Part I

Theory and structural background

1 Toward a theory of revolution: linking structure and process approaches

Introduction

Popular mobilization and collective action overthrew three long-standing regimes between February 1979 and February 1986 in Iran, Nicaragua, and the Philippines. In Iran, the revolution put an end to 2,500 years of monarchy, dissolved the Pahlavi dynasty, and established an Islamic theocracy. In Nicaragua, the revolution uprooted the Somoza dynasty, which had dominated the country since the early 1930s, and enabled the socialist Pandinistas to seize power. In the Philippines, popular mobilization resulted in the expulsion of Ferdinand E. Marcos, who had ruled the country for twenty years, well beyond the two terms to which he had been elected. These political conflicts also had international consequences, especially for the United States inasmuch as some segments of the population and elite in these countries opposed US policies and interventions.

The uprisings and their outcomes in Iran, Nicaragua, and the Philippines provide remarkable cases for comparative analysis. Broadly speaking, the three countries shared certain similar experiences and structural features. Economically, all three pursued capitalist development strategies, which had been quite successful by international standards. For years, they succeeded in generating high levels of growth, development, and industrialization that were impressive by any measure. Politically, each of the regimes governed by means of authoritarian mechanisms and coercive apparatuses, which for years had been successful in controlling or repressing opposition and dissent. In fact, all three had survived earlier challenges: Iran in the early 1950s and again in the early 1960s; Nicaragua in the late 1960s and early 1970s; and the Philippines in the early 1970s. In addition, none of the regimes had been weakened or defeated in external war or had experienced state breakdown prior to the insurgencies. Finally, all three governments had long enjoyed the economic, political, and military support of the United States. Thus, the emergence of the conflicts in the three countries is itself perplexing.

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Despite these similarities, the immediate political outcomes of the conflicts in each of the three countries differed widely. Significantly, in all three cases, unlikely challengers were able to seize power. In Iran, power was seized by Ayatollah Khomeini, who ideologically enjoyed only a very small following among primarily low-ranking clergy. Neither Khomeini, who had opposed the Shah for years, nor his clerical supporters were the originators of the conflicts of 1977. Rather, secular intellectuals, members of the Writers' Association, liberal-nationalists, organized in the National Front, and leftist students initiated the opposition and mobilized against the government. Despite the claims of some scholars that a strong Islamic movement had emerged by the early 1970s, Khomeini and his supporters failed to mobilize the population in June 1975, scarcely two years before the rise of insurgency. Nevertheless, by 1978, Khomeini headed a revolutionary coalition that succeeded in overthrowing the Pahlavi dynasty. But the new Islamic regime resorted to unprecedented violence in order to maintain power. Khomeini not only repressed liberal-nationalists and leftists, he had some of his own closest advisors and allies expelled from politics or killed. Although, during the revolutionary struggles, Khomeini advocated freedom, independence, and social justice, he ultimately established a theocracy, which denied basic human freedoms to the Iranian people.

The immediate political outcome of the conflict in Nicaragua was unexpected as well. Although the moderate opposition initially had the support of large segments of the population in the struggle against Somoza, it failed to maintain hegemony in the revolution. In the final stage of the revolutionary struggles, a small group of Marxists, the Sandinista Liberation Front, or the FSLN, led the coalition, seized power, and then initiated socialist policies to transform Nicaraguan society. The FSLN victory was surprising because, although they had struggled since the early 1960s to overthrow the Somozas and had gained the support of segments of the peasantry in some parts of the country, they had failed to gain control over any part of the countryside. Nor had the FSLN garnered much support among the major social classes in urban Nicaragua where the bulk of the revolutionary insurgencies were carried out. Indeed, the Sandinistas themselves had been the targets of severe repression in the years immediately preceding the inception of the popular insurgency. But, in 1979, they succeeded in overthrowing the state and introducing some major changes in Nicaraguan society.

