

Social Movements and Revolutions

A social movement can be defined as a persistent and organized effort on the part of a relatively large number of people either to bring about or to resist social change. Some examples of the many social movements in the history of the United States include the Antislavery movement, antiwar movements (such as the movements against U.S. involvement in the Vietnam conflict and the U.S. invasion of Iraq), the Antipoverty movement, the Civil Rights movement (the movement for equal treatment of minorities), and the Women's Rights movement. These liberal social movements advocated change from existing government policies or traditional patterns of behavior. Other social movements were organized to resist social change and reassert or restore particular traditional institutions, patterns of behavior, norms, or values. These conservative movements have included the Prayer in Public Schools movement, the Pro-life (Anti-abortion) movement, the Antipornography movement, and the Tea Party movement that emerged in 2009. Many Tea Party supporters claim that the movement's mission includes defending the U.S. Constitution, demanding constitutionally limited government and laws, and supporting a free market as an inherent aspect of constitutionally protected personal liberty.

Although classifying movements as either primarily change-oriented/liberal or change-resistant/conservative can be useful in conceptualizing the central goals of particular movements, it is important to understand that in reality few movements can fit perfectly into these categories. For example, although the Women's Rights movement can be viewed as change-oriented in the sense of advocating a shift from patterns of male dominance toward greater equality of the genders in the economic and political spheres, it also has qualities that could be perceived as conservative. Among these are the movement's opposition to the sexual exploitation of women, an

element of traditional religious morality. Similarly, the Antislavery movement of the nineteenth century and the Antipoverty and Civil Rights movements of the twentieth century, which were change-oriented in the sense of fighting for greater equality for minorities, attacked economic and political oppression in part because of their detrimental impacts on family life and child rearing.

The goal of creating optimal economic and political conditions for the maintenance of strong family units and positive family emotional relations can be viewed as conservative. This type of family environment has been an ideal of traditional culture and morality.

Regardless of whether a movement is publicly perceived as predominantly change-oriented or change-resistant in terms of the direction of its goals, it can be further classified as either a reform or a revolutionary movement on the basis of the scope or magnitude of its goals. A reform movement attempts to change limited aspects of a society but does not aim at drastically altering or replacing major social, economic, or political institutions. For example, the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s did not call for changing the form of major U.S. institutions such as the economic system (capitalism) or the political system (representative two-party democracy). The movement instead advocated limited change: the opening up of existing institutions to full and equal participation by members of minority groups. Thus, the Civil Rights movement was a reform rather than a revolutionary movement. Similarly, the anti-Vietnam War movement was a reform movement because its goal involved change in government policy rather than in the structure of government itself or in any other major institution.

A revolutionary movement, in comparison, is a social movement in which participants are organized to alter drastically or replace totally existing social, economic, or political institutions. For example, the Communist-led Chinese Revolution transformed China's economy by giving ownership of the country's basic industries to the state rather than private individuals. Besides differing from reform movements regarding which aspects of society are targeted for change, revolutionary movements often use a wider range of means to accomplish change (from legal protest demonstrations to nonviolent civil disobedience to acts of violence). Although revolutionary social change (change in the structure of basic institutions) can be brought about through nonviolent means such as peaceful labor strikes or democratic elections, most revolutionary movements that have succeeded have usually been accompanied by some level of violence on the part of both movement participants and governments and groups opposing revolution (DeFronzo 2006a; 2006b; Goldstone 1998; 2001b; 2003; Greene 1990).

Such violence may be branded terrorism by the ruling power being threatened (Cohen 2006; Combs 2005; Howard and Sawyer 2002), but terrorism—the use of

force to intimidate for political purposes—is often in the eye of the beholder, and one person's terrorist can be another person's freedom fighter. Forms of revolutionary violence include people's war (Giap 1962; Mackerras and Knight 1985; Mao [1938] 1965; Wolf 1969)—characterized by widespread support for the goals of the revolution, so that the established government is fighting an entire people—and guerrilla warfare (Guevara 1985; Mao [1938] 1965; White 1984; Wickham-Crowley 1992; 2006), a form of mobile warfare involving small units of combatants operating even behind enemy lines. Forms of antirevolutionary violence may be generally described as counterinsurgency techniques (Calvert 1984; White 1984) and range from arrests and temporary detention to extremes such as the death squads in El Salvador and Guatemala in the 1980s (Binford 2006; Montgomery 1982; Streeter 2000; 2006; White 1984). In several instances since the mid-twentieth century, antirevolutionary forces have, in fact, overturned electoral systems, for example, in Cuba in 1952 (Gott 2004; Szulc 1986), Guatemala in 1954 (Glejises 1991; Schlesinger and Kinzer 1982; Streeter 2000; 2006), and Chile in 1973 (Sigmund 2006; Valenzuela 1978), in order to prevent sweeping institutional change or even progressive reforms from being carried out through democratic means.

Sociologists and other social scientists have often attempted to classify revolutions into one of two "ideal types": leftist or rightist. A left-wing revolution is one in which the central goal is widely perceived to be to change major social and political institutions in order to alter the dominant economic, social, or political relationships within a society (Greene 1990). Usually involved is a redistribution of valuable resources between the rich and the poor, with more equal access to educational opportunities, medical services, higher wage levels, or, in the case of a predominantly agricultural society, land, a stated goal. A right-wing revolution is one in which the primary aim is the restoration of traditional institutions. Right-wing revolutionary movements also generally emphasize the goals of maintaining social order and traditional authority over the goal of achieving greater social equality through institutional change.

