

## Anatomies of Revolution

Recent years have seen renewed interest in the study of revolution. Spurred by events like the 2011 uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East, the rise of Islamic State, and the emergence of populism, a new age of revolution has generated considerable interest. Yet, even as empirical studies of revolutions are thriving, there has been a stall in theories of revolution. *Anatomies of Revolution* offers a novel account of how revolutions begin, unfold, and end. By combining insights from International Relations, Sociology, and Global History, it outlines the benefits of a ‘global historical sociology’ of revolutionary change, one in which international processes take centre stage. Featuring a wide range of cases from across modern world history, this is a comprehensive account of one of the world’s most important processes. It will interest students and scholars studying revolutions, political conflict, and contentious politics in Sociology, Politics, and International Relations.

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For Kirsten, Jake, Xavi, and Kasper

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## Acknowledgements

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I wrote most of this book in Highbury, North London. In the late fourteenth century, rural workers marched on Highbury and burned down its manor house as part of what became known as the Peasants' Revolt. In nearby Stoke Newington can be found the Newington Green Unitarian Church, also known as the Meeting House, which was frequented during the eighteenth century by a number of prominent dissenters, most notably Mary Wollstonecraft and Richard Price. Amongst those who came to hear Price speak were Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson. Heading towards where I work, at LSE, can be found Clerkenwell Green, perhaps the epicentre of revolutionary London. Over the centuries, Clerkenwell Green and its surrounds have been home to Chartists, Suffragettes, and a myriad of groups supporting independence movements around the world. During Lenin's exile in London, the communist newspaper *Iskra* was published here in a building that is now the Marx Memorial Library. Down the road in De Beauvoir Town, over 300 communists, including Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky, Kollontai, and Luxemburg met (in a church no less) over two weeks in May 1907 in order to develop a common revolutionary programme that could overthrow Tsarist Russia and build a communist state.

These are just some of the many revolutionaries who have made London their home or headquarters. The list ranges from the well-known figures above, to which could be added Karl Marx, Simón Bolívar, and Ho Chi Minh, to lesser-known characters such as Madan Lal Dhingra and Francisco Caamaño. Marx is buried in Highgate cemetery, the area where I grew up. At school, I met the children of Chilean activists who had fled Pinochet's Chile and, more frequently, the sons and daughters of those exiled from apartheid South Africa. Occasionally, children whose parents worked at the nearby Soviet Trade Delegation would come and play football in the park; they were usually accompanied by minders to ensure that Cold War enmities did not transfer onto the pitch.

Revolution, therefore, has always been around me. But not just me. Revolution is around all of us, without us always noticing it. Experiences of revolution are central to the making of the modern world – their legacies live on in systems of government, constitutions, legal codes, military strategies, holidays, monuments, music, and more. Yet, in the contemporary world, revolution often appears as an attenuated force, a once radical project that has now been domesticated, made safe for a world of communicative capitalism and low-intensity democracy. This book argues against this view. In part, it does so by showing that revolutions remain a live force in a world of injustice, oppression, exploitation, and debasement. In part, it does so by exploring how revolution changes over time and place – the secret of its longevity is its adaptability. This book unravels the multiple pathways – or anatomies – that revolutionary processes take.

*Anatomies of Revolution* has taken a long time to write. I began sketching it out during the 2011 Arab uprisings, which crystallized a number of issues I wanted to explore in more depth: the relationship between non-violent movements and coercive power, revolution and counter-revolution, international and domestic politics, revolutionary success and failure, and more. I initially set out to write a short book for Polity Press, then something more developed for the Configurations series at the University of Michigan. Many thanks to Louise Knight at Polity and Melody Herr at Michigan for their interest in the project.

Since 2011, I have given talks on and around the book at more events than I can remember. I have also taught the subject for several years, something that students tend to associate with one-way diffusion, but which is actually an acutely interactive process. And I have taken whatever opportunities have arisen to avail friends and colleagues of the argument, more often than not learning enormously from these engagements. All this means that I won't – or can't – thank everyone. Sorry. I will, however, highlight two people who provided extraordinarily helpful comments on the book's penultimate draft: Tarak Barkawi and Ayşe Zarakol. I am very fortunate to count on Tarak and Ayşe as both friends and intellectual comrades. Cambridge University Press solicited three detailed reports on the book, which were extremely useful in clarifying its contribution and avoiding some dead ends. Those concerned have now outed themselves as Jack Goldstone, John Foran, and Daniel Ritter – I am very grateful to all three, as I am to John Haslam at the Press for his interest in the project and for shepherding it through the review process. My thanks also too to those who read – and improved – key parts of the book: Kelly-Jo Bluen, Matt Dixon, Tanya Harmer, Kevan Harris, Adrian Rogstad, Eric Selbin, and Will Rooke. I have also benefited from discussions over

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Then there is my family: Kirsten, Jake, Xavi, and Kasper. Here I am somewhat stumped about what to say. In most acknowledgements, authors thank their families for their help in writing their books. I don't understand this. Almost without exception (Kirsten take a bow), my family has done whatever it can to stop me writing *Anatomies*. I don't blame them. Books take parents away from children and, even when I was physically there, I wasn't always mentally present. Yet still the kids persisted in wanting me to do anything but work. This, it seems to me, is exactly what families are for. So if mine is unusual in this respect, I wouldn't have it any other way. I am very glad to have been pushed and prodded and poked away from the book by all three children and, sometimes, by my wife. Books come and go, even ones that have taken this long to write. Families are forever. And the latter is much more important than the former.

This is why I am dedicating this book to Kirsten, Jake, Xavi, and Kasper, not for helping me, which they haven't, but for insisting that I give them attention when I didn't want to, and for telling me to stop working when I felt that I couldn't. It turns out that they were right and I was wrong. And I love them very much for showing me that.

