met Che Guevara, who eventually heavily influenced the course of the Cuban Revolution.

On 25 November 1956, Castro led a group of 82 men to sail back to Cuba on the *Granma* and try to overthrow Batista again (DeFronzo, 217). After a peasant exposed the group's plan, the crew was disbanded and the Castro brothers, along with Che Guevara, fled into the Sierra Maestra mountains. The revolutionary movement

gained momentum here, with people joining the cause. The revolutionary group also fought off Batista's army well enough that the troops stopped infiltrating the mountains to try and fight them. During this time, Batista also falsely announced that Castro had died, which led to a New York Times interview with Castro (DeFronzo, 218). This interview portrayed Castro as a patriot fighting oppression, which led to more support for the movement from the American public.

On 13 March 1957, another anti-Batista unit, the Revolutionary Directorate (DR) attempted to revolt against Batista, which led to most of the unit being killed by Batista's army. Following this event, many revolutionary groups attempted to overthrow Batista between 1957 and 1958 (DeFronzo, 219). This created mass unpopularity for the leader within the middle class. The United States also stopped providing Batista's army with weapons in March 1958. Overall, this weakened both the political aspect of Batista's rule as well as the military. Due to the growing Cuban unrest and the impending overthrow, Batista fled the country, leaving Castro to take power on 1 January 1959 (DeFronzo, 220).

Soon after Castro came into power, he began to enact various reforms. These included increasing wages for workers, expanding literacy, and destroying large, privately owned sugar plantations. He also announced his commitment to socialism and, soon after that, he announced that they would pledge to Marxist-Leninist ideals (DeFronzo, 220). Historians say that Castro wanted to make Cuba a one-party communist country. Furthermore, within a few years, counter-revolutionary groups were eliminated from Cuba. This led to a decline in US-Cuban relations, but stronger ties to the Soviet Union.

The decline in relations with the US can be shown by the United States sending weapons to anti-Castro forces in the Escambray mountains. The tension between the US and Cuba led to the 1960 Bay of Pigs invasion, which was led by the CIA and a misinformed President Kennedy (DeFronzo, 241). The CIA recruited anti-Castro Cubans to start an uprising against Castro. Once these anti-Castro

Cubans landed in Cuba, they failed to create an uprising and subsequently surrendered within 48 hours. Similarly, the US' fear of communism led to the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, in which the United States demanded that Cuba get rid of large Soviet missiles (DeFronzo, 241). The US blockaded Cuba and made a deal that they would not invade Cuba, but they secretly kept spies on the island until the 1970s.

Castro's leadership was strong, and he retained power until he stepped down due to illness in 2006. Fidel Castro's brother, Raul, took power, and was formally elected in 2008 (DeFronzo, 242). Even though Cuba's revolt inspired revolutionary acts across Latin and South America, the Cuban revolution is arguably the most successful.

However, US-Cuban relations would not become relatively stable until President Obama in the late 2000s. Furthermore, Castro's impact on education, especially the emphasis on medicine, can be seen to this day as over 30,000 Cuban medical workers help in over 60 countries (DeFronzo, 239).

## Theorists: Crane Brinton and Karl Marx

When looking at the Cuban Revolution as a whole, Crane Briton's uniformities do an exceptional job of explaining it. When applying his five conditions for a revolution, it becomes much easier to conceptualize why the Cuban Revolution began in the first place, how it took place and the result.

The first condition has to do with the economy of a state. In the 1950's leading up to the revolution, Cuba had a booming economy (Brinton, 250). Ranking fifth in Latin American countries, the sugar industry essentially built-up Cuba's economy (DeFronzo, 211). Many of the main sugar crop companies were owned and controlled by the United States. Due to this investment made by the U.S., it allowed for stable sugar prices, which tended to fluctuate in the

past. This economic growth benefited the country as a whole, but the wealth within the state became unevenly distributed. The first class and sugar crop owners, as well as government officials, became richer, but the working class and citizens living in rural areas were not reaping any of the growing welfare in the country (DeFronzo, 212). With this inequality growing, people of the working class started to promote change, which led to Brinton's second condition.

In condition two, all social classes feel oppressed by the government and, therefore, feel restless (Brinton, 251). In Cuba's case, people living in rural areas or ones that did not have an education felt the uneven distribution of wealth the most. In rural areas, 42% of the population was illiterate while only 12% was illiterate in urban communities (DeFronzo, 211). With that being said, a majority of Cubans supported the revolution. The lower working class wanted reforms and wealth. The higher educated class wanted more freedom from the U.S. government which had a heavy hand in governing. Not all Cubans supported the revolution. Some of the highest government officials who were becoming richer and gaining power from the U.S. relationship, especially Batista, strongly opposed the revolution. As time went on, the Cuban economy started to decline (DeFronzo, 213). With high unemployment, declining incomes per household, the domination of the U.S. in the Cuban economy and government, and the continuation of communities getting poorer, the grounds for revolution were set in place.

When considering condition three, the acceptance of the revolution is important to think about (Brinton, 251). In this stage, scholars and thinkers give up on their societal norms and operations and begin to support the revolutionary ideas. At this point in the Cuban revolution, many people of all classes started to support change. They started to realize that government officials failed them and did not give support in the ways needed most. At this point, Leninist and Socialist ideas started to spread among Cuban intellectuals, which allowed for the revolutionary movements

to continue with the support of these thinkers (DeFronzo, 220). As these ideas started to gain momentum across the country, specifically in Havana, Batista tried to shut the movements down.

Brinton's fourth condition depicts how governments do not have the resources to respond to the changing needs of society (Brinton, 251). The Cuban government inadequately responded to the revolution. They made no effort to redistribute wealth, which would help solve the problem of inequality in rural areas. Along with this, the Cuban army failed to deal with the rebel army (DeFronzo, 219). With all of this build-up in the revolution, government leaders began to doubt themselves.

Brinton's fifth condition describes when the leaders and the ruling class begin to doubt themselves (Brinton, 252). In the Cuban revolution, Batista tries to maintain power within the government but also by reassuring himself by claiming that Fidel Castro died when in reality he was in the mountains hiding out (DeFronzo, 218). As the rebel groups in the mountains, led by Castro, gained more and more momentum and victories, many officers began to refuse to fight against the rebel groups. Once the military started to lose faith as a whole, Batista's main source of power became useless.

Marx's 'Communist Manifesto' organized society in a way where it depends primarily on the means of production and is based on ideas from Engels. The means of production includes all parts of a society's infrastructure such as human capital, natural resources, technology and communications, property, and the production and maintenance of material goods. The exchange of goods and services within society should be dependent on the fact that all segments of the population are treated equally. All of this known as the mode of production. For Marx, the key aspect that leads to a revolutionary situation, and subsequently a revolutionary outcome, is the division of classes within society. The bourgeoisie and proletariat possess the most commonly pronounced division – and, per Marx, this particular class division is what is necessary for a revolution to occur. Marx championed the idea of a worker's revolt, in a situation where the proletariat are not being treated fairly enough by the

bourgeoisie. For Marx, the bourgeoisie educates the workers, providing them with the information they need to overthrow the mechanisms of Capitalism. The following necessary step is for the 'scholars' and intellectuals of the bourgeoisie to defect to the working class, which gives more political weight to the working class, allowing their revolutionary goals to further succeed. Lastly, the revolution of the proletariat will lead to the working-class abolishing exploitation of the masses. Marx says that a worker's revolt is the gateway to terminating the control that capitalism had on society.

The ruling class will eventually be overthrown if the working class garners enough mass support, and to secure a revolutionary outcome violence is almost always necessary. Marx was fascinated by Hegel and his 'Hegelian Dialectic'. The Hegelian Dialectic is "the principle of all natural and spiritual life" (Maybee, 2020), and comprises three developmental stages: a thesis, antithesis, and a synthesis. Dialectics are a description of how change occurs, whether political, social, or economic. A thesis is just a concept, and it comes prior to the antithesis whose role is to negate and take over the thesis – essentially the antithesis is trying to disprove and subjugate the thesis. This clash of ideas forms the synthesis and is something changed and new (Maybee, 2020). The Hegelian Dialectic applied to Marxist struggle can be understood as follows. The bourgeoisie and proletariat act independently of one another, but they both have an enormous amount of dependence on one another. The bourgeoisie depends on the proletariat to work for them, manufacture, and keep the economy afloat. The proletariat depends on the bourgeoisie to organize society, provide leadership, and provide the proletariat with food, shelter, and wages. However, as the worker realizes its independence and the bourgeoisie's reliance on the proletariat – a proletarian revolution occurs. The power of the aristocracy only exists because of the working class – as the proletariat realize this, they take over. This taking over, and the change that occurs, is the synthesis of Hegel's Dialectics (Swan, 1982).

Applying Marxist theories to the Cuban Revolution we can see how the working class began to foster adverse feelings towards the ruling class. In a time of economic prosperity, as Cuba was in, wealth and resources were being unfairly divided. The ruling class in Cuba were exploiting the masses. When the proletariat begin to see themselves as ideologically independent from the ruling class, this turns into economic independence. Marx says, when the actions of the bourgeoisie continue to frustrate the proletariat, and the proletariat begin to believe they can fend for themselves without the support of the bourgeoisie, revolutionary sentiments begin to spread. This is exactly what occurred in Cuba. The working class began feeling oppressed and exploited and wanted change.

Following, as Fidel Castro gained more political footing and recognition, the proletariat became ideologically associated with him – his communist ideals and revolutionary rhetoric incentivized the working class to side with Castro and develop adverse feelings towards the ruling class. Castro's revolutionary army gained forces and fought government forces in the mountains, gradually winning more territory and securing an advantageous military position against the government. This continued to the point where revolutionary forces were attempting to assassinate Batista. Applying Marxist theories to the Cuban Revolution it is clear that the working class was the motivating and inflammatory faction of the population that instigated the revolution. The working class felt oppressed and thus reacted to the oppression (Chrisman & Allen, 1973). Further extending what Marx believed is necessary for a revolution to succeed, the scholars and intellectuals (or people of the ruling class) began to defect and ally themselves with the working class. These individuals became intrigued by the writings of Leninism and Marxism and they became committed to socialism and socialist ideals. Cuba then detached itself from the United States and allied themselves more with the Soviet Union. In Cuba, the division of classes was most significant between Batista and his ruling class, and the developing influence of Castro and his followers in Cuba. Finally, consistent with what Marx says is

necessary for a revolution to be successful, Castro and those associated with him began violence, continued their violence, and finally overthrew the ruling class.

## Conclusion

Marx's importance in the Cuban Revolution can be seen through the ideology of the movement and the impacts of the policies. This can be demonstrated through Castro's socialist influence on Cuban society as well as Cuba's ties to the Soviet Union during the Cold War period. Furthermore, this has created lasting influence in the region's politics and economy. Similarly, Crane Brinton's uniformities of conditions that spur revolution can adequately explain the origins of the Cuban Revolution. These conditions heavily depict the qualms and inefficiencies in Batista's Cuba that led to revolutionary action.

Overall, the Cuban Revolution was due to mass unrest and a lack of confidence in the government from society and even the officials themselves. Cuba's inconsistent government throughout its history led to uprising and the suppression of opposing political parties and ideologies. In order to further study Cuba, historians and theorists should visit the area and attempt to take first-hand accounts of the revolution and the moments leading up to the revolution.