Just as social movements in general are difficult to categorize as either totally liberal or totally conservative, many revolutions include both leftist and rightist characteristics. For example, the leaders of a revolutionary movement aimed at achieving greater social equality through radical transformations of a society's economic and political systems (leftist characteristics) might attempt to appeal for mass support by arguing that the redistribution of wealth they propose would help reinforce traditional morality (a rightist element) by eliminating extreme poverty as a cause of social evils, such as prostitution, drug abuse, and predatory crime. A number of revolutions, however, can be placed into one of the two categories on the basis of changes they brought about. Of the revolutions covered in this book, the first Russian and the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cuban have been widely interpreted as primarily leftist. On the basis of

the dominant ideological orientations and policies of the revolutionary leaderships of the two nations that experienced revolutions in 1979, the Iranian Revolution can be classified as a predominantly right-wing revolution and the Nicaraguan as mainly leftist. The South African struggle for revolutionary change was oriented toward achieving greater equality by dismantling the nation's system of white racial domination and by greatly expanding political rights and roles for nonwhite South Africans and can—at least in that sense—be categorized as leftist. The post-Iranian Revolution Islamic movements appeared primarily rightist in terms of their cultural goals. However, the “revolutions through democracy” of the twenty-first century in Venezuela and Bolivia were generally viewed as primarily leftist in orientation.

REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS: CRITICAL FACTORS

The factors that can influence the development of revolutionary movements include the extent of inequality and impoverishment within a society's population, degree to which the population is divided along ethnic lines, perception of corruption of governmental officials, level of armament and degree of loyalty of a government's military forces, cultural traditions of violence or nonviolence as means of protesting perceived social injustice, physical size of a country and nature of its terrain, and proximity and level of involvement of other countries that either support or oppose the development and success of a revolutionary movement. But of all possible factors, five stand out as critical and if occurring simultaneously, appear to come close to constituting necessary and sufficient conditions for the success of a revolutionary movement, according to the appraisals of leading academic scholars on the phenomenon of revolution (Foran 2005; 2006; Goldfrank 1994; Goldstone 1994; 2001a; Greene 1990). The order of development and relative importance of these elements differ from one revolution to another.

- 1 Mass frustration resulting in popular uprisings among urban or rural populations: A large proportion of a society's population becomes extremely discontented, which leads to mass-participation protests and rebellions against state authority. In technologically limited agricultural societies, the occurrence of rural (peasant) rebellion or at least rural support for revolution has often been essential (Foran 2005; 2006; Goldfrank 1994; Goldstone 1991; 1994; 2001a; Greene 1990).
- 2 Dissident elite political movements: Divisions among elites (groups that have access to wealth or power of various types or are highly educated and possess important technical or managerial skills) pit some elite members against the ex-

isting government (Foran 2005; 2006; Goldfrank 1994; Goldstone 1991; 1994; 2001a; Greene 1990).

- 3 Unifying motivations: The existence of powerful motivations for revolution that cut across major classes and unify the majority of a society's population behind the goal of revolution (Foran 2005; 2006; Goldstone 1994; 2001a; Greene 1990).
- 4 A severe political crisis paralyzing the administrative and coercive capabilities of the state: A state crisis occurs in the nation experiencing or about to experience the development of a revolutionary movement. The crisis, which may be caused by a catastrophic defeat in war, a natural disaster, an economic depression, or the withdrawal of critical economic or military support from other nations, or by any combination of these factors, may deplete the state of loyal personnel, legitimacy in the eyes of the public, and other resources. The state then becomes incapable of carrying out its normal functions and cannot cope effectively with an opposition revolutionary movement (Foran 2005; 2006; Goldfrank 1994; Goldstone 1991; 1994; 2001a; Greene 1990).
- 5 A permissive or tolerant world context: The governments of other nations do not intervene effectively to prevent a revolutionary movement from developing and succeeding in a given nation (Foran 2005; 2006; Goldfrank 1994; Goldstone 2001a).

Mass Frustration and Popular Uprisings

Revolution has been described as involving a tremendous increase in mass participation in political activity, participation motivated by widespread opposition to existing conditions. Such popular discontent can result from the development of a gap between people's expectations (regarding the lifestyle they feel they should be able to achieve) and their ability to satisfy those expectations. Social scientists have referred to this phenomenon as relative deprivation (Fullerton 2006; Greene 1990; Gurr 1970).

There are several historical processes that can lead to relative deprivation. Among them is rapid deterioration in material living conditions, which may occur for the whole population of a country during an economic depression or for only some population groups during periods of transition in the economic system. A wide breach opens between the way people expect they should be able to live and their capabilities of meeting those expectations—not because of a change in expectations, but because of a decline in capabilities of attaining them. This type of relative deprivation may also result when one country is invaded and conquered by another. The victor nation may exploit the resources and labor power of the defeated people, and a drastic decline in

the standard of living ensues. People in the defeated nation may try to resist occupation forces with violence. During World War II many of the peoples whose nations were invaded by Nazi German or Japanese forces organized resistance groups, which, in some instances, grew into revolutionary movements; the latter not only helped expel the invaders but also brought about drastic changes in social, economic, and political institutions after the war.

Another process that can result in the growth of a gap between people's expectations and capabilities involves an increase in expectations rather than a change in capabilities. Expectations are essentially a function of people's beliefs about what is possible and about what is "right." Experiences that alter these conceptions can strongly influence people's expectations. One such experience is communication with people from other societies where the level of material existence is higher or where a past revolution has resulted in a redistribution of wealth. Contact with other societies or with fellow citizens who have themselves been exposed to other ways of life can lead people to believe that improvements are possible. Communication with foreigners can also influence what people consider to be morally acceptable.

A shift in a people's conception of what is morally right, however, can perhaps most easily be brought about if the message is communicated by recognizable moral authorities. The upsurge in revolutionary movements in parts of Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s came about precisely because of the role religious leaders played in changing the conceptions of millions of poor farmers and workers about the moral acceptability of existing social conditions. Many young men and women of the clergy and religious orders began to embrace the idea of an expanded role for the Catholic Church in the lives of the poor. Rather than simply to cater to spiritual needs through administering the sacraments and saying Mass, they came to feel it was their religious duty to work for social justice and a redistribution of wealth. This application of Christian values has been called "liberation theology" (Berryman 1985; 1987; White 1984). As these ideas were widely communicated, more and more of the poor came to see the poverty and misery they endured as being not God's will but rather the will of some individuals and the result of the systems these people defended. The extreme inequalities that characterized their societies were now considered wrong, even sinful. Peasants and workers began to desire, demand, and expect change. A situation of mass frustration had been created.

