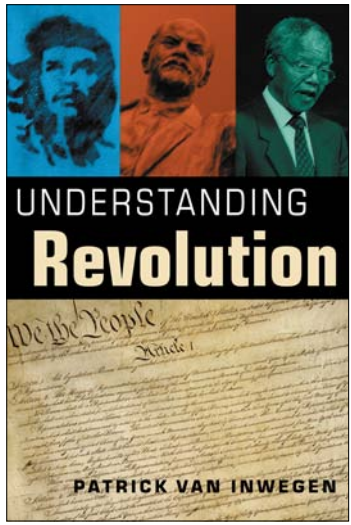
EXCERPTED FROM

Understanding Revolution

Patrick Van Inwegen



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Understanding Revolution

Revolution is the sex of politics. —H. L. Mencken

H. L. Mencken's famous statement on revolutions is illuminating in two respects. First, revolutions can be viewed as the sex of politics in the sense that they give birth to nations. Out of revolutionary periods are born the countries that populate the modern international system. In this sense, they are literally a procreative act. But revolutions are "sexy" in the sense that they have all of the passion, intrigue, drama, ideas, heroes, villains, and crisis mentality that attracts students of social sciences. Revolutions are the subject matter of great works of art, literature, theater, and film—they are fascinating even for the nonspecialist.

Scholarly interest in the topic of revolution has produced a rich literature that spans the disciplines of sociology, history, political science, economics, philosophy, and theology.[1] This book reflects the vast research done on these amazing social phenomena. To begin, in this chapter I address two fundamental questions and introduce the remaining questions that structure the rest of the book. The two questions for this chapter are: Why do we study revolutions, and what are they?

Why Do We Study Revolution?

Excepting war, religion and romantic love, nothing in ordinary human experience has so inflamed the imagination of men, encouraged so many romantic illusions, or broken so completely with the ordinary routine of existence, as has been true of revolution. —Robert Ezra Park

Revolutions are fascinating topics for a number of reasons. Revolutionary situations are often dominated by larger-than-life figures. Some of these figures, such as Mao Zedong and Joseph Stalin, create a cult of personality; others, such as Augusto Cesar Sandino and Ernesto "Che" Guevara, become iconic figures for subsequent revolutionaries. These are people around whom legends emerge, about whom fables are told and countless biographies are written. They are heroes because they do what most others only dream of—they live their lives and direct their movements according to ideals that are much larger than themselves even though those ideals are not always brought to fruition.

Revolutions are an exciting topic of study because they focus our attention on key ideas and ideals. Revolutions are always struggles to create a better world. Heroic figures are a large part of revolutionary appeal because the people engaged in revolution are willing to risk everything to bring about larger sociopolitical changes. As the chapters on ideology discuss, revolutionary ideologies typically not only point out what is wrong with the current government but also suggest a better alternative and a way to move from one to the other. Part of the reason that revolutionary situations are dominated by heroic figures is that they pose a threat. Even more than during a conventional war, the very existence of a ruling regime is at stake. Wars often end with winners and losers, but the losers rarely are entirely purged from power, as is more typical in revolutions.

Revolutions mark key turning points in history. Because international relations have historically been dominated by states, it stands to reason that a change in who governs a state often leads to changes in international relations. France's radical changes in attempting to conquer Europe under Napoleon Bonaparte were a direct consequence of the revolution of 1789. Two hundred years later, with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the crumbling of the Soviet Union in 1991, the international balance of power shifted from a Cold War to a new era of globalization.

Finally, the study of revolutions is fundamental to understanding the current world. Even though revolutions do not entirely determine the type of country that emerges and its relationship to others in the international system, they do set the course that countries follow. To understand why the Iranian president is not the sole source of foreign policy decisions, for example, one must appreciate the revolution that created the Iranian constitution. In a similar fashion, knowing about the independence movement that created the United States also helps us to appreciate the divided powers of the US government. Events in and immediately following the Cuban Revolution help to explain the long-standing animosity between the United States and Cuba. Even comparing the development trends of Southeast

Asian countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines is aided by contrasting the overthrow of their dictators in the 1980s and 1990s. James DeFronzo makes a compelling case for the importance of understanding revolutionary movements:

> An absence of public knowledge concerning the political histories and socioeconomic characteristics of other societies can permit a government to exercise an excessive influence over citizen perception of its actions in foreign lands. It is possible, for example, that U.S. involvement in Vietnam would not have occurred or at least would not have progressed as far as it did if the American people had been fully aware of the Vietnamese Revolution against French colonial rule, the loss of popular support for France's Indochina war effort, and the terms of the resulting Geneva peace settlement of 1954. Although the U.S. public was too poorly informed to prevent the tragedy in Vietnam, the collective memory of the Vietnam experience probably helped prevent direct U.S. military intervention in several countries in the subsequent years. (2007: xi)

In this sense, then, understanding revolutions can help countries avoid the mistakes of the past in similar foreign policy situations.

