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THEORIES OF REVOLUTION AND REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION

by

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December 1998

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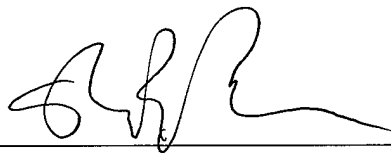Major, United States Air Force
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is in the form of a literature review of the theories advanced by both academics and revolutionaries of why and how a revolution occurs. The thesis is in two parts: the first part describes theories devised by academics to explain why revolutions occur. These theories are divided into three categories based on the level of analysis chosen by the academic. The second half of the thesis deals with the organizational choices made by revolutionaries. These choices amount to the development of a theory, not always explicit, on how revolutions occur. I divide the field into those revolutionaries who choose centralized versus decentralized organizational forms, and those who rely on mass movements versus those who concentrate on actions by elites. The major conclusions of the thesis are that no single level of analysis is sufficient to explain why revolutions occur, and that the choices of organizational form have more to do with the structural considerations of the environment than the will or wishes of the revolutionaries. I end with a call for more research on the organizational choices of revolutionary movements.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A.   WHY THIS TOPIC?

This thesis grew out of my experience with the Special Operations and Low

Intensity Conflict curriculum at the Naval Postgraduate School. I began the curriculum in

1997 and very early on took courses in social revolution and guerrilla warfare. These

were true graduate level courses, and we plunged right into the primary literature dealing

with theory and case studies on these topics. Unfortunately, I have an engineering and

technical background, and had never concerned myself professionally with these topics.

The ideas behind the phrases "hearts and minds," "revolutionary cell structure," "people's

army" and "*foco*" were not familiar to me, though they were to the Green Berets in my

class. I decided I needed a quick-and-dirty undergraduate level introduction to revolution

and revolutionary organizations if I were going to get the most out of these courses.

In any subject, understanding the basic material allows one to understand the

nuances of the more advanced concepts, and, more importantly, it gives one a general

framework, an idea about the extent of the topic, and a skeleton on which to build with

the more advanced material. Having this framework allows one to immediately integrate

new material into a logical and understandable structure. It quickly allows one to

understand the interrelationships between the new material and the old, and it lets one see

where new theories will conflict with old. It is "the big picture," and having it is a prerequisite to truly understanding a subject.

My professors were sympathetic to my plight, and made a few suggestions, but I quickly came to the conclusion that no such quick-and-dirty summary work exists. There have been a few attempts, most notably by Goldstone (1994b) and Cohan (1975), but none of these have attempted to organize the competing theories in a logical framework. Very few scholars, furthermore, had attempted to mix academic theoreticians with the work of practitioners, the revolutionaries themselves. Interestingly, U.S. military doctrine (FM 100-20, 1990) also does a poor job of describing the real working of revolution, concentrating instead on concrete steps which can be taken in counterinsurgency.

As a result, I did not have the big picture until the courses were just about finished, and I am sure I did not get as much out of the courses as I could have. My hope is that this work will fill that gap for those who follow me. This paper should also be of interest to other students of revolution at the undergraduate level, and to military personnel who need a quick introduction to some of the basic concepts which underlie unconventional warfare, revolution and insurgencies.

This thesis will take the form of a literature review. I will attempt to distill the thousands of pages which have been written on revolution into a short document. Naturally that means I will leave out most of the details of the arguments and virtually all of the supporting evidence. What I leave should be a framework, a skeleton on which others can hang the meat and tissue of deeper study. Or, if deeper study is not in the

cards, at least this work will indicate what the whole beast will end up looking like just from having seen its skeleton. The references and bibliography will provide the titles of the source material for further study.

B.   WORKING DEFINITIONS AND ORGANIZATION

This is a work about revolutions, which means the first task is to define that word. Unfortunately, as Simon (1989: 4) has pointed out, "there is no consensus about what constitutes a 'revolution'." Competing definitions differ on whether violence or extra-legal means must be employed, and about the degree of social change which must occur before the label "revolution" applies. The violence described in many definitions is often, but not always, conducted by guerrilla organizations fighting an insurgency. The social changes to which these definitions refer involve the restructuring of the relationships between groups or classes in a society. A change from monarchy to representative democracy would certainly qualify, as would a change from an agrarian economy to an industrial one. Almost implicit in all definitions of revolution is the notion of a short time in which the changes take place. A slow, purposeful and methodical change in the social order would not be viewed as a revolution–it would be understood as an evolution. These three variables–violence, social change and time–seem to be related; the probability of violence clearly increases as the potential for very swift, radical upheaval in the existing social order increases.

For the purposes of this thesis, revolutions will be considered those events which

rapidly change the basic relations between classes in society, for instance a rapid change

from an agrarian economy to an industrial economy, or between the people and the state,

for instance a change from autocracy to democracy. This change does not have to be

violent, and if it is violent, the change does not have to be the result of any particular

form of warfare, like insurgency. This definition rules out "palace coups" in which one

set of autocratic thugs are simply replaced with another set who continue to run and order

the society in the same basic way as their predecessors. The key here is the change in the

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fundamental way in which the society is ordered or in how the society creates wealth. In many ways, this definition follows that given by Schram (1983: 29):

> The word revolution has two basic meanings. On the one hand, it evokes a fundamental change in the locus of power in society, usually carried out by violent or extra-legal means, in which certain social categories, and/or political movements, seize control of state power from others. But the term is also used to designate the radical re-structuring of society and the economy carried out by the revolutionaries once they have successfully seized power.

1.   Organization

This thesis is organized to answer two main questions about revolutions: *why* and *how*. In the first part, Chapters 2, 3 and 4, I will summarize a few of the prominent theories academics have developed to explain *why* revolutions occur. To add some structure to the way the various theories are presented, I will first categorize them into one of three "schools of thought." Each of the theories in a school will share some basic assumptions and presumptions about the mechanisms which cause revolutions. By grouping them, I will be able to quickly describe these general characteristics, and then summarize the specifics of the major theories in the school, pointing out some of the strengths and weaknesses of each, as well as where they conflict with one another.

2.   Disclaimer

Most theorists of revolution do not begin their work by publishing their assumptions about how revolutions work. Often, they do not even identify themselves as belonging to any school of thought on these issues. Since these assumptions work at an almost unconscious level, they may not even recognize what school they belong to. Even

if they did recognize which school they belong to, there is no handbook which describes the assumptions of the various schools and how those assumptions shape the way in which researchers craft their theories and, more importantly perhaps, the way they structure their studies of historical cases of revolution.

Insofar as this work remedies those problems, it rests on several key assumptions of its own. First, I assume that many theorists share a common view on how revolutions work. I assume those views fall into three broad schools of thought, which I have labeled structuralist, rational choice and resource mobilization. I assume that I can derive the views of each school both from general principles and from the works of the researchers in each school. Lastly, I assume I can assign a scholar to one of these three schools based on an analysis of their work. There is, necessarily, room for intellectual maneuvering in this enterprise, as I have created the categories–the schools–based partly on the content of the work of those researchers in the school and then decided whether a researcher belongs in a school based on the content of their work. Content, as a variable, is being used too many times to make this a rigorous scientific enterprise. Note that this casts doubt on the fairness of my case selection (meaning here, the assignment of a researcher to a particular school), and therefore casts doubt on the universality of my conclusions.

The schools are named for the mechanisms believed by their proponents to be the most important cause of revolutions, but at a deeper level, they are really based on the level of analysis employed by the theorists.

3.   **Levels of Analysis**

Level of analysis is the phrase used to describe the size of the group on which the researcher focuses. If the researcher focuses on the international system, using states as the actors in that system, then they are said to be using the "state and international system" level of analysis. If instead a researcher focuses on the decisions of individuals, they are said to be using the "individual" level of analysis. Other common groupings include the "group or organizational" level of analysis, the "bureaucratic" level of analysis and the "decision-maker" level of analysis.

As an example, a researcher examining the Cuban missile crisis of 1961 could focus on the relative capabilities and power of the United States, the Soviet Union and Cuba along with the mechanisms by which those three states competed and interacted. That would be the state and international system level. Alternatively, a researcher could try to explain U.S. policy by looking at the conflicts between the State Department and the Department of Defense. That would be the bureaucratic level. Or the researcher could focus on the decision-making styles of John Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev. That would be the decision-maker level. Each of these levels of analysis would lead to different insights into the Cuban missile crisis, and to different explanations of why events turned out as they did. Similarly, each level of analysis would lead to slightly different predictions as to when this sort of conflict would occur in the future and different policy advice to decision-makers hoping to avoid this kind of crisis in the future.

Though no single level of analysis can provide the complete picture–explaining, predicting and prescribing very well–researchers tend to develop theories and conduct

their studies using just one level of analysis. This is because it is extremely difficult to develop theories which include different levels of analysis, and then hard to test them. In addition, many researchers seem to have deep-seated biases against certain levels of analysis, and they refuse to recognize any value in their use.[1]

4.   Theories of Why Revolutions Occur

Chapter 2 will describe the work of several *structuralists*. The structuralists choose to work at the state and international system level of analysis, and believe that the arrangement of these great impersonal powers is what determines when revolutions begin or end, and whether they fail or succeed. The actions of individuals, even the actions of the leadership of a revolutionary movement, do not matter to these theorists.

Chapter 3 will describe the work of the *rational choice* school. Observers in this school focus on the individual level of analysis, developing theories which explain why an individual would find it in his or her best interest to risk their lives supporting a revolutionary movement. In this school, the individual foot soldiers in the revolution are all that really count. These theories assume that if it is in the best interest of a people to rebel, an organization will form and leaders will be found. These theorists tend to draw on economic theories to explain the actions of individuals. The work of Samuel Popkin and Ted Robert Gurr will be used to illuminate this school of thought.

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[1] The best example of this may be the "neo-realist" position regarding international relations as articulated most dramatically by Ken Waltz. This school deals exclusively with the state and international system level of analysis, expressing great disdain for levels below that. (Patenaude, 1998)

Chapter 4 will describe the work of the *resource mobilization* school. Theoreticians in this school choose to work at the group and organizational level of analysis. They develop theories which describe the way in which revolutionary groups can mobilize elements in society to support their program for social change. They also pay attention to the dynamics of conflict between groups within the state. Though it focuses on groups, this school is the one which pays the greatest attention to the quality of a revolutionary group's leadership. Charles Tilly's theories will provide the subject for a more detailed explanation of this school.

5. Theories of How Revolutions Occur

The second half of the thesis explores theories on *how* to conduct a revolution. Rather than describe theories advanced by academics, I will focus on theories developed by practitioners, the actual revolutionaries themselves. These theories, or proposed methods of conducting a revolution, are prey to all the methodological problems and limitations of the academic theories. In addition, they are not always expressed in clear, theoretical language (or even expressed much at all, as in the case of Hamas). Therefore, a bit of investigative work is required to tease out the underlying theory.

Given the large number of cases of successful revolutions, all of which could be used to develop a theory on how to conduct a revolution, some method to group the revolutions must be used. Unlike the academics, the practitioners do not limit themselves to a single level of analysis, so some other method must be devised. I have chosen to group the revolutions by how the revolutionaries organized themselves. Specifically, I will look at cases in which the revolutionary organization was either *mass-based* or the work of a small *elite*, and cases in which the organization was *decentralized* or *centralized.*

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In Chapter 5, I will describe the variables of mass versus elite and centralized versus decentralized in greater detail in order to provide some weight to my decision to use them to organize my study. These two variables can be expressed as a two-by-two matrix, which results in four cells. Each cell in the matrix may then be filled with an example of a revolutionary group which used the corresponding organizational method. From this starting point, I will launch into a discussion of each cell in the matrix,

concentrating on the one revolution which I believe epitomizes each organizational

method. See Figure 1.

THE MATRIX	DECENTRALIZED	CENTRALIZED
ELITE	Che Guevara	Lenin
MASS	Hamas	Mao

Figure 1. The Organization of Revolution

Chapter 6 will deal with the decentralized and elite organization, as promoted by

Che Guevara. Chapter 7 will deal with the centralized and mass-based organization used

in Mao's revolution in China. Chapter 8 will summarize centralized and elite

organizations using Lenin's Bolsheviks as the detailed example, and finally Chapter 9

will study decentralized and mass-based organizations concentrating on Hamas.

C.   THE METHODOLOGY DIGRESSION

A bit about the methodology used in this discipline is in order before getting into

the detailed theories.

1.   Laws, Theories, Hypotheses, Variables

In any subject which purports to be scientific, there is a hierarchy of statements.

At the top are laws, which are statements of causality without any underlying

explanation. Laws simply describe the world as it appears, and are established after a long period of observation. Laws can be stated as, "A causes B," or, "A does B." For instance, less dense fluids (A) float on more dense fluids (B). This is an example of a "deterministic" law, meaning it happens every time. But, laws can also be "probabilistic," meaning they occur some percentage of the time, i.e., "A causes B, but only X percent of the time."

In these descriptions, the letters "A" and "B" represent variables. Variables come in two varieties, independent variables and dependent variables. Independent variables (often abbreviated IV) are the causes, while the dependent variable (DV) is the outcome. In the example above, fluid density, "A" is the independent variable, while floating or not floating, "B" is the dependent variable. Laws, theories and hypotheses can easily have multiple independent variables, in which case sorting out which cause is most important becomes very difficult. On the other hand, having multiple dependent variables runs into more difficult methodological problems which are beyond the scope of most social science research to resolve.

Beneath laws are theories, which are simple statements that try to explain why certain actions cause other actions. They are statements about causality with an explanation attached. A theory can be expressed as, "A causes B because of C." For instance, helium (A) causes a balloon to rise (B) because helium is less dense than air, and therefore floats (C). Note the explanation in this case refers to a law which has been previously established. Theories should be stated in such a way that they can be proven,

or disproved (which, in fact, may be a more powerful and useful way to state a theory (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994: 100-105)).

Beneath theories in the hierarchy of statements lay hypotheses. A hypothesis is a guess at causality, either with or without an explanation, and stated in such a way that it can be tested. A hypothesis does not appear out of thin air, it is always derived from a theory or a law, even if that theory is left unstated. A hypothesis could be stated, "I think A causes B (because of C), and I can prove it by D" (Van Evera, 1997: 5-15). For instance, "I think helium balloons float because they are less dense than air, and I can prove it (or at least disprove it) by trying to float a helium balloon in some air which is less dense than standard.

2.   Building Theories: Deduction, Induction, and Mills' Methods

Theories are built in several ways. The simplest is for a researcher to sit around and try to reason out why something happens. Once the researcher thinks they have reasoned out a possible explanation, they state it in the form of a hypothesis and proceed to test it. This is known as deductive reasoning. A researcher who knows the law stating that less dense fluids will float may be able to reason that a balloon filled with helium would float in air, and then would be able to test that hypothesis. (Van Evera, 1997: 15-16)

Another way is for a researcher to examine a series of cases in which the event did and did not occur and search for the common independent variables. This is known as

inductive reasoning. Once a researcher finds a set of variables which appear to decide the

result, he forms a hypothesis and proceeds to test it.

To find the key variables, the researcher has a choice. If the researcher focuses

solely on cases in which the event did or did not occur, they would look for variables

which differ across the cases, and then discard them. Once the researcher has thrown

away as many variables as possible, the remaining variables will be the important ones to

test with a suitable hypothesis. This is the Method of Agreement (as named by John

Stuart Mill, 1906: 253-260). For example, a researcher who sees a dozen balloons, half of

which are floating, could look at the floating balloons and begin discarding variables

which differ, like the color or size of the balloons. Eventually that researcher would find

that the only thing those balloons have in common is that they are filled with helium, and

he could begin to form a hypothesis stating that helium balloons will float, and from there

develop a theory as to why they float. If instead the researcher focuses on the balloons

which do not float, they will quickly begin to eliminate the same variables of size and

color and soon realize that the only thing the balloons on the floor have in common is that

they are filled with ordinary air. This method has obvious problems with events which

have multiple causes, for instance, balloons filled both helium and hydrogen, both of

which float, can lead the investigator to distraction. (Ragin, 1987: 36-39)

A researcher who focuses on cases in which the event both did and did not occur

will look for variables which all events have in common, and will discard them.

Eventually the researcher will be left with the variables which differ across all the cases,

and these will be the important variables to use in developing a hypothesis. This is called the Method of Disagreement, again from Mill (1906: 253-260). For example, a researcher with the same dozen balloons, half of which are floating and half of which are not, could look at all balloons and quickly discard color as a variable after finding red ones both floating and on the floor. After discarding size and perhaps a few other variables which are present in both sets of balloons, the researcher will be left with the observation that all the floating balloons are filled with helium and all the ones on the floor are filled with air. From this observation would come a theory, then a hypothesis, and then testing. (Ragin, 1987: 39-42)

One difficulty often encountered after identifying the relevant variables is trying to figure out how to measure them. This is known as "operationalizing the variables." For example, a theory may hinge on whether the central government of a state is "weak" or "strong." But how does a researcher measure that? The researcher may want to categorize pre-1917 Russia as having a weak central government, and post-Civil War United States as having a strong central government. But, even if most other researchers might agree, that statement is still just an opinion. To make it scientific, the researcher must identify measurable aspects of the state which imply either a strong or weak central government (direct collection of tax revenues? direct appointment of local judges?) and then collect data on those indicators. Naturally, the more tenuous the link between the indicators and the variable the researcher is really trying to measure, the less certain the researcher can be of his conclusions.

One final note about variables–the fewer, the better (in theory). A theory which can explain events with just a few easily measured and well defined variables is always preferred over theories which require hundreds of vague and difficult to measure variables. A theory with fewer variables, all things being equal, is said to be "more powerful." This is called the Principle of Parsimony (Ragin, 1987: 83). Unfortunately, the real world of extraordinarily complex events, like revolutions or the weather, is not very amenable to simplistic explanations. This leads to compromises, and accepting less than perfect explanations or predictions (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994: 20). For example, compare the extremely complex computer models used by the National Weather Service to the attempts by your neighbor to predict the weather using just a barometer and thermometer. Your neighbor will not be as accurate, but his method is certainly easier to use.

3.   Testing, Case Selection and Purpose

When building theories about revolution, most researchers use a mix of deductive and inductive methods. However, there seems to be only one accepted method of testing these theories and that is to use them to try and explain historical cases. Therefore, all the researchers in this field will rely heavily on historical case studies to try and prove their theory. The problem with using history is one of case selection. If a researcher uses three revolutions, for instance, the French, the Russian and the Chinese, to develop an inductive theory, and then proceeds to test that theory using, again, those same three cases, that researcher really has not proven anything about revolution in general. They

may have simply proven something about those three revolutions in particular. To be fair, a researcher must develop his theory, or model, on one set of data and then prove it on another set. There are other, though perhaps less egregious, problems with case selection that can bias a researcher and lead to a theory with less weight or power. For example, a researcher who focuses exclusively on 20th century communist revolutions will not necessarily be able to apply their theories to the French Revolution, or even to the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Bias in selecting cases is difficult to overcome (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994: 128-149), and one the reader must be aware of and on the look out for.

Assuming a researcher has developed and "proven" a theory, there is still the question of what to do with that theory. Some theories have great *explanatory* power, they will lead to an understanding of what happened and why. Others have great *predictive* power, they will reliably tell us when an event will occur in the future. Great predictive power does not, *prima facie*, imply great explanatory power. A theory which predicts that tomorrow's weather will be very much like today's will be correct most of the time, but it does not imply any understanding of weather as a process. This holds true for predictive theories which are probabilistic as well as deterministic: predicting that 500 out of 1,000 coin tosses will come up heads implies no great understanding of physics, aerodynamics or the results of collisions between inelastic objects. Still other theories are designed to be *prescriptive*, they intend to tell policy makers what decisions to make to optimize the results. Very few theories can do all three, and none of the theories I will present do even one very well.

D.   CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 10 will present my limited conclusions. First, I do not believe we have yet derived a theory which fully explains or predicts revolutions. This failure is a direct result of the simplification process necessary in crafting theories. What the theorists have done is begin to identify the important variables which will help us understand, explain and influence the conduct of revolutions.

In addition, I believe that more research is needed in several areas, not the least of which is to continue to derive, revise and test theories so that we can better influence revolutions. We need to conduct research into the question of whether the distinctions between mass-elite and centralized-decentralized provide an analytical framework with real power to study and explain revolutionary organizations. We also need to begin to research the structural conditions which favor one organizational method over another.

II. STRUCTURALIST EXPLANATIONS OF REVOLUTION

A.   THE STRUCTURALIST OUTLOOK

The major view of the structuralists is that the overarching structure of states and the international system is the primary determinant of history. This structure can often be described by explaining physical facts, like the benefits and constraints of geography or resources (for example, explaining Britain's actions as caused by the fact they are an island nation, or explaining Japan's actions by noting they have no domestic oil resources). The structure may also be explained in terms of less easily described relationships, like the strength of the central government in relation to the large landlords or the imperatives of an evangelical ideology (for example, explaining why the Magna Carta was signed, or why the Soviet Union tried to "export" revolution). In short, structuralists try to look at the "big picture" to determine the causes of change and the outcome of the revolution.

Groups are rarely encountered in structuralist explanations, and individuals almost never appear. Structuralists believe that whatever actions any single person may take, even if that person occupies a position of great power, are really insignificant in the face of the power of the overarching structure. Where leaders appear to have great and important choices to make, the structuralists tend to denigrate the existence of choice, explaining that the leader's decision is ultimately so constrained by the structure of the

system that they effectively have no choice at all. Skocpol (1994 :8) argues strongly for this position and against what she terms the "voluntarist" approach to revolutions. In her words:

> Willful individuals and acting groups may well abound in revolutions, ...
> but no single group, or organization, or individual creates a revolutionary
> crisis, or shapes revolutionary outcomes, through purposive action.

Clearly, structuralists deny the importance, or even the relevance, of individuals to the course of revolution. In addition, structuralists tend to believe that there are very few structural variables which really matter. It is not a joke to say that the perfect structuralist theory would have only one independent variable – see the section on Goldstone! The few variables the structuralists do hold to be important tend to be big, simple and powerful.

B.   REPRESENTATIVE STRUCTURALIST THEORIES

It is well beyond the scope of this work to summarize and assess every structural theory of revolution. Instead, I will present brief outlines of four popular and important theories each of which illustrate the structuralist outlook in different ways.

1.   Immanuel Wallerstein: The World-Historical (Capitalist) System

Immanuel Wallerstein's 1974 article "The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis," and his book of the same year,

create an argument about the very structure within which states operate and the forces which lead to the different forms of government today.