Still a third process has evidently operated historically to generate mass discontent. Davies (1962) found that for each of several major revolutions he analyzed, the period of revolutionary upheaval was preceded by several years of economic improvement. The associated rise in material living conditions was likely to have generated an increase in people's expectations because they actually experienced improvements. After the interval of prosperity there was a sudden decline in living conditions, caused by

factors such as war or natural or economic catastrophes, which resulted in a wide gap between expectations and capabilities and, consequently, a major increase in mass frustration and support for revolutionary movements.

Dissident Elite Political Movements

Many who have explored the processes involved in the development of revolutionary movements (Goldfrank 1994; Goldstone 1994; 2001a; Gurr 1970; Selbin 2006; Skocpol 1979; Trimberger 1978) have argued that divisions among the elites within a society can increase the probability of the success of a revolutionary movement in a number of ways. First, conflict among elite members, if nothing else, contributes to confusion and disorganization in efforts to suppress a revolutionary movement. Second, if some elite members feel threatened by the actions of other elite members who control their society's government and if these alienated elite members possess important resources required by the state, a decision on their part to withhold or withdraw support from the state can render it too weak and ineffective to cope with revolutionary forces. And finally, some members of the nation's elite families may directly participate in a revolution by providing leadership or other resources to help transform popular discontent and uprisings into an organized and purposeful revolutionary movement. In this capacity, elites usually play a role in formulating an ideology for the revolutionary movement: an indictment and criticism of the existing power structure, a set of justifications for the necessity of resorting to a revolutionary movement to bring about social change, and a long-range plan and strategy of action (Greene 1990).

Ideologies may range along a spectrum from those informed by socialism—the public ownership of land and capital administered for the community good—to capitalism—the private ownership of resources to produce commodities for profit and reinvestment. Ideologies often couple economic aims with powerful unifying goals, such as nationalist resistance to foreign domination or reaffirmation of traditional moral or religious principles, capable of facilitating alliances among a society's major social classes. The primary function of revolutionary ideology is to provide as many people as possible with the same or at least compatible viewpoints on the need to change society so that they will be motivated to cooperate in the revolutionary struggle.

Social theorists and researchers have hypothesized several ways through which elite conflict can develop. Marx and Engels ([1848] 1972; Engels [1880] 1972) argued that technological and economic changes result in one type of economic activity (for example, the manufacture and sale of industrial products) replacing another (such as farming and the sale of agricultural products) as the major source of wealth in a society. The elites involved in the newly dominant economic activity struggle for and eventually win control of the political system from elites representing the

previously dominant economic activity. Goldstone (1994), Skocpol and Trimberger (1978), and others, in describing another process for the development of elite conflict, have argued that as a technologically and economically inferior state attempts to compete with more advanced states, reforms are enacted by some members of its national elite. These reforms are perceived by other elite members to threaten their interests and privileges. Intra-elite conflict and elite opposition to government policies can result.

Huntington (1968), in addition, suggested that as technologically backward societies begin to modernize by expanding educational systems and introducing technologies and learning from the more advanced countries, they tend to create new, educated, and politically conscious elites that demand participation in government. When traditional elites, such as the case of the royal family and much of the nobility in czarist Russia, resist democratization of the political system, some members of the new elites come to favor revolution. Eisenstadt (1978) further observed that "economic downturns" or other disasters can cause elite conflict in societies with dictatorships based on a patronage system of personal rewards to elite members. When the benefits stop coming or are threatened by a particular dictator's continuation in power, the loyalty of elite members to the regime is greatly reduced. In other situations, some elites may simply feel threatened by the economic and political power of a dictatorship and turn against it. Both these factors applied to a degree in causing the defection of some of Nicaragua's economic elite from support for the Somoza dictatorship (Booth 1985; Walker 1986).

The direct participation of elite elements in the leadership and organizational structure of the dissident political movement has often been historically critical for the successful development of a leftist revolutionary movement (Greene 1990; Gurr 1970). Such individuals, representing in some cases only a small minority of elite members, may bring crucial organizational and intellectual skills to a movement. According to Greene (1990), Gill (2006), Gill and DeFronzo (2009), and my own work (DeFronzo 1970), many of the young people from elite families who directly participate in left-wing revolutionary movements appear to have experienced a moral alienation from their society's economic and political systems, often developed or enhanced while attending their nation's colleges and universities. They turn against the very economic and political institutions from which their families have so greatly benefited and reach the conclusion that for some people to live in affluence while the majority of their fellow citizens live in abject poverty is unconscionable.

If revolutionaries of upper- and middle-class origin live at a time when there is little or no political discontent among the majority of their society's population, many of them may perish in violent but futile attacks on the armed forces of the government they oppose. But if they live in an era when their frustrations coincide with the aroused

discontent of the poor, they may not only participate but also play vital roles in revolutionary movements that have widespread support and, consequently, the potential for victory. There are many examples of revolutionary leaders from relatively privileged families who emerged to lead leftist revolutions that proceeded to dispossess the very classes from which the leaders originated. For example, the Russian revolutionary V. I. Lenin, the Chinese revolutionary Mao Zedong, and the Cuban revolutionary Fidel Castro all came from well-to-do backgrounds.

Unifying Motivations for Revolution

Greene (1990), in his review of various revolutionary movements throughout history, noted that it is extremely rare for a revolution to succeed without the backing of substantial numbers from most major social classes in a society. In other words, for a revolution to triumph, several classes must join forces; thus there must be a shared motivation for revolution that cuts across class lines and possibly additional differing but simultaneous and at least temporarily compatible motivations. Although the concept of redistributing wealth in favor of the poor, often manifested in some form of socialist ideology, has motivated many of the leaders of leftist revolutions, the effective mass appeal of such a goal is usually limited in great part to the members of a society's lower classes. Only a minority of the more affluent classes are likely to rally in support of a revolution intended solely to benefit the poor.

