

States, Ideologies, and Social Revolutions

*A Comparative Analysis of Iran, Nicaragua,
and the Philippines*

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

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Linking structures and processes

Most scholars define social revolutions as rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures that are carried through class-based revolts from below (Skocpol 1979:4). Although this tends to be a very demanding definition, it is very useful in distinguishing social revolutions from other political conflicts and outcomes. According to this definition, the ousters of the Shah and Somoza in Iran and Nicaragua qualify as social revolutions, while the removal of Marcos in the Philippines does not. While debates¹ over the definition of revolutions continue, the crucial task undertaken here is to explain what happened in the three cases and why.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Exclusive rule: centralization and repression

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

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

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

double-edged sword. Although such relations may protect dependent states in the international state system, shifts in international alignments may expose them to unfavorable political decisions made beyond their borders. Support may be eroded during times when major powers are preoccupied with war or urgent internal conflicts, or are seeking to balance one another's allies. Additionally, the dependent states are at an obvious disadvantage when they receive less external support than do the armed rebel groups within their borders seeking to overthrow them (Goldfrank 1979:149). External support may even be withdrawn in the face of a forceful internal opposition, especially when continued support for the existing regime could potentially spawn a more radical alternative that may pose a greater threat to the old regime's external allies. Thus, a high level of dependence on external sources may prove distinctly detrimental in times of conflicts and crisis.

Social theorists have long maintained that states which are characterized by exclusive rule and extreme centralization of power are highly vulnerable to challenge and attack (Goodwin and Skocpol 1994). Moore has suggested that centralization of power in China rendered that state more vulnerable to peasant rebellion than India (Moore 1966:458–459). Tilly argued that “Perhaps the largest single factor in the promotion of revolutions and collective violence has been the great centralization of power in national states” (Tilly 1973:445–446). Skocpol (1979:47) presented a similar analysis of the French, Russian, and Chinese states, which were centralized and relatively autonomous from the dominant classes and geared toward extracting greater surplus. All three states were overthrown by revolutions.

State intervention and target of social conflicts

The relationship between the state and economy has crucial consequences for social conflicts. Although virtually ignored by structural theorists of revolution, state intervention in capital allocation and accumulation has profound consequences in such situations. Skocpol's analysis of the “rentier state” (1982) does capture an aspect of state intervention, but it is a concept that is too narrow and thus fails to explain revolutions in non-oil-producing countries. Basically, state intervention in capital accumulation converts the government into a major economic actor and thus affects the nature of social conflicts by providing a visible, concrete target for challenge and attack. State intervention has an impact on social and political conflicts by affecting the interests of various social classes and collectivities and thus setting the stage for conflicts. Furthermore, the level of state intervention affects the nature and likelihood of

class conflict. These variables in turn affect the outcome of social conflicts.

The degree of state intervention in the economy can be analyzed by means of a simple typology categorizing the level of government involvement in the process of capital accumulation. Based on such criteria, three types of states can be distinguished: regulative states, administrative states, and hyperactive states.⁴ Regulative states intervene minimally in the economy, limiting their activities to enforcing rules and assuring “efficient” operation of the market, often through fiscal and monetary policies. Administrative states intervene moderately in economic matters. In addition to regulative activities, they initiate planning, pursue corporatist policies, and may provide economic incentives to certain sectors. Hyperactive states intervene extensively in capital allocation and accumulation, thus limiting the scope of the market’s operation. In addition to extensive regulating and planning, hyperactive states often own and control vast economic resources and, consequently, become major economic actors.

In general, social conflicts may lead to revolution only when contending collectivities and classes target the state. Although many factors contribute to struggle over state power, certain state structures seem to be more vulnerable to social conflicts than others. The level of state intervention affects the nature and outcome of social conflicts. In general, a low level of state intervention in capital accumulation, as exists in regulative states, reduces the probability that the state will become the direct target of collective action and thus, in turn, diminishes the likelihood of revolutionary conflicts. In this case, capital allocation and accumulation are determined by an abstract, decentralized, depoliticized, and “self-regulating” market system, which tends to defuse and privatize conflicts, confining them to the civil society. Because it is abstract, decentralized, and depoliticized, the market cannot be attacked or overthrown. As a result, the regulative state is unlikely to attract direct attacks or challenges because class conflict remains confined within the economic sphere and the civil society. Should such conflicts escalate, aggrieved groups may clamor for the state to intervene on their behalf against their adversaries. Because aggrieved groups solicit help from the state, rather than attacking it, they are far more likely to be reformist than revolutionary. Furthermore, when state intervention is low, the regulative state tends to be perceived as an autonomous entity that serves general, societal interests. In such cases, the state may become an integrative, rather than a divisive, force. Finally, a low level of state intervention in capital accumulation may increase the likelihood and intensity of class conflict. Intensification of class conflict, in turn,