Wallerstein's first argument is that it makes no sense to describe a given state as having either a capitalist or socialist or feudal economy. No country has an economy by itself; instead they are all part of the world economy. An exception to this rule could be made for states which are so poor and backwards that they do not participate in the world economy, i.e. those which have no foreign trade whatsoever. An exception could also be made for a hypothetical empire so large that it only trades within itself, creating a self-fulfilling and completely autarkic economy. The first example is so trivial as to be beneath discussion, and the second arguably has never existed, and certainly does not now exist. The conclusion that there is only one world-historical system immediately throws doubt on any theory of revolution (or any other topic) which relies on differences in the economic systems of states. This is a very important conclusion with extremely far-reaching implications. For this alone, Wallerstein's argument is one which is certain to have great influence on other theories of revolution. Wallerstein further argues that since about the mid-sixteenth century the world economy has been capitalist, and as other states join the world community, they too must become capitalist. In other words, capitalism is the world's economic system, and no amount of posturing or wishing will change that. Having dashed Marx, Wallerstein then moves on to dash "modernization theory."

Modernization theory states that revolutions are necessary because there is no way for peasants to co-exist with an industrial-technological economy. The simple fact that a

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state is trying to move away from a reliance on peasant-based agriculture will eventually require a revolution to sweep away the peasants themselves, dissolving them as a class. Put another way, the "industrial revolution" requires an economic revolution– commercialization of agriculture–which, in turn, requires a social revolution–the dissolution of the peasantry. The first change inevitably leads to the subsequent changes. While this may seem a reasonable, if superficial, explanation of why revolutions occur, and may provide some hope of being able to predict revolutions, it is not very useful in terms of providing prescriptive advice to either policy makers hoping to fend off violent revolutions or revolutionaries trying to foment them.

Wallerstein, however, rejects the "modernization" in modernization theory and asserts that capitalism *requires* three kinds of states. The first is the *core*, the advanced industrialized states which have the highest standards of living and strong governments. The second is the *periphery*, the backwards states which primarily serve as providers of raw materials and resources and which typically have low standards of living and weak state structures. And the third is the *semi-periphery*, those states in the middle on both counts–some raw resources, some production and moderately capable state structures. Wallerstein notes that "By a series of accidents–historical, ecological, geographic– northwest Europe was better situated in the sixteenth century to" become the core states in the new capitalist world economy (Wallerstein, 1974). It was these states that experienced revolutions which might be explained by modernization. Having formed the core, modernization theory no longer applies to the rest of the world.

These three types of states are necessary because they provide capitalism with the division of labor necessary for the system to function efficiently. In effect, the core states are the "owners" of the system. They exploit the periphery by setting unfair rules for trade and extracting the surplus from world production in the form of profits. The peripheral states are the "workers" of the system. They provide the materials and also a large part of the market for manufactured products. They are kept weak because of internal divisions between those who work to provide the raw materials and those trying to establish industrialized factories. The resource providers (excepting a few cases of monopoly or cartel) want unrestricted free trade so they can make as much money as possible, while the striving industrialists need protection to be able to compete with the more efficient manufacturers from the core.

The semi-peripheral states are the "middle managers." They provide stability by standing between the owners of the core and the oppressed masses of the periphery who would try to overthrow the whole system. The semi-periphery has been co-opted into supporting the system by the hope that they will continue to advance, or be "promoted," and one day rise to the level of the core, or be made a "partner."

Wallerstein's theory also attacks the very basis of modernization theory, the "state" level of analysis, by asserting that the world system is conspiring against the periphery modernizing in any meaningful way. The resulting "revolutions," then, must be the result of failures by the core to manage the system competently, and not the result of any pressures inherent to the weak states themselves (Skocpol, 1994: 68-69). Wallerstein

expects the periphery to undergo almost constant political violence, but that it will never be able to change in any meaningful way because the core states set the rules of the game and will ensure that the periphery stays weak and dependent. Wallerstein also hints that the three types of states inevitably lead to three different types of state structures, or governments. The core can afford to have liberal democratic systems, the periphery needs authoritarian systems to control the discontented masses and the semi-periphery falls somewhere in between.

From this description of the way in which the world system operates, Wallerstein then adds a few more observations. To begin with, it is generally agreed that a capitalist system cannot continue to accumulate wealth without periodically redistributing that wealth in some way. Once it is redistributed back to the workers, they can continue to afford to buy the manufactured products on which the core derives its profits. (Think of Henry Ford paying his workers enough to be able to buy a Ford car, or stated another way, by producing cars cheaply enough that his workers could afford one. Without a market, production does not lead to profit.)

However, Wallerstein does not believe that the core can redistribute wealth in any meaningful way. Instead, the periphery will continue to wallow in its poor and unstable condition, periodically flaring into violence, but never with the power to change the world system. Their inability to advance their standard of living, in turn, affects the ability of the core to extract profits by manufacturing goods for sale to the periphery. As the profits of the core fall, the rewards to the semi-periphery of being co-opted must go

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down as well. In addition, over time the semi-periphery will realize the virtual impossibility of ever advancing to the core. These factors will combine to cause increasing instability in the world capitalist system, and its eventual downfall.

What to do with this theory is not very clear. Wallerstein (1974) ends his article by predicting the eventual replacement of capitalism by socialism, but not in the short term, and not through the efforts of states to change the system. In effect, Wallerstein's article has simply provided a rationale for viewing the system in its larger context. Wallerstein is asking us to be aware of the fact that describing certain aspects of states, such as a socialist economic system, may not really make sense when those descriptions conflict with the reality of the larger international system, which is capitalist. The long-term implication is that a theory must make sense not only at the level of analysis at which it was crafted and tested, but also at all levels of analysis. Wallerstein is setting the bar very high for his colleagues and himself.

In addition, Wallerstein has done an excellent job of explaining why modernization theory, while it may have applied to northwestern Europe before the seventeenth century, cannot explain the continuing level of violence and turmoil in the under-developed nations of the periphery. Wallerstein shows that these states cannot modernize meaningfully and must instead remain poor and technologically backwards with authoritarian systems of government. This will remain true at least until the world system changes from capitalism to socialism, a change which does not appear to be coming very soon.

2.   Barrington Moore: The Lords and Peasants

In 1966, at the height of U.S. involvement in the war in Vietnam, Barrington
Moore Jr. published *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in
the Making of the Modern World.* In contrast to Wallerstein, Moore (reprinted 1993)
argues implicitly for modernization theory, believing that revolutions in the modern
world are a necessary result of modernization. This conclusion, however, is simply the
subtext of Moore's argument. Moore's great insight is that the relationship between
peasants and their lords before the revolution is the primary determinant of the outcome
of the revolution. This insight, especially coming as it did in the midst of U.S.
involvement in the war in Vietnam, was a groundbreaking departure from the
conventional wisdom which held that peasants were an insignificant factor in revolutions.

To show that the outcome of revolutions is determined by the relations between
lords and peasants, Moore first asserts that there are three possible types of modern
revolution, each with its own outcome: a "Bourgeois Revolution," leading to liberal
democracy; a "Revolution From Above," leading to fascism; and, a "Peasant
Revolution," leading to communism. This realization alone was a radical departure from
the conventional wisdom of the day which held that there was only one path to
modernization, roughly the path described by Marx of change from feudalism to
capitalism (Skocpol, 1994: 25). Moore makes the description of modernization both more
complex and more richly explanatory by describing and differentiating the different ways
to modernize and the different outcomes of those revolutions. There is room for some

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confusion here, though, as Moore never makes it clear if the type of revolution and the outcome are really just another way to describe the same variable or whether they are in fact different things which happen to be linked by some unexplained causal mechanism.

I believe Moore sees them as different ways to describe the same phenomenon, he would think it absurd to, for example, describe a peasant revolution leading to liberal democracy. For his case studies, Moore uses the United States[2], England and France for the bourgeois revolution to liberal democracies, China for peasant revolution to communism, Japan for revolution from above to fascism and, as an example of the results if there is no revolution, India for stagnation as the price of peaceful change.

From this point, Moore begins to theorize about the variables which will determine which outcome will result from a revolution in a particular state. This is Moore's true interest–the outcomes created by the structure–rather than simply predicting or explaining revolutions. However, because Moore never clearly articulates his variables and the theory by which they interact, instead allowing the reader to infer them from his voluminous case studies, there is room to disagree on what Moore thinks are important variables. Two interpretations are plausible, the first supported by Skocpol (1994: 25-54), the second by Robinson (1997b).

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[2] While the United States never had peasants standing in the way of modernized agriculture, it did have slaves and slave owners, and it did take a violent "revolution" to sweep them away. Consequently, it is the U.S. Civil War which Moore treats as the American bourgeois revolution.

Skocpol's rather confusing version[3] posits that there are two important variables, the strength of the middle class in the state and whether the upper class is neutral regarding modernization, tries to preserve the agrarian system in the midst of modernization, or actually tries to hasten industrialization. This conclusion is a bit of a stretch, however, because, as Skocpol (1994: 33) points out it expands the critical variable Moore labeled "bourgeois impulse" into two variables: strength of the middle class and upper class participation in modernization. This stretch is justified, however, by the amount of effort Moore expends in describing these two aspects in the states and revolutions he uses as his case studies. Had Moore developed a matrix of these variables, it might end up something like Figure 2.

	Upper Class Opposes Modernization	Upper Class Neutral on Modernization	Upper Class Hastens Modernization
Middle Class Weak	Communism		
Middle Class Mid-Strength			Fascism
Middle Class Strong		Liberal Democracy	

Figure 2. Barrington Moore's Theory, Version 1 (after Skocpol, 1994: 32)

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[3] As an example, examine Skocpol's "explanatory" table (1994: 32) and try to apply Mill's method (either of agreement *or* disagreement!) to her categorization of the variables. As confusing as Moore may be, this does not constitute clarification.

But this could not be a complete statement of Moore's theory because he also deals with cases in which there has been no revolution, such as in India. There are other problems with this matrix as well, not least of which is, what happens in all the blank cells? Never having formulated his variables into a matrix, this shortcoming may not have been apparent to Moore or his casual readers, but these questions demand answers, and Moore and his critics are unable to provide explanations.

An alternative explanation (Robinson, 1997b) would start with the idea that the "Revolution From Above" is not a true revolution. From this, Moore's key variables would be whether a revolution occurred and was agriculture commercialized? This interpretation rejects the tenets of the modernization theory in a very subtle way. If agriculture is commercialized, meaning the economy is modernized and the peasants are broken as a class, then, according to modernization theory, there must have been a revolution, at least on some scale. This argument, however, quickly degenerates into nit-picking on the definition of revolution. Note also that "commercial agriculture" may be another way to say a strong or moderate bourgeois impulse, bringing us part of the way back to Skocpol's interpretation. Notwithstanding these points, and accepting this interpretation for the moment, the variables result in a matrix like Figure 3.

	Commercial Agriculture	No Commercial Agriculture
Revolution	Liberal Democracy	Communism
No Revolution	Fascism	Stagnation

Figure 3. Barrington Moore's Theory, Version 2 (Robinson, 1997b)

This interpretation has the decided advantage of simplicity and completeness. It only requires that we assume that the bulk of the case studies in which Moore hammers away at the "bourgeois impulse" are there simply to explain whether agriculture was or was not commercialized (and with the case studies taking up the first 410 pages of the book, that is a considerable amount of work to argue for one point!). It also requires that we discard modernization theory to at least some degree, and it leaves us with a theory which in no way explains or predicts the occurrence of revolution—revolution is now an independent variable rather than the dependent variable. But at least this is a simple and defensible explanation of Moore's point.

All of which leads to the important question, what is Moore's point, and does it constitute a theory about revolutions? I end up supporting Robinson's explanation of the case of India, which proves the converse of modernization theory—if there is no revolution, there is no commercialization of agriculture and there is no modernization. On the other points I support Skocpol's interpretation: Moore's point is that certain structural conditions in a state trying to modernize will lead it to modernize in certain ways. The key condition is the strength of the middle class, with the next most important condition

being the participation of the upper class in modernization. What these variables determine is the way in which agriculture is commercialized, which in turn determines the fate of the peasants and the resulting form of government of the state. This does constitute a theory about revolutions, though it does not provide a mechanism to predict when they will occur. Instead, Moore's work provides tools to predict the outcome once a revolution has begun. Moore's hope is that if we understand the linkage between the mechanisms of change and the outcomes we will someday arrive at a stage of development in which violence, both the routine violence of the system and the extreme violence of the revolution, is no longer a necessary part of our political system (Moore, 1993: 508).

In this, Moore is explicitly equating the violence of modernization with the violence of revolution. Even when it is accomplished in a very controlled manner, as the British legal system managed to do in enclosure era England, modernization is violently disrupting to the great masses. Moore sees no ethical or moral distinction between this level and type of violence and the violence of a clearly extra-legal revolutionary movement. (Moore, 1993: 505)

Moore's theory also serves to illustrate that structuralist theories can deal with the structure of the state independent of the international system. In this case, Moore is dealing with the interactions between three classes, the upper class, the middle class and the peasants. From this, a good argument could be made that Moore's theory really rests on the group or organizational level of analysis rather than on the state or international

system level. Be that as it may, Moore's theory definitely rests on a structuralist conception of the interplay of big, impersonal variables.

3.   Theda Skocpol's Recipe for Revolution

Next, we turn to a very well known structuralist explanation, the theory promulgated by Theda Skocpol in her 1979 book, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*. Skocpol definitively places herself into the structuralist school, stating that "revolutions cannot be explained without systematic reference to international structures and world-historical developments" (Skocpol, 1979: 14). She rejects the fundamental assumptions of each of the other schools; first rejecting the "voluntarist" conception of revolution, which pervades the rational choice school (as well as many historical accounts) and then rejecting the conception of the state and its organization as dependent on the composition of the society and its socio-economic classes, which is one of the assumptions of the groups and organizations level of analysis.

Skocpol also spells out her definition of revolution: "rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures; and they are accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below" (Skocpol, 1979: 4). The inclusion of a requirement for revolt from below make her definition more restrictive than the one used in the rest of this paper. Necessarily then, there will be fewer cases to choose from to test her theory.

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Skocpol borrowed her method from her teacher, Barrington Moore. Like Moore, she attempts a detailed comparative and historical analysis using just a few major cases. She also uses several negative examples, cases in which some factor was missing and there was no revolution, to buttress her theoretical argument–in effect using both the methods of agreement and disagreement. But she goes beyond Moore's method and improves on it by concerning herself not just with the outcome of the revolutions but with the underlying causes as well. In addition, her methodology strongly focuses on the breakdown of state systems, a tack which has been adopted by many subsequent researchers. This improved methodology was a reaction by Skocpol to the academic fashion of her day, which tended towards either Marxist approaches or rational choice theories (Skocpol, 1994: 7). So important were Skocpol's methodological arguments that no subsequent researcher in the structuralist school could ignore her work.

Skocpol uses three major cases–France, Russia and China–to test her theory, along with the periodic short sections on negative examples. In her three cases, Skocpol's book blends a rich and detailed history of the revolutions into a "recipe" for revolution which, befitting the structuralist approach, is conceptually quite simple. She believes there is a menu of six basic structural "ingredients" which are both necessary and sufficient for a revolution to occur. These ingredients are:

- The state must be an autocratic, though partially bureaucratized, monarchy.
- The state must be predominantly agrarian and have a large peasant population.
- These peasants must be relatively unsupervised by the landlords, allowing them to develop a high degree of autonomy and unity.

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- The state must be subject to pressures from other, usually more modernized, states (an external war being the prime example) which detracts from its ability to suppress internal revolts and maintain order.
- There must be conflicts between the monarch and the elites over methods of resolving the crisis (usually meaning, over how to change the tax basis).
- The institutional structures must allow the elites to effectively resist the monarch's wishes; a state normally brought about because the bureaucracy which administers the state is staffed by the elites themselves.

Given these six conditions, Skocpol argues that the administrative and military structure of the state will then inevitably crumble, and this breakdown will then encourage wider popular revolts and encourage the elites to further distance themselves from the *ancien-regime*. These developments, in turn, lead to full-scale social revolution. (Skocpol, 1994: 5) Note that there is not an element of chance here. Skocpol believes that these six conditions will lead to revolution whether or not there is talented leadership amongst the opposition, or even any real ability to build coalitions among the disaffected. Once these six ingredients are mixed, the recipe simply and inevitably cooks itself.

The bulk of Skocpol's book is devoted to describing how these conditions were present in each of her three cases. Her negative examples try to show how the absence of one or more of these variables contributed to a situation in which no revolution occurred. The most powerful of these is her pairing of Russia in 1905 with Russia of 1917. Skocpol describes how the quick end to the Russo-Japanese War relieved the international pressure on Russia and allowed the Czar to bring the troops back from the far east and use them to quell internal disturbances. (Skocpol, 1994: 139)

However, insofar as Skocpol was trying to devise a general theory of revolution, the most powerful critique possible was given by history itself. Right after publishing her

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book in 1979, both Iran and Nicaragua experienced social revolutions which did not, in any significant way, conform with her hypothesis. Reviewers of her book naturally noted this embarrassing bit of reality. In an essay written after several reviews which criticized her failure to explain or predict these cases, she emphasized at great length a point she had originally noted in a small section towards the end of her book (Skocpol, 1979: 288); that is, that she did not presume the applicability of her theory to other revolutionary situations. Her basic defense is that her original conclusions were developed and tested from the facts of the revolutions in France, Russia and China, and that any future revolution in a state which does not share the structural conditions of these three states will necessarily follow a different path and have different sets of causes and outcomes (Skocpol, 1994: 5-7). Methodologically, she cannot be faulted in this defense, though one can almost hear her chagrin at being forced to back-pedal from her original intention, which clearly was to build a grand theory to explain and predict revolutions.

But this defense necessarily raises the questions, how many states will meet the six conditions laid out in the recipe and, given that that number is small, what good is this theory? For these three cases, Skocpol has provided a good explanation. That, in itself, is an accomplishment, though clearly less than what she was aiming for. And, if another state were, by some odd chance, to fit this recipe, then her theory would clearly provide both predictive and explanatory power. Perhaps, then, Skocpol's recipe does not lead to a seven course culinary delight, but rather results in something like a hearty snack.

4.   Jack Goldstone: Too Many Young Men

Goldstone's (1994c) article, "The English Revolution: A Structural-Demographic Approach," and his 1991 book, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, are attempts to explain the English Revolution of 1640 and other European revolutions (his other main case being France) as the result of increasing population and the resulting pressures which that brought on society.

Goldstone's basic argument is that these countries faced a rising birth-rate which led to a rapidly increasing population. Unfortunately, as the population increased, the production of food and other resources stayed the same because the mechanisms of agriculture and the division of arable lands had not changed. A larger population competing for a stagnate pool of resources led to rising prices, inflation, which resulted in decreasing real wages, decreasing real tax revenue and an increase in the government's costs. This led to "fiscal distress" since the government had not developed monetary or fiscal policies to manage inflation fairly and efficiently. Instead of developing such a set of policies the government tried to raise taxes, which resulted in a rise in conflicts between the nobles and the crown. Inflation also led to increased unrest among the urban artisans and merchants. The rising population also created an oppressed class of poor young men who, lacking better alternatives, could be mobilized to revolt. All of this unrest led to revolution.

Goldstone's theory is that all of the underlying problems in these countries would have remained beneath the surface if it were not for the pressures put upon the structures

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of the state by the rapid growth in population. Population growth thus becomes both necessary and, in the face of unresolvable pre-existing structural problems (which can be assumed to exist in almost any society), sufficient to lead to revolution.

Goldstone's theory is notable for two reasons. First, he was the first researcher to identify population growth as an important variable for explaining and predicting revolutions. Secondly, this work is a beautiful example of theory building. Believing that revolutions result from internal unrest and dissension among elites caused by pressures on the state's systems, Goldstone elected not to wrestle interminably with trying to operationalize these fuzzy variables. Rather, he took a metaphorical step back from the problem and asked, what causes these outcomes in the first place? His answer is population growth, an easily operationalized, easily measured, variable. By using population growth to predict the host of other factors which more directly cause revolution, Goldstone has also developed a very parsimonious theory, one which can predict huge outcomes based on very little information.

The problem with Goldstone's theory is that it presumes the existence of weaknesses in the state which cannot be resolved through normal political means. These weaknesses constitute the structural half of his "Structural-Demographic Approach." Without these, rising population, by itself, will not predict revolution. In describing these structural factors, Goldstone falls back on his description of why the state could not change its taxation system and why the division of arable lands among the small landowners resulted in less efficient production of food. In addition, he notes the rising

population of artisans and merchants in the cities who were forced to pay increasing prices for food. Unfortunately, this description does not fully answer the question of what exactly constitutes the structural factors required for the theory to operate. This failure is particularly evident, as has been pointed out by Foran (1995), in his discussion of "culture" as a variable.

In the end, all Goldstone has done is to show that rising population can be an underlying cause of stress on the structures of the state. Given the existence of weaknesses in the state's structures, it can then precede a revolutionary situation. Rapidly rising population, then, becomes, at best, a probabilistic predictor of revolutionary potential.

Goldstone's theory illustrates the problems encountered by structuralists as they try to simplify and reduce in number their independent variables. Goldstone has managed to craft a theory with just one easily measured independent variable, population growth, but his theory ends up being probabilistic rather than deterministic, and all of the explanatory and most of the predictive power is lost in the undefined structural variable of "state weakness." Revolution, it seems, is simply too complex to be explained and predicted with one easy variable.

C. CONCLUSIONS

In presenting each of the structuralist theories in this chapter, I have taken the time to also critique those theories. Rather than repeat those critiques here, I will concentrate on generalizing from those individual cases to the whole school.

Structuralists have done an excellent job of identifying conditions which set the stage for revolutions. Their variables describe the important points which constrain political actors and masses in affecting the course of a state's development. As such, these variables almost provide a laundry list for determining whether a revolution is possible in a given situation. But, as necessary as some of these conditions may be, the structuralists provide no proof that they are sufficient for a revolution to occur. As a result, structuralist explanations simply do not fully explain or predict the real world.

Structuralist theories conflict with the real world as a result of their initial assumptions. By assuming that simple variables and simple theories can explain and predict revolution, they are, in essence, assuming that revolution is a simple process.[4] It is not. Revolutions are incredibly complex events which unfold in an incredibly complex

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[4] Allow me to digress for a minute to the field of mathematics. One of the conclusions from the mathematical field known as chaos theory could be stated, in an oversimplified way, "in complex systems, tiny changes to inputs can cause large changes to outputs" (Easterbrook, 1998). The classic example is the old saw about the "butterfly flapping its wings in Beijing, causing a hurricane in the Atlantic." If we accept that revolutions, and human behaviors in general, are complex systems, there is no hope of finding simple explanations. There is still the potential of finding simple *predictors*, but they will be probabilistic, not deterministic, and finding them will not imply we understand the event.

environment. The variables structuralists choose are simply too big and too simple to really capture the dynamic of revolutions. In particular, the structuralists' complete disregard of the individual level of analysis blinds them to the power of individual decision-making, particularly for individuals in positions of authority.