Broad cross-class participation in revolutionary movements has generally been the product of nationalism (Chiot 1986; Greene 1990) or of the development of widespread hatred toward a particular dictatorship (Greene 1990). Regardless of class or ideological orientation, people sharing the same language and culture who perceive that their ethnic or national group has been the victim of exploitation by another group or country can join together in an effort to end their domination (Adleman 2006; Braveboy-Wagner 1985; Breuilly 1982; Sathyamurthy 1983; Smith 1983).

Nationalism as a motivating factor that unifies diverse social classes behind the goal of revolution is most likely to emerge in reaction to direct colonial rule or indirect colonial domination through a local regime perceived to be operating on behalf of foreign rather than national interests. The controlling alien power is called "imperialistic" because of specific political actions (gaining control over a society and its resources), economic transactions (shaping and developing the society's economy on behalf of the colonizing power), and cultural transformations (inculcating the society with outside religious, educational, linguistic, and aesthetic values based on the foreign culture).

Sometimes the effects of colonization are so thoroughgoing that the overtaken society ends up with a native ruling class not only culturally similar to the imperialist power but also politically loyal to it and economically dependent on it. Neocolonialism

is the continuing state of political and cultural dependency and economic exploitation present in a former colony even after formal political independence has been declared (Calvert 1984; Cavatorta 2006; Chirot 1986).

Revolutionary movements organized with the stated goal of overthrowing either direct colonial rule or neocolonial governments have been called national liberation movements (Calvert 1984; Miller and Aya 1971). Five countries' revolutions covered in this book sprang in great part from such anti-imperialist impulses to national liberation: China, Vietnam, Cuba, and Nicaragua—all organized mainly around socialist goals—and Iran, organized primarily around religious goals. The revolutionary movements in Venezuela and Bolivia, described in chapter 10, *Revolution Through Democracy*, also have strong anti-imperialism themes.

Beyond nationalism and national liberation, abhorrence of an especially unjust and brutal or incompetent regime can bring several classes together in a movement to oust the detested government. The czar's dictatorial rule coupled with his personal arrogance, incompetence, and disregard for human life in conducting Russia's disastrous war effort eventually brought about a near-universal demand for his abdication and an end to the autocratic monarchy system. Similarly, multiclass aversion to the Batista government in Cuba and Somoza family rule in Nicaragua developed not only because of the widespread belief that these regimes allowed foreign interests to exploit their countries' peoples and resources but also because of the perception of crimes and acts of brutality committed by these dictatorships.

Severe State Crisis

A revolutionary movement may come into being and yet have no reasonable chance for success so long as the government maintains strong administrative capabilities and armed forces to coerce the submission of the dissident elements within its population. But conditions and events, often beyond the control of either government or revolutionary forces, may act to destroy the capabilities of the state to function effectively and permit revolutionary elements to overcome its repressive powers (Goldstone 2001b). Dunn (1972) argued that several successful revolutionary movements of the twentieth century were in part due to state crises caused by either war or the process of decolonization. Economic and military mobilization for war can strain a society's resources, and if the war effort is unsuccessful, the perceived futile loss of life and national wealth can destroy the legitimacy and respect previously bestowed on the government by its population. The shattering defeats suffered by the czar's army during World War I helped generate the state crisis that gave revolutionaries in Russia an opportunity to seize power.

Decolonization involves the withdrawal of one country's official administrative personnel and military forces from another country (the former colony). The resulting

postcolonial government may include individuals who previously served the occupying country. Thus, during the period immediately following decolonization, the government of a former colony may be perceived by many of its citizens to be really a mechanism through which the past occupying country continues to control their nation's economy and resources. A postcolonial or neocolonial government may, consequently, lack the support of its own people and perhaps even the loyalty of its armed forces. If this is the case, a postcolonial state can collapse in the face of a revolutionary movement that the population perceives to represent its true national interests.

State collapse may also result from the efforts of economically less developed states to compete more effectively with more advanced states in the world economic system or to cope with pressure on food supplies or other resources caused by significant population increase (Goldstone 1994; Skocpol 1979). As a government attempts to achieve these goals through various modernizing reforms (such as an expansion of the educational system, recruitment of administrators and business and military leaders on the basis of talent and achievement rather than on the basis of nobility or some other traditional factor, distribution of land from large estates to the rural poor, and the imposition of higher taxes on the upper classes), some groups may resist, feeling the new policies threaten their wealth, power, or other privileges, even to the point of withdrawing support from the national government. The state may then be so weakened as to provide revolutionary forces with an opportunity to develop and achieve an unstoppable momentum. For example, Chinese rulers who attempted to modernize their country in the late nineteenth century were frustrated by wealthy landowners and other conservative forces who prevented sufficient reforms, weakened the power of the central government, and presented revolutionary forces with a divided, conflict-ridden, and consequently more vulnerable national leadership (Skocpol 1979).

Another type of state structure that is especially fragile is the "neopatrimonial regime" (Eisenstadt 1978). (This concept is similar to what Foran referred to as a "repressive, exclusionary, personalist state" [2005, 20].) Such a government is structured around a particular individual whose rule is based on his or her control of resources that are dispensed as rewards to supporters (such as governmental administrative positions, high-profit business monopolies, or high salaries and bonuses to military leaders). Important government supporters in such a society tend to be personally loyal to the particular leader and that leader's system, which rewards them. Such a state is especially vulnerable to several types of problems: economic depression, which reduces the resources available to the chief executive to parcel out to his or her supporters; defeat in war, which can create economic difficulties and also tarnish the reputation of the nation's leader; and events such as illness, accidents, or assassinations, which remove a particular leader from power and thus endanger or destroy the state-supporting patronage system.

Permissive World Context

Because any society exists in a world populated by other societies, some of which may have greater or at least nearly equal military and economic power, a revolutionary movement in one nation that appears to be overcoming the national government might be suppressed, at least temporarily, by other nations opposed to the success of the revolution (Goldfrank 1994). Foran (2005; 2006) and Goldstone (2001b) also recognized the importance of this factor. The U.S. involvement in Vietnam and in El Salvador are examples of foreign intervention in domestic revolutionary situations. Similarly, the USSR intervened in the past in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan to prevent the success or retard the growth of movements it opposed. Another significant intervention was the sending of military forces by several nations, including Britain, the United States, and Japan, into the Soviet Union in an effort to help White Russian forces overturn the Bolshevik Revolution during the Russian Civil War.