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## 22. The Arab Spring



110609 'Arab Spring' takes toll on Moroccan economy | الربيع العربي | "الربيع العربي" | يلقي بظلاله على الاقتصاد المغربي | Le Printemps arabe coûte à l'économie marocaine by Magharbia s licensed under CC BY 2.0

“The People Want to Overthrow the Regime”  
الشعب يريد اسقاط النظام

In 2011, a series of uprisings in the form of pro-democracy protests began to appear after the self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi in Tunisia which is now recognized as the beginning of the Arab Spring. The resulting protests in Tunisia

and the successful abdication of the then-dictator and president, Ben Ali, created a domino effect that cascaded throughout Middle Eastern states and North Africa. The Arab Spring is commonly viewed as a single revolutionary event, as the timing of the events seems to suggest so and were cataloged as a revolution catalyzed by young people protesting against the oppressive regimes that ruled the region. This, however, is a common misconception. Many of the states involved in the Arab Spring had shared revolutionary situations and environments but varied in their disparate revolutionary outcomes. Theorists such as Ted Gurr, Charles Tilly, and Chalmers Johnson give us proper insight into how to analyze why these revolutionary situations turned into the many disparate revolutionary outcomes seen today.

## Theories

Using the theories of popular revolutionary theorists helps better conceptualize and analyze the Arab Spring. The theories of revolution by Ted Gurr, Charles Tilly, and Chalmers Johnson are inherently important in analyzing the revolutionary situations and outcomes of the Arab Spring. Ted Gurr claims that revolutions occur because of relative deprivation which is when there is a discrepancy between a person's value expectations and their value capabilities (Gurr, 1970). There are three types of relative deprivation. The most pertinent relative deprivation to the Arab Spring is aspirational deprivation which is when expectations of value capabilities grow while their ability to meet those capabilities remains the same (Gurr, 1970). Charles Tilly makes key distinctions between revolutionary situations and revolutionary outcomes (Tilly, 1993). The three most important causes of a revolutionary theory according to Tilly are the appearance of a revolutionary coalition challenging to control the state (multiple sovereignty), a devotion to that challenge by relinquishing citizenship, and a weak government that is either unwilling or unable to suppress the revolutionary coalition (Tilly, 1993). The causes of revolutionary outcomes according to Tilly are the defection of elites, neutralization of the armed forces, and control of the state by the revolutionary coalition (Tilly, 1993). Chalmers Johnson focuses on four categories of revolutionary theories. The most applicable to the Arab Spring is his process theory (Johnson, 1966). Johnson's process theory is not a theory of any particular revolution, rather a set of guiding principles to model revolutions. (Johnson, 1966). The main principles being the level of structural distortion, level of conscious political choice, and the level of strategy (Johnson, 1966).

## Revolutionary Situation

What was the common environment or revolutionary situation that led the states of Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, and several others to revolution and political violence? Gurr, Tilly, and Johnson all focus on the critical idea that revolutionary situations occur when a weak state does not meet the needs of the people, which firmly explains the overarching revolutionary situation in the Middle East at the time. The states involved in the Arab Spring shared numerous characteristics that made them ripe for revolution. Including, but not limited to, aging leaders, authoritarian tendencies, unbounded corruption, ineffectual governments, economic turmoil, and mass inequality. The citizens of these states also shared similar characteristics that aided in the creation of a revolutionary situation. The actors within these states suffered from a relative deprivation created by the oppressive and authoritarian regimes that characterized the political landscape of the Middle East at the time. More specifically they suffered from aspirational deprivation (Gurr, 1970). Most Arab Spring states had a large share of educated, yet unemployed youth that felt disaffected with the current regime's ability to provide an environment for which they could thrive.

For example, in Tunisia increasing numbers of college graduates could not find employment, economic corruption was rampant, and the cost of living skyrocketed. Egypt faced a growing population of educated young people that could not find employment, poor living standards for most Egyptians, and a corruption-plagued government. Libya and Syria faced increasing unemployment and economic problems because of their natural resource-based economies which consequently led to increased corruption as government officials siphoned money from oil profits for themselves (Pendergast, 2011). In Yemen half of the population was living under the poverty line and one-third was living in chronic hunger (CIA, 2014). Free speech, free press, and criticism of the

government was met with violence and arrests in many of these states leaving a democratic deficit. Effectively neutralizing people's avenues to express their dissatisfaction with their government other than protest.

The perpetual weaknesses of these states to meet the growing expectations of their people resulted in an environment that was on the brink of a revolution. In terms of Tilly, the Arab Spring states weak governments and social processes where the government elite are structured to succeed while the subject populations live in turmoil created the revolutionary situation. In terms of Gurr, the aspirational deprivation seen in these states led to the creation of the revolutionary situation, and in terms of Johnson, the disconnect between the values of the people and the government created the revolutionary situation. Even though all of these states shared a similar revolutionary situation, the small variabilities seen in the structure of the institutions, demographics, culture, and ultimately the uprisings, led to a series of disparate revolutionary outcomes. Three of the most relevant case studies that show these disparate revolutionary outcomes are Tunisia, Egypt, and Syria.

## Revolutionary Outcomes

### Tunisia

Tunisia is one of the starkest examples of Gurr's theory of aspirational deprivation. There was a growing population of educated youth that was unable to gain the employment and economic opportunity that they felt they deserved. In the years leading up to the revolution, fourteen percent of Tunisians were unemployed, and a majority of those people were between the ages of 15-24. To add to the deprivation, 45% of college graduates could

not find employment and households were spending over one-third of their income just on food (Schraeder, Redissi, 2011). Unemployment and high living costs coupled with the fact that the government was doing nothing to meet these expectations lead to an increasing sense of depravity at the hands of Ben Ali. The Ben Ali family at this time owned over 180 of the major companies in Tunisia and 50% of the commercial elites were related to Ben Ali (Anderson, 2011). The combination of a disaffected and educated youth, economic hardship, an extreme inequality perpetrated by the Ali family, and the unwillingness to reform by the government meant that the Tunisians' value expectations were growing while the government's willingness to meet those expectations stagnated.

Why was Tunisia the only Arab Spring state to result in a democracy? The revolutionary situation was not drastically different than other Arab Spring states, however, variabilities within the structure of Tunisia and the events that took place during and directly after the demonstrations led to an environment conducive for democracy. When analyzing this seemingly rare revolutionary outcome it is important to understand Tilly's theory of revolutions in which he states the proximate causes of outcome are dependent on actions taken by the elite and the armed forces (Tilly, 1993). Comparatively, the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia was relatively peaceful and only about 300 people died throughout the protests. When Ben Ali ordered the military to use deadly force against the protestors the General at the time, Rachid Ammar, refused and arrested the head of Ben Ali's presidential guard who was planning to grab power for himself (Schraeder, Redissi, 2011). The military continued to act as an ally to the protestors by securing the major cities and protecting them. The military also insisted upon remaining apolitical while they assisted the protestors in removing the rest of the presidential guard and Ben Ali sympathizers (Schraeder, Redissi, 2011). The actions taken by the Tunisian military had an immense and consequential impact on the outcome of the revolution. Because the military did not try to grab power as it did in Egypt and acted as the armed forces of the Tunisian people

rather than acting as the armed forces of Ben Ali, the old regime was forced to step down. The Jasmine Revolution does not meet Tilly's criteria for multiple sovereignty, but the new polity that was being demanded by protestors was able to take power with the help of the military. The actions taken by the military in Tunisia set the path for a democratic outcome.

Tilly also stressed that revolutionary outcomes were dependent upon whether or not the revolutionary coalition was in power of the government and that in some cases revolutions do not present multiple sovereignty and that the transfer of power to the revolutionary coalition is gradual (Tilly, 1993). In Tunisia after the protest that ousted Ben Ali, a transitional government was put in place made up of members from the old regime. However, this did not sit well with the Tunisia people who did not want a repeat of the old regime. This transitional government stayed in power until February 27, when the leaders stepped down due to popular demand, and a new government led by Prime Minister Béji Caïd Essebsi was instated. This marked a key indicator of democracy, a peaceful transition of power. This series of events shows a gradual transfer of power from the old regime to the revolutionary coalition led by Béji Caïd Essebsi, an outspoken critic of Ben Ali. He led the charge in banning Ben Ali's RCD party, arresting regime hard-liners, and abolished the political police. The combination of multiple variables allowed Tunisia to successfully revolt against their oppressive leader and create a democratic government. The actions taken by the military to side with the protestors and the subsequent peaceful transfers of power shaped the revolutionary outcome to one that would lead to the democratization of Tunisia.

## Egypt

In Cairo, Egypt, 2011 was filled with civil unrest and a demand for change within its government. The revolt in Tunisia, the first state

to turn against its leaders for their wrongdoings, sparked a flame in young and well-educated Egyptians to call for the removal of President Hosni Mubarak, making Egypt the second nation to push for change in the Arab Spring. Mubarak, who ruled Egypt for nearly 30 years without any democratic election, ruled with near-absolute control over his people, fundamentally infringing on the rights of a democracy (Korotayev, Shishkina, 2019). While these protests are based on economic reasons rather than democratic reasons, the people still demanded his removal and a democratic election. Under Mubarak, Egyptians faced a significant rise in inflation, unemployment, and poverty rates, making many unable to find jobs. Due to this growing hatred for Mubarak within the youth population, inevitably leading to the fear barrier being broken and these protests taking to the streets. Inflation and massive unemployment rates poverty led Egyptians to seek massive governmental reform (Korotayev, Shishkina, 2019). The new generation of young Egyptians recognized this as inhumane treatment and knew they had to speak up soon or else all of their rights would be gone. The government further angered the populace by infringing on personal freedoms, enacting a 6 o'clock curfew, and closing internet cafes, restricting many Egyptians access to the internet (Korotayev, Shishkina, 2019). This further escalated protest, leading to the death of Khaled Said, a young man who was forcibly removed from an internet café during a protest and brutally killed in the street.

This young generation of Egyptians, who are familiar with modern democracy and the impact it has on foreign countries, continued to push for change and after foreign media brought this deprivation to light, the protests came to an end. The common goal, which first began with small protests, became reality and in February of 2011 President Hosni Mubarak was pushed to forcibly resign from office leading Egypt into a democratic election for the first time since Mubarak took office, leaving the government up to the Supreme Council of Armed forces (Korotayev, Shishkina, 2019).

Ted Gurr's theory of relative deprivation was relevant during the



protests in Egypt. Relative Deprivation “is defined as actors’ perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities” (Gurr, 1970, P.24). This theory is used because the populace feels basic human rights and access to goods and services are being restricted by that populace’s government or leaders which creates a motivation for change (Gurr, 1970). This is exactly what happens to the people of Egypt as well as other countries in the Arab Spring. For example, in Libya, President Muammar Gaddafi introduced an extreme socialist policy by the name of Jamahiriya (state of the masses) (Korotayev, Shishkina, 2019). This was a practice in which the people are actively involved in decision making within the government. With this in place, this meant that private ownership, trade, and freedom of the press was deemed illegal in fear of retaliation to a strong government. Radical Islamists banded together in 1990 to fight against the regime in which they were unsuccessful. In 2011, peaceful protesters gathered in Benghazi to demand democratic reform and the ending of political corruption. From this demonstration two protesters were arrested which was great press for the citizens of Libya (Korotayev, Shishkina, 2019). To combat opposition to the government, Gaddafi censored television and other major media outlets (Korotayev, Shishkina, 2019) so that the public could not get other ideas about leadership that seemed more ideal than the current situation. Libyans felt that if Gaddafi can pull off this authoritarian regime without backlash, other countries such as Egypt, and Tunisia for example, would implement these practices on their respective populace.

The same goes for the demonstrators, if they were able to knock down the authority other countries would see that it is possible to fight for their rights and not kneel before unjust power. In March of 2011, The Security Council of the United Nation passed a resolution that legalized the use of any means possible to end the killing of the oppressive government (Korotayev, Shishkina, 2019). This was a huge step forward, as it allowed the people of Libya to fight back and not face death. Finally, in August of said year, Gaddafi was captured

and killed publicly which ended the mass oppression of Libyans and set the example that people united can overcome the adversity of mass scale.