Structuralist explanations are elegant. They hold the promise of being able to explain huge, complicated and important processes, like revolutions, by employing just a few simple, neat variables. Analytically, they are enticing because of this parsimony. Unfortunately, they do not hold up to the real world, which tends to be dirty, messy and complicated–in a word, human.

III. RATIONAL CHOICE THEORIES

Where the structuralists chose to work at the state and international system level of analysis, researchers in the rational choice school choose to work exclusively at the individual level of analysis. In this school the structure of the international system, the organization of the state, the arrangement of competing interest groups and the power of individuals in position of authority are all nearly irrelevant in the face of the power of a large number of individuals each freely choosing a certain course of action. Given sufficient motivation, the masses will be able to rise up and overthrow *any* government, in *any* circumstances. This faith in "people power" to overcome any structural limitations is clearly a challenge to the structuralist view. It only remains to describe how the masses get this motivation, and what happens after the old regime is brought down.

A structuralist would counter that those two questions are the only ones which really matter. Describing how the masses become motivated lends itself to searching for structural conditions which allow leaders to foment revolutions, and certain structural conditions may control the outcome of the revolution.

Sadly, most rational choice theorists have ignored the second part of that question, the outcomes of revolution, entirely. The particular consequences of a revolution, when they are addressed at all, are usually explained simply as the logical result of the desires of the mass, e.g., if they want socialism, they will get socialism.

In answer to the first part, there is a distinct split in this school between those researchers who use quasi-psychological theories and those who have turned to theories of micro-economics to explain individual actions in the face of various circumstances.

A.   GURR'S RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

Ted Robert Gurr is a leading proponent of a psychological theory approach. His 1970 book, *Why Men Rebel*, delves into a psychological theory known as "frustration-aggression theory." It states, basically, that when people get frustrated, they get aggressive. These aggressive impulses, properly marshaled by marginalized elites who are also frustrated (though perhaps for different reasons) and in a context which does not strongly condemn violence against the government, lead to organized violence and then revolution.

These two qualifiers, marginalized elites and a cultural acceptance of violence, are structural conditions which are required for the violence to lead to revolution. Lacking one or the other, Gurr believes violence will still occur–only the outcome will be different. For instance, if there are no marginalized elites to organize and control the violent expressions of the masses, the result may simply be a low level of "turmoil" (Skocpol 1994: 102).

Gurr, viewing the violence inherent in revolutions as a simple product of aggression caused by frustration, then tries to determine the root cause of frustration.

Here again, Gurr delves into psychological theory, this time seizing on "relative deprivation." Relative deprivation is a theory that people become "discontented" in a system which does not let them get as much as they feel they deserve. Viewing the system as somehow rigged against them, they then develop strong feelings of frustration. To relieve this frustration, people then develop a strong desire to change the system in order to make it fairer for themselves and others in their condition. (Gurr, 1970: 13)

In summary, Gurr believes that revolutions are the result of organized violence against the political system. This violence is caused by feelings of aggression among the masses and certain marginalized elites. This aggression is the result of frustrations these groups feel, and these frustrations are the result of discontent due to their feelings of relative deprivation. Running this chain of logic the other way: people feel they deserve more than the system lets them get, this makes them feel frustrated, which makes them aggressive, which makes them strike out at the system and overthrow it.

The great insight of Gurr's theory lies not in the specific mechanisms—frustration-aggression and relative deprivation—which he has identified. Rather it is the simple realization, and strong argument, that psychological factors matter, and matter a great deal, when trying to explain human behavior. Prior to Gurr, academics studying revolutions tended to remain in either a political science or history camp. After Gurr, academics desiring to truly understand revolution are forced to pay attention to psychological factors as well. In expanding the realm of knowledge which must be called upon to explain revolutions, Gurr has simultaneously made the work of successive

researchers both more difficult and, at least potentially, more powerful. For this alone, his work is considered classic.

However, as simple and reasonable as Gurr's groundbreaking theory seems, it has two major problems. First, this theory loses a great deal of explanatory power by its failure to describe the impact of different structural conditions and the varying quality of leadership on the outcome of violence against the system. To be fair to Gurr, discussing outcomes was not his intention. Gurr's theory is meant to apply to all forms of "political violence" not just to successful revolutions. (Gurr, 1970: 3-4)

Secondly, and more importantly, the entire chain of logic rests on the variable of relative deprivation, and this variable simply cannot be operationalized in any meaningful way. At its heart, relative deprivation is an attitude or a feeling, and it is difficult to directly measure. If a researcher has direct access to the subjects, then a battery of standardized psychological tests could be administered prior to a revolution to measure feelings of relative deprivation fairly well. But this method will not work for historical cases because most of the subjects are dead. Those still alive are not much more help because they may not remember well, or may lie about their own motivations, or may embellish their exploits, or may engage, consciously or not, in a host of other deceptions. In these cases, relative deprivation can only be measured by reference to certain indirect indicators. Unfortunately, attempts to describe and use these indirect measures have universally failed (Skocpol, 1994: 102-103). This is a significant problem for this theory.

Operationalizing this variable becomes even more difficult because everyone feels

they deserve more than they can get and would like to change the system in some way (as

an extreme example, I bet Bill Gates would like to rewrite our anti-trust laws). Therefore,

a researcher must be able to make very fine distinctions in the level of discontent between

different people in different cases. Otherwise, the variable is present in all cases, and it

cannot, according to Mill's method of disagreement, provide an explanation of cases

where no revolutions or other acts of political violence occur. In crude terms, everyone is

pissed off, but how do you know if they are pissed off enough to revolt?

B.   SAMUEL POPKIN'S RATIONAL PEASANTS

Where Gurr tries to use psychological theories to explain why men rebel, Samuel

Popkin relies on theories derived from micro-economics. In his 1979 book, *The Rational*

Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam, (and in his 1988 article

which excerpts and updates the book) Popkin explains why the peasants saw it in their

rational self-interest, meaning primarily their economic self-interest, to participate in the

Communist-led revolution.

Popkin was the first to take seriously the idea that peasants were not simple-

minded and wedded to the idea of preserving (as opposed to improving) their unique way

of life. Popkin sees the peasants of Vietnam as a dynamic and thoughtful group, prepared

to change whenever change seemed to be in their economic best interest. Popkin shows

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that the more traditional view of peasants as reactionary guardians of the status quo, even where the status quo has them on the bottom of the heap, is based on a poor understanding of the options available to the peasants. Once the economic and cultural system of the peasant is understood, it becomes more clear why they would or would not support various programs for change.

In this way, much of *The Rational Peasant* is an argument to take the peasants seriously as people and adopt a more hard-headed approach to analyzing their situation. And, in taking them seriously, Popkin is arguing against the romantic notion (popularized by Scott (1976) in his book *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*) of the peasant as an integral part of some imagined idyllic agrarian society in which everyone is treated equally and all are cared for by the community. Popkin clearly does not believe in that particular utopia.

Indeed, after taking peasants seriously and dealing with their situation in a more rational way, Popkin concludes that peasants are cut-throat competitors and can be optimistic risk-takers given enough incentive. The incentives and risk of a particular action are evaluated by peasants and Wall Street speculators in the same way–a method economists call Expected Value Theory.

This theory states that if the *Value* of an outcome is greater than the *Cost* of the activity times the *Expectation* that the activity will, in fact, lead to the outcome, then the individual will conduct the activity. Or, mathematically: if $V > C \cdot E$, then conduct the activity. (Popkin, 1979: 30-31, 251-252) Naturally, the values, costs and expectations will

vary for different individuals, and will differ radically between the leaders of a revolution and the individual followers. The formula works for everyone, however.

Basically, Popkin (1979) argues that society in feudal (see Chapter 3) and early colonial (see Chapter 4) Vietnam was not organized to generate the largest surplus or the most profit for the peasant farmers. Rather, it was organized to keep the colonial masters, large landlords, village notables and rich peasants in power. The Communists, like the Hoa Hao, the Cao Dai and even the Catholics before them, saw that by reorganizing peasant society they could generate a surplus for the peasants (at the expense of the other groups noted above). The Communists could then keep enough profit from this activity to develop a national organization to overthrow the colonial government and win independence. The peasants, as they saw the Communist plan being fulfilled, recognized that they would benefit economically if the Communists furthered their reorganization agenda, and so were motivated to assist them in that endeavor. Thus, it was by creating economic allies of the mass of peasants that the Communists were able to create a revolutionary mass movement. The Communists succeeded in this where the three religious groups failed because they had a superior understanding of the political tasks necessary for success (Popkin, 1979: 185).

Along the way, Popkin argues, contrary to modernization theory, that changing from feudal agriculture to a market based system can actually be good for the peasants– even in the short term. It can be good because the market is inherently more efficient than the feudal systems, and allows the peasants to develop their resources in the most

efficient manner. The modern system can also provide the peasant with greater security, particularly in the move from relatively undefined and open-ended feudal obligations to the rule of well defined law. It also increases the peasants' ability to develop and take advantage of insurance systems which will ensure his welfare in times of natural disaster. Popkin's explanation does make sense if peasants are more willing to take risks than is commonly accepted, a point he argues forcefully. (Popkin, 1979: Chapter 2, especially 79-82)

The reorganization of village life taken on by the Communists did not center on organizing the peasants for world-wide class struggle and communist revolution or creating a revolutionary vanguard from the proletariat (which did not exist in any case). They had tried that tactic early, and the villagers had not been impressed (Popkin, 1979: 262). Instead the Communists organized around short-term, local goals–establishing systems to justly distribute land, reforming the tax system, ensuring fair rents and providing for the welfare of the community in times of natural disaster. In addition, the Communists established programs, especially literacy programs, aimed at increasing the long-term welfare of the peasants. (Popkin, 1979: 185-187, 225-228)

The Communists were not able to institute the exact same reforms in every part of the country because the organization of the villages actually differed in the various regions of Vietnam. This was brought about because of different patterns of settlement. Central and northern Vietnam had been settled for centuries and had established villages with organizational structures. In addition, these areas relied on collective processes,

primarily the maintenance of irrigation canals, in order to produce agricultural products. Southern Vietnam, on the other hand, was only opened up during French colonial rule, and relied on rainfall for irrigation. In addition, property rights in this region were completely dependent on records kept by the French colonial administration. As a result, the south had more large absentee landlords, more peasants who did not own their own land and, perhaps as a consequence of this more "modern" arrangement, had a higher standard of living and produced most of the country's agricultural surplus. These distinctions explain why the Communists had to develop different organizational forms and different benefits and sanctions in the south. Their difficulty in making this transition resulted in the Communists organizing northern and central Vietnam before penetrating the south. (Popkin, 1979: 229-236)

In the end, the Communists successfully organized the south as well as the north, and extracted enough revolutionary surplus to win their independence. Unfortunately, Popkin never argues whether the peasants actually got a good deal, whether the benefits of Communist reorganization outweighed the costs of nearly four decades of war.

Though he clearly focuses on the purely economic decision-making on the part of individual peasants, Popkin (1979: 252-266) also explains at great length the critical role of the "political entrepreneur," his phrase to describe the leaders of the Communist revolutionary movement. These entrepreneurs were faced with a formidable task; they started with nothing but their own organizational and leadership skills, and ended up running the country (Popkin, 1988). They did this by creating organizations which

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motivated the peasants to take the collective actions which were clearly in their interest. These collective actions generated "profit" for the peasants and the entrepreneurs were able to divert some of that surplus into building a larger organization with more expansive goals. Thus, the main enemy of the political entrepreneur, in Popkin's view, was not the government they were fighting to overthrow, but the difficulty in motivating peasants to cooperate with and trust each other so they could work together for the long range goal.

Given the explanatory power of Popkin's explanation of the Vietnamese revolution, perhaps the most lasting conclusion from his book will be the simple realization that peasants are not dolts. While they may not be well educated or very sophisticated, they are fully capable of determining their own self-interest and of weighing the costs and benefits and evaluating the odds of certain outcomes. In addition, the peasants are not always reactionary supporters of the status quo; they may very well be out in front leading the revolution if given the right incentives.

C. FREE-RIDERS AND "THIN" RATIONALITY

This motivational problem in collective action is endemic to many rational choice theories, particularly those which rely on quasi-economic reasoning. Using pure economic reasoning, the most rational choice for an individual in a revolutionary situation is often to do nothing at all. This is because the benefits of a successful

revolution will be available to everyone, regardless of whether they participate in bringing it about. In addition, assuming that it takes a mass movement for the revolution to succeed, the contribution of an individual is insignificant, and so does not affect the overall probability of success. The costs of participation, however, will be paid directly by everyone who joins the cause and can be very high indeed. This situation can be described as, "public gain–private pain." Given the potentially high cost and the low marginal return for any individual's contribution, the rational action is to do nothing. This paradox was first described by Mancur Olson (1965), and has come to be called, "the free-rider problem."

Olson went on to describe some ways in which the free-rider problem can be overcome. The most basic is to keep the group very small, making each individual's contribution seem relatively more important. When using this strategy, perception matters more than reality. In Popkin's (1988) description of Vietnam, he shows how the political entrepreneurs used their ideology to help convince the peasants that their contributions mattered more than they appeared, thereby accomplishing their goal. In addition, the Communist leaders intentionally mobilized the peasants around smaller, local problems in order to make the groups seem smaller. Subject to these strategies, an individual cannot reason that the added benefit of their participation is negligible, and so will be more likely to participate (Popkin, 1988). In addition, in a small or well-organized group it is easier to identify, and keep track of, those who are not participating.

Being able to identify the free-riders helps with another method to overcome the problem, providing "selective benefits" (Olson, 1965: 137-141). This can be done in a positive manner by only giving the benefits of the work to those who participate in the collective action. However, for some goals, like a more just and free government, this simply is not possible. In this case, other, less comprehensive, incentives might be devised. A budding revolutionary could, for instance, promise a lifetime tax exemption for those who join the cause early. Selective benefits can also be applied negatively, in which case they would be more properly called selective sanctions, or, simple coercion. For instance, whether or not individuals participate can be strongly influenced by the imposition of a very high cost for noncompliance, as happens when someone literally puts a gun to their head. There is, of course, some degradation of the quality of the work done in that circumstance, but that trade off is one which the organizers of protest must make. Lesser sanctions can range all the way down to simple social approbation.

Another problem with the economic theories of rational choice is that they rest on what Michael Taylor calls the "thin theory of rationality" (Taylor, 1988). Taylor points out that these theories share the assumptions that rationality can only be described in relation to a "thin" set of costs and benefits. In fact, these costs and benefits are typically described purely in terms of money. However, monetary gain cannot explain all collective actions. The obvious next step is to expand the range of costs and benefits in these theories, "thickening them up," to give them greater explanatory power. The risk in

this endeavor is that if the theory thickens up too much, it risks becoming a tautology or predicting too much collective action.

Taylor (1988) argues for including what he calls conditional cooperation and selective social incentives in a situation he describes as one in which an individual chooses and acts in full view of the members of his community. When others in his community choose to act, he then feels compelled to some degree to act with them in order to remain a member of the community. This is, in essence, peer pressure. In addition, the community seeks to impose certain sanctions against those who choose not to act, sanctions which are above and beyond ostracizing them to whatever degree. Taylor argues that this sanction will be imposed because the cost of imposing it is very small for each member of the community, while the benefit from ensuring full participation by everyone is very high. Therefore, by rational choice theory itself, every member of the community will find it rational to enforce participation in the collective project. Taylor (1988) leaves unstated the degree to which this reformulation of rational choice theory rests on a strong conception of community.

Taylor also describes, and then dismisses, other sets of costs and benefits which might be added to the thin theory. He lists three types of costs and benefits which fit this mold: actions which are pleasurable to perform, regardless of the rewards of doing them; actions which are motivated by an individual's desire to live up to their own self image; and, in a similar vein, actions motivated out of altruism. In each case, Taylor argues that

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these additions should be discarded because they thicken the theory too much and end up predicting too much collective action.

D. CONCLUSIONS

Rational choice theories of revolution provide two answers to the question of why individuals might join a revolutionary movement: frustration with the system leading to aggression against it, and pure self-interest (usually expressed in economic terms). But these theories also raise even more questions about why these movements are not more common and why an individual might decide to sit out the revolution based again on his self-interest. These are critical questions, and ones which, it seems, cannot be answered well by staying at the individual level of analysis. Popkin's (1979) foray into discussing the role of the political entrepreneur and the organizational forms they adopt (which requires a jump to the groups and organizational level of analysis) in order to explain the revolution in Vietnam demonstrates this fact. The clear implication, then, is that staying at the individual level of analysis, like staying at the state and international system level, will never provide a comprehensive theory about why revolutions occur.

E.   EPILOGUE: DO INDIVIDUALS CHOOSE, OR DO GROUPS CHOOSE?

Jack Goldstone (the scholar who proposed the structural-demographic explanation of revolutions discussed in Chapter 2) has attempted to rescue the quasi-economic rational choice theory from the criticisms described above by modifying its assumptions. Goldstone fully accepts the calculus of expected value, as used by Popkin, as a reasonable method of determining an actor's proclivity to act. His modification to Popkin is in his definition of "actor." Where rational choice theorists assert that *individuals* make choices or are motivated to participate in revolutionary activity, Goldstone (1994a) asserts that it is *groups* which make that choice and feel those motivations. Simply put, we do not act as individuals, we act as a group. This echoes some parts of Taylor's (1988) argument about community given above, but it expands it and fills it out in many ways.

Strictly speaking, Goldstone is not crafting a theory at the individual level of analysis; he is working at the group and organizational level. However, since he is using exactly the same expected value theory as Popkin, it makes sense to present his argument here, as a bridge between the two schools of thought.

In arguing for the idea that people act as a part of groups rather than individually, Goldstone (1994a) cites at great length the studies, many by psychologists, which tend to support this conclusion. In the end, the weight of evidence makes a good case for his conclusions that, "individuals prefer to act as a part of groups," and that prolonged and rewarding association with a group leads to a sense of "group identity." When this group

identity takes hold, an individual will begin to make choices based not on his individual costs and rewards, but on the costs and rewards for the group.

This approach takes the theoretical calculations of the rational choice school and lifts them into the group and organizational level of analysis. Along the way, it may also resolve some of the sticking issues with this theory, most notably the free-rider problem. It does this by changing the basic calculus of action versus inaction and cost versus benefit. If groups rather than individuals are the basic actors in society, it is clear that society has far fewer actors. This increases the relative power of each actor, making the value of each actor's contribution to a revolution much higher. This directly challenges an assumption of descriptions of the free-rider problem. Put another way, while the chances of any individual's actions or lack of action having any effect on the outcome of a revolution may be so small as to be insignificant, that may not be true for a large group. A large group, in fact, may have decisive effect just by itself.

In addition, membership in a group may shield the individual from some of the costs of an unsuccessful revolt. If a large group tries to stage a revolution and fails, the leaders of the group will surely suffer a tremendous cost, but the rank and file may be protected by the anonymity of the crowd. This is particularly true of larger and more informal groups (especially those which do not keep membership rosters lying about).

In sum then, Goldstone (1994a) may have found a reasonable way to describe the motivations and rational choices made by actors (meaning groups) in revolutionary situations. But he has also opened the door to a host of questions about how groups

mobilize resources and develop the critical "group identity" (or "loyalty," or sense of "community"), required before individuals will surrender their own good for that of the group. Finding the answers to these questions will obviously require working at the group and organizational level of analysis, which is the subject of the next chapter.

IV. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Ending Chapter 3 with Goldstone's (1994a) conclusion that revolution is rational from a group's point of view leads us logically to consider theories of revolution which focus on the group level of analysis. These theories are often referred to as the "resource mobilization" school, a name which highlights what these theorists consider the major problem faced by a group trying to overthrow an existing government–to mobilize enough resources (people, know-how, money, weapons, and political skills) to effectively challenge an established state. The terms "collective action" and "social movement" are also common in works which adopt the precepts and style of this school of thought.

A.   THEORY, OR LACK THEREOF

Though I used the words theory and theorist to describe this school of thought, the most striking conclusion one can draw is that it is devoid of any central or basic theory (though hordes of sub-theories exist). Remember, to qualify as a theory, as discussed in Chapter 1, requires a statement of causality and an explanation of how that causality works; A causes B because of C. (As a review: Laws are simply statements of causality; A causes B; a hypothesis is a guess at causality which lends itself to being tested, with or without a guess at explanation; I think A causes B because of C and I can prove it by D.) By these rules, none of the proponents of this school have actually developed a general theory to explain why revolutions come about. There will be no recipes for revolution, as the structuralists describe, and no discussions of quasi-economic theories of expected value as the rational choice theorists assert. Instead, proponents of this school of thought focus on developing a framework and a set of questions which should be answered to explain a revolutionary situation.

Lacking a theory, the assumptions, hypotheses and explanations offered by

proponents of this school cannot be formally tested, and any conclusions drawn by these

researchers will be tentative and limited. One can only read their explanations of various

revolutions and decide whether it "sounds right" or "makes sense" given the historic

conditions they describe. This is, in essence, the same process we would use to evaluate

the strengths and weaknesses of an historian's account of an event. From a purely

academic point of view, this school's lack of a testable grand theory of why revolutions happen should be a huge problem. But for some reason, it does not seem to have held back this school's proponents, and the frameworks developed in this school of thought are in constant use. This can only be explained by admitting that these frameworks lead to conclusions which, though not formally testable, make sense most of the time, and make more sense than any of the competing and more formal theories of revolution offered by the structuralist and rational choice schools. Or perhaps these theorists are simply working towards a grand theory, and they just are not quite there yet.

The lack of testable theories in this school does affect the type of literature which predominates. Rather than attempts to develop general theories from a comparison of a few short case studies, most of the literature in this school consists of detailed studies of just one case, with very little comparative analysis. Finally, given that there are no grand theorists to unify this school of thought, it is surprising that most of these case studies adopt a very similar framework.

B.   CHARLES TILLY'S FRAMEWORK

The surprising conformity by disparate researchers to a coherent framework is most likely due to the efforts of Charles Tilly, who has attempted to describe a resource mobilization framework in a more general and logical way in his major work, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (1978). Despite its title, his work is not narrowly interested in

revolutions; he is interested in a much broader class of social movements. However, this does not detract from applying his framework to revolutions, and so I will concentrate on revolutions as we have more narrowly defined them.

Tilly concentrates throughout his book on the group or organizational level of analysis, though he does make a few short forays into the individual level of analysis and several rather longer journeys into the state or international system level. He believes that understanding a revolution (or any social movement) requires knowledge in three different areas: first, some detail about the particular circumstances of the case, including the problem, the opponents, the means available to act, and their perceptions of the nature of the problem; second, some information about any large scale changes going on in the society at the time, such as industrialization; and third, understanding how people act together (Tilly 1978: 4-5). It is the last area, the study of "collective action," on which Tilly concentrates.