In some situations, outside nations have not intervened to prevent revolutions or have not intervened to the extent necessary to defeat a revolutionary movement. In these cases one of the factors contributing to the victory of a revolutionary movement was, then, a "permissive world context." Reasons for less-than-wholehearted or no intervention have included the following: fear of disapproval, economic sanctions, or even military attack from nations that support a given revolutionary movement; concern about provoking a hostile reaction from the potential interventionist country's own citizens; displeasure with the government a revolutionary movement seeks to overthrow; or the fact that despite strong motivation to intervene, recent economic or military hardships or internal political turmoil may have so physically or psychologically exhausted a nation that it is simply unable to intervene effectively.

Several examples of unsuccessful or nonexistent intervention by outside powers against revolutionary movements illustrate the concept of permissive world context. Following World War I, the European capitalist nations and the United States probably were too battered by the years of conflict to mount a large-scale assault on revolutionary Russia, especially given the huge population and vast territory of the country and the level of popular support the revolution enjoyed. During the Cuban Revolution of 1956–1958 and the Nicaraguan and Iranian revolutions of 1978–1979, no nations sent military forces to save the internationally despised regimes of Batista, Somoza, and the shah of Iran. And despite the massive level of intervention in Vietnam and other parts of Southeast Asia during 1963–1973, the United States might have used even greater military power were it not for the development of significant domestic opposition to the Vietnam involvement and the threat of possible direct military confrontation with the USSR or China over Vietnam. Finally, the USSR's 1989 renunciation of the right to intervene in Eastern Europe permitted the swift success of political revolutions in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania.

REVOLUTIONS THAT FAILED

The significance of the five critical factors for the success of revolutions can be further illustrated by reference to revolutionary movements that failed to accomplish their goals for sweeping social change. Although they are not inclusive of all the unsuccessful revolutionary situations of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the examples presented in Table 1.1 represent most of the important cases for which extensive scholarly analyses are available. In the table the presence of each key factor is indicated by a plus sign, and its absence during the relevant historical period is signified by a minus sign. Even though some students of revolution might question my decision to assign a plus or a minus in one or more individual circumstances, it seems clear that in none of these cases were all of the five key factors present simultaneously. The table refers to the revolutionary movement in South Africa only during the period 1912–1989 and the modern El Salvadoran movement only during the years 1972–1991. Both of these movements, especially South Africa's, achieved at least limited success in the 1990s. Besides South Africa, at least four other revolutions that failed or did not achieve success within the time periods specified—the attempted Russian Revolution of 1905 and those of Guatemala (1944–1954), Chile (1970–1973), and Poland (1980–1981)—are dealt with to some extent in later chapters.

Brief accounts of three of the other unsuccessful revolutions, Greece (1947–1949), Hungary (1956), and El Salvador (1932; 1972–1991), may be useful in illustrating the debilitating effect on the progress of revolutionary movements of the absence of one or more of the critical factors.

During World War II, the Greek Communist Party and other leftist groups organized the largest and most effective resistance against German Nazi occupation forces and against the Greek politicians and military and police units that collaborated with the Nazis. By 1945, the Communist-led forces controlled much of the countryside and many of the smaller towns and cities. But toward the end of the war, the British, fearing the possibility of the establishment of a leftist government in a nation long considered to be in Great Britain's sphere of interest, turned the reins of power over to conservative Greek political and military leaders, despite the fact that many of them had collaborated with the Nazis (Alexander 1981; Baerentzen and Close 1993; Close and Veremis 1993; Hondros 1981; Papastratis 1987; Richter 1981; 1986).

Following a number of politically motivated murders and violent skirmishes involving all sides, full-scale civil war broke out in 1947. The revolutionary forces enjoyed some significant popular support, but they also suffered from crucial problems. The most central of these was the lack of a permissive world context in that first Great Britain and then the United States chose, in the context of the developing Cold War, to intervene with massive military and economic assistance to aid the conservative-

TABLE 1.1 Revolutionary Movements That Did Not Succeed During the Time Periods Specified

	<i>Mass Discontent</i>	<i>Elite Dissent</i>	<i>Unifying Motive</i>	<i>State Crisis</i>	<i>World Permissiveness</i>
Russia 1905	+	+	-	-	-
Zionist 1897-1939	+	+	+	-	-
South Africa 1912-1989	+	+	+	-	-
El Salvador 1932; 1972-1991	+	+	-	-	-
Palestinian 1936-1989	+	+	+	-	-
Guatemala 1944-1954	+	+	+	-	-
Philippines 1946-1956	+	+	-	-	-
Greece 1947-1949	+	+	-	-	-
Hungary 1956	+	+	+	+	-
Czechoslovakia 1968	+	+	+	+	-
Chile 1970-1973	+	+	-	-	-
Poland 1980-1981	+	+	+	-	-

Note: A plus sign means that the factor was judged to have been present during the relevant time period, and a minus sign means that the factor was judged to be absent.

led Greek army in countering Communist-led rebels. The revolutionary forces received much more limited, though significant, assistance, primarily from the newly organized Communist-led government of Yugoslavia.

Since the British refused to remove the large majority of collaborationist military and police but instead incorporated them into the postwar conservative Greek state—which Britain and later the United States supported—the antirevolutionary government did not experience a severe state crisis.

Finally, the revolutionary forces never achieved a stable unifying motivation capable of uniting the majority of Greece's population behind its leadership. This failure was in part due to the intervention of the British. Revolutionary forces were unable to capitalize on their wartime victories as resistance fighters through free elections. British-supported conservatives used repressive measures in the large cities and in areas of the countryside under their control to preclude the establishment of a democratic political system. This policy helped provoke the former resistance fighters to revolt and even to acts of terrorism, which alienated much potential popular support.