## Syria

When examining the political unrest and civil war in Syria under the authoritarian rule of Bashar al-Asaad during the Arab Spring, it is necessary to delve deeper into Charles Tilly's theory of revolution to better understand why this revolution has exploded and found no end. Tilly's theory of revolution is separated into two distinct factors: a revolutionary situation, and a revolutionary outcome (Tilly, 1993). Aforementioned, a weak state or government where the elite are given the necessary tools to succeed while the subject population is left to suffer, and live-in unrest creates a revolutionary situation. For a revolutionary situation to be present, there must be an aggregate of causes; the appearance of two or more sovereignties competing for the power of the state, support from the subject population, and the ruler's unwillingness or inability to subdue the alternative coalition (Tilly, 1993). In the case of Syria during the Arab Spring, all three components necessary for the presence of a revolution state were, and still are, apparent; much like many of the other countries during this time, there was a hard push against oppressive regimes in the form of pro-democracy protests, which began in early 2011.

These protests presented themselves as the pathway for the opposing sovereignty to gain control and power throughout Syria, in hopes to bring Assad's regime to an end. The Assad authoritarian regime resembles many of those throughout the other countries experiencing the same revolt and push for democracy. It is important to acknowledge that the economic policies set in place were there to benefit the elites and leave nothing but scraps for the lower class.

Much of the regime's support stems from the co-optation that Assad's father Hafiz al-Assad had put into place during his reign over Syria; this system has allowed Asaad to retain the support of the political and business elites (Lesch, 2013). While much of Asaad's continued reign over the regime can be credited to this support, the protests have remained divided and without a common purpose, leaving the co-opted parties of Asaad believing that his regime is the lesser of two evils. As tensions began to rise, Syria's situation emulated Ted Gurr's theory of relative deprivation, meaning the perception of the difference between one's value capabilities and their value expectations (Gurr, 1970). A lack of resources and political opportunity among the lower class led to unrest and feelings of relative deprivation; eventually causing a revolutionary war, with both the masses and the elites reacting to their respective sense of relative deprivation.

The uprising against the Syrian regime came as a surprise to Asaad, it seemed after Syria's minister of foreign affairs had claimed that the regime's situation "had never been better" (Zisser, 2012.) The protests against the Syrian regime were minuscule in comparison to those of other countries and seemed as though the cause was not going to escalate throughout the country. Initially, the anti-regime protests began in the south, mainly in Dara'a and its surrounding villages; these peripheries – which the Asaad's eventually adapted – played a huge role in supporting the Baath party (Zesser, 2012). The turning of these peripheries can be attributed to the years of drought and staggering economic policies that critically damaged the well-being of said villages (Zesser, 2012). As the protests began to gain momentum throughout Syria, it was clear that Asaad's push back was imminent which led to military action that accounted for the death of protestors (Moussa, Zuber, 2018). This response was the spark that lit the fire for large scale civilian support. While the Syrian military had made its stance clear in the support of Assad, the rebel forces grew stronger and spread throughout the country, eventually bringing the battle to many major Syrian cities, such as the capital, Damascus (Moussa, Zuber,

2018). The formation of second sovereignty was finally upon Syria and had a much different response from Asaad than other leaders throughout the Arab Spring. Asaad's firm commitment to his regime had plunged Syria into a complete divide, further demonstrating that the use of force can only go so far in mass politics while the opposition continues to gain steam. The revolutionary outcome had finally become apparent as a seemingly never-ending civil war was on the brink of commencing.

The separate outcomes from each country apart of the Arab Spring brought change to each country, but pale in comparison to the still-ongoing civil war Syria is facing. After the Free Syrian Army was formed in July of 2011, it was clear that the Assad regime had more of a fight on their hands than initially anticipated. While the Syrian military had the rebellion outgunned in nearly every aspect of battle, artillery, men, and overall strategy. Yet, Asaad's forces seemed incapable of extinguishing the insurgency's spread (Arquilla, 2012). Asaad's inability to quell the rebellion that adamantly fought for his resignation only further demonstrates the slow collapse of the regime, with support for it both domestically and internationally eroding fast" (Zesser, 2012). Ultimately, neither the rebellion nor the regime had been able to gain the upper hand, leading to a stalemate that prompted an international intervention. Though intervention came on both sides, the support for the rebellion sparked concern that weaponry and control would fall into the wrong hands due to a conglomerate of many different motivating factors. Now, a country still in shambles and covered in bloody warfare, Syria has proven to have a substantially different outcome than those of its Arab Spring counterparts. Sparked by the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya were among other countries next to follow in the Arab Spring. Through international intervention, protests, war, and the deaths of thousands, Libya was finally able to reconstruct its government after the death of Qaddafi. Even though violence and disorder plagued Egypt throughout 2011, order was eventually restored as the fall of Mubarak's government became more apparent (Moussa, Zuber, 2018). These outcomes, among others throughout the Arab

world may have spent countless lives on change, but ultimately led to a reformation of the masses and brought about development in the way leaders handle mass politics such as this, not a civil war.

## Counter Argument

Although Gurr and Tilly do a good job of describing why the Arab Spring occurred and its different outcomes, there are still gaps in their descriptions. One could argue that Chalmers Johnson's process theory better explains the Arab Spring revolutions. His process theory describes three variables that produce variability in revolutionary situations and their outcomes (Johnson, 1966). The first variable being the level of structural distortion which is the level of synchronization between people's values and the values of their government (Johnson, 1966). Across the Arab Spring states desynchronization between the values of the people and the values of the government institutions was rampant. Authoritarian leaders who lived in extravagance ruled over a growing young and educated population who were barred from reaching economic prosperity leading to a disconnect between their values. The second variable is the level of conscious political choice which describes the type of social change that will result from the disconnect. These are the decisions made by governments and other actors that participate in the revolution and are coined as "accelerators" or "precipitating events" (Johnson, 1966). Mohammed Bouazizi's self-immolation and the torture of children by the Syrian secret police both acted as precipitating events that acted as a catalyst for revolution (Sarihan, 2014). The third variable is the level of strategy and tactic taken by either the revolutionary or counter-revolutionary force. The tactics and strategy taken by these forces determine what type of revolutionary outcome will occur (Johnson, 1966). The Tunisian army's choice to side with the protestors over the Ben Ali regime allowed for Tunisia's revolutionary outcome to be widely different

than that of Libya or Syria whose armies responded violently against the revolutionaries. Thus, we see Syria and Libya still struggling with the consequences of those strategies by way of civil war all the while Tunisia is arguably the most democratic Middle Eastern state (Masoud, 2018).

## Conclusion

The common perception that the Arab Spring is one singular revolutionary event leads to confusion about the myriad revolutionary outcomes that resulted from pro-democracy protests over the last decade. While the domino-like sequence of protests that took over the Arab world were similar in nature, each uprising led to dissimilar outcomes varying from complete political reform to aggravated oppressive regimes. Charles Tilly, Ted Gurr, and Chalmers Johnson all offer distinct revolutionary theories that allowed for insightful evaluation of the events that took place during the Arab Spring. Tilly's theory of revolution pertaining to revolutionary situations and outcomes was showcased by Syria and the ongoing civil war that was brought forth by multiple sovereignties and Asaad's inability to subdue the rebellion. Egypt's situation and outcome emulated Gurr's theory of relative deprivation as the populace's belief that their value capabilities are not meeting the standard of their value expectations. Whether it be Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, or any other state involved, the comparable revolutionary situations throughout the Arab Spring all led to drastically disparate outcomes.

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## Image Attribution

110609 'Arab Spring' takes toll on Moroccan economy | الربيع العربي "الربيع العربي" يلقى بظلاله على الاقتصاد المغربي | Le Printemps arabe coûte à l'économie marocaine by Magharbia s licensed under CC BY 2.0



# 23. American Revolutions? The Left/Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter



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“There’s class warfare, all right, but it’s my class, the rich class, that’s making war, and we’re winning.”

— Warren Buffett

Though this book has examined international cases of revolutions and political violence, this chapter will

reorient the analysis to the United States and analyze the social revolutions of the American left. The chapter afterward will examine the social revolutions of the American right. The U.S subject is unique because, unlike the case studies previously covered in this book, its social movements have taken place within a state featuring an advanced capitalist economic system and democratic polity in the Global North, and because the U.S is regarded by many as the global hegemon of the international system. As a result, the U.S exerts considerable influence on the international stage and has had a hand in many revolutionary outcomes in other countries through direct or indirect involvement in foreign politics. As political philosopher James DeFronzo notes, liberal movements are distinguished from their conservative counterparts by their unique aim to transform the political and economic order of a given society, rather than to preserve the status quo (DeFronzo, 2015, p. 9). Given the political, economic, and military power of the United States, how do American citizens of the left push for liberal change within the state? To what extent have American leftist revolutionary

movements been successful in their aims to bring about liberal change?

In this section, Chalmers' Johnson's equation for revolution and James DeFronzo's five preconditions for a successful revolution will be applied to the Vietnam Antiwar protests, the Occupy Wallstreet Movement, and the Black Lives Matter movement to explain their respective causes and outcomes.

## Vietnam Anti-War Movement

Following the policies being put in place by the American government and the disregard of American lives by the government, the Vietnam anti-war movement began. Although the Vietnam anti-war movement did not fully develop into revolutionary war, and somewhat produced a revolutionary outcome, anti-war groups put pressure on the government and action on the part of those involved with the movement that fall in line with the theories put forth by Chalmers Johnson and James DeFronzo.

The Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), which became the group largely responsible for the organization of the anti-war movement's activities, originally established themselves as a group concerned with "societal and university reform" (Berry, 2018: p. 31) based on college campuses and communities in the United States. The SDS as well as other anti-war groups shifted their focus to Vietnam particularly when Lyndon B. Johnson became president after Kennedy's assassination, and the number of drafted men increased accompanying the Gulf of Tonkin incident. The location of apparent North Vietnamese contact with U.S. naval forces, The Gulf of Tonkin, prompted Johnson to ask for Congressional approval to begin official warfare in the region ("The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution and the Limits of Presidential Power", 2020). This sparked the large numbers of men being drafted, which only increased as Johnson's presidency continued. The United States' involvement, to many,

seemed like men got shipped off to die in a war the United States had no chance to win. This feeling in particular heightened with the news of the Tet Offensive, one of the bloodiest battles, if not the bloodiest battle, of the entire Vietnam War (Bowman, 2018). Domestically, seemed to show the American efforts in Vietnam as successful and tactful. The Tet Offensive showed the American people that quite the opposite of success was playing out in Vietnam. This exacerbated the feeling that men would be shipped to Vietnam just to die.

To combat the draft, demonstrations from anti-war groups and individuals involved the burning of their draft cards (Berry, 2018: p. 36). In addition, people found creative ways to dodge the draft in the form of running away to Canada, joining the national guard, or going to college (Berry, 2018: p. 36). Going to college turned into a popular way to get out of being drafted, and a large portion of the anti-war leaders were college students. This contributed to the idea that the draft targeted low income and African American citizens in the United States because the options others took to avoid the draft could not present themselves as opportunities for these populations. Disdain and fear of being drafted took over the minds of American citizens, especially as numbers of men being drafted increased significantly over the course of Johnson's term.