Collective action is the academic phrase used to describe the ways in which groups interact with and make claims against other groups or individuals in power (Tarrow 1994: 31). In our modern world, we are very familiar with certain types of collective action, such as the workers' strike, the march on Washington, the sit-in, and the hunger strike. But the types of collective action which groups use are not constant, they evolve continuously. For instance, very few of us would recognize (or understand the reason for) a commonly used tactic from France in the 18th Century, the *charivari*, in which unmarried youth in a village would organize a noisy protest anytime an older man

took a younger bride (Tilly 1978: 144). Similarly, during the French Revolution the Committee of Public Safety would have been confused, or simply amused, had anyone attempted to change their policy on the liberal use of the *guillotine* with a hunger strike.

Tilly (1978: 5-6) admits to the politically charged nature of collective action, and therefore of any studies of them, and spells out his own (mostly liberal) biases. He also points out that studies of collective action do not fit either of the two ways researchers commonly explain social events. He labels these two methods as causal and purposive. Causal explanations look for external events or conditions which cause a group or individual to act in a certain way. The structuralist school is causal. Purposive explanations assume that there is some rule (not necessarily stated overtly) by which individuals and groups make choices. The rational choice school is purposive. Tilly (1978: 6) critiques both approaches:

> In the realm of collective action, it is hard to build causal models which give serious attention to the interests, grievances, and aspirations of the actors. It is also hard to build purposive models which specify the constraints limiting the pursuit of interests, grievances, and aspirations.

All of which should sound familiar at this point. The rest of the book is Tilly's attempt to create a synthesis between these two types of analysis. In the end, Tilly (1978: 231) is convinced that he has not succeeded in his task, but that he has pointed the way for future researchers.

What Tilly has succeeded in offering researchers is a framework, indeed almost a checklist, of questions to be answered in the study of any revolution. And his list is very comprehensive–if a researcher could answer all of the questions, he would understand

why the revolution came about. Tilly (1978: 7) begins by breaking collective action into

five parts: interests, organization, mobilization, opportunity, and collective action itself.

1.   Interests

The first part of the framework is interests, by which he means, what are the

stakes of the game? What do groups stand to win or lose if they interact with other groups

in a contentious manner? Tilly sees two main problems in determining interests, first

trying to figure out exactly what a group's interests are, then explaining why they are

acting on those interests.

In trying to determine a group's interests, Tilly (1978: 60) posits two basic

choices: a researcher can accept what the group says about its interests, or he can infer

their interests from a wider analysis of their basic social setting. Both of these methods

have problems. In the first case, people often lie or even delude themselves, and it is not

uncommon for different members of the same group to say conflicting things. In the

second case the researchers are (somewhat arrogantly) supposing that they can figure out

a group's interests better than the group itself can. Also, there is often a conflict between

the group's short term interests, which Tilly believes is more likely to drive collective

action, and their long term interest, which is easier to infer from an historical distance

(Tilly 1978: 61). In the end, Tilly's preferred method is a blend of both these techniques.

He uses a wide analysis of a group's basic social setting, concentrating, in good Marxist

fashion, on the relations of the means of production, to determine a group's long term

interests, and then relies on their own pronouncements to determine their short term
interests.

In addition to these problems, there is the problem of group interests versus
individual interests, which we dealt with in our discussion of the rational choice school
and the free rider problem. Tilly's answer to this problem is to define the degree of
conflict between group and individual interests as a variable which affects the cost of
group action–more conflict makes action less likely (Tilly 1978: 62). He offers no real
method, however, to measure this variable or its effect.

The second part of the problem, explaining why a group is acting on its interest, is
actually more difficult than it seems. As Tilly points out (1978: 59), once a group starts to
act, it usually is not very difficult to figure out why they are acting. But a complete theory
of collective action would also have to explain why the group did not act later rather than
sooner, and why other groups never act, all of which makes a much more difficult
problem. Tilly does not offer any theory which satisfies these criteria.

2.   Organization

Tilly believes that organization matters in two ways. First, the degree of
organization, from near chaos to highly integrated, has a great effect on the group's ability
to mobilize and engage in collective action. To measure the degree of organization, Tilly
(1978: 62) draws on the work of Harrison White. White decided that there are only two
kinds of groups, categories and networks. A category is any group of people who share a
common identifiable characteristic or identity, like being female, Sunni Muslim, or a

resident of Timbuktu. As these examples show, a category can be more or less broad, a continuum he labels "catness." Categories can also be combined in Boolean fashion to make them broader or narrower, for instance all the female Sunni Muslims who do not live in Timbuktu. A network is a group of people who are linked "by a specific kind of interpersonal bond," like a group who owes each other wedding invitations, or a group all of whom converse with each other once a day, or the group a person exchanges Christmas cards with each year. Again, networks can be more or less broad, a continuum he labels "netness."

The degree to which a group is well organized depends on both its catness, or degree of common identity, and its netness, or degree of internal networking. Organization, then, is simply the product of netness times catness. Tilly (1978: 63-64) gives four examples to illustrate this point. He starts with a casual crowd, low on both catness and netness, and subsequently low in organization. Next he takes the group of All Brazilians, higher on catness, but low on netness and therefore somewhere in the middle on organization. His third example is a friendship network which transcends identifiable characteristics and is therefore low on catness. The friendship group, however, is high on netness, and so it ends up, like the Brazilians, somewhere in the middle on organization. Finally he describes a printer's union local, which would be high on both catness and netness, and so high on organization as well. As a result, the printer's union local would be a more likely group to engage in collective action.

Secondly, Tilly believes that the type of organization impacts its ability to engage in collective action. He mentions three variables which are particularly important–the degrees of differentiation, centrality and stratification–all of which he believes impact on the organization's efficiency and effectiveness, though in ways he does not explain. On top of that, he stresses the group's "inclusiveness," a poorly defined variable, as the "main aspect of group structure which affects the ability to mobilize" (Tilly 1978: 64).

All of which is wonderful stuff, but still Tilly has theorized a causal relationship between degree and type of organization and propensity to engage in collective action without testing any hypotheses. On top of that, he has taken a fuzzy and subjective variable, the degree of organization, and defined it as the product of two variables which are almost as fuzzy and subjective, catness and netness, and introduced another ill-defined variable, inclusiveness. This is not progress in scientific terms.

One interesting point about the influence of organization on interests–many times a group will grow to a point where it feels the need for a professional full-time staff. The staff then often develops their own interests, which tend to start drifting away from the interests of the original group. Because of their power over the actions the group will take, and their ability to rally the group members in support of new causes, they can often change the group's direction in radical ways. This can also lead to defections from the group by those who do not support the newly articulated interest (Tilly, 1978: 151). The recent battle between the staff and rank and file members of the Sierra Club over whether the organization should take a stance on immigration may be a reflection of this dynamic.

The staff strongly supported the expansion of the organization's traditional environmental agenda to encompass other political issues, while the rank and file fought to limit the organization to its more traditional role.

3.   Mobilization

Mobilization is a measure of a group's ability to control resources. These "resources" can be enumerated in several different ways, but Tilly (1978: 69) is partial to the economist's standard "factors of production: land, labor, capital, perhaps technical expertise as well." Any group will try to accumulate resources, and to increase its ability to exercise those resources. The primary way a group accumulates resources is by expanding, with each new member bringing in some new resources which the group can use.

If a group commands absolute loyalty from its members, then any resource controlled by the members will be made available to the group. In the real world, few groups can make such absolute demands on their members, so they command something less than the sum of their members' resources. Tilly (1978: 71) tries to quantify loyalty as the probability of a member delivering up a resource on demand, and he states that the primary variables influencing this probability are the amount of resources requested, the range of resources and the range of circumstances under which the group requests the resources.

Groups can mobilize in three ways: defensive, offensive and preparatory. Defensive mobilization is triggered by an outside threat which "induces the members of a

group to pool their resources to fight off the enemy" (Tilly 1978: 73). This sort of mobilization is usually bottom-up, the masses coalesce then find their leaders. Offensive mobilization is fueled by a change in opportunities instead of threats and is usually top-down; the leaders rally the masses to the cause. Preparatory mobilization is almost always top-down, and consists of a group mobilizing resources in anticipation of a future change in opportunities or threats. A labor union which collects money to build up a war chest in anticipation of a future strike is engaging in preparatory mobilization (Tilly 1978: 74).

Tilly (1978: 75-76) contradicts the conventional wisdom that the rich mobilize defensively, to protect what they have, while the poor mobilize offensively, to claim what they do not have. Instead, he points out that the poor cannot afford to mobilize until they are threatened, while the rich can afford to spend a few resources in search of future gains. Once mobilized, however, the conventional wisdom does kick in–the poor tend to demand things they do not have, while the rich tend to defend what they already have.

Tilly (1978: 84) summarizes his discussion of mobilization by defining it in two ways: first, as the product of the quantity of resources a group could command times the probability that the members will produce those resources on demand (loyalty); and second, as an undefined function of the group's organization (which is the product of its catness times netness). These thoughts provide a researcher with some ideas of how to look at the level of mobilization in a revolutionary group, but they do not lay out true theoretical relationships, or even define variables which can be measured well.

4.   Opportunity

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Tilly uses "opportunity" in two different, though complementary, ways. First, he says it "concerns the relationship between a group and the world around it" (Tilly 1978: 7), which sounds very much like a structuralist description. The main relationship Tilly is concerned with is that between the contending group and the state. The state can choose to react in one of four ways to collective action: the state can repress the group, it can tolerate the group, it can facilitate the group, or it can coerce the group (Tilly 1978: 107). Having delineated these choices, Tilly then pretty much ignores coercion and toleration.

Repression and facilitation can be aimed at either the group's mobilization or against the collective action itself; a state can outlaw membership in a group or simply prohibit the group from staging a protest march. Tilly believes that it is much more effective for a state to repress mobilization than collective action, since this "neutralizes the actor as well as the action" (Tilly 1978: 101). Repression and facilitation can also be very finely tuned to the political situation:

> the same government which smiles on church services bringing together a thousand people assembled to pray for salvation shoots without hesitation into a crowd of a thousand workers assembled to pray for justice. (Tilly 1978: 106)

Second, Tilly describes opportunity as a measure of the ratio of the cost of action against the expected gain (Tilly 1978: 99), which sounds like a quasi-economic description akin to the rational choice school. This definition assumes that the groups are rational actors, and that they have relatively good knowledge of the costs and risks of their actions.

For Tilly, these two conceptions appear to be two sides of the same coin. Structural conditions will determine the costs and benefits of different actions, and a group considering collective action will attempt to determine these values before deciding what action to take. There is a mix here of causal and purposive arguments.

5. Collective Action

Finally, we get to the collective actions of the groups contending for power. Tilly believes that collective actions are not abstract–people get together and act in order to influence specific other people or groups to act in very specific ways (Tilly 1978: 143). Recognizing that the typical kinds of collective action change over time and across cultures, he goes on to characterize them as either competitive, reactive or proactive.

Competitive collective actions are those designed to take resources claimed or controlled by others (Tilly 1978: 144). The *charivari* is an example–the young people of a village are trying to "take back" a young woman from an older man. Reactive collective actions, or "collective reactions," are those taken to reassert a claim which is being challenged (Tilly 1978: 145). Peasant attacks against enclosures are an example. Finally, proactive claims are made by a group trying to get something they have not had before, such as a worker's strike for health insurance coverage.

Having given us these categories, Tilly fails to deliver up their significance. Instead, he launches into a sustained account of the varieties of collective actions seen throughout Western Europe and the United States in the last 300 years. From collective actions, he then continues into the realm of collective violence (Tilly 1978: 178).

6.   The Polity Model and the Mobilization Model

At the same time Tilly is describing his five components of collective action, he is also applying two different models which attempt to explain how these components interact. The first, the polity model, is static and attempts to show the interactions of all groups in a population. It contains a government, members of the polity, and challengers trying to gain entry into the polity. The model allows for coalitions to form between the government and members and between members and challengers. Tilly asserts that, whatever else they may seek, all challengers are trying to become members of the polity and all members are trying to remain members in the polity (Tilly 1978: 54). The polity model describes interest group politics in a rather structural form. Each of the actors in the model is analyzed for each of the five elements of collective action: interest, organization, mobilization, opportunity and collective action.

The second model, the mobilization model, focuses on a single challenger. Here Tilly (1978: 56) changes some of the elements a bit. He still uses interests, organization, mobilization and collective action, but he expands opportunity to be three separate elements: opportunity/threat, repression/facilitation, and power. Tilly puts each of these seven categories in a box on a piece of paper and then starts drawing lines between them and hypothesizing about the connections. At the same time he tries to test these hypotheses with the information he has about the specific group in question.

The mobilization model is designed to be purposive and dynamic, and the researcher is supposed to use it to map out changes in the group over time. But at the

same time, the model can only show relationships which occur at one given time. To use the model over a longer run is akin to taking a series of snapshots and trying to run them together to form a motion picture (Tilly 1978: 142).

7.   Tilly Summarized

Tilly believes revolution can best be understood through an analysis of groups and organizations. He stresses the importance of knowing some detail about the history of the society in turmoil and any large social changes occurring in it as well as a general understanding of how people act collectively. On the last point, Tilly advances two models to explain collective action. The first is the polity model which includes all the actors in a society loosely divided into three categories: the government, the members of the polity and the challengers. Once the actors are identified then the coalitions and conflicts between them can be mapped out.

The second model is the mobilization model which attempts to show the interaction of all the components of collective action as they affect one actor at a particular time. The components of collective action are the group's interests, type and degree of organization, level of mobilization, tactics of collective action and opportunity to act. The opportunity to act can be further broken into an analysis of the opportunities and threats, the repression and facilitation the group faces and the relative levels of power between the contenders. Tilly has literally dozens of hypotheses, or sub-theories, about how, in general, each of these components are related, but acknowledges that his

hypotheses are not established truths, just educated guesses from a man who has spent years researching this field.

But, as much as those hypotheses make sense, and they do make a lot of sense, one cannot build a theory out of hypotheses--that's backwards. Tilly's work remains something less than theorizing about why revolutions occur or how they play out. As he slips back and forth between his two models, and between causal and purposive explanations, Tilly has simply given us a framework to try to understand, or as he puts it "strategies for the study of," revolutions (Tilly 1978: 51).

C.   THE FRAMEWORK IN USE

Tilly's framework has been adopted and modified by dozens, if not hundreds, of scholars since the publication of *From Mobilization to Revolution* in 1978. It has found a warm welcome particularly in the hands of those academics who wish to do a detailed case study of one revolution. This sort of study does not lend itself to grand theorizing on the causes of revolutions in general, though it can certainly test such a theory. Instead these authors are interested in the causes of one particular revolution, and Tilly's framework provides an excellent, indeed the only, vehicle for exploring and answering that question. This is a crucial distinction. Though Tilly's framework does not provide any grand theory to explain why revolutions occur, it is the only available framework

which allows a researcher to truly understand how a revolution happens. Though perhaps it is only half a loaf, it is certainly enough to fill up on.

Typically, the scholars who write these sorts of works write a short section in their introductory chapter in which they discuss the framework they will use for the rest of the work. These discussions are very reminiscent of Charles Tilly, and he is usually properly credited. As examples of Tilly's framework in action, we can consider three works by different authors who are interested in vastly different revolutions.

1. Oberschall on Eastern Europe, 1989

Anthony Oberschall (1996) wrote a short piece on the revolutions in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia, in which he focuses on just three topics: "framing," mobilization, and opportunity. The last two are simply Tilly's variables, while the first refers to the process of defining political reality in the minds of the polity, or

more crassly, getting people to accept your spin on what the real issues are. As an example of framing, Oberschall states,

> In East Germany, it is the participants in demonstrations who initiated and provided the interpretative frame... That frame was "free elections" and "democracy."

Naturally, the communist government attempted to put its "interpretative frame" on the demonstrations by labeling them "counter-revolutionary" and "illegal." But, they lost.

On mobilization, Oberschall uses Tilly's catness and netness variables to describe why preexisting organizations in these communist societies were generally weak. He then explains how mobilization occurred in each country, focusing on how small networks of dissidents were able to join with quickly forming mass movements to lead revolutions in each country. In his discussion of Poland, he adds to the stew the ability of the Catholic church to provide some sanctuary for leaders to organize and present their agendas, along with a history of militant labor movements, of which Solidarity was simply the last and greatest. While discussing the mobilization in East Germany, Oberschall (1996) recounts the development of two new forms of collective action, the mass marches from the Nikolai church in Leipzig and the mass invasion of foreign embassies in neighboring communist countries. His analysis builds on the ideas of Tilly (1978: 151) regarding the development and communication of new "repertoires of collective action."

Tilly defined opportunity in very structural terms, and Oberschall (1996) continues this by describing opportunity as being created by both the domestic and international political environment. This differentiation is very important to his later

analysis because he shows how important the international environment was in 1989. Poland, the first of the four nations to replace a communist government, was critically important to the other three states. Similarly, when Hungary repudiated its Warsaw Pact treaty obligation to seal its border with Austria, it precipitated a mass exodus of East Germans through Austria and into West Germany, and the East German regime was doomed.

Oberschall's (1996) work is meant to be a quick description of just a few of the factors which influenced the Eastern European revolutions of 1989. His work follows rather closely the framework left by Tilly, and expands it in certain directions to give a fuller explanation of these particular cases. Like Tilly, Oberschall is not trying to develop or test a grand theory of revolutions. He is simply trying to better understand a few related cases, and Tilly's framework is best suited to this task.

2. Hiltermann on the *Intifada*

Joost R. Hiltermann's (1991) extremely sympathetic study of the Palestinians before and during the *intifada* is another work which borrows Tilly's essential framework as a tool for understanding one particular case of revolution, or in this instance, near revolution. Hiltermann concentrates on the role of labor and women's movements on the organization and mobilization of the popular uprisings in the West Bank and Gaza.

But before launching into the body of his work, which is more concerned with presenting the data he has collected than in theorizing or explaining revolution, Hiltermann has the obligatory introductory chapter explaining his framework. Tilly's

work is well represented in this discussion, and he even has the honor of being turned into an adjective: "...in the situational field of opportunity (in the Tillyan sense)..." (Hiltermann 1991: 15).

Hiltermann certainly seems to fulfill Tilly's directive to have a good understanding of the culture and the history of the society under study. In addition, he seems to be able to use Tilly's framework to analyze the groups which made the *intifada* happen. In each section of his book, Hiltermann refers to Tilly's five components of collective action, concentrating on mobilization and organization throughout the discussion. He also addresses Israeli repression of the Palestinian movements in detail (see, for instance, Hiltermann 1991: 53-55).

In the end, Hiltermann has produced a very detailed history along with a good explanation of a small part of one (near) revolution. But, because of the limitations of the resource mobilization framework–the lack of true theory–his conclusions only apply to the *intifada*. And indeed, after his detailed study of why and how the movement played out, his conclusion seems almost trite: "The Palestinian uprising should not have been a surprise to anyone" (Hiltermann 1991: 208). Still, no other framework would enable a researcher to better explain the *intifada*.

3.   Everingham and the Sandinistas

Mark Everingham's (1996) study of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua is not, for the most part, a study which follows Tilly's framework for resource mobilization and the group and organization level of analysis. Everingham is much more concerned with

structural factors and theories of revolution, particularly theories which attribute

revolution to the type of regime, in this case a "neo-patrimonial dictatorship," and the

effects of modernization in small scale agrarian societies (Everingham 1996: 5).

But these theories do not explain Nicaragua's revolution completely because they

cannot account for the broad, multi-class coalition which ousted Somoza. Everingham is

convinced that these theories need to be modified, or expanded, in order to be able to

explain why the rich joined with leftist guerrillas to overthrow the state (Everingham

1996: 7), though he never advances such a modified structuralist theory. In his analysis of

the coalition, where traditional structuralist theories have lost their explanatory power,

Everingham falls back on Tilly's framework. Only after discussing in detail the

mobilization, organization, interests, opportunities, and collective action of the coalition–

in other words, after following Tilly's prescription for understanding–does Everingham

(1996: 177) arrive at his conclusion:

> The politics and political strategies of groups and individuals engaged in
> coalition-building are at least as influential on the path of political change
> as state structures and the relationships between the state and classes.

In other words, Tilly is right, and the structuralist explanations fail. Naturally, this

conclusion provides even more weight to the explanatory power of Tilly's framework

since it comes from a researcher who is so closely wedded to the structuralist frame of

analysis.

D.   CONCLUSIONS

The school of thought which focuses on explaining revolutions by using the group and organizational level of analysis, which we have been calling the resource mobilization school, is both the most and least satisfying of the three schools we have covered. It is the most satisfying because it alone provides a framework which allows a researcher to truly understand why and how a revolution came about, but it is the least satisfying because it does not give us a general theory to explain all revolutions, or to predict where and when they will occur in the future.

This may be simply because revolution is too big a topic, and too subject to the myriad variables of human behavior, to ever be explained by any neat one, two or three variable theory. But, even if that is true, there will still be value in trying to understand revolutions, and trying to find theories to explain them. And it seems clear that the only way to understand revolutions is to begin by truly understanding a few cases. The only real tool for truly understanding revolutions will continue to be the resource mobilization school, as it has been best articulated by Charles Tilly.

V. REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATIONS

I have chosen to categorize revolutionary organizations into one of four types based on where they fall along the spectrum of two distinct variables. The first variable is the degree to which the organization is centralized or decentralized, and the second is the degree to which the organization's "center of gravity" is in the elite at the top or in the masses at the bottom. As a review, those variables define a matrix with four cells, first introduced in Chapter 1, and reproduced below, as Figure 4.

THE MATRIX	DECENTRALIZED	CENTRALIZED
ELITE	Che Guevara	Lenin
MASS	Hamas	Mao

Figure 4. The Organization of Revolution

In the following chapters, I will discuss the four cases which are illustrative of each organizational form. However, some discussion of what those defining variables mean and why I think they are important is warranted before beginning those sections.

A.   DEFINING DECENTRALIZATION

Decentralization is a term which has received a great deal of attention in the

literature on organizational structure. Unfortunately, that means there is no universally

accepted definition of what decentralization is or how to measure it. Jennergren (1981:

39-59) and Mintzberg (1993: 95-115) both summarize the arguments and agree on the

following concepts. First, decentralization does not exist in and of itself, it is one end of a

continuum which stretches from rigidly centralized organizations to very amorphous,

decentralized ones. In common usage, the single word decentralization can mean either

the larger concept of the centralization-decentralization continuum, or the process of

moving down that continuum towards the more decentralized end.