⁴ I have borrowed the first two terms from the work of Zysman (1983), although he may not agree with my definitions.

removes the state from being the principal target of attack and thus reduces the likelihood of revolution.

In contrast, states that intervene to a great extent in the economy render themselves more vulnerable to challenge and attack. Hyperactive states tend to become major economic actors, control a great deal of economic resources, and intervene extensively in capital allocation and accumulation. As loci of accumulation, hyperactive states may become direct producers and financiers. In extreme cases, a hyperactive state may even become the single largest entrepreneur, industrialist, banker, and landowner in its domain. These states also tend to institute regulative mechanisms, which intervene extensively in multitudinous aspects of the economy in order to promote economic development.

High levels of intervention entail significant political consequences for the interventionist states. High state intervention replaces the abstract, decentralized, and depoliticized market mechanism with a visible, concrete, social entity, which can be targeted for attack during conflict or crisis (Parsa 1985, 1989; Rueschemeyer and Evans 1985:69). High state intervention expands the extent of political conflicts because of the convergence of economic and political conflicts in the political arena. In addition to ordinary political conflicts, states also become the center for economic conflicts. Thus, at times of economic crisis, the state, rather than market forces, will be held accountable for failure and mismanagement, once again making the government vulnerable to challenge and attack. Furthermore, hyperactive states in developing countries often pursue development strategies that serve narrow and particular, rather than general societal, interests. Such strategies are often accompanied by rapid accumulation of resources in some sectors in contrast to others, thus widening social, economic, and regional inequalities. State power in such conditions becomes visibly and directly linked to privilege and disprivilege and inevitably politicizes the development process. If inequalities and disadvantages were generated by the market mechanism, adversely affected groups would not blame the state; rather, aggrieved segments of the population would demand state intervention to redress their grievances. But when rising inequality is directly and visibly linked to state policies, politicization may be inevitable and the hyperactive state cannot escape liability.

Finally, a high level of state intervention affects the nature of economic and political conflict. Hyperactive states that employ sizable segments of the workforce inevitably tend to become the target of workers' economic conflicts. Workers' attacks against the state may reduce the intensity of class conflict. Reduction in the intensity of class conflict, in turn, increases the likelihood of coalition formation and revolutions.

Following World War II, state intervention expanded dramatically in many dimensions. Although it is impossible to quantify this variable, an approximation of the degree of intervention may be obtained by examining the government's share of total fixed capital expenditure within the national economy. Table 1 presents the public share of fixed capital formation, that is, expenditures on infrastructure and public enterprises, for a number of non-socialist, developed and developing countries between 1978 and 1980. As the table illustrates, governments in developed countries did not intervene highly, but those in developing countries were highly interventionist. The share of fixed capital formation in Western Europe and North America was modest, ranging from 8.3 percent in Spain and 8.5 percent in the United States to a high of 18.4 percent in Ireland. Among developed countries, Japan and New Zealand had the highest ratio, 31.3 and 33.5 percent respectively. In contrast, most states in developing countries seemed to play a much greater role in fixed capital expenditures. Most developing countries had exceedingly high levels of state contribution, with some African countries, such as Burundi and Morocco, reaching upwards of 95 percent. Indeed, perhaps the most significant characteristic of states in developing countries is that they were at the center of economic activity and development, in contrast to Western European and North American states.

Although European governments played a crucial role in economic growth in the initial stages of their development,⁵ developing countries in the decades following World War II until at least the early 1980s pursued highly interventionist approaches. The many economic factors that influence government intervention in developing countries include the absence of a strong and resourceful entrepreneurial class; high risk and large investment; the need to provide support for the private sector by developing basic industries; stiff competition from powerful transnational corporations; and the rising cost of capital and advanced technology in the twentieth century. In some cases, the departure of foreign capital led to an increased number of state-owned enterprises, which at times represented a significant share of the economy.⁶ Political factors, too, can bring about government intervention, such as the rise of nationalist movements and the nationalization of foreign assets; pressures from below to nationalize

⁵ Although the state performed certain necessary functions in the economic development of Western European countries, its activities were limited in comparison with contemporary Third World countries. For the European experience see Hall and Ikenberry (1989), Supple (1980), Tilly (1990), Weiss and Hobson (1995).