The draft became an especially pertinent issue as Johnson approached the end of his presidential term and as Nixon was preparing to move into the presidential role. Anti-war protestors hoped that Nixon would try to bring an end to the war and withdraw troops from Vietnam. However, the release of the Pentagon Papers during Nixon's presidency yet again accelerated anti-war sentiments. The Pentagon Papers, while they did not cover the time Nixon was in office, gave more fuel to the anti-war movement because it seemed as though this war was far from over (Moran, 2018). Nixon also viewed the leaking of these documents as treasonous, despite the information presented in them having no relation to his presidency and policies regarding Vietnam (Moran, 2018). Anti-war groups, seeing Nixon's reaction and having the

realization that the war would not necessarily end as soon as they had hoped. Nixon was perpetuating the situation that anti-war individuals had been working tirelessly to end. The culmination of these frustrations and the inability of the government to respond in an efficient and effective way came into full view during the Kent State Shootings in 1970. Student demonstrators gathered on the Kent State campus to protest against Nixon's decision to allow the United States to invade Cambodia, going against his initial promise of finishing the war (Lewis & Hensley). The Ohio National Guard was called in to town because of this and fears that rioting would occur, but the National Guard was called to the campus because an ROTC building was lit on fire, making the campus situation worse (Lewis & Hensley). May 4th, 1970, the National Guard fired their weapons into a crowd of protestors, killing 4 people (Lewis & Hensley). This caused uproar from the anti-war community because the shootings happened after a demonstration promoting anti-war ideals. In addition, Nixon released a statement that insinuated that the tragedy at hand was incited by the protestors in the first place, and that protests should stray away from violence in order to avoid another Kent State (Guerrieri, 2020). Nixon's disregard for even the lives of American's domestically further agitated the anti-war movement, one of many blunders for Nixon regarding the war. Nixon's actions exposed a plan to not leave the war the way he had said at the beginning of his presidency.

Anti-war protests dedicated to actual demonstrations like the one at Kent State composed a large portion of overall demonstration tactics. The anti-war movement had a reliance on visibility by state and national governments in order to garner support for their cause and put pressure on politicians. The protests at times would also erupt into unrest, which caused pressure domestically to appease the American people when it came to the United States' involvement in Vietnam.

## Application of Chalmers Johnson

Chalmers Johnson's theory is made up of a combination of multiple dysfunction, an intransigent elite, and an x factor that "sparks" a revolution and ultimately results in some kind of revolutionary outcome (Johnson, pp. 188-191). The Vietnam anti-war movement has all of these components but does not end in revolutionary war. The multiple dysfunction in this case can be considered as the United States' involvement in Vietnam in the first place. There was no chance of the United States winning the war, and involvement in the first place was frustrating a mass amount of the population. The government also induced a mass draft which angered anti-war groups, especially because it targeted low income and African American citizens. The intransigent elite can be considered the college students and demonstrators who took to the streets to put pressure on government officials and called for change domestically. They were not drafted into the war themselves, because they had the ability to go to college, but were the voices of those who went overseas and who were drafted. The "x factor" could be considered as a variety of things. This includes the Gulf of Tonkin incident, the Tet Offensive, the leaking of the Pentagon Papers, and the Kent State shootings. All of these events set off waves of revolutionary situations in the United States, however, a full revolutionary war did not start. The anti-war movement gained motivation to fight for their beliefs in various forms of protest after these events occurred. The Vietnam anti-war movement did not necessarily evolve into full blown revolution though, and that may be because the feature of multiple dysfunction did not get dire enough to push the United States into a domestic civil war. There were protests and change did occur after an extended period of time in Vietnam but did not fully erupt into a revolution. This could be attributed to the resignation of Nixon and the gradual end of the war as Nixon's presidency came to an end as well, because the events went somewhat hand in hand with one another. The gradual

decline of the Nixon administration helped bring a quicker end to the war, and with that the reason for protesting was lost. Although the situation did not bring about total revolutionary war, the end of the war could be considered a successful revolutionary outcome for the anti-war protesters.

## Application of James DeFronzo

James DeFronzo's theory features the components of Mass Frustration, Dissident Elite, Unifying Motivations, Severe Political Crisis, and a Permissive/Tolerant World Context (DeFronzo, 2015: pp. 12-13). This applicable to the Vietnam anti-war movement in various aspects of how the movement changed and shifted focus over time, as well as how the movement responded to the various actions of the government that it did not agree with. Mass frustration can be shown through the protests of the draft, whether that was draft avoidance or the demonstration of burning draft cards. Many anti-war groups opposed the draft and how it singled out certain populations in the United States to serve in a deadly war. The dissident elite in the Vietnam anti-war movement were the college students and young people on the front lines of protests and draft card burnings. These were the groups that did not necessarily get drafted but were the "intelligentsia" of the anti-war effort. These people were students and teachers that were against the war in Vietnam and educated various people on why the anti-war movement was one the public should support. This was highlighted through "teach-ins" hosted on college campuses, which was where students and members of the public could learn about the war and ways, they could get involved in protesting or advocating against it (Berry, 2018: p. 34). The unifying motivation in this case ties back into mass frustration at the time. Many people did not want their family members, friends, or even themselves to be drafted into what many people thought was a war you would not come home from.

The severe political crises could be tied back into what the x-factor of Johnson's theory was, which were the Gulf of Tonkin incident, the Tet Offensive, the leaking of the Pentagon Papers, and the Kent State shootings. All of these events sent the anti-war movement into overdrive when it came to rallying against the war in Vietnam. When it comes to the permissive or tolerant world context, there really was only domestic push back against the anti-war movement. The Vietnam War, even under the conditions put forth by DeFronzo, did not result in a full-blown revolution. The war ultimately ended, and Nixon resigned, and the anti-war movement died down with that. The government, although they were not proponents of the anti-war movement, were more concerned with keeping domestic uprisings at bay, especially considering how devastating the war abroad already was. This in itself could be considered a revolutionary outcome, despite there being no revolutionary war, because the anti-war protests did achieve their goals in pushing for the end of the draft and the war.

## Occupy Wall street

Occupy Wall Street encompasses a modern identity of revolutionary action. Started in 2011 at Zuccotti Park on Wall Street, spurred by the mass discrepancy between most Americans and the top 1% of the U.S. economically. Through analyzing the organization and movement as a whole through both Chalmers Johnson and James DeFronzo's condition of revolution, it can be understood why Occupy was successful as a protest but a failure as a revolution.

The rising tensions between minoritized communities and cops and between wealthy hedge fund managers and minimum wage earners became kindling lighting the fire of Occupy Wall Street. Starting in September with just the occupation of Zuccotti Park, Occupy had spread to almost every major metropolitan in the U.S. by the end of October. (We are the 99%, 2011) As people became

angrier with the current economic and social situation in America, there were thousands stepping out to exercise their democratic right, calling out systematic oppression and corruption perfectly encapsulated in the Wall Street culture. The movement was, in part, catalyzed by the Arab Spring, where protests began in Egypt earlier that same year surrounding public discontent and high levels of unemployment. Unlike Egypt, there was no revolutionary outcome, just an awakened and heightened public sense of discontent with major corporations. (Graeber, 2011) The main requests of protestors are better wealth distribution, democratic representation, and a political change in the prioritization of corporations. Occupy stretched from East Coast to West and even across the world and lived past the physical protest themselves. Time Magazine even named the Person of the Year 2011 as The Protester, (Times, 2011) and the original blog continues on with updated protest and ally information. (We are the 99%, 2011) The movement was considered radical because of the anarchism beliefs that it was rooted from (Graeber, 2011) The large media presence became a fast-burning method of communication and information, encouraging city after city to have their own protests. The conditions for a revolution were present; economic disparity mixed in with racialized injustice made obvious by the fallout of a harrowing economic awakening in the 2008 Stock Market Crash. The protests were broadcasted and organized through social media, specifically through a blog titled 'We are the 99%', coordinated with the belief that the top 1% of the wealthiest population left everyone else, or the 99% fighting over crumbs for survival. The protesters lined the streets of major cities across the U.S. while thousands of New Yorkers continued to protest and occupy, even across the Brooklyn Bridge. The main source of frustration is the disposability of the everyday American to large corporations and in the grand capitalist scheme. The protest was a sign of the failure of trickle-down economics and an outcry for the U.S. to pay more attention to the civil rights and economic issues at hand instead of investing as much as possible into the military. (King, 2011)



## Why Did Occupy Fail?

As a decentralized movement with newly gained momentum, the Occupy Wall Street movement failed in a couple of aspects. As a nationwide and ever global movement mostly informed on social media, there were complications surrounding the decentralization. The message was the same, but the immediate demands of the movement would vary by location, giving slight differences in outcome. For example, Oakland's Occupy worked differently than Chicago's, both had the same goal but different levels of disparity and community awareness. (King, 2011) Not having a short term demands to be met lost the movement 's momentum, as the occupation barely lasted six months, with issues mostly contended as a congressional level. (Astor, 2011) Another issue pointed out is that the movement appeals in a large part to the police forces handling the protests and arresting people. In the case that there was an appeal to that specific line of blue-collar work, then the momentum could have been utilized to shut down this system reliant on cops as a mechanism of protection. (Astor, 2011) There was no revolutionary outcome due to the decentralized nature of this movement, the loss of momentum and failure to appeal to everyone encompassed in the 99%.

## Chalmers Johnson Application

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Chalmers Johnson's trio of conditions can be applied. There is multiple dysfunction represented by the criminalization of citizens of color, the struggle to bring the economy back after a major event, a disconnect between corporations and communities as well as an invalidation of worker's worth. The decline of economic safety after the 2008 recession still affected the majority of America 3 years later, while

large companies and the top 1% went back to prospering. The intransigent elite were the original protestors in New York, along with mass media gatherings behind the movement. The 'x factor' could be considered the initial occupation of Zuccotti Park, the march on Brooklyn Bridge, and the blog 'We are the 99%' and the televised effects of the Arab Spring. Since this movement did not end in a revolution, it holds true in Chalmer's belief that decentralization only creates reform as opposed to a full-blown revolution. The situation in the United States was not bad enough to enact a reaction to multiple dysfunctions, which could also lead to a reason within the theory of why Occupy never became a revolution. As changes at a smaller level occurred and the movement was addressed by Obama, there was no real large-scale solution.

## James DeFronzo Application

As for James DeFronzo's five conditions for revolution, (Mass Frustration in Society, Dissident Elite, Unifying Motivation, Severe Political Crisis, Permissive or Tolerant World Context) each presents itself in a way, but not to the degree needed for a full-fledged revolution. Mass frustration is shown just in the sheer number of protestors and how widespread the movement became in such a short time. The signs from all around the world depicting the slogan "We are the 99%" prove the message hit home far and wide. Dissident elite can be applied to the avid social media correspondence placing the demonstrations and protests as accessible information without necessarily doing much more than posting on Facebook. As the movement did not have a figurehead, the media aspect proved to organize and engage as many groups as possible while remaining relatively anonymous. The unifying motivation came from how the previous year's economic spiral affected the entire population, creating an easy hook for the majority of Americans struggling financially. Severe political crises

did not apply as heavily for Occupy. While the protest was political in nature, there was not as dire of political incidents as the Gulf of Tonkin, but arrests did happen, and there was major civil upheaval at the disappointment in a nation that puts its guns before its people. Occupy did take on a global stance as it appealed to a world context. Occupy did not meet the conditions for revolution and does not qualify as a revolution under DeFronzo's theory. The campaign ended within six months of its beginning, and while it has continued to be relevant, it still did not incite drastic change into the American economic inequalities.

## Black Lives Matter

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement is the most widespread contemporary social movement of the American left in the modern day. Following the George Floyd protests of summer 2020, it may also represent the largest U.S social movement to date (Buchanan, Bui, & Patel, 2020). The Black Lives Matter hashtag was founded in 2013 by three Black women named Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi, and Patricia Cullors, who coined the term on Twitter following the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the fatal shooting of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, an African American teen in Florida (Knox & Herbert, 2020). Nearly 7 years after its founding, what began as a radical refrain for the Black community which reflected the inherent, human worth of Black life in the face of racial injustice has become a multiethnic, national social movement opposing widespread police brutality against the Black community.