Beyond knowing the origins of modern states, understanding the current world also implies knowing how people in societies normally interact. In this way, revolutions are abnormal events that help us define what is normal. People normally follow their government (in terms of respecting the laws); revolutions instead involve people directly challenging their government. Societies normally operate with stable or slowly changing norms and values, whereas revolutions are often a time of radically shifting norms and values. Even economic interactions undergo significant fluctuation in revolutionary periods. In this way, studying revolution is like undertaking the psychological study of a deviant behavior in order to understand normal behavior. By studying the abnormality of revolutions, we get a better sense of what "normal" societies, economic interactions, and political regimes look like.

Defining and Distinguishing Revolution

> *We live in a world in which over half of the inhabitants of the planet live in a country that has undergone a revolution in this century.*
>
> —Michael S. Kimmel

The purpose of social sciences is to more fully understand change and continuity within societies. Revolutions fundamentally involve change and are

a part of what can broadly be termed social movements. Social movements, Charles Tilly argues, comprise three elements: (1) a campaign or public effort making claims on an authority, (2) means of political action, and (3) a public representation of the cause's worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment (2004). They are coordinated attempts at creating some change in the existing system. This is obviously a broad field of which revolutions occupy the extreme periphery.

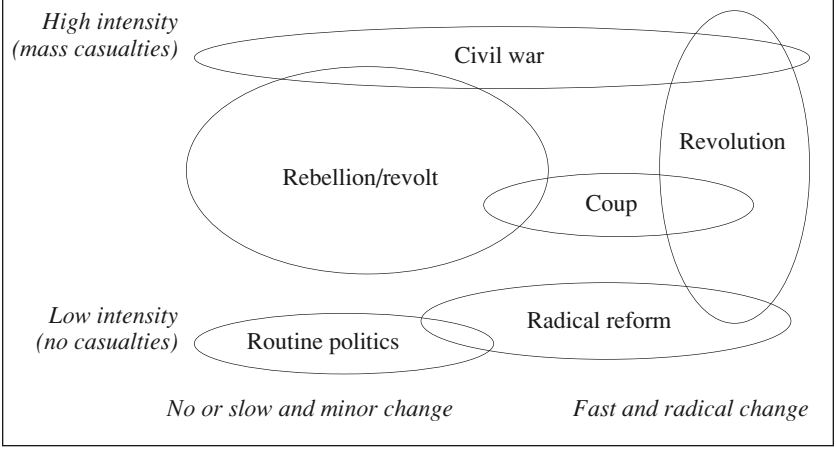
When we study social movements we are often interested in the types of changes that occur and the scope and speed of those changes. Revolutions tend to be the most radical kind of change a society endures; that is, they are positioned on the very edges of the spectrum of social movements. It is useful to look at what other types of events and activities are also included in social movements to better understand revolution.

Figure 1.1 arranges a number of types of social movements according to the rapidity of change as well as the intensity of these activities. The category of casualties, shown on the vertical axis, is chosen as a measure of intensity because of the assumption that people are typically not willing to kill or die for causes unless they are very important and no other way of achieving a goal is perceived. For example, the American colonists did not go directly to war with the British, but rather activists engaged in widespread noncooperation and nonviolent protests for years before any violence occurred. The lines surrounding the various types of events are meant to be fuzzy and oftentimes overlapping, because the general categories shown along the horizontal axis are theoretical concepts used to discuss actual events. The events are always going to be more complex than the theoretical concept used to discuss them implies. Thus, Gamal Abdel Nasser's coup in Egypt in 1952 probably resulted in more change than did the People Power revolution in the Philippines in 1986. Finally, the size and shape of ovals represents the scope of an event; for example, a civil war can create slow or fast change, but it always has high casualty rates.

There have been many attempts to define revolution, and, as we will see, many types of revolutions require slight alterations of the definition. A consensus of the bare minimum for what constitutes a revolution has begun to emerge, however, in the scholarly literature. Charles Tilly has written about a great many social movements, including significant works on revolutions, for more than thirty years. He provides the clearest definition of revolution that distinguishes between this type of social movement and the others discussed above. Building on his definition, I define revolution as *a forcible, irregular, popularly supported change in the governing regime* and then pull this definition apart into its constituent elements and implications.

First and foremost, revolutions are forcible events. The utilization of force entails getting someone to do something he or she would otherwise not

Figure 1.1 Spectrum of Change of Social Movements



do through threat of punishment or promise of reward (Keohane and Nye 2001). Force requires the exercise of power, which Max Weber defines as the "ability of one actor within a social relationship to carry out their will despite resistance" (1968: 53). Because governments do not want to relinquish power, force is required to take power from those who control the state. Force, in these terms, does not necessarily entail violence. If the group in control of the state is not forced to give up power, a revolution has not occurred. The merging of East and West Germany in 1990 is an example of when one state gave up power willingly to another. The East Germans gave up substantial power by unifying with West Germany, a process not typically viewed as a revolution. The "velvet divorce" of the Czech and Slovak Republics in 1993 similarly is not a revolution because the Czechs were not forced to give up their control over Slovakia but rather welcomed it.