⁶ State enterprises accounted for 75 percent of the total sales by firms in developing countries, compared with 10 percent for public enterprises in developed countries (Kirkpatrick 1984:152). On the issue of public enterprises see also the following works: Gillis (1980), Shepherd (1976), and Short (1984).

Table 1 *Public share of fixed capital expenditure in comparative perspective, 1978–1980*

Developing countries	Percentage	Developing countries	Percentage
Morocco	95.59	India	45.42
Burundi	95.20	Fiji	45.03
Zambia	82.99	Argentina	44.65
Togo	75.59	Venezuela	44.51
Gambia	73.23	Congo	43.28
Malawi	70.33	Botswana	43.22
Seychelles	67.10	Kenya	43.03
Central African Republic	65.67	Mexico	42.24
Benin	63.66	Brazil	40.81
Pakistan	62.46	Uruguay	40.60
Swaziland	62.29	Papua New Guinea	40.54
Cape Verde	59.62	Saudi Arabia	40.26
Cameroon	59.18	Ecuador	38.33
Lesotho	58.94	Rwanda	38.29
Liberia	58.74	Egypt	38.27
Tunisia	58.66	El Salvador	38.02
Bolivia	57.76	Honduras	37.37
Sri Lanka	57.68	Chile	36.98
Yemen	55.92	Colombia	36.40
Jordan	55.69	Senegal	36.20
Sierra Leone	51.74	Chad	36.11
Haiti	51.67	Nepal	36.07
Zaire	51.28	Malaysia	35.82
Jamaica	51.26	Costa Rica	34.93
Uganda	51.07	Gabon	34.91
Nigeria	50.59	Mauritius	34.16
Turkey	50.56	Guatemala	34.07
Trinidad-Tobago	49.52	Thailand	31.79
Ghana	49.32	Dominican Republic	29.33
Taiwan	47.02	Somalia	27.07
Bangladesh	46.28	Singapore	26.52
Mali	45.96	Paraguay	23.40
Indonesia	45.85	Peru	22.86
Panama	45.80	South Korea	19.11

Table 1 (cont.)

Developed countries	Percentage	Developed countries	Percentage
New Zealand	33.58	Netherlands	15.15
Japan	31.30	Iceland	14.87
Ireland	18.41	United Kingdom	14.05
Switzerland	17.99	France	13.33
Denmark	17.81	Australia	13.08
Sweden	17.45	Finland	12.81
Austria	17.20	Italy	12.79
Belgium-Luxemburg	16.44	Canada	11.93
Norway	15.89	United States	8.58
Germany	15.86	Spain	8.32

Source: World Bank (1991)

or expand employment; and antagonism against out-of-favor entrepreneurs linked to outsiders.

Governments in many developing countries own some of the most important economic assets, such as basic industries or oil and other minerals, which are significant sources of revenue. Such states may also control most of the country's financial capital. During the Cold War, many such states were the recipients of foreign aid and development assistance, which transformed them into major financial players. They also borrowed massive amounts of capital from international banks to promote economic development. An important consequence of state capital allocation is the increasing potential for the financial system to become politicized, especially where preferential treatment excludes segments of the business community. Many governments in developing countries also became direct producers and owned the largest industrial enterprises in their countries. The 500 largest industrial corporations outside the United States in 1979 included 52 corporations in developing countries. Of these, 34 were owned by the state (*Fortune*, August 13, 1979).

Governments in developing countries also used a variety of regulatory mechanisms. In pursuit of import substitution industrialization after World War II, many governments in developing countries erected steep tariff barriers, issued limited licenses, and allocated foreign exchange on the basis of quotas to restrict domestic competition. To promote industrial development and obtain vital technology, these states sometimes overvalued their currency, thus adversely affecting the agricultural sector. Sometimes they also controlled wages and prices, which severely

undermined the market mechanism. More importantly, states often intervened in industrial relations as well, restricting or banning labor organizations and strikes in order to speed up capital accumulation.