BLM remains decentralized in character. The most coherent structure of the BLM movement may be the national Black Lives Matter 501c3, which was started by Garza, Tometi, and Cullors after the BLM hashtag went viral. Still, the regional chapters maintain their political autonomy, and do not always coordinate their political actions. While most supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement

would agree that racially motivated police brutality exists in America, each political faction advocates different means for how to address the issue. While those on the far left of the Black Lives Matter movement call to defund and abolish the police, moderate BLM subscribers advocate for police reforms such as revised antiracism and de-escalation trainings and redefining the role of police in society (Chisholm, 2020). The Black Lives Matter movement—while invariably centering the experiences of Black citizens and maintaining a leftist political gravity—has supporter across the lines of race, class, gender, religion, and even party affiliation.

Though BLM has been growing for just shy of a decade, the movement has never acted in such a concert until early summer 2020. On May 26th, 2020, Americans on lockdown everywhere due to the raging COVID-19 pandemic were shocked and outraged to see a viral video depicting the particularly gruesome murder of George Floyd—a Black man from Minneapolis—by white police officer Derek Chauvin, who arrested Floyd and knelt on the back of his neck even as Floyd repeatedly gasped “I can’t breathe.” Onlookers watched as three other police officers did not intervene and prevented bystanders from intervening. In the days and weeks that followed, nearly 140 cities across the United States staged protests in George Floyd’s name, and the National Guard was deployed in 21 states to restore law and order (Taylor, 2020). While many protests were peaceful, protests in major cities were marked by looting and vandalism, as well as fringe instances of violence.

Though the BLM movement is still ongoing, the powerful force of the BLM protests from this past summer begs the question: why now? Further, will the momentum of the Black Lives Matter movement lead to a radical reckoning with racist policing in society? The catalyzing force of social media in the United States has been documented in the previous section on the Occupy Wallstreet movement, and as well as from an international perspective in the chapter on the Arab Spring. As with the previously illustrated cases of American leftist revolutionary movements, Defronzo’s and

Johnson's works remain relevant to explain the converging political, economic, and social contexts in which the contemporary Black Lives Matter movement emerged, and to predict what revolutionary outcomes it may lead to.

## Chalmers Johnson Application

Johnson's equation of multiple dysfunction, an intransigent elite, and an X factor resulting in a revolutionary outcome can be applied to the Black Lives Matter case to describe the causes of the May 2020 protests, and to explain their revolutionary outcomes.

Of Johnson's first criteria for assessing a revolutionary situation, there is the phenomenon of multiple dysfunction, which describes the extent to which the values of a society become incompatible with the institutions of that society. If there is substantial discord between the two, system disequilibrium can result (Johnson, p. 189). In the case of BLM, there is a growing feeling among leftist Americans that the policing system in the United States has failed to ensure the rights and civil liberties of Black Americans. Under the U.S Constitution, police officers are sworn to abide by the American ideals of justice. These ideals are expressed through the exercise of certain rights, including the right of all Americans convicted of a crime to a speedy and fair trial, to be tried by a jury of their peers, to be guaranteed protection from unlawful search and seizure, and to be guaranteed protection from cruel or unusual punishment. After viewing ceaseless hashtags bearing the names of the many Black victims of police brutality since Trayvon Martin's death in 2013, there is an overwhelming sense that the police system has failed to serve and protect Black Americans, and that police officers in the United States often abuse their power through unjust practices such as racial profiling. Because of this, Americans from across the political spectrum have become increasingly disenchanted with the justice system. Though they disagree about how police brutality

should be ameliorated, Black Lives Matter supporters overwhelmingly agree that the current system does not work, and that change must take place to correct this discrepancy. The political and economic backdrop of America was also grim in late May 2020, as Americans had been on lockdown under COVID for about 2 months, and 40.8 million unemployment claims were filed, the highest record in history (Domm, 2020). Americans everywhere were beginning to feel uncertain about their safety, and polarized messages from Republicans and Democrats intensified the moment.

An intransigent elite is also needed to spark a revolution, according to Johnson. This term assesses the extent to which an elite class is committed to the revolutionary group and its ideals, and is heavily influenced by structural conduciveness, or the extent to which a government is responsive to challenges to its norms. The composition of an intransigent elite will determine the kind of social change occurring from system disequilibrium (Johnson, p. 189). While it can be argued that the United States is highly permissive of diverse political thought, Johnson does mention that the reliability of the system's armed forces is a strong deterrent from a revolutionary change. Thus, though critique of the American justice system may be at peak levels, the raw power of the American military and its loyalty to the U.S government nearly eliminates the possibility of an armed campaign on behalf of the BLM movement. Where warfare capabilities are improbable, political discourse and popular culture become increasingly important tools of persuasion for political revolutions.

Intransigent elites of the Black Lives Matter movement include Black celebrities. In recent decades, research has noted that Black representation in pop culture such as film, TV, pop music, and art has increased, thus increasing the social capital and influence of the Black Community in American culture. Many Black celebrities have utilized their elevated social platforms to advocate against police brutality. For example, Colin Kaepernick—a Black former NFL player—became infamous in 2016 for taking a knee during the National Anthem to raise awareness about police brutality (Boren,

2020). In Kaepernick's case, he has expressed his support for abolishing the police (Cancian, 2020). In many cases, Black American celebrities such as Kaepernick come from socio-economically disenfranchised backgrounds, or may have experienced police brutality themselves, which gives them a sustained interest in the resolution of the issue. Minoritized in academic institutions as well as government and economic positions, popular culture is one of the few places where Black Americans might exert greater political influence. For a movement whose name began as a rhetorical appeal in the social media machine, Black celebrity is a powerful catalyst which has helped promulgate Black Lives Matter ideology crafted by organizers on the ground to a much broader audience. Furthermore, Black celebrities have also been able to materially support these causes, by either donating funds themselves to support bail funds or by urging social media followers to donate to local organizers via social media. The widespread support of BLM has ensured its political sway and has reframed conversations about racism in law enforcement in media and politics. What remains to be seen is whether this political influence will be enough to ensure systemic change in a center-right, two-party system.

The final aspect of Chalmer's Johnson theory involves an X factor, which sparks the revolutionary situation. The murder of George Floyd was the X factor of the Black Lives Matter movement which motivated community activists in Minneapolis to act and was spurred on by democratic collective will of the people. Further, the escalation of mass protests in Minneapolis into riots triggered a mimetic effect in other big cities as news about the escalation spread, and ultimately led to the mobilization of masses in cities like L.A and N.Y.C the night after the initial Minneapolis protests (Taylor, 2020). Indeed, it would be hard to imagine that the nationwide protests would have taken on their intense character if the events in Minneapolis did not escalate first.

# James Defronzo Application

As stated previously, Defronzo outlines 5 conditions for the success of a revolution, including: Mass frustration in society, a dissident elite, a unifying motivation across class lines, a severe political crisis which paralyzes the administrative and coercive capabilities of the state, and a permissive or tolerant world context towards the domestic revolution (Defronzo, 2015, p.12-13). These factors can be applied to the Black Lives Matter case to explain its potential for success in the future in eradicating police brutality in the United States.

Mass frustration was self-evident in the Black Lives Matter protests of summer 2020. The sheer scope and intensity of the BLM protests demonstrated the depth of anguish and disillusionment that many citizens were feeling with American police. That millions of protestors were willing to risk infection with the novel Coronavirus to attend the protests further underscores this point, and that so many Americans were on lockdown and facing grim employment opportunities and financial uncertainty contributed to a sense of disintegrating patience with the government. As mentioned earlier, a variety of leftist political groups representing socialist and anarchist strains also participated in the protests across the nation, weaving their own critiques of the U.S economic order into the discourse amidst the havoc wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic. The presence of mass looting and violence, as well as the use of force by police clad in riot gear to disperse protestors, were also independent catalysts which may have exacerbated the mass frustration that existed and may have extended the lifespan of the protests by weeks or months.

In terms of a dissident elite, this describes specifically the Black celebrities and social media influencers who played an integral role in popularizing BLM ideology and news from on-the-ground. As Defronzo notes, divisions among political elites, "if nothing else, [contribute] to confusion and disorganization in efforts to suppress



a revolutionary movement” (Defronzo, 2015, p.15). However, these Black celebrities often do not fit the mold outlined by Defronzo as the well-to-do, upper class defectors and supporters of leftist revolutionary movements. (Defronzo, 2015, p.16). For many Black celebrities, commercial success represents an upwardly mobile trajectory in their careers from previous economic marginalization. As of yet, few have emerged as movement organizers themselves, however important their roles as influencers. In this way, the ideology and the leadership of the Black Lives Matter movement remains grassroots and Black-centered and does not reap the benefits of a dissident elite, which may undermine the movement in the long run.

Next, the unifying motivation will be assessed. Defronzo emphasizes the importance of broad-based support across class lines for a successful revolution (Defronzo, 2015, p.17). In this endeavor, the Black Lives Matter movement has fallen short, particularly the more leftist strains which led calls to defund the police in Minneapolis. While it is true that Black Lives Matter enjoys widespread support from across racial and class lines, this support from upper classes and white Americans dwindles when considering demands to defund and abolish the police. This is because, similar to American soldiers, police officers generally occupy a prized place in American consciousness and have been invaluable to protecting the interests of upper classes in the United States. Furthermore, a majority of the police force is white, meaning that white individuals with family members in the police force may be particularly disincentivized from supporting the more radical elements of BLM.

The severe political crisis was exemplified in the political and economic disequilibrium of the time was brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic in tandem with the mimetic escalation of the George Floyd protests across U.S cities, which strained the ability of state and federal governments to establish order. However disruptive or otherwise long-winded the protests were, their effects were not overwhelming to the coercive capacities of the

government, which still had a solid national guard and police force to disperse protestors, and to establish law and order in time. Finally, the factor referring to a permissive world context—or a lack of intervention from outside nations in a revolution (DeFronzo, 2015, p.20)—was not applicable in the case of the George Floyd protests. While cities globally protested in George Floyd's name and reckoned with their own legacies of anti-Black racism, the revolutionary situation in the United States did not escalate to the point of civil war, and therefore did not require outside intervention.

## Conclusion

After applying Johnson's trio of conditions and DeFronzo's 5 conditions for a successful revolution to the cases of the antiwar Vietnam protests, the Occupy Wallstreet Movement, and the Black Lives Matter movement, it is evident that while the revolutions of the American left have been able to shape public discourse and policy to a point, most contemporary petitions for liberal change in U.S society have not succeeded in their endeavors to fundamentally transform the U.S political and economic system. The most successful of the revolutions analyzed includes the antiwar protests, which successfully petitioned for the end of the draft and the end of the Vietnam war. In the case of the Occupy Wallstreet movement, decentralization impeded it from graduating from a mere reformist movement to a truly revolutionary one. As for the fate of the Black Lives Matter movement, it is as of yet undecided; however, its presently decentralized character paired with political polarity on the question of police abolition among its base do not forebode sustainable, monumental transformation of U.S policing, but rather moderate police reform. As of yet, it appears that liberal change in the United States is still subject to the political will and involvement of U.S elites as in the case of the Vietnam war, and liberal change

is still dependent on the permissiveness of the state's coercive authorities to delimit the edges of its protests.

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# 24. American Revolutions? The Right/The Rise of the Alt-Right



Charlottesville “Unite the Right”  
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“I imagine one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly is because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain.”

— James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*

The rise of Neo-Nazism and the so-called “Alt-Right” remained mostly in the shadows until 2016 and the election of Donald Trump; members of the fascist organization have hailed him as a savior who will bring their ideals into the spotlight. This is concerning to some for obvious reasons. After all, Hitler came to power legally as well. As the various names for this movement imply, it is a re-emergence of the Nazi ideology that came to power in Germany in the 1930s and sparked a World War in the 1940s. There are notable differences in the two movements, namely the surge of anti-Muslim sentiment that has accompanied politics in a post-9/11 world. Any person of color seems to be a target of the Alt-Right, as well as feminists, the educated, Democrats, and journalists; the latter of these largely due to President Trump’s repeated lies and falsehoods about the integrity of the media. There is no telling whether the Alt-Right will continue to rise to power with Trump ousted from office or retreat back into the shadows, lurking on the periphery of communities and in dark corners of the web, where it grew in the first place.