In the Philippines, the most likely candidate for power was the Communist Party of the Philippines, which had struggled against the government for years. The Communist Party possessed a powerful nationwide political organization and enjoyed the support of segments of the popula-

tion through the National Democratic Front, established to unite the people against the Marcos regime. The armed wing of the Communist Party, the New People's Army (NPA), was a large, capable guerrilla army that operated throughout much of the country. Though nowhere was it actually in control, the NPA was the *de facto* government, collecting taxes and providing health and sanitation services in many parts of the country-side. In 1985, Marcos even threatened to use foreign troops to fight the NPA. Yet, surprisingly, the communists failed to seize power when the Marcos regime was overthrown. Rather, the elite emerged victorious, and formal democratic institutions were restored. The new president, Corazón Aquino, came from one of the wealthiest families in the Philippines and, strikingly, had no history of prior political involvement.

These puzzling developments in the three countries constitute the basis for this unique comparative research. This is the first in-depth work to explain the causes and immediate outcomes of the conflicts in these three countries, using primary data. First, the analysis will focus on both the structures and the processes that culminated in social revolutions in Iran and Nicaragua, and political reforms in the Philippines. This dual approach is essential because both the structures and the processes exert influence on the outcome of the conflicts. Second, in order to understand the revolutionary processes, this research presents and analyzes extensive, primary data about the collective actions of major social groups and classes, including students, clergy, workers, capitalists, and alternative challengers in these countries. Collective actions by specific actors are at the heart of revolutionary struggles but are often given short shrift by analysts who examine mainly the ideology of the successful challengers. This research will uncover much about the specific social and political conflicts, which is a significant contribution to scholarship on revolutions because there remain some lingering misconceptions about the insurgencies and outcomes in these cases. In particular, the Iranian revolution, despite a wealth of scholarship, is still not completely understood. Third, the current research is unique in its analysis of the interests and ideologies of major social actors. It disaggregates the revolutionary conflicts into their distinct collectivities, which acted together to bring about social change, and analyzes the particular interests and ideologies of each group, along with any shifts that occurred during the struggles. Without analyzing the demands and ideologies of each of these groups in detail, no study can present a complete explanation of the causes and outcomes of the conflicts.

Finally, the goal of this research is to contribute to a comprehensive theory of social revolution in developing countries and a framework within which to understand and explain other revolutions. A comparative

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analysis of the three cases will illuminate our understanding of the roles of
state structures, social classes, and ideologies in large-scale social con-
flicts. Furthermore, a key element in the examination of revolutionary
outcomes presented in this work is the comparative analysis of the simi-
larities and differences between Iran and Nicaragua, where ideologically
driven challengers assumed power, and the Philippines, where power was
restored to the elite. The inclusion of the Philippines is central to the
analysis because this country shared many of the structural characteristics
of Iran and Nicaragua and possessed even stronger revolutionary challen-
gers than either of the two other cases; yet, unlike them, it did not
experience social revolution. In addition, as part and parcel of this analy-
sis of successful processes, the current research will also attempt to
explain the failure of earlier insurgencies in these countries. A compara-
tive-historical analysis reveals that prior to the successful removal of these
powerholders, all three countries experienced insurgencies which cul-
minated in defeat. Revolutionary success and failure may belong to the
same category, as Tilly reminds us, and it may be equally important to
explain the failures as well as the successes of revolutionary movements
and conflicts. ''If a theory purports to tell us when and why a society
is ready for rebellion, it also ought to tell us which sectors of the society
will resist the rebellion, and why. Exceptions prove the rule. Counter-
revolutions test our explanations of revolution'' (Tilly 1963:30). The
following will present the theoretical framework used in this research.

Linking structures and processes

Most scholars define social revolutions as rapid, basic transformations of
a society's state and class structures that are carried through class-based
revolts from below (Skocpol 1979:4). Although this tends to be a very
demanding definition, it is very useful in distinguishing social revolutions
from other political conflicts and outcomes. According to this definition,
the ousters of the Shah and Somoza in Iran and Nicaragua qualify as
social revolutions, while the removal of Marcos in the Philippines does
not. While debates[1] over the definition of revolutions continue, the cru-
cial task undertaken here is to explain what happened in the three cases
and why.