Second, the level in the organization where decisions are made is the key to this

continuum. An organization with one man in charge who makes all of the decisions

would be at the very centralized end of the continuum; an organization with 1,000

workers who all participate equally in every decision would be at the very decentralized

end of the continuum; and, an organization in which workers at the bottom make a few

decisions, middle managers make the bulk of the decisions, and the few executives at the

top make a minority of the decisions would fall somewhere in the middle.

Third, not all decisions are made equally. Even in an organization which is very

decentralized in its productive processes, some decisions will be made only by the top

management. Jennergren (1981: 46) relates that among several major studies there is

unanimous agreement that a few types of decisions are simply never decentralized, and he

characterizes these as the "important decisions." They include the organization's

objectives, strategic planning, basic policies and selection of people for high-level

positions.

In the business world, Mintzberg (1993: 102, summarizing Lawrence and Lorsch,

1967) asserts that decisions about financial and legal issues are usually made at the top,

while many production and marketing decisions are made somewhere in the middle or

even near the bottom. This split between centralized decisions in some areas and

decentralized decisions in others is called "selective decentralization," and it implies that

an organization cannot be described as centralized or decentralized across the board.

Instead, the organization must be described as centralized or decentralized across what

Mintzberg (1993: 102) calls a "constellation" of similar decisions.

B.   DECISION-MAKING

If it seems the process of defining decentralization has taken a neat, concise

concept and mucked it up, hang on, it gets worse. To this point we have defined

decentralization in terms of decisions. But as Jennergren (1981: 40, actually crediting

Mintzberg, *et al.*, 1976) points out, "decisions are not just made, at least not strategic

ones. Rather, *they materialize in stages*, and different hierarchical levels are instrumental

at different stages" (emphasis added). This highlights the fact that decisions are not

discrete events, they are a process, and that the process can be scattered throughout an organization. Mintzberg (1993: 100, summarizing Patterson, 1969: 150) posits a five-step decision process:

- Collecting *information* to pass on to the decision-maker, without comment, about what can be done;
- Processing that information to present *advice* to the decision-maker about what should be done;
- Making the *choice*–that is, determining what is intended to be done;
- *Authorizing* elsewhere what is intended to be done; and
- Doing it–that is, *executing* what is, in fact, done.

It is rare that all five steps are concentrated at the same level in the organization, rather these five steps are usually scattered throughout the structure. In using the term "decision" to define decentralization, we have been referring to either step 3 or step 4 or some combination of the two. These constitute formal power over decisions, and, where the organization is functioning as designed, that will work fine for our definition.

But many times decisions are actually made at other steps in the process (Mintzberg 1993: 101). For instance, the person who controls what information is passed up, and what information is withheld, can many times control the outcome. Similarly, the people giving advice to the decision-maker, particularly advice on very technical matters which are not the decision-maker's expertise, can easily sway the argument towards their favored solution. And last, the people called upon to execute the decision can simply refuse or ignore the order, or more subtly twist the guidance to allow them to do what they want to do anyway.

C. WHY DECENTRALIZE

Having defined decentralization we can now get to the point of the exercise: why

decentralize, and how far should decisions be decentralized? Mintzberg (1993: 95-96)

quickly sketches out the case for centralization as the easiest way to coordinate decisions

across an organization. The fewer people actually making decisions, the easier it is for

them to get together and make sure they are all headed in the same direction. Then

Mintzberg (1993: 102), drawing on his years of experience in the field, states a normative

conclusion: an organization should attempt to structure itself so that the authority to make

decisions (step 3 above) is at the level at which the information required to make that

decision can be most easily gathered. This will constitute effective decentralization, and,

according to Mintzberg, will make the organization more effective for three main reasons.

First, decentralization and participation in decisions will improve the morale of the

workers. Second, decentralizing decisions to the "proper" level should lead to more

effective decisions. Third, decentralization should make the organization more flexible

and allow it to respond to local conditions more quickly.

All of these assertions are common in popular literature and thought. But, as

Jennergren (1981: 51-54) relates after summarizing a variety of major studies on the

effects of decentralization, only the first, the positive impact on worker morale, can be

supported by rigorous studies. This is the great game of "empowerment," at which

managers everywhere pretend to play. But high morale does not necessarily increase the

organization's effectiveness (Jennergren, 1981: 53). Interestingly, this use of decentralization as a way to empower the workers and allow them to participate in the decisions which affect their lives simultaneously appeals to both democrats and Marxists. The tug of ideals has added some weight to the appeal for organizations to decentralize, or at least claim to be decentralizing.

The studies on effectiveness (measured in various ways) lead to the conclusion (Jennergren 1981: 52) that,

> the relationships between decentralization and effectiveness vary from one case to another, depending on situational factors. Unfortunately, these situational factors are largely unknown.

Which is hardly helpful advice for those trying to structure an organization. Similarly, the studies of decentralization's effect on adaptiveness lead to two somewhat incompatible explanations: first, that decentralized organizations find change easier because local decision-makers can respond to a changing environment without having to wait for a decision to come down from on high; and second, that centralized organizations can change faster because decision-makers do not have to develop a consensus among a large number of people. So, change is easier for decentralized organizations, faster for centralized ones. After reviewing several studies which purport to confirm one or the other of these hypotheses, Jennergren (1981: 53) concludes that, "the impacts of decentralization on adaptiveness are not yet clearly known."

Since decentralization does not seem to bring with it any automatic benefits, and since centralizing tends to reduce the difficulty in coordinating decisions across an

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organization, we still have to address the question, why would an organization decentralize? The simple fact is that an organization has to decentralize to a certain degree as it grows, since eventually the organization reaches a size where there will be too many decisions for any one person to make or understand (Mintzberg 1993: 96). The only question then is how to decentralize effectively, and on that question the literature is, as Jennergren clearly shows, hazy at best.

D.   DECENTRALIZATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

If decentralization is based on decision-making, and if decision-making is based on information, then modern systems for handling information should affect the degree of decentralization in an organization. The question, then, is how information systems affect decentralization. Recent writings on the topic seem to universally accept that advanced information systems will inevitably lead to flatter, more decentralized structures, which are presumed, counter to the evidence, to be more productive and flexible (Bolman and Deal 1997: 49, 54-55). Some writers go even further, Serieyx (1993: 14-15, quoted in Bolman and Deal, 1997: 5) wrote, "The information revolution ... overturned the rules of the game and suddenly turned yesterday's organizations into antiques."

Jennergren (1981: 51), our trustworthy pessimist, again relates that there are two contradictory hypotheses relating to information systems: either that they increase centralization because senior managers can quickly retrieve the information they need to

make virtually any decision; or that they increase decentralization because they reduce the risk of decentralizing. They do this by ensuring that all information is available at all levels and by allowing senior managers to more closely monitor their subordinates' activities and decisions--correcting them quickly if need be. Jennergren (1981: 51) refers to this aspect as a "structural role" in decentralization. He concludes that information systems may work either way, and it simply depends on the specifics of the case, though the only specific he mentions which might affect the outcome is the attitude of the people at the top.

Mintzberg (1993: 96) strongly weighs in against the natural impulse of senior managers to centralize decision-making with the aid of advanced information systems, or Management Information Systems, MIS, as he refers to them:

> Sometimes a sophisticated MIS gives the illusion of knowledge without the capacity to absorb it...this inevitably leads to a state known as "information overload:" The more information the brain tries to receive, the less the total amount that actually gets through. People at the bottom of the hierarchy with the necessary knowledge end up having to defer to managers at the top who are out of touch with the reality of the situation.

Given the above, there are very few conclusions which can be defended regarding information systems, decentralization and effectiveness or productivity in an organization. What is clear is that many writers believe that decentralization leads to more efficient and flexible organizations, and that advanced information systems will

assist, or perhaps force, an organization to decentralize its structure.[5] Using the very

language of information systems, these flatter, more decentralized structures are often

referred to as "networks," though a network is technically a very specific type of

decentralized organizational structure. Whatever benefits decentralization may bring,

there is no reason to assume the organization must become a true network to reap these

rewards.

The only note of discord here is Mintzberg's caution that managers will need to

resist the temptation to centralize with advanced information systems simply because

they can. These statements are uncontroversial, but hardly proven.

E.   IMPLICATIONS

If we accept for the moment the conclusions above, then what are the implications

for political entrepreneurs who seek to overthrow the state? The quick answer is that they

would naturally seek to incorporate advanced information systems into their

revolutionary organizations, and to flatten their structure. This would then make them

more flexible and efficient (not to mention the positive effect on their morale) and better

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[5] As an interesting side note which challenges this logic, the reverse of this statement is even more easily defended: an organization which has a very primitive information system will have to decentralize or it will never be able to accomplish anything. So if very primitive systems force decentralization and very advanced systems force decentralization, then do only mid-range systems allow centralization?

able to challenge the state. Instead of revolutionary organizations, we may face revolutionary networks, which would engage us in "netwar" (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 1997: 277).

It has also been suggested that these different organizational structures, and the advanced information systems which enable them, would lead the revolutionaries to change their tactics, allowing them to attack the state "asymmetrically." Meaning that they will no longer use crude force to defeat the state, but will instead rely on more devious and roundabout ways of influencing outcomes. Attacks on the computers which control the banking system or the electrical power grid are perennial favorites for the thinkers in this arena.

But, revolutionary movements face challenges that normal organizations do not, mainly trying to be secretive to avoid being crushed by the state. This imperative may significantly alter their freedom to decentralize or change structures, particularly where the new structures are inherently more difficult to make secure.

1.   A Bit of a Rant

There is an old wives' tale regarding revolutionary, or underground, movements which states that there is an inverse relationship between the security of the organization and the efficiency at which it operates (Bell, 1989: 17-18). Security is loosely defined as the ability to resist the state's attempts to destroy the organization and efficiency is roughly the organization's ability to carry out its agenda–whether that is a terror campaign or full scale military operations against the state. From this purported law,

some conclude that different organizational structures which may increase efficiency (as, for example, many claim decentralized, network structures do) will, if adopted by underground movements, end up decreasing their security and leading to their early demise (McCormick, 1998). This is a comforting conclusion.

The theory behind this law seems to be that there are only so many hours in a day, and any hours spent taking security precautions are hours that cannot be spent blowing up car bombs or planning attacks. In addition, supporters of this argument can cite several historical cases where organizations have increased either security or efficiency and suffered the corresponding decrease in the other variable. It is important to note the time relationship in this law—the gains in efficiency can be immediately reaped by an organization while the inevitable result of a lack of security plays out over a longer term. The implication for revolutionary organizations is that they must choose how much of their capability to act in the short term (their efficiency) they will sacrifice in order to ensure their long-term survival (their security).

There are two flaws in the argument. The first is that the historical cases cited to support the relationship use organizations which have only one type of structure, a centralized, cell-based hierarchy (for instance, the Red Brigades, UNITA, the PLO (Bell, 1989: 18)). This is a serious case selection bias, and makes it impossible to apply the conclusion across other organizational structures, for instance networks. The second flaw in the argument is the way the variable "efficiency" is defined and used. At first, efficiency is used in a way which seems synonymous with outcomes, either car bombs or

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attack plans. Later, in the theoretical explanation, it is used in a more familiar way as a measure of work accomplished in a given period of time. These are really two different variables, and should be treated that way.

While I cannot fix the case selection flaw, I can fix the theoretical and definitional problem. To do so, let's rename efficiency in the first usage as "actions," and in the second usage as "productivity." Then explicitly tie the theory explaining the law into its statement. The result ends up something like this: there is an inverse relationship between the security of the organization and the number of actions it can accomplish, given that the productivity of the members is held constant.

This is a tighter, more accurate, and more easily defensible statement of the relationships. Unfortunately it also invalidates our comforting conclusion from the original wording, since the point of different organizational structures (like decentralized networks) is to increase productivity. If a switch from a hierarchical cell-based organization to a networked organization really does increase productivity (which is the assumption of those who promote network structures), then the organization can simultaneously increase both security and actions, or choose to hold one variable constant and increase the other by a greater amount. For example, if the members of a revolutionary organization switch to a network structure and, hypothetically, become 10% more productive simply because such structures are inherently more efficient, they can choose to continue to perform just as many actions as before the switch, and they will

spend less time doing so. Then they can use their new found spare time to improve the organization's security. This is not a comforting conclusion.

The only remaining ray of hope to support the original comforting conclusion is that network structures *may* be inherently more difficult to make secure due to their exceedingly high number of nodes and the interconnections between all nodes. Moving information around will leave a signature, and those signatures can often be followed back to the source or forward to the destinations. Once one node is cracked, the whole organization is potentially open for exploitation by the state. Unfortunately, while it is comforting, this thought is really nothing more than an untested hypothesis with regards to underground organizations. The only obvious advantage for an underground organization in radically decentralizing is that it makes it very difficult, if not impossible, for the state to "decapitate" the organization.

F.   CONCLUSIONS ON CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION

We have decided that centralization-decentralization is a continuum, that an organization will decentralize certain constellations of decisions further than others, and that at times decisions are actually made at a different level than the formal structure of the organization would lead us to believe. This means that characterizing an organization as decentralized or centralized will in the end be a judgment call, and that it can best be made comparatively rather than absolutely. In other words it will be easier to characterize

organization A as more decentralized than organization B than it will be to assign some decentralization score to organization A.

Organizations which are decentralized may tend to have flatter formal power structures, and may be more efficient and flexible. Highly centralized structures will have the advantage when it comes to coordinating decisions across the organization, but will suffer some in regards to efficiency due to the time lag while senior managers are fed the information they need to make decisions. In either case, a constellation of "important decisions" will always be centralized. These will include the organization's objectives, strategic plans, basic policies and selection of people for high-level positions.

Decentralized organizations may develop network structures, which in the case of underground organizations may decrease their security. However, any organizational structure can be decentralized through simple delegation of authority. Finally, we have concluded that advanced information systems may allow, or even compel, an organization to decentralize.

For revolutionary organizations, decentralization is just as much an imperative as for any other organization which needs to grow larger than a single person can control. But, beyond this necessary decentralization, the question to be answered about any specific revolutionary organization is to what extent does the organization embrace decentralization as its operating ideology, and does it adopt structural forms and information systems which encourage or enable decentralization? From that, what

advantages or disadvantages does each organization accrue as a result? These questions

will be taken up in the examples in the following sections.

G.   MASS VERSUS ELITE ORGANIZATIONS

The second variable which defines my matrix of revolutionary organizations is the

extent to which the organization is primarily empowered by either the elites at the top of

the organization or from the masses in the trenches. Once again, this variable does not

encompass two distinct possibilities, but rather a continuum with mass at one end and

elite at the other. Most organizations will fall somewhere in the middle, and it will be a

judgement call as to whether an organization derives its power and capability more from

a powerful elite or from the power of the masses. (As with many such calls, this one may

be easier to make after weighing the evidence of history.) Again, as with centralization

and decentralization, it will be easier to characterize organizations in this way in relative

terms than in absolute terms. Saying revolutionary group A is more mass-based than

group B will make more sense than simply saying group A is mass-based without using

other groups to provide context for that assertion.

As a way to decide where an organization falls on the continuum, consider

whether the threat from the organization is due to its sheer size, or is due to the

capabilities and talents of its leaders. Alternatively, consider whether a successful

assassination of the top ten revolutionary leaders would have changed the outcome at the

decisive moment of the revolution, or whether the outcome would only have changed if

the revolutionaries had half as many troops in the field at the decisive point. Failing those tests, an organization can be categorized as elite by default if its membership is very small in relation to the size of the forces which oppose it. The obverse, however, is not necessarily true.

Unlike decentralization, there is not a wealth of management literature which uses this distinction as a way to characterize organizations and describe their strengths and weaknesses. Instead, this distinction is best illustrated from the field of military studies.

Asking whether an organization is primarily empowered by the elites or by the masses is another way of asking where the organization's Clausewitzian "center of gravity" lies. Clausewitz saw in the deployment of field armies the same types of actions and reactions as in physical systems, and he borrowed the phrase center of gravity to describe the way these forces can work. In physics, center of gravity refers to the point about which extraneous forces will cause an object to rotate, to move or to cease moving. It is the "hub of all power and movement upon which everything depends," (FM 100-5, 1993: 6-7) and the point about which the object can be thought of as being centered. Thinking in terms of "what part of the organization does everything else seem to revolve around" is an easy way to determine the metaphorical center of gravity.

In the military sense, centers of gravity are often thought of in terms of the most decisive, efficient or powerful component of a military force. For modern American forces, high technology, often meaning airpower, is generally considered our center of gravity in conventional war. Clausewitz and our modern doctrines argue that military

commanders needed to be aware of their own centers of gravity and those of the enemy. Awareness of their own would enable them to concentrate their actions using their most decisive component, and awareness of their enemy's allows them to focus their actions against the one spot which will cause the most disruption of his forces, and presumably of their ability to fight. (FM 100-5, 1993: 6-7)

In deciding whether a revolutionary organization is mass-based or elite, I will be using the ideas behind the concept of center of gravity. However I will be artificially constraining Clausewitz's concept, as I will only be considering the relative strengths of two components of the organization, the elite and the masses. It may, in fact, be that a revolutionary organization's center of gravity is neither the elite nor the mass but is another component of the organization entirely, such as their technical bomb-making skills.

Having decided whether a revolutionary organization is mass-based or elite, the question then is what advantages and disadvantages accrue to the organization from that choice, and what constraints does that put on the operation of the revolution? This question will be taken up in the four illustrative examples which follow.

VI. CHE GUEVARA AND THE GUERRILLA *FOCO*

Che Guevara was a leader in the 26-month revolutionary guerrilla war which led

to the downfall of Batista and the rise of Fidel Castro as ruler of Cuba. Following the

change in government, Cuba was rapidly transformed from a capitalist, neo-patrimonial

dictatorship to a socialist authoritarian state with ties to the communist regime in the

Soviet Union. The relations between classes, and between the government and the people

were radically changed in a short time; this was truly a revolutionary period in Cuba.

As a leader in the armed uprising which became the focus of the revolution, Che,

though an Argentinean by birth, was made Minister of the Interior in the new

government, a position of great power in the regime. Despite the duties of his office,

Che's main interest was in exporting the revolution throughout Latin America and the

world. To help accomplish that goal, he spent a great deal of time writing a handbook on

how to run a revolution. This book, *Guerrilla Warfare*, has seen many printings and has

been translated into several languages. It is nothing less than a statement of Che's theory

on how to run a revolution, and has advice for a budding revolutionary which runs the

gamut from the strategic to the tactical to the mundane. In it, Che advocates a method of

revolutionary organization which is very elitist and decentralized. His book is the best

theoretical statement of how to organize a revolution using these ideas.

Che's book has inspired revolutionaries throughout the world who have adopted

its method for their own and have striven in their personal lives to "be like Che"

(McCormick, 1997). It is considered one of the classic texts on guerrilla warfare, and though it has several flaws, it is deserving of serious study because of its evident impact on revolutionaries throughout the world and because it is the best statement of a theory of revolutionary organization which asserts that a decentralized yet elite organization can be successful. Che himself attempted to repeat his success in Cuba by starting revolutions both in the Congo and in Bolivia, but even he was unable to repeat his initial success using his method.

A.   CHE'S THEORY

Che begins by accepting that certain structural conditions are necessary for his method to succeed. Having said that, he quickly distances himself from the true structuralist school by noting that, "It is not necessary to wait until all conditions for making revolution exist; the insurrection can create them" (Guevara, 1985: 47). The first condition is one Che calls a "subjective condition"–the people must believe they will win. He states it emphatically: "Whoever does not feel this undoubted truth cannot be a guerrilla fighter" (Guevara, 1985: 56, emphasis in the original). Without this ultimate faith, Che believes the guerrillas will never overcome the inevitable setbacks they will face early in the struggle. Indeed, Che's book is designed, in no small part, as an argument to encourage others to try revolution–because if the Cubans could win, others can as well (Guevara, 1985: 12, 47-48).

Che believes there are four basic objective structural conditions which are necessary for revolution. The first is the existence of a neo-patrimonial "Caribbean-type dictatorship" (Guevara, 1985: 12). All authority in the government should be held by one man, a father figure for the state, who is widely seen as corrupt and self-serving. There should be no history of democratic institutions, either in government or in labor unions or peasant organizations. This dictatorship should be in power without benefit of any legal or constitutional means, especially electoral victories. This is important because where the government "maintains at least an appearance of constitutional legality, the guerrilla outbreak cannot be promoted, since the possibilities of peaceful struggle have not yet been exhausted." (Guevara, 1985: 48)

Secondly, there must be suitable terrain in which the guerrillas may operate. This includes "zones difficult to reach, either because of dense forests, steep mountains, impassable deserts or marshes" (Guevara, 1985: 215). The revolutionaries need this space so they can move without being harassed by the government forces. Since the government will be better equipped than the revolutionaries, the guerrilla must find terrain which negates the government's mobility advantage.

Thirdly, the revolutionaries must be able to exploit rural antagonisms. The guerrilla movement will begin as a rural movement, and its success depends on the support of the rural population. Where there are no issues the revolutionaries can use to ally with the rural population against the government, there will be no reason for the rural peasants to risk assisting the guerrillas. Che believes land reform is the most important

rural issue which can win the peasants over to the guerrillas. By promising to redistribute the land, the revolutionaries make quick allies of the peasants, which allows them to stay ahead of the government's forces during the early part of the armed struggle. (Guevara, 1985: 78-80)

Fourth, the country should have a tradition of guerrilla warfare, whether it is of the revolutionary Marxist type or even simply by romantic bandits. This ensures that the people understand intuitively the methods of the guerrilla and are therefore able to assist them without a great deal of training. Again, the support of the local population is "an indispensable condition" leading to victory (Guevara, 1985: 215).

Once all of these structural conditions have been met, Che asserts that the revolution awaits only the arrival of a dedicated band of between 30 and 50 men who will form a *foco*, or center of guerrilla activity, and start the armed struggle. These men move into a rural area and secure the support of the local peasants by promising land reform and carrying out constant political indoctrination, not the least of which will consist of the positive example the guerrillas make of their own lives. Using the terrain and the help of the locals, they will stage ambushes against the government forces, taking what supplies they need to continue the fight, treating the wounded and captured with dignity, and then stealing off into the bush. Without the assistance of the locals, the government will not be able to locate the guerrillas and will eventually be forced to concede more and more territory to rebel control. As the guerrillas become more successful, they will attract more people to their cause, growing more powerful by the day. Eventually the *foco*, or column,

will become too large for the area they have secured, and some of the men will have to split off to go to another part of the country. There they repeat the process, eventually splitting again. In time, the country becomes covered with guerrilla columns, and the revolutionaries start moving out of the rural areas into the suburban areas and eventually into the cities themselves. Finally the revolutionaries overthrow the government and replace it with their own organization (Guevara, 1985: 47-179).