# Background

The Alt-Right movement gained popularity through online sites that eventually raised them to mainstream media. 4chan in particular is notorious for the rise of the Alt-Right. The site was not originally created for this group to gather, but it became an outlet for members to share their thoughts and opinions. 4chan is purely an internet discussion board for various topics. The Alt-Right came together under the thread /pol/, or politically incorrect. /pol/ was a discussion board meant for political discussion along with other world news discussions, replacing a previous thread under the name of /new/, or 4chan's previous news thread. (Hawley 2019, p.118). Originally, many people under the /pol/ thread shared strong libertarian views, but in the early-mid 2010s, the thread became highly influenced by far-right ideologies. The contributors to the thread turned to extremist views, allowing a platform for Neo-Nazis and White Supremacists on the site with topics of antifeminism, racism, antisemitism, homophobia, and islamophobia. Many of these users supported Donald Trump's presidential campaign in 2016 and continue to grow their far-right views under his presidency. The anonymity of the website allows users to share these views without putting any personal information forth. By having this anonymity, extremists can spread their views easier and with less repercussions. The Alt-Right has spread beyond the platform of 4chan to other sites, but moderators of these sites can quickly shut down any user that brings about offensive material. However, censoring extremists' views online brings up the controversy of violating the first amendment in the United States, since a lot of views are considered free speech. The Supreme Court has ruled on multiple occasions that hate speech is legally protected under the first amendment. The use of memes on these threads also helped fuel the fire of the Alt-Right. Some memes can be considered extreme and dark, while others can be more subtle, while still sharing a far-right view, which is the political act referred to as

“dog whistling.” (Hawley 2019, p.111) A notorious meme that became associated with the movement is Pepe the Frog. Pepe the Frog was originally a harmless cartoon that became the mascot of the Alt-Right when Donald Trump retweeted an image of himself depicted as Pepe the Frog. As this took off, Alt-Right internet users depicted Pepe in Nazi uniforms, and other racist contexts (Hawley 2019, p. 115). Many internet users today learned that, oftentimes, the Alt-Right “troll” others on the internet in order to incite a reaction from them. An online troll’s intention is to gain self-entertainment by inciting others. The Alt-Right will troll their victims in order to make them look bad in some cases as well. If a troll receives the attention they intended for, even negative, it constitutes a victory in their view. (Hawley 2019, p. 108)

## Dark Minds of the Alt-Right

In the “Dark Minds of the Alt-Right,” readers are introduced to what exactly the Alt-Right is, with some research and further explanation on why this ideology is becoming an increasingly popular subsection of main conservative thought. In 2017, the Alt-Right reached mainstream media with the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, South Carolina. The rally was made up of many far-right groups including the newly self-proclaimed Alt-Right. Since the term is still fresh, Associated Press has warned not to use the term because there is still ambiguity to it. The Alt-Right, as of now, can range from people who are white supremacists to economic populists. President Trump’s statements to the Unite the Rally sparked major controversy when he referred to the protestors as “very fine people.” This statement has been a continuing criticism even after years to come.

Patrick Forscher of the University of Arkansas and Nour Kteily of Northwestern University have put out a psychology paper analyzing the Alt-Right’s beliefs. They began to survey members of the Alt-



Right with questions such as “What are your thoughts when people claim the Alt-Right is racist?” Members replied with responses such as wanting for themselves to live amongst their own “people,” those people being of European descent, or simply defined, white (Khazan 2015). Their responses also revealed that they feel like whites are at a disadvantage and see other religious and ethnic groups as subhuman, compared to the responses of people who are not part of the Alt-Right. The Alt-Right participants of the group differed in the research because they were much more likely to have a social dominance orientation – the desire that there be a hierarchy among groups in society. Men, whites, and Republicans amongst this group think that they are more discriminated against, while minorities and women were not (Khazan 2015). This find was similar to the victimhood mentality that white supremacists have, in which they believe whites are the real oppressed group in American society. In the study, participants were asked to rate groups on how “evolved” each group was. A lower score puts them closer to being ape-like, while a 100 is fully evolved. Groups seen as opponents, such as Muslims, Mexicans, blacks, journalists, Democrats, and feminists, were considered less evolved compared to whites in the eyes of members of the Alt-Right (Khazan 2015).

The researchers classified two subgroups within the Alt-Right. “Populists” were more concerned about government corruption and were less extremist, while “Supremacists” were seen as more extreme and racist (Khazan 2015). Populists were more likely to be radicalized as they met more Alt-Right members, which is not difficult to do in this age of technology. It only takes one click for people to fall into the rabbit hole of white supremacy. Contrary to the expectations of the researchers, economic anxiety was not a driving factor in the Alt-Right’s views, which is in line with studies that show that the Alt-Right is primarily made up of the rich and college-educated (Kyler 2020). Despite their education, the Alt-Right trusted media sources such as Breitbart and Fox News, resenting mainstream sources that they see as biased towards the

left. In addition, Alt-Right members were more likely to engage in violent behavior and oppose Black Lives Matter.

## Undercover with the Alt-Right

Studies like these are important because it is so difficult to understand the inner workings of the Alt-Right as an outsider. Knowing this, Hope Not Hate, a British anti-racist watchdog group decided to send Patrick Hermansson, a Swedish grad student undercover to discover the truths about the Alt-Right. He was chosen partly for his “Nordic” heritage, which gained him respect in the group, as Neo-Nazis are known to be obsessed with seemingly ‘pure’ heritage (Singal 2017). Hermansson marched at the Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville, and while there, was pepper sprayed and witnessed the murder of Heather Heyer. While back in Britain, Hermansson met with a man named Greg Johnson, an extremist of the Alt-Right at a private dinner. Johnson exclaimed, “we need to bring the mainstream to us.” He expressed confidence that this tactic was working, and that the online movement is successful. This movement is defined by the far-right personalities who use videos, blog posts, and tweets to push the boundaries of the mainstream media to the right. This is also successful due to the anonymity that online platforms have and the fact that these tactics are likely to work successfully on young, white males, which is the target demographic of the Alt-Right (Singal 2017).

Hermansson met another prominent figure of the Alt-Right, Jason Reza Jorjani, founder of the AltRight Corporation. Jorjani expressed hope for a future for Europe with expulsions, concentration camps, and possible war. He took cues from Hitler, who he saw as a great European leader (Singal 2017). His corporation encourages the connectivity between American and European Alt-Right groups. The Alt-Right despises globalism, despite being a global network themselves with regular interaction between

members across the globe. Jorjani made claims to having contact with Steve Bannon, a previous member of the Trump administration. Jorjani believed the Alt-Right could serve as a policy group for the Trump administration with connections to Bannon, but these hopes failed with Bannon being ousted (Singal 2017). Trump continued throughout his presidency to lend more legitimacy to white supremacy groups than was altogether proper for a world leader, but the group did not gain a foothold like Bannon again in his presidency.

A less extreme and more mainstream submovement within the Alt-Right has been termed the “Alt-Light.” The Alt-Light aims to defend “the west” against liberal-dominance and is not explicitly racist, which is why it is seen as the ‘lite’ version. This movement has denounced racism and antisemitism, but will agree to extreme immigration policies against Muslims, showing how the Alt-Right’s most extreme views now center on anti-Islam sentiment, compared to Hitler and the Nazi party’s predominantly Anti-Jewish sentiment. Because the Alt-Light is more moderate, it attracts more conservatives to the movement in larger numbers. Hope Not Hate describes the group as “less extreme, but more dangerous” (Singal 2017). Younger members of the Alt-Light who are fluent with the internet culture of memes have successfully been able to market the movement to more young people, creating more opportunity for them to be radicalized further. The rise in the use of the internet has made it easily accessible for people to get involved and find others in the community especially after taking the initial steps.

## **“Alt-Right” Groups Will “Revolt” If Trump Shuns White Supremacy**

There raise concerns within white supremacy groups that Trump will denounce them as soon as he is sworn into office, contradicting

some campaign promises that gathered interest from these groups in the first place. Trump denouncing these groups reassures liberals who feared the administration would be racist. The Alt-Right ultimately remains on the fringes of society instead of the spotlight of power since Trump does not go far right enough in enacting his policies. President Trump has backpedaled on a lot of promises, including the deportation of every illegal immigrant, although the border crisis is still an extreme situation that is at the hands of his administration. The Alt-Right starts facing fights within themselves as Trump starts making compromises in offices, and arguments such as “Trump betrayed us” vs. “You’re betraying us by saying that he did” start arising. Trump’s victory energized the Alt-Right and the movement is growing whether it is with or without him, though Trump did grow the Alt-Right base by calling Mexicans criminals and rapists, deporting undocumented immigrants, vowing to enact a Muslim ban, and build a wall. Richard Spencer, a key figure in the Alt-Right movement, celebrated Trump’s victory in a speech where he said “Hail Trump. Hail our people. Hail victory!” The last phrase was a direct translation of the Nazi slogan, along with some audience members giving the Nazi salute. Members within the Alt-Right condemned Spencer’s speech, arguing that this was not an effective way to bring Americans to an effective understanding of race in their point of view. Eventually, President Trump disavowed the group in the beginning of his administration. Richard Spencer continues to give speeches and bring awareness to the Alt-Right and looks to run for Congress in the state of Montana. Jared Taylor, a prominent white supremacist, states the idea that both liberals and the Alt-Right had in regard to Trump is a result of media distortion. Trump is an American nationalist, but not a Neo-Nazi (Carroll 2016). Taylor has hopes and urges patience within the Alt-Right movement that someday racial nationalism will triumph in America.

## Chalmers Johnson

Chalmers Johnson expanded on the theorists before him to create Process Theory, which examines the causes of revolution through the understanding that change precipitates change. Revolution is a constantly changing environment, and Johnson's theory acknowledges that changes occur as a revolutionary situation is taking place. Johnson recognizes three stages of revolution: structural distortion, conscious political choice, and strategy and tactics (Johnson 1982, p. 187). Structural distortion and conscious political choice are both stages which can be moved between, as a movement determines the political saliency of their cause and the direction, they will be moving in. However, the final stage of strategy and tactics leads to a movement becoming solidified. Johnson argues that once violence has been used, the group's ideology has been solidified and the movement is no longer able to operate at the level of structural distortion or conscious political choice.

This case study portrays an example of a social movement as a reaction against social change and progression itself. The use of technology and the adaptation to the modern situation is an important part of Johnson's theory. The Alt-Right has acknowledged the importance of media today in gaining support and growing their movement, and through their use of the media have been able to find niches online. The growth of this movement through the internet, the use of 4chan and Reddit, and the translation of its ideology into a digestible form targeted at young white men through humor and pop culture depicts the continuity of the movement and its ability to change with the use of technology. The Alt-Right has targeted this demographic and made itself more accessible through the use of pop culture, including the Pepe the Frog meme, and the distillation of extremism through euphemisms such as "race realist" or "human biodiversity." This discourse has made the extremist ideology of the Alt-Right more palatable to the Americans they are attempting to win over. Johnson discusses the flexibility of

movements and the continuity of changes of a movement. This is seen as the Alt-Right has adapted their use of technology and found their niche in online forums to where their extremist viewpoints are repeated back to themselves.

In some ways it is difficult to define clear goals of the Alt-Right, which operates more as an ideology than a single group. By not defining itself as a clear organization, the Alt-Right is able to resonate as a more individualized ideology than an association with an organization. While some members of the Alt-Right have clearly defined their own organizations, such as Richard Spencer's National Policy Institute, many exist more loosely in internet discussions and forums, lacking an organizational hierarchy and making them more difficult to condemn as a group.