Second, with the global spread in democratic governments, the definition requires a qualification that the change in leadership must be irregular, extraconstitutional, or noninstitutionalized. The toppling of state leaders and ruling parties is institutionalized in democracy. Rapid changes of power and control of the government within democracies are far from revolutions. Rather, they clearly illustrate democracy at work. Even highly irregular events such as an impeachment or the resignation of a president are part of the institutional process. For example, the resignation of US president Richard Nixon in 1974 did not constitute a revolution. In this case a head of state was forced from power (primarily by the threat of impeachment). The succession of the president was, however, institutionalized. Similarly, impeachment,

votes of no-confidence, recall votes, and other means of removing an individual from office do not constitute revolutions because they take place within the institutionalized framework of the system; they are routine politics that do not alter the system.

Third, change in government must be supported by a substantial portion of the population. Support of a large political party, a distinct geographical section of the population, a large and powerful segment within the government (such as the military), or an economically defined segment of society (such as merchants, peasants, or farmers) could all be substantial segments of a population. The threshold of "substantial" is utilized to sort out those movements that are supported only by a few fringe elements of society or a few military generals. For example, a bloodless coup where one general replaces another as dictator does not necessarily constitute a revolution. This situation may be greeted with apathy by most of society and thus not meet the requirement that challengers be supported by a substantial portion of society. Further, support of the contenders must be more than a very small minority. For example, the East Timorese independence movement from 1974 until 2001 constituted a revolution only for East Timor rather than for the whole of Indonesia (just as if Chechnya were to secede from Russia, it would not constitute another Russian revolution). Indonesia occupied the half island, controlling all aspects of government. The secessionist movement was not aimed at the overthrow of the Indonesian state, however, but rather at a very small jurisdiction of that state. In contrast (and not coincidentally, at the same time), the popular demonstrations that led Suharto, then president/dictator of Indonesia for the preceding thirty years, to resign could be viewed as a revolution. The conflict in the latter case was for all of Indonesia, whereas in the former it was for half of a small island that had been a Portuguese colony.

A related, but not obvious, assumption of this forceful, popularly supported regime change is that the change in government must be domestically orchestrated. Invasions and occupations of a state do not qualify as revolutions even though they are forceful irregular seizures of the state. External actors often play a role in shaping a revolution; nevertheless it is primarily a domestic event. Thus, although the French alliance with the American colonies was crucial in supporting the war effort, the primary actors in creating the revolution were the colonists themselves. In contrast, the US actions of toppling the Taliban government in Afghanistan in 2001 or the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq in 2003 are clearly not revolutions because they were externally imposed. Domestic actors such as the Pashtuns in Afghanistan and the Kurds in Iraq played a role in changing the state leadership, but they were not the primary contenders in these conflicts.

The clearest indication of a revolution is a change in who governs a country, both in terms of individuals and parties. A government is the leadership in charge of coordinating the various functions of the state, which Jeff Goodwin defines as "those core administrative, policing, and military organizations, more or less coordinated by an executive authority, that extract resources from and administer and rule (through violence if necessary) a territorially defined national society" (2001: 11). Thus, a government runs the state and provides for defense domestically and internationally, and it does this by extracting resources from society and monopolizing the legitimate threat and use of violence. The scope of its authority is limited to a politically defined geographic area with a population. The state is the sum of all these elements (government, geography, people, and institutions), whereas the government is the group who controls the state. This distinction is important because revolutionary actors compete with others to become the government and thus control the state. More than just the individuals in government must change, however; there needs to at least be an attempt at changing the system, or regime change. A regime is the larger framework of a government. Regimes are typically more enduring than governments, whereas states are more enduring than regimes. Regimes can be tied to governments, for example, the Franco regime in Spain or the Ba'athist regime in Iraq; but they do not need to be, as in the case of the democratic regime in the United States. A government is most often associated with a political party or party leader in democracies—the Tony Blair government in the UK or the Nicolas Sarkozy government in France. In this case, the government changes, but the regime continues. In patrimonial regimes, the regime and government are more likely to be the same; a change in one leads to a change in the other. Revolutions thus involve not just a change of the person or party in power but a wider change in the governing system.[2]

Because revolution is only one type of social event that occurs within a broad spectrum of change, it is useful to draw some distinctions among these other activities to highlight what constitutes a revolution. Routine politics is the starting point for any discussion on change. The assumption of routine politics is that conflicts can be resolved within existing institutions. An institution is an organization or activity that is self-perpetuating and valued for its own sake. Institutions incorporate a people's norms, rules, and values that give meaning to human activity. The method of resolving conflicts within a democratic republic is for elected representatives to debate an issue and come to some sort of compromise. In most modern democracies, this resolution depends on several institutions—a legislature, democracy, a free press, and political parties, just to name a few. In authoritarian systems, routine politics also involves the resolution of conflict within existing institutions, which

may include the monarchy, a legislature, and political parties. The defining characteristic of routine politics is that it does not go beyond the boundaries of existing institutions or call for the destruction or radical change of those institutions.