B.   CHE'S THEORY: ELITE AND DECENTRALIZED

Che clearly believes that the revolution can only be lead by the guerrilla, he rejects the idea that the revolution can be directed by someone who has not risked his life in the struggle. In addition, Che believes that the successful guerrilla will show himself to be one of society's elite in terms of physical, mental and moral or spiritual qualities. Che describes the guerrilla as a social reformer, a "guiding angel" for the peasants and a "standard bearer of the cause of the people" (Guevara, 1985: 78).

Che is also in favor of decentralization in the guerrilla organization, though he states his case in weak terms. He clearly perceives that the various columns will act in most respects independently, though they can be called together for limited operations which require larger forces. The only coordinating mechanism he asserts between the various commanders is the importance that they "coordinate ideologically and personally with the overall chief" (Guevara, 1985: 72). Che's position is explained in greater detail

by Regis Debray in his *Revolution in the Revolution?* (1967) in which he explains that the coordinating mechanism is really the simple fact that all the commanders originally will have come from the same *foco* and will therefore share the same strategic, operational and tactical concepts and biases. Debray compares daily life in the guerrilla column to a "certain moral, political, and military school," and implies that graduating from this school will qualify an officer for command and, more importantly, convince his superiors that he can be trusted to take the right actions without direct supervision (Debray, 1967: 81). In this way, coordination of action is achieved by indoctrination and training rather than by supervision. The commander of each column is given wide-ranging authority, and very few decisions need to be kicked up to senior commanders.

Operationally, these choices in organizing the guerrilla force lead to several implications. First, the *foco* must have a well-defined and simple ideology and strategy for taking power. Both of these are required in order to make sure that the decentralized elements will not work against each other. Secondly, the revolutionaries must have a pre-existing grievance which is strong enough to permit them to win the allegiance of the peasants before they have demonstrated an ability to overthrow the government. Where an issue with this power, like land reform, does not exist, the elite leadership of the revolution will find it impossible to win the peasants' loyalty and survive. In addition, the guerrillas must truly be an elite. They must demonstrate their physical, mental and moral superiority to the government at all times in order to inspire the peasants and convince

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them that victory is inevitable, no matter how out-gunned and out-manned the guerrillas

may be at the start.

The government can defeat this sort of revolution by simply taking away the land

reform issue. Either a deal to buy off the peasants with land, or even the appearance of

progress on a peaceful resolution of the issue, may be enough to stop the peasants from

providing risky support to the guerrillas.

C.   CHE'S THEORY: AN ASSESSMENT

Che's theory has been criticized in a variety of ways, many of which are

documented and answered by Debray. Doctrinaire Marxists criticize Che, as they do Mao,

for deriding the influence of the urban proletariat and for trying to make a socialist

revolution out of rural peasants. Leninists and Trotskyists criticize Che for neglecting the

importance of a vanguard party, a primarily political organization, in directing the

revolution (Guevara, 1985: 14-19). Others criticize Che for building a strategy out of

tactics, rather than starting with a strategy and trying to devise tactics which will achieve

that aim (Debray, 1967: 60).

Maoists criticize Che for trying to build an army without the guidance of a Party,

which they assert is the only way to ensure the army can "maintain its political

orientation, and to fulfil its revolutionary tasks." (Giap, quoted in Debray, 1967: 97). In

effect, the political and military leadership of the revolution, the Mao and Chu Teh of

China, has been combined in one man, Fidel Castro. Maoists see this as a situation in which the revolutionary goals of the Party will necessarily become subordinate to the welfare of the army, leading to a stagnate political force, indeed, something more like a bandit gang, interested solely in their own survival, than a revolutionary army interested in transforming the state.

More practical-minded commentators simply criticize Che's theory on the grounds that it has only worked once, and has failed numerous times (as in the Congo, Bolivia, Guatemala, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia and El Salvador) (Guevara, 1985: 214-417).

From a methodological standpoint, the reason that Che's theory is flawed is that he attempted to build his theory of revolution inductively, using his own experiences in the Cuban Revolution. As a general rule, deriving inductive theories from just one case study is a method fraught with peril. Indeed, it is nearly impossible.

Compounding that mistake, Che simply did not get the case study right. Reading Che's version of events in the Cuban Revolution, and then reading the versions by other, more respected historians, one would be forced to conclude that the two works were about completely different events (see, for example, Bonachea and San Martin: 1974). Che was, perhaps, too close to these events to see what was really happening. This misunderstanding of history, particularly Che's misunderstanding of the appalling weakness of Batista's regime along with the strength of the urban support elements which enabled the guerrillas to survive and eventually seize power, led him to draw the wrong

conclusions about what forces led to the success of the Revolution, and these wrong conclusions were enshrined in his book.

Che's theory still resonates with many revolutionaries throughout the world (McCormick, 1997), and though it has proven impossible to repeat the success of the Cuban Revolution, it is still a theory which holds some elements of truth, and which should be studied and understood by anyone trying to understand how to conduct an insurgency or counter-insurgency

D.   IMPLICATIONS

The history of the Cuban revolution and subsequent attempts to use Che's theoretical method raise certain implications regarding the operations of decentralized and elite revolutionary groups. To begin with, it is clear that the revolutionaries must be a truly elite group. They will have to start with very little, 30-50 men, and yet have the organizational, political and military skills to end up defeating the government. These sorts of talents are rare, and it is hard to imagine such a small group being able to muster these capabilities when faced with a competent government administration. Indeed, in Castro's case, it is easy to argue that the skill of his revolutionaries is not what guaranteed success, even given that both Castro and Guevara were enormously talented men. Instead it was the weakness of the government that enabled the guerrillas to prevail.

Secondly, the revolutionaries must be ideologically and personally compatible. This is necessary, first, to enable them to survive the first few months when, as Guevara admits, they will be under enormous pressure from the government. Once survival is relatively assured, they must remain united because the entire method of coordinating their effort against the government rests on the ability of the leaders of each column to anticipate and support the efforts of the other columns. The lack of formal coordinating mechanisms simply means that these efforts will be at the mercy of the interpersonal relationships of the leaders. In the event in Cuba, this cooperation necessarily extended to the control of the urban uprising, which in fact enabled Castro to seize power when Batista fell.

Both of these limitations provide a means for the government to attack and defeat the revolutionaries. First, simply setting up a reasonably competent civil and military administration will make the guerrilla's job much more difficult. They will have to spend more of their resources simply staying ahead of the administration, and will have to develop much more formidable powers to effectively challenge the government. Castro's 400 men in the Sierra could not threaten even a partially capable civil and military administration.

Secondly, the government can attempt to attack the communications and consensus of the separate guerrilla leaders. All actions which are calculated to sow distrust or dissension among the revolutionaries will pay enormous rewards by limiting their ability to join forces to achieve major objectives. Well executed, this strategy would

lead to the separate columns becoming isolated, and then they could be destroyed in

detail.

VII. MAO AND THE PEOPLE'S WAR

We shouldn't read too many books... It will be enough to read a dozen or so. If we read too many we can move towards our opposite, become bookworms, dogmatists, revisionists."

Mao Zedong[6], February, 1964 (Schram, 1983: 71)

Mao Zedong fought a revolutionary war for nearly 30 years before finally achieving victory over the Nationalist government of China. In the course of his fight he developed and executed a modern theory of revolutionary guerrilla warfare which placed primary emphasis on the mass of rural peasants and the centralized direction of a vanguard Party which would orchestrate the struggle. Mao's theory of "People's War" became the basis for action by other revolutionary groups throughout the world, notably the Vietnamese under Ho Chi-Minh, and has influenced all subsequent theories of revolution, particularly that of Che Guevara.

A.   MAO'S METHOD

Mao began by rejecting Marxism's insistence that a true socialist revolution could only occur in a country which had industrialized, and the revolution must be led by an

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[6] The old spelling, using the "Wade-Giles" system, is Mao Tse-Tung; the new spelling, using the "Pin Yin Tzu Mu" system, is Mao Zedong. Throughout this section, I have used the new spelling. In the List of References, I have used the spelling shown on the title page of the book.

urban proletariat (Mao, 1961: 17). He did this not so much out of conviction that the idea was necessarily wrong, but because China simply could not meet the first condition, and as a result did not have a large enough urban proletariat to stage a revolution. This fact was demonstrated by Li Li-San in the 1930 urban uprising which was crushed by the Nationalist army (Guillermaz, 1972: 195-206). Thus, in order to have any hope of a successful revolution, Mao was forced to abandon these doctrinaire prerequisites. In this way, Mao's theory was, from the beginning, constrained by the structural conditions of China. Instead, Mao focused on what China did have–a huge rural peasantry which existed on subsistence-level agriculture, and, for the most part, did not own its land.

Mao believed that the first requirement for victory in revolution was mass action. From Marxism he added that the mass must be motivated along class lines. Mao saw the peasants of China, indisputably the mass of the nation, as the most obvious class with which to begin a revolution, and noted that the most outstanding feature of the peasants was their abject poverty. This poverty contributed to the revolutionary potential of the peasants since most of them had very little to lose and much to gain by joining a revolutionary group. Mao hypothesized that their poverty was created by the fact that most of them did not own their land and had to pay high rents to the landlord class, and decided that the simplest way to motivate the peasants would be through the promise of a better standard of living through land reform. In practice, land reform meant taking land from the rich and giving it to the poor. This Robin Hood strategy had the added benefit of being easy to execute, since Mao did not even have to buy the land–he could use the

peasants themselves to expropriate it (Yeh, 1971: 3-14). Mao's theory, then, is a simple statement of how to organize and mobilize a disaffected class to revolt under a given set of structural circumstances.

Mao postulated a strategy of revolution which had three stages. In the first stage, a small nucleus of dedicated revolutionaries moves into a remote and inhospitable region. There they organize, consolidate, and most importantly preserve their revolutionary organization (Mao, 1961: 20-21).

In this and succeeding phases, Mao foresaw the need for different types of military units. The most basic is the militia, which is composed of local peasants who are truly part-time soldiers. They may be armed with swords, a few odd shotguns and the occasional pistol, and are used mostly for self-defense in their villages and fields, intelligence gathering, and as porters and logistics troops. Next are the regular guerrillas, professional soldiers who operate in small units over a relatively small geographic area. They are better equipped, better trained, and able to initiate small offensive actions against the government forces. Finally, Mao believed that over time these guerrilla units would become more like a regular army, operating in larger units over a more extended area, and able to conduct large-scale offensive operations using more conventional military tactics. In practice, the line between these three different types of forces was never very clear (Guillermaz, 1972: 327-328).

Any military actions which occurred in the first phase would be small-unit operations by militia and guerrilla forces designed primarily to harass the government

forces, show the peasants that there is a viable uprising, and procure arms and ammunition. These military activities are designed to ensure the organization's survival and growth rather than representing an attempt to inflict real damage on the government. The primary activity during this period will be political indoctrination designed to win over the local peasants to the revolutionary cause. To accomplish this goal, the political indoctrination must be constant and detailed, with an emphasis on the ways in which the revolutionary organization is working to solve the problems of the common man, meaning, primarily, land reform (Mao, 1961: 89).

While Che Guevara's theory of revolution also emphasized land reform, Mao, unlike Che, went to great length to downplay the value of military action to motivate the people. He viewed this as a dangerous precedent leading to military adventurism without political purpose. Instead, Mao constantly stressed the importance of political indoctrination for the troops as well as the peasants. Indeed, Mao wrote derisively about those who "think that the task of the Red Army, like that of the White Army, is merely to fight." Mao continued that the reason the Red Army fought was to "conduct propaganda among the masses, organize them, arm them, and help them to establish revolutionary political power." (Mao, 1967: 54). Every unit, from company to division, had political cadres assigned to provide the men with political instruction and ensure their loyalty, and command of the unit was split between a military commander and the senior political cadre (Guillermaz, 1972: 189-190).

Once the revolutionary organization has secured a base area, organized and consolidated political and military forces, and secured the support of the local population, then it can begin the second phase, expansion. In this phase, military operations become more common, and more deadly. The base area is expanded geographically, including non-contiguous areas suitable for guerrilla operations. The political indoctrination of the people and the military forces, both the "regular" guerrillas and the militias, continues unrelentingly. In the guerrilla controlled areas, the revolutionary organization begins to develop mechanisms for civil administration and control. Taxes are assessed and collected, legal disputes are adjudicated and social services, to include the ubiquitous political schools, are organized. The revolutionary organization begins to function more and more like a government (Guillermaz, 1972: 336-343).

As the revolutionary organization begins to function like a government, Mao postulated that it would begin to develop military forces like those of the opposition. This gradual evolution of the guerrilla force into a professional army would occur in stages over a period of time (Guillermaz, 1972: 331). This is the third phase of the revolutionary war, and is the phase of conventional military conflict between the revolutionaries and the government. Throughout the evolution to the third phase, the political indoctrination of the troops and the population of the rebel controlled base areas would continue in order to ensure that the army and the people were loyal to the Party and the revolutionary cause (Mao, 1961: 22). Eventually, the revolutionary army, backed by the solid support of the population of the secure base areas, would face down the government forces and destroy

them in battle. The revolutionaries would then take their rightful place as leaders of the nation.

B.   MAO'S CENTRALIZED AND MASS-BASED ORGANIZATION

Mao's theory of revolution is based on the assumption that mass action is required to seize power. This presumption requires the existence of a large group within society (which, in Mao's Marxist view, must be a definable class) which has a significant dispute with the organization or economic structure of the state. This dispute must be significant enough to enable the political entrepreneur to use it to motivate the group to mass action against the state. Mao gave land reform as the only example of a dispute which would serve to sufficiently motivate a class to oppose the state. Under different structural circumstances, other issues could be used successfully in this way, but Mao does not develop any theory to identify those circumstances or issues.

To control this mass movement and direct them in actions which lead to revolution, Mao asserted the need for a highly centralized, hierarchical organization. This does not imply that Mao sought to centralize decisions on tactical problems, particularly military problems. Indeed, he recognized that he could not rely on centralized direction of tactical actions simply due to the technology of the times (Mao, 1961: 24). Making a virtue of necessity, Mao stressed that small unit actions must be controlled by the commander on the scene in order to exploit their "great flexibility." In the very next

paragraph, however, Mao again stresses the need for centralized strategic direction (Mao, 1967: 183-184). His approach can be summarized as "centralized control and decentralized execution."[7]

This precept is repeated in a variety of circumstances. Applied to economic development it became "centralized leadership and dispersed operation" (Schram, 1983: 40). In guerrilla operations it was restated as " unified strategy and independent activity" (Mao, 1961: 114). This principle is even used to explain the relation of the Party to the masses, asserting that it is analogous to the relationship between guerrilla commanders and their subordinates; the leaders "establish the objectives, and the [masses] carry them out with a combination of fidelity and initiative." (Mao, 1966: 36)

In Mao's theory, the necessary centralized direction of the revolution can only come from the Party (Schram, 1983: 40). Senior Party leadership decided on the correct strategy, and then published their platform. The cadres at lower levels were then given instruction in the meaning of the strategy. To ensure the cadres had the same outlook on the problems of the day and were all moving towards the same strategic goals, Mao instituted a series of training schools to educate and indoctrinate them. These schools were organized hierarchically, much like the U.S. military's system of professional military education. Throughout this formal schooling, the cadres were closely supervised and the training itself was highly systematic. It was also groundbreaking: Mao first

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[7] Which, coincidentally, is the slogan used to describe the United States Air Force's command and control philosophy.

articulated his theory of protracted war in lectures at the "senior service school" in 1938 (Guillermaz, 1972: 329).

C.   MAO'S THEORY: AN ASSESSMENT AND IMPLICATIONS

There can be no dispute that Mao was brilliant. He correctly identified the strategy and organization which would lead to victory for the Communists, created and maintained that organization in the face of challenges from within by the more doctrinaire communists and from without by the Nationalists and the Japanese Imperial Army. He kept his organization intact through mergers and splits with the Nationalists and the allies while shifting his fight to the Japanese aggressors and back to the Nationalist army, and throughout 20 years of constant fighting managed to maintain the morale of his troops and the support of the populace upon which they depended. In the end, Mao's forces demonstrated their tactical, operational and strategic superiority over the Nationalist forces in a dramatic campaign which destroyed the Nationalist army and captured the entire mainland of China in just over two years.

There are two implications which arise from Mao's method; the first is that it is hostage to having the correct structural conditions. Without a mass of disaffected people in some socio-economic class, or perhaps other kind of grouping, who can be motivated to oppose the state in search of relief from an unfair allocation of political or economic resources, Mao's theory of revolution cannot get off the ground. This is partially a

tautology: without a mass, a mass-based revolutionary organization cannot exist.

Fortunately for revolutionaries, a disaffected mass is not too hard to find in most developing nations of the world. The key for government forces is to keep this mass from coalescing into an organization. This can be accomplished through a divide and conquer strategy. Unlike such a strategy against an elite organization (as we discussed in the section on Che's method), this time the target of the dissension and distrust must be the various sub-groups which make up the mass. These sub-groups may be identified in a variety of ways: regional affiliation, ethnic origin, religion, status of property holdings, race, etc. Efforts to split the consensus required for these groups to cooperate can then be devised based on these differences, for instance pitting ethnic groups against one another on the basis of perceived slights which occurred in some dark historical period.

The other implication from Mao's work is that his method is destined to require a very long time to execute. There will be no two-week revolutions in Mao's world; the boys will not be home by Christmas. For revolutionaries who lack patience (Che?), Mao's theories will not provide a workable solution to the problems of organizing a revolution. This extended time also provides the government a very great opportunity to study the revolution and its own responses to determine which tactics are actually working. Presumably, the government should be able also to penetrate the organization over time and develop better intelligence on the activities of the group. In many ways, time works to the government's advantage, should the government choose to use their time wisely. In defense of the Nationalists in this case, they were distracted, to say the

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least, from their campaign against Mao by, first, their efforts to consolidate control of the

country from the various warlords who ruled in the 1920's and 30's and, second, the

necessity of fighting the Japanese.

VIII. LENIN

Vladimir Ilich Lenin was an agitator and a Marxist, though not a doctrinaire

Marxist. He was also a coward and an almost sociopathic killer. Lenin developed a theory

of socialist revolution which called for a centralized and elite organization, took power

throughout Russia and ruled the country with an iron hand until his death on January 21,

1924, when the mantle of leadership passed to his protégé, Stalin (Pipes, 1995: 381).

After his death, Lenin's theory of socialist revolution, popularized by Trotsky in his

multi-volume work *The History of the Russian Revolution*, became the guiding

philosophy of the Soviet Union in its quest for world-wide communist revolution.

Lenin's theory, however, has not been used in any of the other communist revolutions to

date, and differs significantly from the competing theories of Mao and Che Guevara.

(Tucker, 1969: 153)

A.   THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

While history is always interesting, history books can be both vacuous and dull.

<div align="right">Historian Richard Pipes (1995: 387)</div>

To understand Lenin's theory, a brief outline of the history of the Bolshevik party

and the Russian Revolution is in order. The Bolsheviks were one of two competing

Marxist parties in Russia, the other being the Mensheviks. The Mensheviks believed a

socialist revolution in Russia would follow the pattern described by Marx, which meant

first a capitalist, *bourgeois* revolution, followed by a period of rising industrialization.

Only after a significant mass of proletarian workers had been created by industrialization

would a socialist revolution be possible. Lenin and the Bolsheviks believed that the

workers were naturally reformist, not revolutionary, and that in order to create a socialist

state a vanguard of radical intellectuals, the *intelligentsia*, would have to lead the workers

to revolt (Pipes, 1995: 27, 105). This would require a long period of very active

preparation by a disciplined party of professional revolutionaries (Tucker, 1969: 148).

That party was the Bolsheviks. Lenin's Bolshevik agitation had, up until 1917, earned

him a short stint in exile in Siberia, and a longer period of exile abroad.

The Russian Revolution itself was really a two-part affair. The first part

culminated on February 17, 1917,[8] when Czar Nicholas II, following years of turmoil and

months of mounting crises, abdicated the throne to his brother, who promptly refused to

accept. Into the resulting power vacuum stepped the Provisional Government. This

government was a collection of reformists and revolutionaries who had been opposed to

the Czar. It included the Mensheviks, but the Bolsheviks were conspicuously absent. This

government could agree on only two points: they would keep Russia in WW I and they

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[8] Any date before February 1918 should be viewed with suspicion. Before then, the
Russians used the Julian calendar, which was 12 or 13 days behind the Gregorian
calendar used by the rest of Europe. In the Gregorian calendar, Nicholas' abdication was
on March 2 (Pipes, 1995: 33, 410).

would schedule elections for a Constituent Assembly, which presumably would write a Constitution and form a permanent government.

When the Czar abdicated, Lenin was in exile in Switzerland. With the help of the Germans (who thought Lenin's Bolshevik party would take Russia out of the war) Lenin returned to St. Petersburg on April 17 and began reforming and reinvigorating (and, again with German help, refinancing) the Bolshevik party. He soon published his "April Theses," which changed the current, almost conformist, direction of the party and called for an immediate revolution by the Bolsheviks (Trotsky, 1992: Vol. 3, 124-166).

Using a disagreement over the aims of the war effort as a pretext, Lenin pushed the Bolsheviks into the streets in April to try and spark a revolution. The attempt fizzled, but was not actively suppressed by the Provisional Government, who feared a counter-revolution from right wing monarchists more than from left wing socialists (Pipes, 1995: 119). This tendency to view Lenin and the Bolsheviks as misguided supporters of the left-leaning government, rather than as a dangerous threat, would come back to haunt the government.

In response to the April riots, the Provisional Government changed its name, and slightly changed its composition, to become the Coalition Government–though again it did not include the Bolsheviks. This worked to the Bolsheviks advantage, as they could not be blamed for any of the failures of this government to resolve the basic problems besetting Russian society. (Pipes, 1995: 120)

In June, the Coalition Government launched a new offensive in the war against

Germany. This act was widely interpreted as a betrayal by the peasants and soldiers who

thought that the government had promised to get out of the war. After the offensive failed

to make any gains, there was a half-hearted attempt by the commanding general,

Kornilov, to launch a right-wing coup. The coup also failed, and Kerensky, a Menshevik

and now the Prime Minister, quickly pardoned the officers involved in order to keep the

army from disintegrating from internal turmoil. This act further incensed the soldiers and

peasants who had been actively looking for effective and responsive leadership since the

abdication of Nicholas in February. (Acton, 1990: 189-191)

Lenin was ready to offer the peasants the leadership they desired. Though he had

no intention of actually enacting land reform in the manner the peasants wanted, he

supported their goals as a tactical move to ensure their support for the Bolsheviks. Lenin

knew that after a successful revolution he would be free to renege on land reform in order

to restructure the agricultural sector in what he believed to be a more socialist manner.