Furthermore, the revolutionary forces lost much of their nationalist support, which they had enjoyed when fighting the German, Italian, and Bulgarian Axis occupiers, by agreeing to cede significant, largely Slavic-inhabited parts of Greece to Yugoslavia in return for desperately needed military supplies. Divisions within the Greek Communist Party that mirrored the split between the USSR and Yugoslavia in 1948-1949 and the subsequent Yugoslav reduction of aid, coupled with crushing military defeats in 1949, resulted in the rout of the rebels and the flight of the survivors to neighboring countries (Close and Veremis 1993; Iatrides 1993; Kalyvas 2006; Smith 1993).

The development of the ill-fated Hungarian Revolution of 1956 followed a different path. Majorities of voters in the 1945 and 1947 parliamentary elections supported a four-party liberal, left-wing coalition, which included the country's Communist Party. With the start of the Cold War, the pro-Moscow Stalinist faction of the Hungarian Communist Party not only seized control of the party but also took over the governing coalition and in effect established a one-party political system. But the death of Stalin in 1953 and the subsequent condemnation of Stalin's crimes of repression in February 1956 by the new leaders in the USSR undermined Hungary's authoritarian pro-Stalinist regime. A more independent, nationalistic faction gained significant influence in the Hungarian Communist Party and government in 1956, a process that also occurred in Poland. Students and citizen groups in both countries demonstrated in favor of more democratic political systems and greater independence from the USSR (Berecz 1986; Byrne 2006; Hoensch 1988; Lomax 1976).

When the newly ascendant, nationalist-oriented leadership of the Polish Communist Party began to assert in limited but significant ways its independence from Moscow, thousands of Hungarians held rallies in support of the defiant Poles. After the Soviets accommodated the new Polish government rather than intervening militarily, some nationalist-minded Hungarian Communist Party leaders, including the country's prime minister, declared support for switching to a genuinely democratic multi-party political system and for withdrawing Hungary from its military alliance with the Soviet Union, measures far beyond the concessions the Poles had recently won. The Soviet leaders, whose country had been devastated during World War II by the Nazi-led Axis invasion (in which more than 200,000 Hungarian troops participated) and who had witnessed earlier in 1956 the willingness of Britain and France to invade Egypt to protect their perceived interests, decided to intervene militarily in Hungary in order to assist the more hard-line faction of the Hungarian Communist Party in regaining control of the country. Despite massive popular support for revolution, the existence of prorevolution elite elements, the unifying motivation of Hungarian nationalism, and the near collapse of the antirevolutionary state and its armed forces, the lack of a permissive world environment forestalled political revolution in Hungary until 1989.

Much earlier in the twentieth century, El Salvador was characterized by extreme economic inequalities and cultural divisions between the Latinized residents and the other half of the population, which followed the traditional indigenous culture and worked primarily in rural areas, often for plantation owners engaged in export agriculture. During the 1920s, while the wealthy minority in El Salvador prospered as a result of the relatively high prices on the world market for the country's agricultural exports, leftist intellectuals and labor activists were able to organize socialist-oriented political movements and unions in some towns and among rural workers in the western half of the country. Following a collapse in coffee prices as a consequence of the worldwide depression and increased popular discontent, military leaders, who had long served the interests of the rich, overthrew the country's elected, reform-oriented president in 1931 and prepared to crush the workers' groups and leftist political parties.

An alliance of leaders from the rural and urban unions and some enlisted army soldiers organized an uprising intended to overcome the military leaders and accomplish a socioeconomic revolution. Because of the exposure of the rebels' plans, cultural divisions among the poor majority (which the revolutionary ideology had far from completely overcome), and, most important, the near total monopoly of firearms by the armed forces, the 1932 revolutionary effort lacked a sufficiently unifying motive and confronted a relatively strong state and military. Additionally, the revolutionaries did not enjoy a permissive world environment, although significant foreign intervention was not necessary to defeat the uprising. After they had smashed the revolt through the execution of 10,000 to 30,000 people, a succession of military leaders ruled the country through repression and electoral fraud without effective opposition until the late 1970s (Anderson 1971; Binford 2006; Cockcroft 1989; Montgomery 1982; White [1973] 1982).

Mounting discontent and outrages over rigged elections led to a new leftist revolt, this time accompanied by the development of an effective revolutionary army capable of carrying out sustained combat operations against the El Salvadoran armed forces. Whereas the modern revolution never achieved a unifying motive capable of uniting the majority of the population under its leadership, the most significant barrier to the success of the revolution was a nonpermissive world environment, manifested in the Reagan administration's massive and almost unconditional military and economic support for the antirevolutionary regime. American intervention in El Salvador, coupled with the strength of the revolutionary forces, resulted in a long, brutal civil war during the years 1980–1991. With the end of the Cold War and a major reduction of U.S. military assistance, the stalemated El Salvador civil war ended in a negotiated settlement in which only some of the revolutionaries' original aims were satisfied (Binford 2006; Vilas 1995).

THEORIES OF REVOLUTION

Because the five factors—mass frustration, elite dissidence, unifying motivation, state crisis, and permissive world context—appear crucial to the success of revolutionary movements, it is important to evaluate existing theories of revolution in terms of their ability or inability to account for the simultaneous occurrence of these conditions.

Research related to attempts to formulate theories of revolution include the efforts of Edwards ([1927] 1970), Brinton ([1938] 1952), and Pettee (1938) to identify what Goldstone (1982) and Foran (2006) describe as a natural history of revolutions: a description of the phases through which a successful revolution almost invariably progresses. These include certain developments in sequence such as

- 1 a society's intellectuals, most of whom in the past normally supported the existing regime, turn against it;
- 2 the old regime tries to save itself from revolution by attempting reforms that ultimately fail to protect the old order;
- 3 the revolutionary alliance that eventually takes power from the old government is soon characterized by internal conflicts;
- 4 at first the postrevolutionary government is moderate;
- 5 disappointment with the failure of moderate revolutionaries to fulfill expectations leads to more radical revolutionaries gaining control;
- 6 the radicals take more extreme actions to fulfill revolutionary aims, including the use of coercive methods against those whom they perceive resist or threaten the fulfillment of revolutionary goals;
- 7 eventually more pragmatic moderate revolutionaries replace the radicals.