Radical reforms go beyond routine politics in the scope and speed of their change. Some radical reforms may simply be the creation or destruction of an institution; for example, the government creates a new militia force or takes control of all media. Radical reforms can also be more encompassing and are similar to "revolution from above" (Trimberger 1978). These widespread changes are typically propagated by those in control of the government. For example, the shah of Iran (the ruling monarch), in an attempt to modernize his country, created a series of reforms to Westernize and restructure the Iranian economy in what is referred to as the White Revolution (though it was not a revolution). In 1963, he began with reforms that seized large parcels of land from aristocratic owners to redistribute to smaller farmers, nationalized pastures and forests to reduce nomadic herders, sold state-owned factories, allowed women to participate in politics, and established a literacy corps to run schools to reduce illiteracy. The key aspect that separates radical reforms from revolutions is that there is no challenge to control the state.

It is also important to note that although a reform can sometimes lead to revolutions (as the Iranian case suggests), at other times it may diffuse them. The British reforms of taxation and other legislation on the American colonies at various times encouraged reaction (as in the imposition of the Intolerable Acts) and at other times undermined rebellious action (as in the repeal of the various taxes and the Quartering Act in 1770). The intent of reform is typically to undermine opposition to a government. The idea is that a ruler allows public pressure to be dissipated by reforming something that the public does not like. Jack Goldstone argues that "successful reforms have several elements in common: they lead to meaningful (not just pro forma) involvement of different groups in political decisions; they strengthen the state sufficiently to meet pending challenges, usually by creating greater efficiency in revenue collection or state administration; and they do not raise the anger of prominent social groups or make enemies of them by imposing new burdens upon them" (1998: 416). Radical reforms typically go beyond this and are attempts by rulers to make changes that are not demanded by the public. Rather, they are changes intended to push beyond the existing system or radically restructure certain aspects of that system.

Rebellion or *revolt* (terms used interchangeably) typically refers to an unsuccessful version of revolution (*insurrection* is another synonymous term that has come into more popular use since the occupation of Iraq and

Afghanistan under US-led coalition forces in 2003). But it is more than just unsuccessful; as Mark Hagopian notes, it is an "angry, violent expression of the refusal of an individual or group to continue in its present condition" (1974: 11). Chalmers Johnson similarly defines rebellion as "the violent, spontaneous act of 'ordinary people' saying no! to conditions as they are" (1973: 8). It may be best viewed as the time when "the existing order of things no longer seems inevitable and change appears as a possibility" (Walton 1998: 414). This moment can then lead to a revolution, or if there is not a change in the government, it can dissipate. The reason that it is so often associated with the failure of revolution is that when a revolt leads to a revolution, the particular action becomes classified as one element of the larger movement. The Boston Tea Party of 1773, for example, is not viewed as a revolt because of later events that led to a revolution. It is subsumed as part of the beginnings of a revolution. In contrast, Shay's Rebellion of 1786, although it spurred significant changes (including the reconstruction of the conception of the federal government with a new constitution that eliminated the Articles of Confederation), did not lead to a revolution. As such, it is typically referred to as a rebellion or revolt. Because of this distinction, rebellions tend to be associated with less radical change (though the American example of Shay's Rebellion suggests that they can have a significant impact). They also tend to be associated with violence, though this is not necessarily the case.

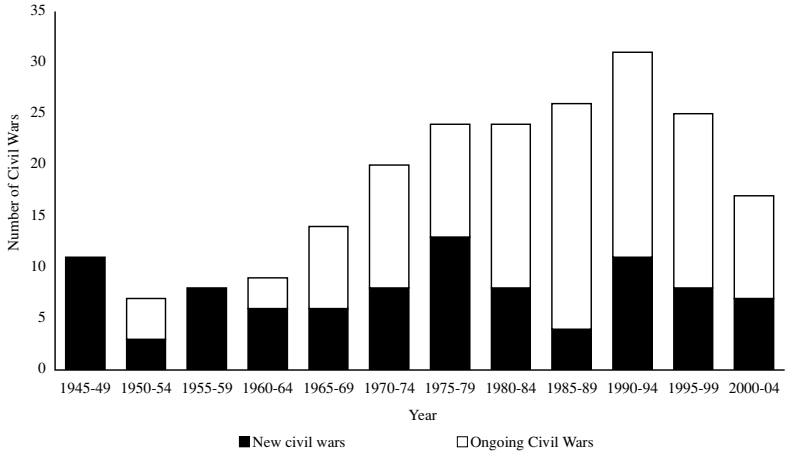
A coup d'état, or coup, as it is often referred to, is the takeover of the government by a small group, usually from the military. Samuel Huntington outlines the distinguishing characteristics of a coup: "(a) it is the effort by a political coalition illegally to replace the existing governmental leaders by violence or the threat of violence; (b) the violence employed is usually small; (c) the number of people involved is usually small; (d) the participants already possess institutional bases of power within the political system" (1968: 218). Thus, there is a change in government that is unconstitutional and typically driven by violence. This is because coups are almost always orchestrated by the military or a faction within the military. This small group of military leaders typically seizes the power of government, and most of the institutions of the state fall in line. Cooperation with the coup leaders is often because the elites of the other institutions agree with the reason for the coup or because they fear repression if they do not cooperate. Because coups are typically driven by military leaders, they often justify the coup as part of their mission to defend the country. Typically they point to corruption or inefficiencies in the government as the rationale for their seizing power.