Although a number of countries in Asia and other parts of the world have successfully used state power to promote industrialization (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan), in general, high state intervention increases the likelihood that social conflicts will become politicized and, given the appropriate conditions, target the state. High levels of state intervention in capital accumulation in developing countries often have negative consequences for many social groups and classes, thereby weakening political support for the regime across the board and setting the stage for social conflict. For example, state intervention during the 1960s and 1970s adversely affected the agricultural sector in many developing countries that pursued import-substitution industrialization. These governments either ignored the agrarian sector or failed to carry out substantial reforms to improve the condition of the peasantry. In fact, in most cases, government intervention served the interests of large producers at the expense of smaller ones. State intervention in the industrial sector may also adversely affect working-class interests when hyperactive states promote capital accumulation by banning strikes, keeping wages down, and restricting or prohibiting working-class organizations. Although ordinarily workers may accept these policies, in times of crisis these policies constitute grounds for working-class mobilization. The likelihood of workers' politicization increases, particularly in conditions where state intervention is high and the government is the principal employer. In such cases, the state will become the direct target of workers' attacks.

High levels of state intervention may also negatively affect the capitalist class, splitting its interests. While state intervention may protect and promote nascent industries, some capitalists may oppose regulative activities, for example, limited licensing and high protective tariffs, which may reduce potential entry into such sectors. While these policies may prove highly lucrative for a small segment of capitalists who are protected from competition and the vagaries of the market, the vast majority of small and medium-sized capitalists may oppose such privileges because they may be compelled to operate without protection and advantages. Capitalists may likewise oppose state intervention in capital allocation, which often politicizes the financial process, because segments of the capitalist class are likely to be excluded from government resources. Although large, favored enterprises may be granted access to state resources, small and medium-sized businesses may be excluded, placed in precarious circumstances, and may turn to bribery to gain advantage. These capitalists often condemn corruption because it imposes an addi-

tional cost on their businesses. Exclusion of these smaller entrepreneurs from the most favorable loans and subsidies may reduce the hyperactive state's base of social support, making it vulnerable in times of conflict.

Such high levels of state intervention may inevitably result in the exclusion of segments of the capitalist class from preferential treatment by the government because of the relatively large size of the class in developing countries. This class remains sizable in developing countries in contrast to industrialized countries, where capitalism and market competition have reduced its size. As shown in table 2, employers and self-employed segments of the population constitute 38.09 percent in Bangladesh, 25.67 percent in Brazil, 67.7 percent in Ghana, 30.55 percent in Iran, 29.93 percent in Nicaragua, and 36.33 percent in the Philippines. In contrast, the corresponding figures are only 8.1 percent of the workforce in the United States, 7.57 percent in the United Kingdom, 8.36 percent in West Germany and 14.29 percent in Japan. Where the capitalist class is large, as it is in developing countries, it may be inevitable that significant segments of this class will find themselves excluded from preferential treatment and government resources.

Where high levels of state intervention adversely affect the interests of all major social classes, this may encourage coalition formation among various social groups. Although these social groups and classes may have conflicting interests, in times of crisis they may coalesce against a common enemy, that is, the interventionist state.

Finally, the hyperactive state may also become a target of attack if it pursues inappropriate economic and financial policies that increase the country's economic vulnerability in the world market.⁷ States that heavily rely on external sources of capital and technology may become vulnerable during unfavorable economic conditions and experience a debt crisis (Foran 1993, 1997; Walton 1989:299). Of course, government mismanagement of resources often intensifies the debt crisis. The vulnerability is especially acute for developing countries that rely heavily on exports of a few raw materials and primary commodities. An economic downturn may produce falling prices for these goods and a decline in demand on the world market. Monocrop economies can be devastated by such world market fluctuations, and even oil-rich countries are susceptible. A decline in the world market can negatively affect those segments of the population that produce the single export and may even threaten broad segments of the population. In the context of declining resources, a highly indebted country may experience a balance of payments crisis and may be

⁷ Dependence may generate economic difficulties and render Third World countries vulnerable to political conflicts; see Eckstein (1989), Foran (1993, 1997a), Wolf (1969), Paige (1975), Walton (1989), and Boswell and Dixon (1990).