While the discovery of relatively invariant sequences of broad types of events during revolutions is interesting and important, the description of such a chronological sequence is not itself a theory but rather only a description of what must be explained by a theory of revolution. Similarly, the five factors described earlier, which seem both necessary and sufficient for the occurrence and success of a revolution, do not in themselves constitute a complete theory of revolution; instead, they represent factors whose development or presence must be explained by a theory. Greene (1990), in his review of theories of revolution and of studies on participants, ideologies, organizational structures, tactics, and settings for numerous revolutions, identified several major theoretical perspectives, including the Marxist, frustration-aggression, systems, and modernization approaches.

Marxist theory is both too complex to cover here in its entirety and too important to gloss over. Elements of Marxism will be presented here and in several of the following chapters, but for solid overviews, see Robert Tucker's edition of *The Marx-Engels Reader* (1972) and Richard Schmitt's *Introduction to Marx and Engels* (1987). According to Marxist theory, revolution is likely to occur at a point when existing social and political structures and leadership interfere with economic development. Karl Marx traced such economic development through various stages from feudalism to capitalism to socialism and eventually to communism. As technological and economic change takes place during the period of capitalist industrialization, a conflict develops between the new urban industrial working class—the proletariat—and the ruling capitalist class. According to Marx, the importance of labor, such as the operating of manufacturing technology, would inevitably supersede that of the ownership of capital (wealth in the form of money, resources, investments, or the physical means of production) in the industrialized economic system. When the government-controlling capitalist class attempts to maintain its grip on power, the working class is driven by frustration and exploitation to revolution. What Marx posited as “the dictatorship of the proletariat” ensues, with the working class taking over governmental power. Many varieties of Marxist theory have developed over the years, but common to all has been the presumption of the need for revolution at certain critical stages in economic history.

According to Foran (2005; 2006) and Goldstone (2001b), during the 1960s attempts to formulate explanations of revolution resulted in two additional types of theories. One of these, which Greene (1990) called the frustration-aggression theory of revolution, focused on the development of mass frustration as a cause of mass mobilization for revolution. The frustration-aggression type theory included the relative deprivation theories of popular discontent described by Davies (1962) and Gurr (1970), which were discussed earlier in this chapter (see section “Mass Frustration and Popular Uprisings”). The other type of theory put forth during this period was the structural functionalist approach to explaining revolution, exemplified by the work of Smelser (1962) and Johnson (1964), which Greene (1990) referred to as the systems theory of revolution.

Systems theory of revolution, unlike Marxist theory, does not view revolution primarily in terms of progressive historical changes in technology and forms of economic organization. Systems is a more general perspective that assumes that revolution is likely to occur when prerevolutionary social structures fail to perform essential functions, no matter what the cause of such failure might be. Essential functions include not only the carrying out of necessary economic and administrative tasks but also the socialization of society's members to a culture (set of beliefs and attitudes) supportive of existing social structures.

A fourth approach, modernization theory, is similar to Marxist theory in that it associates revolution with technological and economic change. But the modernization, unlike the Marxist, perspective does not hypothesize a set historical sequence of stages in economic development and does not specify which particular economic group would be the major proponent of revolutionary transformation. Rather, modernization theory holds that the experience of technological and economic change tends to “mobilize” new or previously apathetic groups by raising both their economic aspirations and their demands for political participation. Revolution is likely to occur when those holding state power are unable or unwilling to meet the demands of groups mobilized by modernization.

During the second half of the 1960s and in the 1970s, a fifth major contemporary theory of revolution, structural theory, which like the Marxist perspective emphasized the importance of structural aspects of society, became prominent. Barrington Moore's comparative study (1966) indicated that rebellious movements in peasant societies were most likely to develop when a certain shift in a society's economic structure occurred, that is, as a traditional farming economy was threatened by and beginning to undergo “transition to capitalist agriculture” (Foran 2006, 869). Wolf (1969, 276–302), in analyzing six peasant societies that experienced revolutionary conflicts, also found that a major factor in mobilizing support for rebellion was the situation of increasing commercialization of agriculture threatening “peasants' access to land” (Foran 2006, 869).

The most influential and theoretically comprehensive modern structural theory was developed by Skocpol and Trimberger (1978; Skocpol 1979). It is identified with Marx's view that a revolution is not exclusively the product of subjective characteristics of a society, such as shared cultural values or social or economic expectations, but is in great part dependent on specific objective conditions involving political, economic, and other aspects of social structure. The Skocpol and Trimberger formulation, however, departed from Marx's original perspective in several ways. First, the state was viewed not as the instrument of class domination emphasized by Marx but as a form of social organization that combines administrative and military functions and draws resources from society to use in maintaining social order and in competing against other nations economically and militarily. Second, in contrast to the original Marxist analysis, for which a revolution was the outcome of internal technological and economic factors, this new structural approach was oriented to the larger world environment and perceived revolution as the result of conflict among nations at different levels of technological and economic development.

The Skocpol and Trimberger structural theory specified that the key objective conditions for revolution have in the past occurred in primarily agrarian, technologically inferior states when these were confronted with overpowering military and economic pressures from more advanced nations. Inability to resist foreign aggression reduced

the perceived legitimacy of the prerevolutionary regimes, which were also undermined by divisions within elite population segments regarding how best to deal with external threats. Government policies to cope with foreign pressures, such as attempts to increase state resources by raising taxes on an already largely impoverished population, or the economic effects of foreign exploitation generated mass discontent. The resulting popular support for revolutionary movements overwhelmed the severely weakened prerevolutionary regimes. From the structural point of view, the purpose and outcome of such revolutions was primarily political: the establishment of a new governmental system in a less developed society, a system that would be better capable of utilizing available resources to counter external threats from more advanced nations.

The general theories of revolution briefly described here all explicitly or implicitly hold that mass frustration has been an essential element of revolutionary movements. Marxist, modernization, systems, and structural theories also suggest that failure of the state to meet new mass expectations or carry out important economic or other crucial social functions leads to a weakening of government legitimacy and coercive capacity, which heightens the probability of revolution. Modernization, Marxist, and structural theories specify processes by which certain elites in society may become sufficiently discontented so that they withdraw support for the existing government or even commit themselves to leading a revolutionary effort.