At its root, a civil war is a type of war in which the primary combatants are both from the same country. Conventional war is typically conceived as

two countries' militaries fighting each other. The key distinction between war and civil war, then, is that rather than two countries fighting, it is two or more parties in one country fighting. Civil wars usually have the central government as one of the warring parties. The exception to this general rule is in states where there is no strong central government, such as in failed states. In contrast to coups, civil wars usually require more popular participation. Although the military may support a coup, they usually are not involved in fighting for the coup. If this were the case, it would be more likely that it is a civil war. This points to the last typical characteristic of civil wars: they usually have a certain threshold of organized violence. They are violent events, with the minimum casualties typically set at 1,000 battle deaths per year. These are people directly killed in fighting, and the figure does not include those who died because of starvation, malnutrition, disease, or other common corollaries of wars. Further, the violence must be organized, meaning that military structures of some kind engage in most of the fighting. This distinguishes between rioting and other types of violent demonstrations. Figure 1.2 shows the number of civil wars since the end of World War II.

Because *civil war* is a broad term used to capture a type of fighting, there are many variations of civil war. Typically the assumption of civil

Figure 1.2 Civil Wars, 1945–2004



Source: Center for the Study of Civil War, UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University and Centre for the Study of Civil War at the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), Oslo, 2006, http://www.prio.no.

wars is that larger armies are fighting, as was the case in the US (1861–1865) and Chinese (1927–1949) civil wars. Civil wars can also occur, however, when the primary tactic is not conventional armies but guerrilla troops fighting a war of attrition, usually referred to as a guerrilla war. This involves the tactics of avoiding direct conflict with the opponent's military because they are much stronger and more likely to kill you (see Chapter 7). The fighting may be very drawn out, as in Chad, Colombia, and Myanmar, where civil wars have lasted for decades, or they may be relatively concise, as in the conflict in South Yemen in the first few months of 1986. They may be localized to one area, as in the Ugandan war against the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda from 1987 to the present (though peace talks are currently under way), or may engulf the entire country, as in Bosnia (1992–1995). Ethnic wars are typically civil wars in which the defining characteristic of those fighting is drawn in ethnic or racial terms. These types of war may spill into genocide, the intention to systematically destroy a group of ethnically, religiously, or culturally distinct people, as was the case in Rwanda in 1995. Revolutionary wars are another type of civil war, where the fighting is aimed at creating a revolution. Civil wars may also be utterly devoid of any ideological motivations. The civil wars in Chechnya and Colombia (in the 1990s) both combined a secessionist or revolutionary movement with criminal activity that eventually swamped the movement and drained all the ideological content. These are all types of civil wars that share the defining characteristics of domestic combatants, with a large following where there is organized violence at a significant level.

As Nicholas Sambanis points out, "states avoid using the term [civil war] to play down the level of opposition to them. Thus, for example, the Kenyan '*shifta*' war of the 1960's against secessionist Somalis in the Northern Frontier District may have technically been a small civil war, but in the historiography of the country and in the minds of many Kenyans, it was just banditry ('*shifta*' means bandit) or a border conflict with Somalia" (2006). This caution is useful when analyzing any of the definitions given above. Coups, rebellions, civil wars, and revolutions all depend on someone labeling them after the fact. That someone is always the dominant power; as Winston Churchill noted, "history is written by the victors."

The discussion of these other types of social movements allows us to define revolutions in relation to these events. The definition of revolution I am using distinguishes one type of social movement from the others, though there is significant overlap in reality. Revolutions differ from routine politics in the level of change as well as the fact that they involve the change in government through nonroutinized forcible means. Unlike radical reforms that are pushed by a government, revolutions require an irregular change in

the government. Revolutions differ from coups primarily in the extent of popular support and the scope of change advocated. As noted above, the distinction between rebellion and revolution is primarily that rebellions and revolts are not successful. Civil wars are distinguished by their level of organized violence, whereas revolutions have no such stipulation, as the many anticommunist nonviolent struggles in the 1990s showed. Historical cases are often difficult to classify; at one point an event begins with a coup, then later becomes a revolution that degenerates into a civil war. The purpose of defining revolutions is to highlight the tendencies that characterize what we refer to as revolutions.

Having defined revolution, I move now into a discussion of some types of revolutions in history.