This tactical concession to ensure the support of a power group is not unique. Lenin made

concessions to the various ethnic nationalities in Imperial Russia in regard to their hope

for self-determination. He later reneged on these promises as well. (Pipes, 1995: 12)

While this was happening, Lenin organized the Red Guards, a militia which was

not subordinate to the St. Petersburg Soviet (a "soviet" was originally a local committee

which assumed governmental powers and, theoretically, worked as the executive agent of

the Provisional or Coalition governments). In July, with the Red Guards and a Bolshevik-

influenced machine-gun regiment from the St. Petersburg garrison, Lenin again tried to spark a revolution. His forces marched throughout the city and even surrounded the St. Petersburg Soviet, but then they blinked. Rather than take over the government by force, the Bolshevik forces held fast, and loyal troops soon took back the city and restored order. Shortly after this, the Coalition Government leaked information that the Bolsheviks were receiving money from the enemy, the Germans, and Lenin was forced into hiding. (Pipes, 1995: 121-127)

Again, however, the government failed to destroy the Bolsheviks, viewing them as fellow supporters of socialism (albeit a slightly different form of socialism), and still fearing a revolution from the right. By September, Lenin was convinced, yet again, that "the crisis is ripe," and it was time for a Bolshevik revolution. At first, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party did not agree, but by early October Lenin's leadership had brought them around to his point of view. (Trotsky, 1992: Vol. 3, 130-148)

On the 9th of October, Kerensky ordered several units from the St Petersburg garrison to move to the front. Distrustful of Kerensky's motives, the St. Petersburg Soviet organized a Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC) to coordinate the defense of the capital city. The MRC was given the authority to countermand the orders of the central government, and was influenced and infiltrated by the Bolsheviks. On the 21st and 22nd, Kerensky ordered further transfers to the front, but the MRC overruled him, and with the support of the Bolsheviks and Bolshevik controlled newspapers, took their case to the people. Kerensky ordered the Bolshevik presses seized, and ordered the bridges linking

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the various sectors of St. Petersburg raised to isolate any disturbances. The Bolsheviks again went on the offensive.

By the 25th, the Bolsheviks had won the city. They had isolated the garrison, using the 10,000 troops who supported their program to ensure the neutrality of the remaining 230,000 troops in the city (Pipes, 1995: 142-145). They controlled the bridges, railroads and factories, and took control of the government. Lenin quickly drafted a message stating that the Provisional Government had fallen, and that power had devolved to the MRC. (Acton, 1990: 202-203)

The *coup d'etat* in the capital city was soon followed up by Bolshevik takeovers in Moscow and other major cities. At the same time, the peasants, encouraged by the Bolsheviks, rose up to take the land from the large landowners. These were virtually separate revolutions, though they occurred at the same time. (Tucker, 1969: 147)

In November, the elections for the Constituent Assembly were held, and the Bolsheviks managed to stack the elections so that they won. By December, Russia was out of WW I, and in the midst of a civil war as the Bolsheviks worked to consolidate their victory and ensure that there could be no further counter-revolutions. (Pipes, 1995: 410)

The primary way the Bolsheviks ensured there would be no counter-revolution was by ruthlessly killing the opposition, very much unlike their brothers the Mensheviks. By one account, the Russian Revolution and ensuing civil war, including the virtual war against the peasants, resulted in 23 million deaths (Pipes, 1995: 402).

One interesting note, throughout the several tries at revolution Lenin was never at the front of the Bolsheviks in the street. Whenever there was a chance of physical violence, Lenin went into hiding in Bolshevik-maintained safe houses in St. Petersburg. During the intense plotting in September, Lenin ran away to Finland, leaving Trotsky to do the day-to-day work of running the Bolshevik party (Pipes, 1995: 113). Either Lenin was, or felt himself to be, so critical to the Bolshevik's chances of success that his life could not be risked, or he was a coward. (Pipes, 1995: 105)

B.   LENIN'S METHOD

Lenin's, and therefore the Bolshevik's, method was actually very simple, employing four interlocking ideas: elitism, decentralization, the primacy of politics and a set of situational factors.

Lenin did not trust the masses of workers or peasants. In fact, so deep was his distrust that it was described as an "unbridgeable gulf" (Acton, 1990: 180-181). To Lenin, the masses served merely as "objects of the politicians" (Acton, 1990: 208) to be controlled the way a skilled puppeteer controls a puppet. Lenin was, quite simply, elitist, and unashamedly so.

The elite of professional revolutionaries envisioned by Lenin and the "vanguard party" they formed were the heart and soul the revolution. The elite adopted a very authoritarian ideology (Acton, 1990: 180-181), assumed that they knew what was best for

the country and worked to implement their solution. Where the masses would disagree

with them, they would lie about their intentions, justifying their moral transgressions by

the belief that they were working for the greater good. This attitude towards the masses

demonstrated the "fundamental cleavage" between their goals and opinions and those of

the masses they claimed to represent (Pipes, 1995: 387).

The radical *intelligentsia* took as its primary mission the radicalization of the

masses in order to instill revolutionary zeal. They did this by taking specific grievances

held by the masses, and transforming them into a rejection of the entire current structure

of the government. (Pipes, 1995: 21-27, 105). Once the masses rejected the current

government, the way would be open for a disciplined, well-organized party to seize

power. In the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks used disagreement with Russia's

continuation in WW I and peasant aspirations for land ownership as the specific

grievances they rode to power.

The ability of a small, radical organization to take power was amply demonstrated

in October 1917, when the Bolsheviks and their supporters, numbering perhaps 25,000 to

30,000 people, took power in a city of 400,000 with a garrison of 240,000, and eventually

controlled an entire nation of 150 million (Pipes, 1995: 391-391).

The second idea, which propelled the Bolsheviks to power, was the centralized

nature of their organization. The radicalization of the masses to create the conditions for a

revolution would take an indefinite, though presumably long, time. This would give the

government many opportunities to seek out and crush the small vanguard party, and

would, therefore, require a secure, even conspiratorial, party structure (Tucker, 1969: 148). Conspiracies, almost by definition, have to be very tightly controlled and managed by a small central body. For the Bolsheviks, this body was the Central Committee, which nominally had 21 members (although during their historic meeting on October 10th, in which they committed to revolution, only 12 members, including Lenin and Trotsky, were actually present (Trotsky, 1992: Vol. 3, 146)). This centralization fit very well with Lenin's desire to personally control as much of the functioning of the party as he could.

Thirdly, Lenin introduced the idea that revolution is primarily a political, not military, undertaking, which only culminates in a military *coup-de-grace* when the time is ripe (Tucker, 1969: 161). The focus on political power naturally led Lenin to focus the activities of the revolutionary organization on the capital city and other major centers of power in the country (Trotsky, 1992: Vol. 3, 179). At the same time that he was politicizing a normally military activity, Lenin was militarizing politics. He was the first:

> to treat politics, domestic as well as foreign, as warfare in the literal sense
> of the word, the objective of which was not to compel the enemy to submit
> but to annihilate him. (Pipes, 1995: 392)

This tendency to annihilate political opponents was amply demonstrated during the "Red Terror" which came after the Bolsheviks consolidated power.

Lastly, Lenin postulated that a specific set of structural conditions were necessary for a successful revolution. These are known as a "Revolutionary Situation," and consist of a crisis in the policies of the ruling class which aggravates the suffering of the masses, which in turn increases the masses revolutionary tendencies (Tucker, 1969: 149). Lenin,

unlike structuralist academics, did not believe that the party should simply sit around and wait for these conditions to develop, he saw it as the job of the party to encourage the development of these conditions as far as possible. The most likely cause of crisis in the policy of the ruling class, and one which was not susceptible to manipulation by the party, was an unfavorable situation in an external war, a point which later came to be seen as a necessary part of socialist revolution. (Tucker, 1969: 139)

In summary then, Lenin's theory of revolution called for a very centralized organization composed of an elite of professional revolutionaries acting both overtly and covertly to work to radicalize the masses and create a set of structural conditions which allow them to stage a very political, and hopefully bloodless, *coup d'etat* in the capital city and other major centers. This typology is known in U.S. military doctrine as the "critical cell" type. The description in military doctrine emphasizes the need for external crisis and the infiltration of some government agencies (in the Russian case, the MRC) by the revolutionaries. (FM 100-20, 1990: 2-5, 2-6)

C.   PROBLEMS WITH LENIN'S THEORY

Lenin's theory nicely describes the October Revolution in Russia, but this may simply be another case, somewhat like Che Guevara, of building a theory out of the events in one case. Unlike Che, Lenin and Trotsky at least seem to have gotten most of the facts right in their version of the events of October.

Still, there are three difficulties which a hopeful revolutionary would have to overcome before riding to power using Lenin's theory. To begin with, the situational factors which are required for this method to work are very hard to find (Tucker, 1969: 153). Lenin was relatively lucky to be trying to take power in a country which was embroiled in a World War which it could not win. This grave national crisis effectively distracted the central government from the task of maintaining order at home, and the demands of modern total war complicated the governments attempts to effectively control the apparatus of the state. In short, chaos prevailed in Russia. In addition, the masses were in a revolutionary mood, partly due to efforts by the Bolsheviks to stir them up. (Tucker, 1969: 146)

In addition, Lenin benefited from the central government not wanting to take effective measures to destroy the Bolsheviks. The central government, and Kerensky in particular, did this because they simply did not believe the Bolsheviks were a real threat. (Acton, 1990: 208)

Lastly, the Russian Army was paralyzed during the October Revolution. This paralysis grew partly out of the fact that the Army was concentrating on the front against Germany, and partly out of a historic tradition in which Russian officers would stay well clear of politics (Pipes, 1995: 19). They were content to obey whoever was in power, whether it be a Czar, a committee, or the Bolsheviks. Had they acted, the St. Petersburg garrison alone could have stopped the October Revolution in a matter of hours and restored Kerensky to power.

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The second major difficulty is that Lenin's method is highly dependent on the skill and resolution of the leaders (Acton, 1990: 208). This follows naturally from Lenin's use of an elite organization. Lacking a leader as single-minded as Lenin, or a deputy as talented as Trotsky, this method would be very difficult to use.

Finally, using such a small highly centralized organization to defeat the government virtually requires a government which itself is small and highly centralized. Were significant parts of the government's administrative apparatus controlled outside of St. Petersburg, Lenin's *coup d'etat* would have resulted solely in his control of the city– and nothing more. Imagine a small group today taking control of Washington D.C. and assuming that that would put them in control of all aspects of state and local government, the military and the National Guard.

Each of these difficulties implies a method whereby a government can defeat an elite and centralized revolutionary group. The most profitable tactic may be simply decentralizing the government itself. In addition, the government can put the majority of its effort into penetrating and destroying the small conspiratorial revolutionary organization. The sum total of all these difficulties may well be insurmountable for an aspiring revolutionary, and may explain why Lenin's particular method has not been adopted in any subsequent successful revolutions.

IX. HAMAS

Of the four illustrative examples of methods to organize a revolution, the hardest to describe and illustrate is the decentralized and mass-based organization. This is so because, to date, no revolutionary movement has managed to use this method successfully to seize power, though a case might be made for the Iranian revolution in 1979. However, Khomeini exercised a fair amount of central control over the course of that revolution, making that example less clear-cut and making it more difficult to generalize usable conclusions. (We will return to the problem of classifying Iran's 1979 revolution in the concluding chapter.) Without a clear case of victory with this method, this discussion must be a bit hypothetical. Making this method more difficult to describe is the fact that the best example of a group which uses this method is Hamas, and it is not known for openly publishing its theories and methods. So part of this discussion must also be an attempt to describe the method of Hamas and argue that its method fits my description of a decentralized and mass-based movement. Once the decentralized and mass-based organization of Hamas has been described, I will attempt to analyze its chances of achieving their aims given the structural conditions currently in Palestine. This discussion will not be definitive as to their chance of success or failure, but rather an attempt to illustrate the method of organization along with some of its strengths and weaknesses.

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Hamas is a movement of national liberation which seeks an Islamic state in Palestine. They are in the midst of two wars to achieve their goal; a war of succession with Israel and a civil war with Yassir Arafat's secular "Palestinian Authority," the organization which now exercises limited sovereignty over a few small parts of Palestine in accordance with the Oslo peace agreements.

A.   ORIGINS OF HAMAS

1.   Palestinian Nationalism

There are two intertwined threads which describe the origins of Hamas, the first of which is the history of Palestine itself and the nationalist fervor that history has engendered. That idea, Palestinian nationalism, could be seen as a bit of an oxymoron since the Palestinians have never had a true state. The best they can honestly lay claim to is a few periods of semi-autonomy under the supervision of various colonial masters. But, like the Armenians and a dozen other ethnic groups, they believe they were promised their own state at the end of WW I, and they are determined to get it (Kimmerling and Migdal, 1993: 75).

In the midst of WW I, the British were searching for new allies in their fight against the Ottoman Empire. They focused on Sharif Hussein who, under the Ottomans, governed the Hejaz, which encompassed roughly the territory of northwestern Saudi Arabia with a bit of modern Jordan and Israel. In exchange for Hussein leading an

internal rebellion against the Ottoman forces, the British promised to set him up as the ruler of an independent state on the territory he controlled. Hussein (an Arab) quickly agreed to rebel against his Ottoman (Turkish) colonial masters, and the British sent him a bright young intelligence officer as an advisor–T. E. Lawrence, soon to be known as Lawrence of Arabia. (Mansfield, 1992: 154)

Notwithstanding their deal with Hussein, the British turned right around and began secret negotiations with the French and Russians regarding how those three powers were going to carve up the Middle East after they won the war. Naturally, Hussein was not mentioned at these talks. Instead, each power agreed to take a portion of the area and administer it as a colony. The secret treaty which grew out of these talks was the Sykes-Picot agreement.

The British further muddied the waters with the Balfour Declaration, in which they pledged support for the Zionists' plan to establish a Jewish "national home" (a phrase meant to convey something less than a state, but more than an immigrant population) in Palestine. (Mansfield, 1992: 159)

At the end of WW I, the League of Nations stripped the Middle East from the defunct Ottoman Empire and assigned different parts of it to various western nations to manage as "Mandates." A Mandate, for all practical purposes, meant a colony to which, some day, the controlling power planned to grant independence. Not surprisingly, the Mandates followed the Sykes-Picot agreement pretty closely, with the exception that Russia got nothing as its punishment for going communist and quitting WW I. Britain

ended up with Palestine (meaning present day Israel, the occupied territories of the West

Bank and Gaza, and Jordan) and Iraq. The French got Syria and Lebanon.

The British then reneged on their deal with Hussein. This infuriated his sons, who

reacted by committing various threatening acts, like marching on Damascus to throw out

the French, a British ally. To appease the sons, Britain set one up as the King in Iraq and

carved the eastern part of the Palestine Mandate out to form the state of Jordan, which

was then given to another son. (The western boundary was the Jordan River, so initially

this country was called Trans-Jordan.) While this was going on, the Zionists began

immigrating to Palestine in fairly large numbers. (Mansfield, 1992: 183)

Conflict between the Zionist immigrants and the Arab Palestinians began almost

immediately. The conflict was characterized by a great deal of terrorism and a degree of

insurgency by the Zionists against both the Arabs and against the British forces

attempting to administer the Mandate. The Zionists clearly wanted an independent Jewish

state, which they began calling Israel. By the end of WW II, the British Empire was

exhausted and began shedding former colonial possessions as quickly as it could. The fate

of the Palestinian Mandate was thrown to the nascent United Nations, where a Partition

Plan was quickly drawn up. (Kimmerling and Migdal, 1993: 137-140)

The Jewish settlers agreed to the terms of the plan for two reasons: first, it

recognized an independent Jewish state for the first time; and second, they knew that the

plan would never meet with Arab approval, so acceptance was an easy way to score

political points without worrying about not getting everything they wanted out of the

deal. The Arab population rejected the plan because it gave part of "their" land to the Jews, and because it would leave an Arab Palestinian state which would be carved into three non-contiguous parts, a situation which many felt would lead to a non-viable state. (Mansfield, 1992: 235)

With the U.N. Peace plan rejected by the Palestinians, a full-scale civil war broke out in which the Zionist militias quickly demonstrated their military superiority. In this war, the Israelis won quite a bit more land than the U.N. Partition Plan would have given them (78% of Palestine versus 55%), and they quickly consolidated their victory and began the process of building a viable state. In 1948, Israel, as a sovereign nation, was born.

Violence, mistrust and denunciations continued to characterize Arab-Israeli relations after the war. The Arab states continued to insist that Israel was nothing more than another illegitimate European colonial master with no right to rule over the territory of Palestine. The Israelis continued to build up their armed forces, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).

In 1967, the three Arab states bordering Israel–Egypt, Jordan and Syria–began to move to a war footing to expel the Israelis from Palestine. Before they could strike, the IDF began a lightning campaign against each one in turn, crushing them all. After six days, the U.N. enforced a cease-fire, and Israel ended up occupying huge new territories: the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights (Mansfield, 1992: 273-275). The Sinai was returned to Egypt through the Camp David peace accords

and the Golan Heights have been completely militarized, leaving only the West Bank and

Gaza as the "Occupied Territories" that pose a threat of internal uprising.

The stunning defeat of Arab forces in 1967 shocked Palestinians and led to the

revitalization of the various Palestinian nationalist organizations. Chief among these was

the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) under the leadership of Yassir Arafat, which

was formed as an umbrella group to coordinate the activities of everyone fighting for a

Palestinian state. Soon, the Arab world designated the PLO as the "sole legitimate

representative of the Palestinian people" (Kimmerling and Migdal, 1993: 230).

Eventually the PLO and its executive council, the Palestine National Council, came to be

seen as the Palestinian state in exile–even to the point of having observer status in the

U.N. General Assembly.

2.   Islamism

The second thread which explains the origins of Hamas is the appeal of Islam as

the guiding ideology for a society, and the rise of organizations dedicated to that cause. In

1928, Hassan al-Banna of Egypt founded the first modern Islamist[9] organization, the

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[9] "Islamist" is the academic term for organizations or individuals the press would call "Islamic Fundamentalist." Academics object to the label fundamentalist because it carries several connotations from its origin and use to describe Christian sects which are nonsensical when applied to these Islamic organizations. For instance, Christian Fundamentalists generally believe the Bible is the literal word of God, which sets them apart from more mainstream Christian belief which allows for allegory. On the other hand, all Muslims believe the *Qur'an* is the literal word of God, there is simply no argument on that point. Contrast a Muslim who believes the state and economy should be structured on secular principles with an Islamist Muslim, one who believes the state should be based on the *Qur'an* and the *sunna* of the Prophet.

Muslim Brotherhood. It is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting an Islamic revival through religious, educational and social programs. Branches of the Muslim Brotherhood quickly formed in other Arab states, where, as in Egypt itself, they were sometimes seen as competing power centers and were either outlawed or restricted by the government. Occasionally, a government would go beyond outlawing the group, as Hafez al-Asad of Syria did in February 1982 when he leveled the town of Hama, a center of power for the Muslim Brotherhood and hotbed of resistance to his regime in Damascus. Asad's troops and artillery killed 38,000 in the process of destroying the town, and the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood along with it. (Friedman, 1995: 90)

The Jerusalem branch of the Brotherhood was formed in 1945, when Palestine was ruled by the British under the post-WW I Mandate system, and historically maintained a very non-political agenda.

The same stunning defeat of the Arab world at the hands of the Israelis in the 1967 war which led to the revitalization of Palestinian nationalism also convinced many Arabs that the western, secular path to modernization had failed them (Esposito, 1995: 133, 154). They did not see how they could catch up to, and then compete with, a modern European power (Israel) by trying to play their game by their rules. The Muslim Brotherhood offered another agenda, the return to a society based on Islamic principles.

This idea had a great deal of historical legitimacy, as many Muslims believed that the Islamic world had been at the height of its power (and certainly more powerful than Europe) at a time of great religious dedication. Similarly, the Islamic world of that time

had made many great scientific and technological advances. It is important to note that the Muslim Brotherhood does not reject modernity, but they do reject the western secular approach to modernizing.

These factors, the obvious failure to compete with western secular states and the history of greatness accompanied by religious dedication, led to a resurgence in membership in Islamist organizations, including the Muslim Brotherhood, which soon expanded its Jerusalem branch to include the rest of the Israeli occupied territories.

However, in the midst of Israeli occupation, many Muslims felt the need to go beyond the Muslim Brotherhood's nonpolitical agenda and create Islamic movements to more actively resist the occupation. These Islamic movements were often at odds with Yassir Arafat's secular Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The first of these new organizations was the Islamic Jihad for Palestine, formed in the early 1980's by two former member of the Muslim Brotherhood, Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi and Abd al-Aziz 'Awda. (Mark and Katzman, 1994)

At the same time, the leadership of the Brotherhood in the Occupied Territories was itself becoming more radical, and in 1983 its elected leader, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, was arrested by the Israelis and charged with stockpiling weapons in his house and establishing a militia to oppose Israeli rule. Sheik Yassin himself was not considered much of a security threat, he had been confined to a wheelchair since an accident when he was 16, but he was considered a charismatic and militant leader. Inexplicably, he was freed two years later as part of a prisoner exchange. Having learned some organizational

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lessons from his first failure, Sheik Yassin would be ready when the next opportunity arose, and he would only have to wait four years. (Wilkinson, 1993)

3.   The Threads Intertwine

These two threads, dedication to Islam and Palestinian nationalism, came together due to a traffic accident on December 8, 1987, at a Gaza checkpoint run by the IDF which resulted in the death of four Arabs. Spontaneous street demonstrations protesting the alleged assault by the IDF quickly began and soon spread to other parts of the Gaza and West Bank. This uprising soon acquired the name *Intifada*, which literally means "shaking-off." (Kimmerling and Migdal, 1993: 262)

The PLO was surprised by the intensity and resiliency of the demonstrators and struggled to get out in front of and lead their nominal constituents. Other organizations, both within and outside of the PLO similarly began to try and harness the emotions and activism of the *intifada*. Among this group were several members of the Muslim Brotherhood, most notably Sheik Yassin, who believed the Islamists must take a more active, political and even violent stance against the Israelis. Not wanting to jeopardize the Muslim Brotherhood's long-standing non-political reputation, they formed what they described as an affiliated group on December 13, which soon adopted the name Islamic Resistance Movement, or Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya. The Arabic acronym of the group's name would be HAMAS (if acronyms were used in Arabic), which coincidentally is the Arabic word for "zeal" (Mark and Katzman, 1994). True to their name, Hamas strongly encouraged Palestinians to participate in the *intifada*.

Hamas issued their Charter on August 18, 1988, in which they described themselves as the militant, or military, wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, and expressly called for a single Arab state throughout Palestine organized on purely Islamic principles. These two points, an Islamic state and the exclusion of Israel, were in sharp contrast to the PLO's agenda, and continue to define Hamas as more radical than the PLO.