   Although several generations of social scientists have attempted to
explain the causes and origins of social revolutions (Goldstone 1980), no
general theoretical consensus has emerged. In the past few decades,

[1] For other perspectives on the definition of revolution see Walton (1984:7–13) and Aya
(1990:11).

structural models of revolution have greatly advanced our understanding of revolutions in developing countries. Several influential works, focusing on variables such as the nature of the state, economy, classes, and international conditions, have gone a long way toward explaining social revolutions (Goldstone 1991b; Moore 1966; Paige 1975; Skocpol 1979). Structural analyses of states' vulnerabilities within the world system, their internal structures, and their relations to economy and society have proved very fruitful in studying large-scale social conflicts and revolutions.

Yet, despite great advances, structural models by themselves cannot explain the complexity of social revolutions in developing countries. Although structural conditions set the stage for conflicts, they do not determine the revolutionary process or outcome. Thus, if a structural analysis of revolutionary conflicts and their outcome is to be comprehensive, it must rely on additional variables. Furthermore, models that rely on the role of class conflict are insufficient to account for social revolutions. Although some degree of class antagonism characterizes most revolutions, class conflict by itself does not produce social revolution in contemporary developing countries. In fact, intense class conflict may actually reduce the likelihood of revolutions because, in the absence of state breakdowns, class coalitions have been crucial for the overthrow of the state. Marx's theory of revolution focused primarily on social classes and assumed that class conflict in the economic sphere would inevitably find expression in the political sphere. The central argument of Marx's analysis was that class exploitation in the context of economic crisis would result in rebellion and revolution (Boswell 1993). The present work will demonstrate that, contrary to Marx's theory, a high level of working-class militancy and an ideological shift against the capitalist class and system may actually impede the formation of broad coalitions, which are necessary for revolutions. Because revolutions in the twentieth century have occurred only where major social classes succeeded in forming broad coalitions, any theory of revolution must also focus on the state, its nature, and its vulnerability to revolutionary conflicts (Goldfrank 1979:141; Goldstone 1980, 1986; Parsa 1985, 1989; Rueschemeyer and Evans 1985; Skocpol 1979).

Skocpol's influential work (1979) makes an important contribution and shifts the focus of analysis back to the state and allows for its potential autonomy. She maintains that the social-revolutionary conflicts involve a struggle over the forms of state structures (Skocpol 1979:29). But Skocpol's formulation is somewhat problematic because it relies heavily on the relationship between the dominant class and the state. It locates the center of the conflicts around the capitalist class and the state. It is true

that, as the present work will show, the capitalist class often joins the insurgency primarily to change the power structure. But, as Skocpol has argued, revolutionary struggles always involve multiple conflicts and multiple actors with diverse interests, and cannot be reduced to merely one set of conflicts. Furthermore, many states in developing countries do not rule in alliance with the upper classes. Thus, the simple withdrawal of support by the capitalist class from the state may increase state vulnerability but may not result in revolutions. Skocpol's analysis also suffers from the fact that her formulation does not take into account the role of other classes and actors. Working-class insurgency may threaten the capitalist class and prevent them from opposing the state even in the face of rising conflicts. Thus, capitalists' attacks against the state are affected by the intensity of class conflict and threats posed by other classes. Labor radicalism, particularly in the presence of powerful, revolutionary challengers, may prevent capitalists from attacking the state.