Types of Revolutions

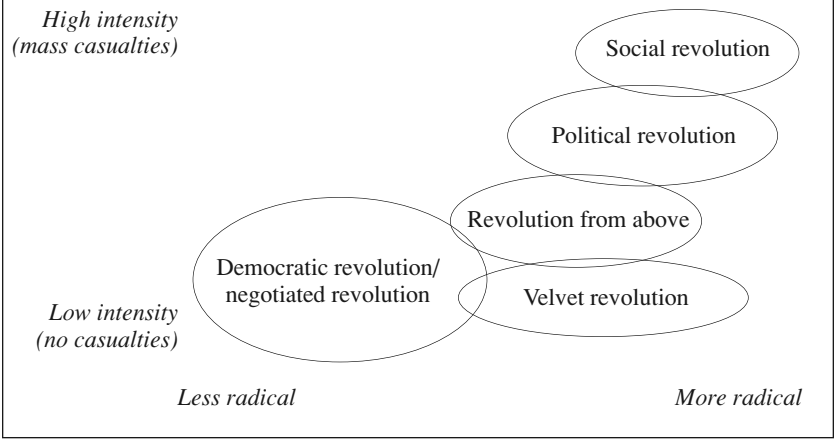
> *A reform is a correction of abuses; a revolution is a transfer of power.*
> —Edward Bulwer-Lytton

Just as there is a wide spectrum of activities within social movements, so there are many types of revolutions. Scholars, to further isolate what they hope to study, have defined revolutions as political, social, democratic, peasant, periphery, or several other types. The definitions of these suggest a particular type of revolutionary change or the key actors involved. Mirroring Figure 1.1, the types of revolutions can be arranged according to their intensity and the scope and speed of their change, as shown in Figure 1.3.

Political revolutions are what I have defined as revolution: a forcible, irregular, popularly supported change in the governing regime. They provide the widest latitude in incorporating revolutionary events without being so broad that they are synonymous with social movements. In contrast, social revolutions are broader in their impact. They are "rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structure; they are accompanied and in part carried through by class based revolts from below" (Skocpol 1979: 4). Samuel Huntington goes even further when he defines social revolutions as "a rapid fundamental and violent domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social structure, leadership, government activity, and policies" (1968: 264). As Jeff Goodwin notes, "What counts as 'rapid and fundamental' change, however, is a matter of degree, and the line between it and slower and less basic change can be difficult to draw in practice" (2001: 9).

Revolutions typically involve the most extreme tendencies of any type of social movement and social revolutions the most extreme tendencies of

Figure 1.3 Spectrum of Types of Revolutions



revolutions. For this reason, they help to clarify much of what we are interested in understanding in revolution. If we want to understand the significance of revolutionary change, there is no better place to look than social revolutions. Social revolutions also have the drawback of being very rare, however. Figure 1.4 lists the major social revolutions over the past 200 years. What is striking is that there are relatively few social revolutions in history, and all but one were in the twentieth century. Although the list begins after the American Revolution, most scholars who analyze social revolutions do not include it as a possible case. They argue that the more significant economic, social, and even political restructuring required to be a social revolution did not occur in the United States until after the Civil War.

A revolution from above, another type shown in Figure 1.3, is an elite-directed transition from agrarian to industrial society that is guided by a relatively autonomous bureaucratic apparatus. This bureaucratic group usually originates from an increasingly nationalistic revolutionary leadership within the military. These revolutions involve modernizing the economic and to a certain extent the social and political structures of what are perceived as backward countries (by the modernizing elites). Ellen Trimberger argues that this type of revolution is only likely when four parameters are met (1978). First, the bureaucrats must be independent of the dominant economic class; that is, they cannot be beholden to conservative elements, and second, they must also be relatively cohesive politically. Third, they are spurred to action because they foresee a threat to their own interests, usually in the form of

Figure 1.4 Major Social Revolutions, 1789–1989

France	1789	Ethiopia	1975
Mexico	1910	Angola	1975
Russia	1917	Mozambique	1975
Yugoslavia	1945	Cambodia	1975
Vietnam	1945	South Vietnam	1975
China	1949	Iran	1979
Bolivia	1952	Nicaragua	1979
Cuba	1959	Grenada	1979
Algeria	1962	Eastern Europe	1989

foreign countries' taking greater control of their resources, which leads to a more nationalistic sentiment. Finally, the international situation must be conducive to allowing military leaders to take power in a nationalist movement; if a country is too dependent upon an unapproving foreign power, this type of movement is very unlikely. There is debate about whether or not the crumbling of communist rule in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union constitutes a revolution or whether this type of revolution from above is as much a reform as it is a revolution—what Timothy Garton Ash calls "refolution" (1999). Refolution, he argues, originates in top-down elite reforms of a bankrupt system and takes place without the violent struggles common to past revolutions; as seen in the collapse of communism.

On the lower end of both the intensity spectrum and the scope of change in Figure 1.3 are democratic and negotiated revolutions. These are admittedly relatively newer phenomenon and as such have not been as thoroughly addressed in the scholarly literature. Democratic revolutions are "spontaneous popular uprisings—peaceful, urban-based, and cross-class in composition—which topple unyielding dictators to begin a transition process which leads to the consolidation of democracy" (Thompson 2004: 1). The outcome of the revolution—the transition from authoritarian to democratic regimes—is the key defining characteristic of this type of revolution. In contrast, a negotiated revolution, the most recent form of revolution, is one in which the toppling of the government is more likely to take place when opposition leaders engage the government in a process that yields revolutionary change than when armies of peasants storm the capital. The term

negotiated revolution first was used for the transition in South Africa, then later applied to Hungary and generalized to this broader type by George Lawson (2005). Both democratic and negotiated revolutions are what Lawson calls "catching up revolutions" in that they seek "to join the prevailing international order . . . [they] seek liberation rather than utopia" (2005: 76). Unlike most social revolutions, they are not interested in creating a "new" social order, and they have no radical ideology; rather, they aim to implement the dominant international ideology: liberal (capitalist) democracy.