Indeed, the PLO is a secular organization, and their Charter calls for the establishment of a secular state in Palestine. In addition, the PLO has recently agreed to the "two state solution," meaning that the state of Israel does not first have to be abolished for a Palestinian state to be created. In effect, the PLO has gone back to accepting in principle the U.N. Partition Plan. However, many Palestinians, and all members of Hamas, believe that the land of Palestine is an Islamic *waqf*, a gift of land to the Islamic world from God, which therefore can not be given away (Hamas' Charter, 1988: Chapter 3, Article 11). They support only a single, unified, Arab state in Palestine.

As the *intifada* continued, Hamas developed a stronger organization and presence in the occupied territories. Soon, the leaders of Hamas stopped referring to themselves as a part of the Muslim Brotherhood due to their very activist, political and violent stance in opposition to Israel (Mark and Katzman, 1994). In fact, Hamas has now developed their own charitable and educational organizations which they administer separately from similar institutions more closely tied to the Muslim Brotherhood (Wilkinson, 1993). At the same time, the Muslim Brotherhood claims to have no control over the activities of Hamas (Mark and Katzman, 1994).

B. HAMAS' ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP, DECENTRALIZED AND MASS-BASED

Today Hamas is best understood as an independent insurgent group, or movement

of national liberation. They are fighting to retake what they consider their land (the

territory of the old post-WW I British Mandate of Palestine, not including Jordan) from

the European colonial power (Israel) which rules it. They reject the "two state solution"

where Palestine is split between an Arab and a Jewish state, and reject those Arabs

(notably Arafat's PLO and the "Palestinian Authority" created in the Oslo talks) who will

accept anything less than complete sovereignty for an Islamic state. Hamas is by no

means a pacifist organization, and they consider themselves at war with any supporter of

a Jewish homeland in Palestine, military or civilian, and will target them in any part of

Israel or the Occupied Territories. (Wooten, 1993)

To describe the organization or leadership of Hamas is a very difficult task

because there is so little published information with these kinds of details. There are two

possible explanations for this situation, one being that Hamas recognizes the value of

keeping their organization secret to prevent their opponents from infiltrating and

destroying them. The other is that Hamas simply does not have any organization or

leadership. It is very difficult to argue against the first explanation, but in my opinion the

available evidence more strongly argues for the second explanation.

What we do know about Hamas is that there is no publicly declared membership

roster, and there are no overt leadership mechanisms (an "executive council," or a

"revolutionary command council," or the like). Instead, there is the *Majlis al-Shura* or "advisory council" which tries to set general policy. The members of the council exercise leadership of the organization strictly through their individual and combined moral authority–there is no formal chain of command.

Hamas does have separate groups for administration, intelligence, information, political affairs and military operations, but these are apparently uncoordinated activities rather than an intentional division of responsibility (Mark and Katzman, 1994). Hamas also has a large network of social welfare organizations which provide a wide variety of services to the Palestinian people. Because of this charitable work, Hamas claims the right to collect a religious tithe, the *zakat*, of 2.5% of the income of Palestinians in the occupied territories. Hamas also receives funding from Palestinians abroad, and probably receives some funding from the government of Iran (Mark and Katzman, 1994). Active membership in Hamas' constituent organizations probably numbers in the low tens of thousands, while perhaps as many as a few hundred thousand support the organization's general goals and agenda (Wooten, 1993). Certainly, Hamas must be considered a mass-based revolutionary organization.

It is also very decentralized. The different groups mentioned above are not integrated into a rigid structure, instead Hamas appears to be a loose confederation of small groups which share a common goal and ideology. Some would call this *a social movement* rather than an *organization*. Formal mechanisms to coordinate the actions of the various diverse groups of Hamas supporters to achieve any concrete near-term goals

appear to be completely lacking. At the same time, the loose organization allows the

various small groups to specialize in an area of effort for which they feel best suited.

Some members of Hamas, for instance, spend their time working for the cause by

organizing university students. Students will be recruited and organized into Hamas-

affiliated groups which run a slate of candidates for student government positions. The

groups will provide modest assistance in purchasing textbooks for poorer students, and

will organize carpools to help students get to classes. This modest social welfare

assistance is complemented by religious and political indoctrination designed to lead the

students into a more thoroughly activist role in the larger struggle. (Mark and Katzman,

1994)

The lack of coordination between different Hamas groups is best illustrated by the

actions of the militant elements of Hamas. From very early on, some members of Hamas

organized themselves into the *Izz al-Din al-Qassam* Brigades, which took their name

from a charismatic Syrian cleric the British had "martyred" in 1935 (Wilkinson, 1993).

The Brigades are rumored to be very small, perhaps as few as 60 to 100 members, and

they are evidently organized into small, tight cells in a classic structure designed to limit

the damage of defections or compromise (Rotem, 1993). The Brigades' militant actions,

particularly car and suicide bombings are evidently committed on their own authority,

and are often denounced by leaders of the various political or charitable wings of Hamas

(Inbari, 1995).

Interestingly, the leaders of the combat elements do not directly participate in combat operations–they are not the suicide bombers themselves. However this does not degrade their moral authority to order bombers into action. The militants in Hamas believe that the command to use violence, what they label "the call," comes directly from God, and is not related to the authority of the men who exercise control by actually building the bombs or picking out the targets (Oliver and Steinberg, 1994). The power of this split command and control system, and the difficulty an opponent would have in influencing at least the command side of it, goes without saying.

Another example of poor coordination would be the great controversy over whether Hamas would run candidates in the elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council. This body would serve as the legislative organ of Arafat's Palestinian Authority (PA). In a very short time, three recognized leaders of Hamas, including it's founder and "spiritual leader," Sheik Yassin, gave three very different policy prescriptions, each set out as being the definitive position of Hamas. First, Sheik Yassin promised that Hamas would put up candidates because they, "wanted to have an influence on the daily lives of Palestinians." Another spokesman quickly denied that Hamas would participate in what they characterized as elections which they believed would simply codify the two-state solution. Later, another spokesman announced that Hamas would participate in elections to choose the representatives of the Palestinian people, but would never participate in any of the "self-rule" institutions. In the end, several known Hamas supporters ran in, and some won, the elections, however they did not identify themselves as Hamas' official

representatives (Robinson, 1997a: 171, 192). Clearly, the diffuse and unstructured

leadership of Hamas has difficulty in getting the various groups in the organization

headed in the same direction at the same time.

Another way to characterize the decentralized nature of Hamas' organization is to

describe the leadership. A search of the unclassified literature, of which the Jerusalem

Post is the most detailed source, will produce the names of 19 men (17 still alive) who are

called leaders. The first and most obvious is Sheik Yassin, the charismatic founder of

Hamas, who is now described as its "spiritual leader," and has become a symbolic

figurehead who is not involved in the day to day decision-making or administration of

Hamas' activities (Wilkinson, 1993).

Musa Abu Marzuq was described until recently as the head of Hamas' political

bureau and a possible leader of the military wing (UPI, 1996). Marzuq was detained in

the United States, and later sent to Jordan. More recently, Khalid Mash'al, who survived

a bungled Mossad assassination attempt in Jordan (Info-Prod Research, 1998), has

apparently taken over Marzuq's portfolio. Exactly what his duties and responsibilities are,

however, is unclear (Al-Dustur, 1997).

Mohammed Nazzal is Hamas' representative in Jordan, where Hamas is allowed

to operate openly as a foreign political organization. He is most often portrayed in the

role of spokesman than as a decision-maker. In contrast, Ibrahim Ghusha is usually called

Hamas' official spokesman, but has been labeled as one of the top four leaders in the

organization, though no specific acts of leadership have been attributed to him (Voice of Israel, 1993).

Muhsein Abu-Ata has been identified as a leader in the moderate wing of Hamas, and has actually met with Israeli military leaders including the commander of IDF forces in Gaza (Pinkas, 1994). Abu-Ata wanted Hamas to participate in the Palestinian Authority's elections, a plan which met with vocal opposition from hard-line Hamas leaders. Sheik Jamil Hammameh, who also advocates joining the political process, has been named as a prominent Hamas leader in Jerusalem. Again, his duties and responsibilities in the organization are unclear (Lahoud, 1994).

Sheik Ahmad Bahir, runs Hamas' charitable organization in Gaza. Like many known leaders, he was arrested after several suicide bombings, though he claims no leadership or influence on Hamas' military wing, and his arrest has had no noticeable affect on the bombings (Immanuel, 1995a).

S'aid al-Arabid is one of the four men identified in the press as leaders of Hamas' main military wing, the *Izz al-Din al-Qassam* Brigades. Al-Arabid is described as a former lieutenant to Imad Akel, who was killed by Israeli soldiers in November 1993 (Reuters, 1995). Akel apparently has been replaced by Ibrahim Makadmeh, who is now described as the senior military leader (Rodan and Najib, 1997a). The fourth publicly identified figure in Hamas' military wing is Yahya Ayyash, nicknamed "the engineer" by the Palestinians for his skill in constructing bombs. Ayyash was assassinated by the Israelis with a booby-trapped cellular telephone. This "loss of leadership" was answered

with a series of bombings by a new group, "The Cells of the Martyr the Engineer Yahya Ayyash–The New Pupils." The new group is not controlled by the more mainstream *Izz al-Din al-Qassam* Brigades, and their attacks were designed to show the Israelis that others in Hamas knew how to stage bombings. (Robinson, 1997a: 194-195)

Abdul Aziz Rantisi is named as a Hamas leader in Gaza, (Rodan and Najib, 1997b) along with Khalid Hindi, who is also the treasurer of the Islamic University. Other leaders from Gaza are Ismail Haniye, Said Namruti and Abdullah Mohanna. Their duties and responsibilities are never discussed. (Immanuel, 1995b)

Ismail Elbarasse is a former board member of the Dallas, Texas, based Islamic Association of Palestine (IAP), a nonprofit organization which raises money for charities that assist Palestinians. Elbarasse helped Musa Abu Marzuq funnel up to half a million dollars from the United States to Hamas. The activities of the IAP and the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, a similar nonprofit organization also based in Dallas, led Israeli intelligence to charge that Hamas was not just being funded from the United States, but was getting instructions from expatriate leadership which was operating openly in this country (UPI, 1996). The FBI effectively admitted the funding side of the charge, but denied that Hamas' leadership is operating out of the US (Wooten, 1993). The charge that the leadership of Hamas is located outside of Israel or the occupied territories is not unique to this instance. Hamas' leadership has at different times been alleged to reside in Khartoum, Syria, Jordan and on several occasions in the vague

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"abroad" (Immanuel, 1992 and 1995b, Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 1996 and Franklin, 1997).

At this point it may seem that Hamas does not have any leadership, a point on which Mahmud al-Zahar, an often-named leader from Gaza, would agree. The Israelis arrested him after a series of suicide bombings in 1993, but the bombings were not affected by his detention and he was freed in 1995 (Inbari, 1995). Though labeled a leader, al-Zahar insists he is merely a spokesman and, in fact, claims that the organization has no leaders:

> The Islamic Party has not been tardy [in revealing its leadership]...
> everybody wants there to be leaders in Hamas; Israel wants there to be
> leaders [in Hamas]; Indeed, many Palestinian tendencies[10] want there to be
> leaders inside Hamas. I assure you that the likes of these leaders do not
> exist and, God willing, they will never exist. This is because any issue
> which comes up is settled by referring it to God, [for it is written,] "And in
> that which you disagree, refer it to God." And so we refer everything to
> God and to the *sunna* of the Messenger. (Oliver and Steinberg, 1994)

It would be hard to imagine a more decentralized organization and leadership than that described by al-Zahar. Indeed, what he describes is so decentralized and apparently leaderless as to be nothing more than a mob, although admittedly a very passionate mob.

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[10] This is most likely a reference to the security services of Arafat's Palestinian Authority.

C. HAMAS' FUTURE

The odd, indeed almost nonexistent, leadership and organizational forms of

Hamas are both a source of strength for the organization and its greatest weakness. The

fact that the organization and its leaders simply cannot be pinned down is a strength since

it means they cannot be destroyed outright. And, in a curious way, the fact that the

organization continues to exist even in the face of repeated attempts to crush it convinces

many that the organization must be under some divine protection, implying that the

organizations' goals and methods are in accord with Islam. This can be easily illustrated

by the decision-making process described by al-Zahar in which the leaders of Hamas are

committed to, "refer everything to God and to the *sunna* of the Messenger."

However, the fact that the leadership and the organizational structure is so

decentralized and diffuse means that it can never purposefully mobilize and take

advantage of the synergies inherent in an organization as large and diverse as Hamas.

There is also the danger that if the organization falters, some will be convinced that it has

lost the protection of God, which may contribute to an even greater plunge as confidence

in the organization drops.

The greatest strength of Hamas may well be the mass base which supports the

goals of the organization. This great ideological underpinning ensures that Hamas will

never simply fade away. There will always be Islamists and uncompromising nationalists

among the Palestinian people. Until another organization comes along which is better

structured to take advantage of the deep and powerful religious and nationalist emotions of the mass of Palestinian people, Hamas will always be there, and Arafat and the Israelis will never be at peace.

Given the strengths and weaknesses of Hamas' organizational structure and leadership, it is difficult to imagine Hamas ever winning control of Palestine. To do this, Hamas would have to defeat not just the Israelis but also Arafat's PA and its numerous security services. At the same time, it is difficult to imagine either of those two organizations ever destroying Hamas. This case study may well prove the viability, that is to say the ability to survive, but not the effectiveness, or ability to win, of a decentralized and mass-based organization in a revolutionary war.

More interesting, perhaps, is the degree to which Hamas may have been forced to choose a decentralized and mass-based form by the structural conditions in the occupied territories. Hamas could not use Mao's method because they lacked remote safe areas beyond the control of government forces in which they could operate and grow. They could not use Lenin's method because they cannot infiltrate Israel's government. And, finally, they cannot use Che's method because the government of Israel is much more firmly entrenched and dedicated to survival than was Batista's regime.

At the same time, Hamas has adopted parts of each of those theories. The mass basis of Hamas and their organization around a single, powerful ideological idea (Islamic nationalism instead of land reform) is very reminiscent of Mao. The actions of the *Izz al-Din al-Qassam* Brigades smacks of Che's revolutionary *foco*, and the Hamas candidates

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in the PA's elections may be the beginning of a coup from the left as Lenin used against

Kerensky. Whether Hamas can make this mish-mash of techniques and tactics into a

successful strategy of revolution remains to be seen.

X. CONCLUSIONS

This thesis set out to survey the theories which describe both *why* and *how* revolutions occur. These theories, as is the nature of all theories, are attempts to *explain* or *predict* revolutions. Some, especially the theories of how, also aim to aid decision-makers trying to either facilitate or avoid revolutions in the future.

A.   WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW

In examining these theories, it became clear that none of them fully explained or predicted revolutions, and the advice they offer, particularly to budding revolutionaries, is not perfect and complete. These theories are not the exception–I did not simply pick theories which fail. In fact, Moore, Wallerstein, Goldstone, Skocpol, Gurr, Popkin and Tilly are all recognized experts in this field and their work is very well respected. Likewise, Mao, Lenin and Che each achieved remarkable seizures of state power against long odds. Even Hamas, while not yet successful in their ultimate goal, has accumulated remarkable power in a very difficult situation. The truth is that every theory about revolution fails to fully explain or predict the event.

The apparent failure of these theories is due, ironically, to very nature of theorizing. In order to engage in building and testing theories scientifically, a researcher has to simplify his topic, breaking it down to its most basic elements, and then try to find

the few elements which consistently seem most important. These elements, or variables, are then tested against the record of history to see if they provide any explanatory or predictive power. Gurr (1970: ix) openly acknowledges this deconstructive process, describing his book as, "...an exercise in simplification of the kind known as theory-building." Unfortunately, this deconstructive, simplifying method–the scientific method–breaks down in the face of enormously complex processes which have multiple and often varied causes, and which are at times inconsistent.

This is not a problem *of* simplification; it is a problem of *over*simplification. Were revolution truly simple–which is the first assumption of all theorists–then a simple 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, or 20 variable theory, perhaps even a theory which operated on only one level of analysis, could accurately account for it. But revolutions are not simple; they are a human event, and they are as complex as the people who carry them out.

B.   WHAT WE DO KNOW

This fundamental, predictable, failure of theories regarding revolution does not, however, make them useless. We can still use these theories as a framework to help in understanding revolution, as we earlier decided Tilly's many theories must be used. What these researchers and practitioners have done in crafting their theories is to begin identifying the important variables. With these variables defining the framework, we can begin to understand the way different factors help shape the outcome of events. We can

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even begin to make preliminary, perhaps hesitant, predictions based on the way we see these variables operating in a real case. And we can identify processes which we might be able to use to either help or hinder a revolution.

For instance, we know that states must not be thought of simply in terms of themselves–they are inextricably linked to a world economic and political system which neither they nor the rest of the world can escape and this linkage greatly constrains the types of economic development they can pursue (Wallerstein, 1974).

We know that modernization of agriculture displaces peasants, leaving a disaffected mass which is prone to revolt. We also know that the outcome of such a revolution can hinge on the strength of the middle class and whether the upper classes help, hinder or stay neutral in the conflict. (Moore, 1993)

We know that a country with a rapidly rising population will be put under great stress, particularly if the state is not able to reform its tax system to deal with the inevitable inflationary pressures (Goldstone, 1994c).

We know that autocratic, though partially bureaucratized, agrarian states in which the peasantry is largely unsupervised and which are under great external pressure (particularly that caused by the state losing or having just lost a war with a more advanced and powerful neighbor) are in a particularly dangerous situation. If, in addition, the elites are in conflict with the monarch over how to solve the state's problems, and the elites are able to oppose the monarch successfully due to the structure of the state's

systems, the state will be even more prone to losing control of its population internally, leading to subsequent revolution. (Skocpol, 1979)

We know that when the masses become extremely dissatisfied with their ability to achieve the goals they feel they should be able to achieve, they will feel deprived and will become frustrated. This frustration can easily turn to anger, then violence against the system which has unfairly kept them down. (Gurr, 1970)

We know that no revolutionary organization can appeal to the masses without a program of change which will demonstrably improve the economic condition of the masses. (Popkin, 1979)

We know that a very effective way to study revolutions in order to understand them is to examine the interests, organization, mobilization, opportunities and methods of collective action engaged in by the revolutionary organization. In addition, the interactions between different groups in the polity and the different ways those groups try to mobilize resources over time must also be examined. (Tilly, 1978)

We know that there are at least four different ways to set up a revolutionary organization, and that much of the reason to choose one over the other depends on the structural conditions present in the state (though we have not fully developed exactly which structural conditions are most important–see below).

We know that a fairly decentralized movement, motivated by the armed struggle of a revolutionary elite (Che's method), can harass the government's forces using guerrilla tactics. The guerrillas can gain such a following that in a short time the ruling

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elite will decide that the costs of staying in power do not justify the gains and resign to exile.

We know that a centrally controlled mass movement (Mao's method), starting from a secure rural base, can demonstrate its ability to provide for the welfare of the people and defeat the security forces of the government using guerrilla tactics. Over time, this movement, properly disciplined by the controlling political authorities, can evolve into a conventional military and political power and expand to take over the entire country.

We know that a highly centralized movement of a radical elite (Lenin's method) can work its way into the official structure of a government, particularly in a time of great upheaval, and eventually seize power in the capital and the other major cities.

Finally, we know that in the face of a very difficult operational environment, a decentralized mass strongly motivated by a unifying ideology (Hamas) can achieve remarkable power and influence over both an occupying force (Israel) and a local quasi-government (Arafat).

Summarized in this way, our knowledge of revolution may seem complete. It is not. The little knowledge we have thus far gained from the many theories of revolution is tentative and ill-defined. However, it can be used to understand, predict and affect revolutions to some extent. Though limited in this way, this is still powerful and important knowledge, especially for the people directly involved in a revolution. It is also important for those not directly involved, particularly as we move to a more closely

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linked world in which actions of states and organizations on the other side of the world can have direct and almost immediate adverse impact on our lives.

C.   WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

Certainly, therefore, we should continue to study revolutions, develop, test and refine theories to explain and predict their occurrence, and test methods of facilitating or hindering them. Though we should set off on this quest understanding fully that no theory will be perfect, there are some ways we can make our theories better.

One way would be to consciously take into account factors on all levels of analysis. To assume that revolution can be explained with reference to just one level of analysis is to make an overly simplifying assumption which works to negate the value of any subsequent research. Unfortunately, as Tilly (1978: 6) mentioned earlier, it is hard to build theories on just one level of analysis:

> In the realm of collective action, it is hard to build causal models which give serious attention to the interests, grievances, and aspirations of the actors. It is also hard to build purposive models which specify the constraints limiting the pursuit of interests, grievances, and aspirations.

Though it may be hard, the goal is still a theory which begins to take into account all those factors: the interests, grievances and aspirations of a group along with the constraints which limit the pursuit of those ideals.

Another way to develop better theories would be to spend more time trying to understand why people join and develop loyalty to groups. The power of groups as the primary actors in a revolution is strongly hinted at by many of the theories we have

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covered, but the essentially psychological question of why men form strong groups has been ignored. The work of Gurr, and to a lesser extent, Tilly, shows that essentially psychological theories of human behavior can be integrated into the mainstream research on revolutions, which to date has been dominated by historians and political scientists.

My last two suggestions are to orient more research to the organizational problems of revolutionaries. To begin with, is the classification of revolutionary organizations based on centralization-decentralization and elite-mass the best way to study the differences between these organizations? If these two variables are truly the best, how would one operationalize them in a case like Iran in 1979? Was the Iranian revolution truly a centralized, mass-based movement with Khomeini providing the ideological as well as operational leadership? And, if so, how was Khomeini able to overthrow the Shah in a very short period of time when one of the lessons from the model for this form, Mao's Chinese revolution, is that this method requires a long time to use? Alternatively, was the Iranian revolution a decentralized, elite based movement, implying the same basic mechanisms Che wrote about from the Cuban revolution but without a rural guerrilla war? And, would this interpretation square with the amount of centralized control which we know Khomeini did in fact exercise over the course of the revolution? Or, could the Iranian revolution best be described as a decentralized, mass-based movement, organized in a way similar to Hamas, and making Khomeini the equivalent of a Sheik Yassin?

In addition to trying to operationalize these variables, future research could help to identify those indicators which a revolutionary could use to determine which organizational form would confer the greatest advantage in a given structural situation. For instance, what is the role of ideology and culture in determining whether a given organizational form will work? Does the lack of a rural base make mass movements impossible? Can a centralized, elite organization seize power from a group with different ethnic or religious affiliations? Answering these questions would also help explain the choices various groups have made, as was alluded to at the end of the chapter on Hamas.

These are modest suggestions, which is fitting since this is a modest work. Other, I hope better, researchers will carry on this study, and perhaps at a later time I will be able to rejoin the debate on this very important topic.

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