Some theorists of social revolutions also criticized Skocpol's structural formulation for failing to take into account the role of ideology in social revolutions. To redress the shortcomings, a number of analysts brought ideology to the forefront of the analysis of revolutions.[2] Many of these theorists attributed independent power and dynamics to ideology. In an analysis of the French revolution, Sewell argued that ideology had a central role in the social structure and its transformations. He stated that if societies are ideologically constituted, "then adding ideology to the account will also mean rethinking the nature, the interrelations, and the effects on the revolution of state, class, international, and other structures" (Sewell 1985:61). Goldstone argued that once the institutional constraints have collapsed, ideology and culture develop their own momentum and play a leading role in revolutions (Goldstone 1991b:418). Moaddel went even further and in his analysis of the Iranian revolution turned ideology into an independent actor. He argued that although foreign capital and the state had adversely affected the bazaaris and workers, the conflicts of these classes were not inherently revolutionary. Rather, he argued, Shiite revolutionary discourse transformed social discontent into revolutionary crisis (Moaddel 1993:153–163). Even Skocpol (1979:17), who had claimed that revolutionary movements rarely begin with revolutionary intentions, in her analysis of the Iranian revolution, argued that ideas played an important role in the revolution. In fact, she assigned sweeping powers to ideology.

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[2] Some of the important works that have paid greater attention to ideology include Foran (1993, 1997a), Foran and Goodwin (1993), Hobsbawm (1973), Migdal (1974), Scott (1979), Moaddel (1993), Arjomand (1981, 1986), Farhi (1990), Colburn (1994), and Burns (1996).

Skocpol asserted that the Shiite culture of martyrdom inspired devout Iranians to oppose the Shah in the face of repression and death (1982:275).

Despite significant contributions in understanding the role of ideology in social revolutions, some of the works that assign primacy to ideology in revolutions still suffer from a number of shortcomings. To begin, some of these works suffer from methodological reductionism. These analyses often focus primarily on the ideology of the successful revolutionary challengers and thus assume that those who participated in the conflicts actually adhered to the challengers' ideologies. Furthermore, such explanations tend to be circular because they use the outcome of the revolution to account for its causes. This method of reasoning tends to ignore the complexity of revolutions and to simplify the revolutionary process. The problem is that revolutionary challengers do not always present all aspects of their ideology to the public and at times modify or even conceal their ideologies to ensure the participation of privileged social groups that may be threatened by their radical tendencies. Furthermore, in repressive situations, ideological debates are very limited, and ideologically driven challengers may be unable or unwilling to reveal the precise nature of their ideology.

Although an understanding of the ideology of challengers is essential, a sound analysis must also convincingly demonstrate that the principal actors were both aware of such an ideology and actually supported it. If participants line up behind certain challengers, this does not necessarily imply ideological conversion. Rather, such support may come about because of political causes and tactical considerations. Therefore, an analysis of challengers' ideologies cannot be a substitute for an understanding of the ideologies of the specific collectivities that carry out most of the collective actions during conflicts. Where substantial variation exists in both the timing of the collective actions of various groups and the articulated demands of the actors, it is reasonable to suspect that the outcome cannot be due to ideological causes. A complete explanation of the role of ideology in revolutionary conflicts requires a thorough analysis of the demands and ideologies of all major social actors.

Most importantly, analyses that attribute sweeping powers to ideology fail to account for the social origins of ideologies and their relation to the social structure. Ideologies do not emerge in a vacuum and should always be understood in the social and historical context. Furthermore, because ideologies have social structural consequences, they should be analyzed in relation to the existing social actors. Although some scholars have noted the role of ideology in different phases of revolutionary conflicts (Arjomand 1986:384; Goldstone 1991b:418), no contemporary work

has yet presented a comprehensive analysis of the ideology of the various
actors in Third World revolutionary situations. As will be seen in the
three cases, different social groups have different propensities toward
revolutionary ideologies. In highly differentiated, stratified societies, vari-
ous collectivities not only have different interests but also differ in their
propensities toward different ideologies about the social order. A sound
analysis must provide systematic, empirical data on the ideologies of
major participants and their ideological preferences. Such an analysis
must present systematic and comprehensive evidence about the demands
and slogans of all social actors during large-scale conflicts. Only a sys-
tematic analysis of all the major participants in their actual social and
historical context will reveal the impact of ideology in large-scale social
conflicts. This work will attempt to make such a contribution.