Throughout history, most revolutions have been violent or followed by civil wars. More recently, there have been a number of revolutions that were neither born of, nor led to, violent confrontations—as most visibly illustrated in the fall of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Velvet revolutions, the final type shown in Figure 1.3, are situations in which nonviolence is the dominant means of creating a revolution. The term *Velvet Revolution* was originally used just for the Czechoslovak revolution but came to include all of the nonviolent Eastern European revolutions. In my own study of this topic, I expanded it further to apply to all nonviolent revolutions (Van Inwegen 2006). The origins of the phrase come from dissident groups in Czechoslovakia who used music as a form of protest, meeting to play and hear banned rock music. This included the experimental music of the US rock group, the Velvet Underground, whose name reflected the spirit of the underground cultural scene (though it was not connected to Czechoslovakia). The velvet terminology was first applied to the goals of underground activists who sought change and eventually led to the revolution (Keane 2000: 351). Other terms have been used to denote similar processes, such as the Orange Revolution of Ukraine in 2004, the Carnation Revolution of Portugal in 1974, and the Rose Revolution of Georgia in 2003, though there is debate about whether or not some of these should be considered revolutions.

This typology is not meant to be exhaustive or entirely inclusive. Different scholars, for different reasons, have come up with typologies that have included other types of social movements. For example, Chalmers Johnson (1973) identifies the following types of revolution: jacquerie (reactionary), millenerian (aimed at creating heaven on earth), anarchist, Jacobin communist (nationalist), coup d'etat, and mass militarized insurrection (nationalist). Most of these overlap with the types I have described above, but they have not been used by other scholars. The common element of all these types of revolutions is that they result in attempts at rapid change of the government; the differences indicate the variety of revolutions in history.

Overview of the Book

He who serves a revolution plows in the sea. —Simon Bolívar

The reason for writing this book is to pull together as much of the relevant work on revolutions from a variety of disciplines as possible. This draws on sociology, history, economics, and political science. In each of these disciplines, there are further subdisciplines that have contributed to our understanding of revolutions. What all of these studies share in common is the assumption that we can know meaningful things about revolutions and that this knowledge can be cumulative. For example, a biography of John Adams can be used in a study on elite interactions in the American colonies, which may in turn be used as part of an economic analysis of the triangular trade system, which could be used for part of an investigation into the structural causes of the American Revolution. Each of these is a fundamental building block not only to our understanding of that particular event but also to the larger objective of understanding revolution. Because of the nature of social sciences, this does not mean that once a study is published on an issue, it has been resolved and there is consensus. Rather, some issues are hotly debated and often reflect larger intellectual debates that span the disciplines. For example, the relative importance of individuals versus structural elements is very contentious. Are revolutions the product of visionary leaders, or are they a function of the economic and historical context? This book will focus on areas of consensus, highlight the sides of debates, and chart the evolution of key debates in the literature to answer persistent questions about revolutions.

Having defined revolution and answered why we study it, the remainder of the book will discuss answers to key questions to help us better understand revolution. The earliest studies of revolutions were largely descriptive, drawing out similarities of the flow of revolutions. This tradition has continued and will be used in Chapter 2 to answer the question: How do revolutions happen? Answering this involves summarizing the variety of steps and stages that most revolutions go through. In the simplest version, there is a revolutionary situation in which the preconditions exist that make revolution likely. Some sort of catalytic event spurs mobilization of people against the government, and that leads to a clash between revolutionaries and the government. If the government wins, the revolution fails. If the revolutionaries seize power, there is a period of resolution when various groups vie to consolidate power and implement change.

Chapter 3 addresses one of the most fundamental and rigorously answered questions: What are the causes of revolution? A consensus has begun

to emerge out of a contentious debate that there are structural preconditions that make revolution very likely, though not inevitable. The key structural factor appears to be the nature of the state, or more specifically the type of regime and its relationship with society. When a weak, patrimonial, repressive regime is in power, revolution is much more likely. There are also structural arguments that focus on class explanations as well as analyses that point to the international system, however. These analyses argue that revolution is more likely when countries modernize, when changes in the international balance of power open up opportunities, or when new ideas, money, and technology are introduced to the country.

Chapter 4 focuses on the role of ideologies in justifying revolutions by answering the question: What is the purpose of revolution? In short, the most common answers to this question have included: to create a government of the people that protects their inherent freedoms (liberalism), to create a state for our own people (nationalism), to create a classless society that will end exploitation (Marxism), and to create a state that conforms to the will of God (religious ideologies). In addition to developing the ideologies behind each of these answers, I will also summarize the work on the role of ideologies in revolution in Chapter 4. The scope of these ideologies is immense, and so the first two will be addressed in Chapter 4, and the latter two are covered in Chapter 5. To do this we will look at the development of the ideology as well as how revolutionaries have utilized and often significantly altered an ideology to fit their historical context. We will investigate the varieties of liberal ideologies used against colonial domination, communist rule, and dictators; nationalist ideologies in India and China; the adaptations of Karl Marx by Vladimir Lenin, Mao Zedong, and Fidel Castro/Che Guevara; and the varieties of Islamic fundamentalism in the world today.