A major inadequacy of the Marxist, frustration-aggression, systems, and modernization theories, however, is their relative lack of attention to two essential elements of successful revolutionary movements: a unifying motivation capable of bringing together diverse groups behind a common revolutionary goal and the existence of an international environment permissive of revolution. The Skocpol and Trimberger structural theory, at least implicitly, confronts the issue of unifying motivation by asserting the primacy of the population-bonding revolutionary aim of creating a new, stronger government better capable of protecting national interests but, like the other theories, tends to ignore the world permissiveness factor. These omissions limit the ability of the major theories of revolution to predict either the development of revolutionary movements or a revolution's chance for success. Both the unifying motivation factor and the role of a permissive international environment will be seen at work on many occasions throughout the chapters on individual revolutions. Together with mass frustration, elite dissidence, and state crisis, these factors go further than general theories toward explaining and predicting revolutionary action and success.

ARE REVOLUTIONS DEVELOPING OR OCCURRING NOW?

In several nations around the world revolutionary movements are under way, and in others situations exist that appear conducive to the development of revolution. Two

elected leaders, President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and President Evo Morales of Bolivia, have claimed to be leading their nations through revolutionary transformations. Venezuela and Bolivia will be discussed in some detail in Chapter 10, *Revolution Through Democracy*. Another country where elections may lead to revolutionary economic change through democratic means is Nepal. After a ten-year civil war between the monarchy and Maoist-oriented, Communist-led guerrillas, a peace agreement was negotiated in 2006. Under a new temporary constitution a nationwide election for a constituent assembly was held in April 2008. Seats in the assembly were won mainly by three parties: the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), which received 38 percent of the vote; the Communist Party of Nepal–United Marxist-Leninist, 19 percent; and the Nepali Congress, 19 percent. At its first meeting in May 2008, the assembly changed the structure of Nepalese government by abolishing the monarchy and declaring Nepal a federal democratic republic (CIA 2010). The constituent assembly extended its term well into 2011 to continue work on a new permanent constitution (Miley 2010). The voting tendencies of the majority of Nepalese suggested that future elected governments were likely to continue carrying out significant change.

In other countries, military actions recently removed elected leaders committed to helping the poor. In 2009 a Honduran military coup ended the presidency of Manuel Zelaya (Main 2010), who had been elected in 2005 as a center-right politician but shifted significantly to the left, established ties with Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, and promised to combat poverty. The removal of a democratically elected president, one committed to aiding the poor in a country with one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world, sparked mass protests and seemed to increase the potential for the development of a revolutionary movement.

A few years earlier, the Thai military had ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, a former policeman who became a telecommunications billionaire and was "the first prime minister in Thailand's history to lead an elected government through a full term in office" ("Profile" 2010). He was very popular, especially among the country's rural poor in north and northeast Thailand, who benefited during Thaksin's five years in power from his education, health, and debt relief programs. He was also supported by pro-democracy urban intellectuals. But Thaksin was opposed by many among Bangkok's rich, accused of abuse of power and corruption, and removed from office in September 2006. In response a massive movement developed, the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD), also called the Red Shirt Movement, for its participants' trademark attire. The movement aimed not only to restore Thaksin Shinawatra to office but, more broadly, to establish a true democracy in Thailand ("Thailand Protests" 2010). For weeks during the spring of 2010, thousands of Red Shirts held demonstrations in Bangkok demanding fully democratic elections and protesting what they charged was an unfair system in which the wealthy and top military leaders

were free to break laws without fear of punishment (Fuller 2010). At least eighty-eight persons were killed in a series of confrontations (Mydans 2010). The military dispersed the Red Shirt encampment in a commercial area of Bangkok on May 19. The Thai government claimed that several dozen people and some companies financed the Red Shirt protests and accused Thaksin Shinawatra and thirty-nine others of terrorism. Red Shirt supporters, though, claimed that financing came from many thousands of small contributors who believed in the revolutionary potential of a real democratic political system.

SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview of concepts, theoretical perspectives, and research findings important to the discussion of revolutionary social movements. A revolutionary movement, in contrast to a reform movement, is aimed at bringing about change in the basic institutions of a society. Of all the phenomena specifically relevant to the success of a revolutionary movement, five appear to be of crucial importance: (1) the growth of frustration among the majority of a population; (2) the existence of elite elements who are alienated from the current government and, more specifically, of elite members who support the concept of revolution; (3) the development of unifying motivations that bring together the members of different social classes in support of a revolution; (4) the occurrence of a crisis that severely weakens government administrative and coercive capabilities in a society experiencing the development of a revolutionary movement; and (5) the choice on the part of other nations not to intervene or their inability to do so to prevent the success of a revolutionary movement in a particular society.

The third point does not exclude the probability that some of the reasons individuals participate in or support a revolutionary movement are of a highly personal nature, such as the belief that the success of the revolution will improve their own material well-being or a desire for revenge, or because of ties to loved ones or friends who support revolution. But as Greene (1990) pointed out, the participants in a revolution, often drawn from different economic backgrounds, share motivations that bind them together in the common effort. In several revolutions an adherence to a cross-class religious belief or a commitment to freeing one's country from perceived foreign control or from the rule of a despised dictatorship has acted in this way.

Nationalism, often spurred by reaction to imperialist exploitation, has been a powerful unifying sentiment. And although the notion of redistribution of wealth is not necessarily synonymous with socialism, various forms of socialist ideology have figured prominently in the belief systems of many leftist revolutionary movements. The combination of the nationalist goal of liberating one's people from foreign domination and the goal of redistributing wealth to achieve a more egalitarian society has proven

to be extremely effective in rallying otherwise diverse social groups to revolutions in Russia, China, Vietnam, and other societies. Nationalism, as a spur to unified action, and economic redistribution, as an antidote to mass frustration, join together with the other major revolutionary factors—elite dissidence, state crisis, and world permissiveness—to explain many sociopolitical upheavals of the past and, perhaps, those of the centuries to come.

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