The anger driving the Alt-Right speaks to a level of structural distortion in which this portion of the population feel strongly enough about these beliefs to attempt social change. However, this perspective of structural distortion is based on the skewed view of the attack on the "white race" and is built on a culture of victimization and reallocation of blame towards minority groups. The Alt-Right is motivated through a victimization culture, repeating rhetoric such as "white genocide," "cultural continuity," and Spencer's goal of "peaceful ethnic cleansing." As one of the most prominent advocates for the ideology, Spencer's demand for a "white homeland," and calls for racial separation have become a key concept in the movement (Spencer).

The Alt-Right, while growing its online base, has become more and more a part of the mainstream conversation, with connections to many visible personalities such as YouTubers and far-right news organizations. This has allowed for a spread of the ideology while not becoming explicitly active. However, violent actions committed in the name of the Alt-Right have become more and more common, and they have become more visible through physical protests and events. The events of the Unite the Right rally shocked the country, not only because of the violence and clear racist displays taking place but also by the rhetoric surrounding the events afterward

from prominent public figures, particularly Donald Trump. Through Johnson's model, at the level of strategy and tactics, the group in question becomes visible and is unable to operate again under the levels of structural distortion or conscious political choice. Once the group becomes violent, their declaration of purpose and political saliency becomes solidified (Johnson 1982, p. 192). Many theorists discuss the role of terrorism in revolution, and how the rhetoric around violence can determine the public's reaction. The article "‘Alt-Right’ Groups Will ‘Revolt’ If Trump Shuns White Supremacy," discusses some of the Alt-Right's reactions against Spencer's blatant references to Adolf Hitler, with the use of "Hail, Trump. Hail our people. Hail victory!" The concern from some within the Alt Right is that blatant terrorism or racism will remove the Alt-Right from mainstream conversation and isolate them from the people. Richard Spencer describes the desire to have a movement that does not look "crazed or ugly or vicious or just stupid," in order to continue gaining recruits.

## **Karl Marx**

Karl Marx presents an analysis of the way in which capitalist structures perpetuate social conflicts, through his discussion of dialectical materialism and thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. These two concepts analyze the contradictions created by material needs and desires, and the reaction to change in a thesis, antithesis, and synthesis relationship. Marx focuses his analysis on the philosophical perception of the world through materialism, and the socioeconomic reality created through the assignment of material value. He argues that instead of attempting to mend perceptions of social discontent, the structure itself must be changed to acknowledge the disconnect created by the material perception of reality.

Marx's discussion of dialectical materialism emphasizes the

conflict of unmet material needs leading to discongruence and contradictions in social expectations (Marx). In the case of the Alt Right, this discongruence is created because of the victimhood mentality many members hold. This perception of oppression is created from social movements towards equality, away from social structures which favor white people, leading to those in the Alt Right to feel as if they are losing what they see as their rights. As another aspect of this discongruence Ted Gurr describes the concept of relative deprivation as the difference between material expectations and material capabilities, leading to relative deprivation when expectations are not met by capabilities (Gurr 1970, p. 27). In the case of the Alt-Right, this perceived deprivation has been blamed on minority groups. Relative deprivation gives an explanation to the discontent felt by the Alt Right when viewed through the perspective of dialectical materialism.

Marx's identification of the importance of class in revolutionary movements is also applicable to the Alt-Right, in examining the rhetoric created about the ingroup and out group. Besides economic concern, the Alt-Right boasts racial purity and takes on a victimization culture, seeing themselves as defenders of their race, protecting themselves against attack from diversification. An aspect of the relation to class struggle has been the outburst of Alt-Right anger not just to minorities, but also Democrats and the so-called 'bourgeoisie,' often with ties back to the support of social programs and globalization. A major motivation of the Alt-Right is the reaction to globalism. The Alt-Right's fear of this "globalist elite," returns back to this deferral of blame for their position. The personification of the constructed fear of being overtaken as a "white race," has taken on the image of a global conspiracy of progressive politicians and has become one of the cornerstones of Alt-Right fear.

Marx's analysis of the faults of capitalism, through both "Das Kapital," and "The Communist Manifesto," analyze the structures in which the proletariat unifies into a revolutionary class, as well as breaks down the exploitive qualities of capitalism and the circumstances for revolutionary situations. Understanding the



situations in which rebellion occurs, specifically in a socialist or communist uprising, is an important aspect of understanding how the fear of these movements have been co-opted by far-right movements, such as Hitler's rise to power and rhetoric today surrounding the Alt-Right.

Marx's theory of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis states that knowledge is created from knowledge by locating internal contradictions and finding conclusions. Marx applied this theory to observe revolutionary change by defining thesis as the status quo, antithesis as the mechanism for change, and synthesis as the outcome of the interaction between the two. The Alt Right emerged as an antithesis to social changes towards equality and operates as a reactionary force to what they believe to be oppression towards themselves. Marx acknowledges thesis, antithesis, and synthesis as a process, highlighting the cyclical nature of change. The synthesis of the reaction of the Alt Right to advancement of equality will be seen in how society adapts to their demands, and whether or not it addresses the structural aspects which promote them.

## Conclusion

The growth of the Alt-Right movement has come about through the increasing polarization in America, and the ability for extremism to find a platform on the internet. This combined with connections to Donald Trump and the Republican party, has in the past few years enhanced a kind of "legitimacy" of the group that promotes hatred and fear. Tactics of deplatforming and identifying members of the Alt-Right have become an important aspect of breaking down the ideology, however in order to fully address the issue a conversation must be started around why this extremist ideology has found such a firm grip on American culture. The Alt-Right movement has perpetrated violence, xenophobia, and hatred, and must be addressed.

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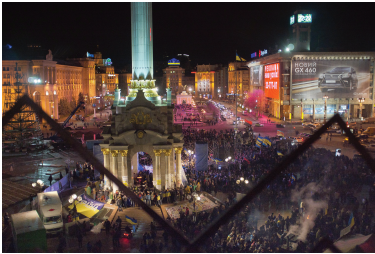
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## Image Attribution

Charlottesville “Unite the Right” Rally by Anthony Crider is licensed under CC BY 2.0

# 25. The Ukraine Orange Revolution & Russian Counter-Revolution



“22:22’ or 6 hours before bloody crackdown of students Nov 30, 2013.”  
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“The attitude of the West and of Russia towards a crisis like Ukraine is diametrically different. The West is trying to establish the legality of any established border. For Russia, Ukraine is part of the Russian patrimony.” -Henry Kissinger

The events in Ukraine over the last twenty provide a perfect example of an international component that can often predict revolutionary outcomes. This chapter will analyze the Ukrainian revolutions and counter revolutions that have occurred from the 2000s to the present and how they fit into two revolutionary theories’ confines. The Orange revolution, which upon most accounts, is deemed peaceful, stretched over two years from 2004 to 2005. It involved an alleged attack by their President Leonid Kuchma on a journalist, forcing him not to run for a second time Ukrainian citizens had risen in their disapproval of him. A disputed election between a Russian supported candidate and a western supported candidate followed. The theories applied in this chapter to the Ukrainian revolutions will be those of James Defronzo and Chalmers Johnson. Upon examination, the conclusion can be reached that James Defronzo’s structure-oriented theory of revolution most holistically and accurately explains how these revolutions played out.

To begin to understand the motivations behind, proceedings of,

and outcomes up to the most recent Ukrainian Revolution, one must first have at least a grossly simplified knowledge of the last century of Ukrainian history. Their history cannot escape ideological deviance and has had a hard time pursuing its simple goals of developing pro-western relations and eventually pro-western institutions. To begin, Ukraine achieved its independence at two different points throughout the 20th century. The first time, in the 1910's. Their attempt was undermined by the USSR, foreshadowing a theme of Soviet/Russian opposition to a prosperous and progressive Ukraine. The Soviet Union held strategic control over the country throughout most of the century thwarted their progress towards true independence. Not until the early 1990's, following the fall of the USSR, did Ukraine again declare real independence and outline a mission to westernize their institutions. Specifically, the country wanted to democratize and liberalize (Contact Ukraine). A weakened Russian state could not initially respond directly to the persistent threat of a NATO-aligned nation on their doorstep. However, the fear, aggravation, and commitment to stopping NATO's growth still existed (Foreign Affairs). The first decade of true independence was tricky for Ukraine. The nation dealt with two influential spheres, pulling it in two directions: The population aspiring for Western democracy and the Russian regime aspiring to keep it as a de-facto satellite state. Initial interim government President Leonid Kravchuk chose to sway towards Western sympathy, but he was defeated after his first term to Leonid Kuchma (Karatnycky 2005). This period was when Russian influence began to creep back into Ukrainian politics using discrete methods. Despite satisfying both populations to a surprising extent for some time, Kuchma was much more open to the considerations of Russian interests than his predecessor. Corruption eventually became transparent after about a decade. The 2004 election saw another battle of similar names: Viktor Yushchenko versus Viktor Yanukovich, in which Yanukovich initially won. Yanukovich had the prospects of becoming a definitively pro-Russian president of Ukraine.

Upon examination, the election was fraudulent, protests erupted, and the Orange Revolution ensued. Although there appeared to be a positive outlook on the general populace's election result, it enraged the citizens once the egregious voting fraud came to light. Among some of the more stunning examples of fraudulent behavior were violations of freedoms and threats, even attempts at Yushchenko's life. The violations of freedoms consisted of government-sponsored news media agencies tormenting Yushchenko without allowing public response and stifling his rallies. The attempts at his life came multiple times, including a truck trying to drive him off the road as well as being poisoned (Foreign Affairs). A vote recount enacted Yushchenko, the opposing Viktor, as president. This unrest furthered the narrative of a country whose population was hungry for the western institutions it kept being deprived of. Although Yushchenko took the reins for a short period of time, Yanukovich eventually grabbed it back over a decidedly fair vote. Although this might appear to be an ideological swing in the populace, it was not and did not mean the populace was gaining back loyalty to Russia as a whole. Yanukovich's election came with expectations and conditionality that he would maintain Ukraine's trajectory towards democratization. He failed to follow through on these expectations, which prompted the next Ukrainian Revolution of 2013-2014.

The revolution has since morphed into a Russian proxy war that has resulted in thousands of deaths. However, the initial effort was, in many aspects, a nonviolent success for the pro-western populous. There were around a hundred deaths, but relative to the death toll of many other revolutionary situations, this case was still considered relatively peaceful (Foreign Affairs). The first visual signs of resistance occurred in 2013 with student protests. The protests came after Yanukovich denounced the hope of signing a European association that many in the country wanted and anticipated (BBC). The move, to most citizens, once again foreshadowed a scenario they had seen too many times before: Russia infecting the domestic political sphere to keep Ukraine "eastern" and vulnerable. The

protests gained momentum quickly, and as the calendar year changed, more numerous large-scale protests emerged. Soon enough, in 2014, Yanukovich fled the country alongside the Prime Minister. Then the government was overthrown, marking what would at first appear to be the “success” of the pro-western group. However, upon resetting its trajectory once again, Ukraine immediately descended into further turmoil. Russia occupied and then annexed Crimea. Eastern Russian-loyalist regions took note and independently broke off their association with Ukraine leading to about 7% of the state’s land to be under control by Russian special forces and separatists (NBC news). While that percentage may appear low, its meaning pertains to Russian resistance as a critical component of the revolutionary situation. With Russia looming aggressively, Ukraine must balance its genuine prospects with its strategic quelling of Russian interference. Additionally, Ukraine president Poroshenko decided to counter Russian propaganda with hardline censorship. This move deviated from the country’s alleged commitment to western practices. It weakened a considerable portion of the population’s faith in their president, thereby probably weakening their chances in the war (Foreign Affairs).