Chapter 6 addresses the question: Who leads revolutions? A wide variety of types of individuals participate in or support revolutions, but revolutionary leadership often comes from certain types or classes of people. This chapter investigates a spectrum of people, focusing on their revolutionary potential and the role they typically play. These groups include intellectuals, students, workers, peasants, ethnic groups, political parties, clergy, and capitalists.

To complete the analyses in the earlier chapters, which cover ideologies, structural contexts, and leaders, Chapter 7 answers two questions: Why do people participate in revolution? How do they participate in revolution? A variety of psychological and social psychological explanations for why people participate in revolutions are explored in the chapter. Within this basic flow of revolution, there is a spectrum of strategies that push the revolution forward. This spectrum ranges from nonviolent actions such as protests and

noncooperation toward more violent actions such as guerrilla raids to full-scale civil wars. This, in short, is how people participate in revolution.

Chapter 8 deals with the aftermath of revolutions, answering the question: What is the result of revolution? As Chapter 2 shows, after the clash between revolutionaries and the government when the government is overthrown, there is necessarily a consolidation phase. This chapter looks at the types of consolidation and counterrevolutionary movements that have occurred as well as evaluates the tangible effects of revolution. Studies have shown that the ideologies espoused in the beginnings of revolutions are rarely implemented, casualty rates increase, there are significant effects on wealth, health, and social relations, and postrevolutionary states are much more likely to engage others in war.

Chapter 9 is a brief summary and discussion on the areas of consensus and continued debate in the revolution literature. Although there is relative consensus on the importance of structural factors, there continue to be debates about what constitutes revolution, the relative importance of structures versus agents, and the likelihood of revolutions in the future. There is agreement about the explanatory power of many of the theories developed in the literature but much less faith in the predictive power of these theories.

Each chapter ends with discussion questions related to the chapter, many of which encourage application to the case studies in the Appendix. The Appendix includes short overviews of some of the classic revolutions that have shaped the world's history as well as some more contemporary events. The reason for including these is to give a concise account of the key events and people so that readers can draw out further relationships to the concepts. Most scholarly work on revolutions assumes that the reader knows the basic outline of the revolution under discussion or that the reader can piece together the relevant facts as they emerge in the analysis. Although I agree that students are capable of this task, this book seeks to provide that information concisely. I have also attempted to balance between the great historical revolutions and more contemporary revolutions or revolutionary movements. In addition, the appendix includes a chronology of key events in the revolutions, the key individuals involved in the revolution, and some recommendations for further reading on that case.

Questions for Discussion and Reflection

1. How does the American Revolution fit the criteria of a social movement?
2. What is the relationship between radical reforms, rebellions, or revolts and coups d'état? Is it possible for a radical reform to discourage a rebellion but encourage a coup d'état, or vice versa?

3. What are the most important distinctions among rebellions, coups d'état, and civil wars? In what ways are they similar?

4. Once a successful revolution replaces an unpopular governing structure with one that is more widely accepted, what are the principal challenges that a revolutionary government might face?

5. Is a social/peasant revolution a more effective means of bringing about revolutionary change than a velvet/democratic revolution? Why or why not?

6. To what extent does the East Timorese battle for independence fit the definition of a revolution? Should it be considered a revolution? If so, what type of revolution (i.e., social, political, democratic, etc.)?

7. How did the actions of the Indonesian government help or hurt its ability to undermine a revolutionary or independence movement in East Timor? What comparisons can be made between the East Timorese fight for independence and the American Revolution?

Notes

1. As George Lawson notes: "Revolution is a constant feature of world history: a study of its etymology would have to include the Greek concepts of *epanastasis* (revolt) and *neoterismos* (innovation), the Arabic terms *inqilab* (to rotate) and *thaura* (to revolt), the notions of *mered* (rebellion), *kom* (uprising), *marah* (revolt) and *kesher* (plot) in classical Hebrew, and the Chinese word *ge-ming* (change of life, fate or destiny). Over the last two hundred years deriving in part from the work of Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau, the concept of revolution has become more circumscribed, assuming a narrow meaning as a radical break from past arrangements. In this way, the English Civil War of the 1640s was reinterpreted as a revolution during the eighteenth-century, as was the Revolt of Netherlands and, later on, the American War of Independence. After the French Revolution, the concept took on a kind of transcendental, metahistorical tilt that universalized, naturalized and ultimately, mythologized, the revolutionary experience. Rationality, progress and liberty became inexorably tied to the concept of revolution alongside the idea of total, inevitable change" (2005: 52).

2. A caveat about control of the state is warranted: the change in government must be for a significant period of time. The seizure of the reins of power for a week only to be turned over to another group does not constitute a revolution. Tilly argues that a month of control is the bare minimum to consider an event as a transfer of power. Rapid changes in power either mean that a revolution is continuing to unfold or that a country is sliding into the category of a failed state.