Social revolutions are complex, rare processes and, as such, are ex-
tremely difficult to predict (Keddie 1995b:3; Stinchcombe 1965:169).[3]
The following discussion presents a preliminary sketch of the variables
that may be useful in guiding the analysis. The analysis draws and
extends variables from the structural model of revolution, resource mo-
bilization theory, and the political process model. As we shall see, certain
state structures are more likely than others to generate the conditions
that favor large-scale social conflicts. For example, states that form ex-
clusive polities and states that intervene highly in capital accumulation
tend to become very vulnerable to challenge and attack. Prolonged ex-
clusion from the polity predisposes the excluded toward radical
measures and insurgency. State intervention in capital accumulation
also affects state vulnerability to challenge and attack. Highly interven-
tionist states can readily become targets of attack during social conflicts.
In addition, levels of state intervention also affect the nature of class
conflict. But structural variables mainly set the stage for conflicts. They
are inadequate to explain the dynamics of mobilization and collective
action. Thus, it is important to analyze the process of insurgency and the
dynamics that encourage or discourage coalition formation. In the ab-
sence of prior state breakdown or military victory by insurgents, broad
coalitions are crucial to the removal of powerholders. Finally, it is essen-
tial to analyze the role of revolutionary challengers and ideology in social
revolutions. The following discussion elaborates on the constellation of
structures and processes that culminate in social revolution in develop-
ing countries.

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[3] Because of the complexities, Stinchcombe (1965:169) has proposed that sociologists
attempt to explain the occurrence of a revolutionary situation, rather than actual
revolutions.

Exclusive rule: centralization and repression

States that are characterized by exclusive rule tend to become vulnerable to challenge and attack in times of crisis. Such states contract the scope of the polity and block access to the state and the centers of political power. They often tend to eliminate or render irrelevant formal democratic institutions. In extreme cases, highly exclusive states may develop an exceedingly personalistic rule, which excludes virtually the entire population, even the economic elite, from decision making and government resources. ''Sultanic'' regimes (Linz 1975:259–263) and ''autonomous personalist'' regimes (Midlarsky and Roberts 1986:24–27) are extreme examples of exclusive rule. Under such regimes, rule is based on personal characteristics (Chehabi and Linz 1998:7). Such regimes also tend to minimize or eliminate accountability to the public and rule independently of the underlying population (McDaniel 1991:6). Centralized, dynastic regimes are especially vulnerable because they restrict elite access to the polity and remain exclusive for prolonged periods without providing any option for change (Foran 1997a:229; Goodwin 1994:758; Snyder 1998:56).

When exclusive rule and centralization of power come about in the context of large-scale social conflicts, they often have several crucial consequences. First, in such conditions, states may have to continually resort to violence and repression to demobilize or eliminate their opponents or insurgents. The continuous use of repression may reduce social support for the regime and force it to become dependent on both the military and external support to maintain power. State reliance on military coercion may enable governments to hold on to power in the short run, but such reliance may prove to be inadequate in the long term. When challenged by broad coalitions that disrupt the social order, governments may not enjoy the loyalty of the armed forces, particularly if rulers do not completely control the military or if it lacks cohesion. In times of crises, preexisting divisions may render the military vulnerable to schisms and defection. For example, armies that are based on conscripts are often vulnerable especially because they may retain regular contact with the civilian population. Second, government repression may weaken or eliminate elite or moderate challengers and consequently polarize the opposition in favor of the hegemony of radical or revolutionary challengers. Thus, government repression may well affect mobilization options in future rounds of conflict.

States that are highly exclusive may attempt to rely on external support to remain in power (Snyder 1998:58). The external dependence of such states also renders them vulnerable, as such reliance can be a