As with all other revolutionary situations, however, reasoning and process are vital for developing an adequate understanding of what happened. Furthermore, reference to theories and historical academia is essential in each revolution. This helps determine which ones fit most logically to the situation and, therefore, carry the most weight when analyzing other revolutionary situations. Two of the most prominent initial approaches to this analysis are structural theories and actor-oriented theories. Structural theories emphasize the influence of a society’s functional and hierarchical conditions that motivate revolutionary outcomes. In contrast, actor-oriented theories focus more on the person or persons’ traits that motivate these outcomes. Examples of structural conditions include factors like middle-class size and economic or ethnic indifferences. An example of an actor-oriented condition may be the characteristic

of a revolutionary that allows him or her to garner a populace's support. The theorists that will be referred to in this paper are James Defronzo and Chalmers Johnson, with Defronzo representing the structural point of view and Johnson representing that of a hybrid one that includes actor-oriented elements.

Defronzo's theory is structured around five specific phenomena deemed vital for the insurgent group's success in a revolution. Four of these are seemingly tailored to explaining pre-revolutionary conditions, with one involving conditions determined during the movement. The first of these five qualities are the growth of displeasure and discontentment among most of the population. This is true of the crisis in Ukraine (Defronzo, 1991a: p. 12-13). Most of the population, mainly those on the western side of the country, are not fond of Russia's influence and want to grow a strong relationship with its western neighboring countries, as they have for some time. There are groups in Ukraine that remain loyal to the old Soviet regime and the old institutions, including large numbers of ethnic Russians which creates the Ukrainian/Russian Divide within the country. Still the 7% representing all the nation's land during this crisis is very indicative because the number includes both the annexed area of Crimea and previously domestic populations that willingly chose to break away from Ukraine. That is to say that the populace of the country that is not receptive to a revolution could be easily visualized for the most part geographically (NBC news).

Defronzo's second precondition is that elite members of the society are alienated from the current government or have positive support for the revolution. This characteristic lacks in many revolutionary situations, often since elites benefit from the flawed government, causing lower classes to revolt. Nevertheless, Ukraine serves as an example of one in which a handful of elites, ethnic Ukrainians, did defect. The revolution has been a domestically popular one, and its participation from the citizens has grown to a tremendous amount. More participation meant more people, friends, and family known on a personal level by elites in Ukraine. This, combined with the fact that the insurgent citizens revolted in

a mostly peaceful fashion, is probably the two biggest reasons elites leaked reasons to support counterinsurgency and supported the revolutionary movement (Foreign Affairs). Following this condition, Defronzo states the importance of a unifying formation of motivations that can tie together varying social classes. Again, this is positively relevant to the crisis in Ukraine. The first student protests were motivated by one single event: the denial of European association by former president Yanukovich. As the movement gained momentum, more began to show support for it domestically for the same reasons as the first students. People joined for different reasons, but this does not break alignment with Defronzo's theory as he strategically left out, identifying unifying motivations as all similar. He further said that these motivations could be completely personal and subjective (Defronzo, 1991a: p. 17). This should not be mistaken as a tenet of actor-oriented theories, in any case.

An actor-oriented promotes these personal characteristics as ones used to motivate others to join. In this case, they motivate the single subject to join in the broader structural revolution. These personal motivations in Ukraine surely emerged in the initial condition where friends and family of elites began participating. The final precondition out of Defronzo's five overall phenomena is that the crisis weakens the government regarding their ability to administer current policies and deceive their citizens (Defronzo, 1991a: p. 13). This is where it gets complicated for the situation in Ukraine. The protests threw the government into turmoil; it overthrew the government altogether and drove Yanukovich to flee. However, it did not rid them of coercion. In response to Russian propaganda post-Ukrainian Revolution, the new president Poroshenko has installed brute censorship practices. Examples included cutting Russian media and social media and penalizing anti-corruption activists in his own country. Remember, although this revolution ensued on the surface because of Yanukovich's decision, the frustration had been boiling for years and years due broadly to Ukrainian citizens wanting to westernize. Not only is



this overt censorship not in line with the western reasoning behind the revolution and the reasoning for Poroshenko to hold power in the first place, but it got direct condemnation from the people and organizations of western countries, countries that Ukraine is theoretically trying to partner up with ideologically. The author of one article on the current situation in Ukraine contends that just as much as the country needs help against Russia, they also need help against “Kiev’s imitation of Democracy” (Karatnycky). As this can be viewed as a detachment of Ukraine’s revolution from Defronzo’s theory, it can just as equally not be viewed that way. Defronzo would argue that the second Yanukovich fled, it meant a confirmation of this condition, and that the newly fabricated issues are the problem of a new government. Therefore, these issues exist in a new revolution if it came to that again. His fifth specific phenomenon, but not necessarily a precondition, is the presence or non-presence of foreign intervention. It is not simply whether other countries interfere, but rather how they do. For example, a foreign country could intervene in ways that are either beneficial or detrimental to the insurgent group.

Alternatively, they could have not intervened, which could also prove either beneficial or detrimental. Foreign intervention could have happened at any point during the timeline of a revolution. There are undoubtedly preconceived reasons why Russia would want to or would not want to interfere in a foreign revolution, both domestic and dependent on the revolutionizing nation. However, undoubtedly, things could happen during the revolutionary process that would influence a foreign country in one direction or the other. Ukraine has received help from foreign entities, mostly European. This means that most of the aid has been pro-western and, therefore, pro-insurgency. Nowadays, the aid mostly serves to defend against Russia, such as the United States’ hundreds of millions of dollars since 2014. However, the fact that it is coming from western entities indicates their desire to help Ukraine solidify its democratic institutions (CSIS). Defronzo eventually adds to his five phenomena a chiseled down equation for effective rallying

movements: nationalism plus a sentiment of egalitarian distribution (Defronzo, 1991a: p. 17). The Ukrainian Revolution makes sense when viewed through the lens of his theory.

As opposed to Defronzo, Chalmers Johnson adopts a more hybrid approach to analyzing revolutionary situations. Johnson begins his work by admittedly stating that it is mostly a response to literature from the latter half of the 20th century. He groups revolutions into four overall categories, with the first two consisting of said actor-oriented and structural theories. He does so after he cites flaws in the first two theories. Johnson thinks that actor-oriented theories alone are not enough to explain revolutionary outcomes but are still crucial in the analysis because they can explain things that structural theories fall short on. The two theoretical groups that he added are conjunction theories and process theories. Conjunction theories are Johnson's "hybrid" form. As the name suggests, they combine tenets of analysis from structural theories and actor-oriented theories to offer a more holistic and accurate rundown of why the revolutionary situation ensued in the way it did (Johnson, 1966a: p. 170-171). In other words, Chalmers Johnson thinks that structural theories mistakenly leave out the human element and that actor-oriented theories mistakenly overemphasize it. Now looking at this in the context of revolutions, Ukraine has had structural flaws contributing to their insurgent motivation over the past hundred years, including the 2013-14 revolution. The structure of the country has sort of embodied a national cognitive dissonance. It is a country that has had domestically favorable support of democratization but has not been able to fulfill this vision due to its geopolitical circumstances. Russia remains on its doorstep, peaking through the windows and often metaphorically stepping inside to try to change policy through incentivizing Ukrainian leaders. After the revolution, they made this step inside more literal with their annexation of Crimea.

To summarize this point, Ukraine's structure boils down to a never-ending pull between Russia and western civilization represented by the EU, a pull that has forever burdened its citizens.

On the actor-oriented side of the conjunction, theory lies former president Yanukovych. He is no “Great Man”, and he did not even positively create the motivation for the revolution. Rather, Yanukovych is an actor orienting this revolution due to his flaws and the disdain that his citizens had for him. He did rally and motivate an insurgent group to satisfy the idea of an actor working alongside a structure, but he did not do so out of his own accord. In addition to proposing conjunction theories, Chalmers Johnson also emphasized the importance of process theories. He thinks it is too often overlooked when trying to determine why a revolution was successful. Process theories are built on the belief that what happens in a revolutionary situation and how the insurgent group reacts to it is pivotal for the outcome. This may seem somewhat obvious, yet so many theories focus so much on the preconditions that lead to initial dissatisfaction. Johnson cited Lenin as an example of a revolutionary who found success due to his insurgency’s flexibility (Johnson, 1966a: p. 185). It is unclear how relevant this point is to Ukraine, however. The citizens demonstrated a linear peaceful protest method and ultimately achieved their goal in the short term. The protests did grow but did not vary too much in manner.

The Ukrainian Orange Revolutions and the somewhat on-going troubles within the state represent an interesting modern case where different theoretical stances can be applied. This chapter used the theories of James Defronzo and Chalmers Johnson to view these revolutionary situations through a structural lens and actor-oriented perspective, respectively. After application and analysis of both, Defronzo’s structural theory more adequately explains this outcome. While Johnson puts forth some actor-oriented factors that can fit into the Ukraine crisis, it more easily works in conjunction with Defronzo’s five phenomena. The revolution represented a growth of frustration from much of the populace, alienated insurgent-supportive elites, weakened government administration, and choices by foreign nations that favored a revolutionary outcome to occur.

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# Image Attribution

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# Conclusion

GREGORY YOUNG

So, WHY DO MEN REBEL?

The statement at the outset of this textbook, acknowledging that the many attempts by scholars to formulate universal theories to explain revolutions and predict their success or failure, have, in fact, yielded disappointing results. However, it is also true that one should not abandon that quest. The job of a political scientist or international relations scholar is to theorize and generalize in order to explain a very complex world. The predictive capacity of the theories to explain insurrection and revolution should not be dismissed due to inevitable complexity. Granted, if scholars attempt to explain every dependent variable with a multitude of independent variables, they have explained nothing and abandoned parsimony.

Chalmers Johnson has attempted parsimony, but still has significant explanatory width. He has defined what he calls a “Process Theory” of revolution. This theory takes the structural elements combined with the actor-oriented elements of a conjunction theory and adds an interactive element that this work has chosen to call a “Spark” (Johnson, 1966). It combines the mass frustration with environmental factors like lack of economic opportunity, democratic deficit, fear of government violence and corruption with actor-oriented variables that can mobilize the masses with a unifying motivation, a charismatic leader, disaffected elites, or a vanguard revolutionary party. These can all increase the scope and intensity of Gurr’s “relative deprivation (Gurr, 1970). Yet even then still no revolution occurs. It may take the “Spark” like the self-immolation of a poor Tunisian street vendor that spreads virally on Facebook, the Cossack butchering of numerous innocent bread-shortage demonstrators or even the dramatic defeat in war which

puts the interactive rather than cumulative forces of revolution in motion.

The relative strength of the forces of revolution versus those of the government is often the best predictor of the outcome of the insurrection. Charles Tilly put it best articulating that if there are two or more blocs competing for control of the sovereignty of the state and the rulers are unwilling or unable to suppress these contenders, you have a revolutionary situation (Tilly, 1993). Revolution is still not automatic due to the process theory of the aforementioned factors, but often an intransigent elite in power who refuses to listen to the will of the people make it so. John F. Kennedy said, “Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable.”

Comparisons among the case studies provided will still lead to different individual causal factors that can exist within this larger framework. From this work can one predict the revolutions of the future. Che Guevara famously stated that misery is everywhere and therefore every state is ripe for revolution if the masses can be mobilized (Guevara, 2002). Very few scholars would disagree that economic inequality and repression are still very present globally. However, democracies continue to spread and provide some hope that reform will replace revolution to mitigate that misery. “Genuine democracy, unrestrained and free from intimidation by other nations or external economic forces, has the potential to be an instrument of popular revolution where people suffer from limited opportunity and exploitation” (Defronzo, 2011). Social movement leaders who can formulate the necessary themes of economic justice will likely continue to inspire many people to call for revolutionary change.

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