Table 2 *Percentage of employers and self-employed in the total labor force, in comparative perspective*

Developing countries	Percentage	Developed countries	Percentage
Togo	70.28	Ireland	19.01
Malawi	69.88	Israel	18.29
Ghana	67.70	Italy	17.94
Nigeria	65.39	Spain	17.92
Cameroon	60.24	New Zealand	15.98
Sudan	57.95	Japan	14.29
Haiti	51.48	Australia	13.96
Pakistan	48.17	France	13.96
Mali	45.84	Finland	13.43
Guatemala	42.19	Singapore	12.72
Bangladesh	38.09	Austria	10.09
Ecuador	37.27	Denmark	8.90
Philippines	36.33	Norway	8.82
Greece	32.53	Sweden	8.66
Iran	30.55	Netherlands	8.64
Nicaragua	29.93	Canada	8.49
El Salvador	28.24	Germany	8.36
South Korea	28.11	United States	8.10
Venezuela	27.40	United Kingdom	7.57
Morocco	27.08		
Mexico	27.00		
Colombia	26.94		
Taiwan	26.92		
Egypt	26.51		
Chile	26.47		
Turkey	26.10		
Brazil	25.67		
Tunisia	25.06		
Portugal	24.71		
Sri Lanka	24.57		
Malaysia	24.20		
Costa Rica	24.00		

Source: ILO, *Yearbook of Labor Statistics, 1989–90*. Geneva: ILO.

required to initiate “structural adjustment” and currency devaluation, often with adverse effects on the country’s entire economic structure.

To sum up, the high level of intervention characteristic of hyperactive states can reduce the operation of the market mechanism and politicize the process of capital allocation and accumulation, making the state a target for aggrieved social groups. Exclusionary state policies may affect various interests adversely and diminish support for the state. If such

exclusion is coupled with external economic adversities and pressures, hyperactive states may become increasingly vulnerable to crisis and challenge.

But structural vulnerabilities by themselves do not inevitably produce social conflict, let alone revolution. The history of the world is replete with examples of states that were highly centralized and interventionist and also excluded and adversely affected large segments of the population. Many of these states had only limited social support, yet only a few actually experienced social revolution. In short, structural theories by themselves are inadequate to explain the eruption, nature, timing, and outcome of social conflicts (Aya 1990; Kim 1991:10; Walton 1984). Although structural factors set the stage for conflict and restrict certain options by affecting the interests and capacities of different collectivities for mobilization and action, they cannot determine the complex revolutionary processes and actual outcomes. There is always more than one potential outcome present in any conflictual situation (Kimmel 1990:185–186). Similar structural conditions may give rise to different outcomes (Selbin 1993:29). Thus, any analysis of revolution must also take into account the revolutionary process and the role of revolutionary challengers in order to explain the outcome of social conflicts.

Collective action and coalition formation

All social structures generate conflicting interests. But such conflicts do not usually translate into mobilization and insurgency in the short run. Thus, analyses of social revolutions must go beyond structural theories and examine the process of mobilization and collective action. It is essential to explain the revolutionary process by focusing on variables such as opportunities, organization, threats, vulnerabilities and coalition formation (Tilly 1978).

In highly repressive situations, large-scale insurgencies are initiated only when favorable opportunities emerge, that is, when the balance of power favors disadvantaged groups and classes (McAdam 1982:40–41; McAdam and Snow 1997:34). “The major power of movement is exerted when opportunities are widening, elites are divided and realignments are occurring,” as Tarrow (1994:150) has noted. Favorable opportunities may arise when the state becomes vulnerable due to external pressures, schisms within the state, or state reforms that reduce repression against insurgents (Jenkins 1985; Jenkins and Perrow 1977). External pressures may render the state vulnerable particularly when the state is highly dependent on external powers in the world system. State vulnerability may lead well-organized collectivities to challenge the state.

External pressures may also prompt the state to introduce certain reforms that could reduce repression and facilitate opposition mobilization and collective action. Finally, repressive measures in the context of political polarization may also generate popular mobilization and collective action and render the state vulnerable. Regimes that are threatened by large-scale challenges may resort to sudden repressive measures to intimidate the opposition. Ironically, repressive measures undertaken by the government against leading challengers may render the state vulnerable by generating at least a short-term coalition among broad segments of the population and various collectivities. Unfortunately, political opportunity theorists have not studied the complex role and impact of repression on opportunities in the context of political polarization.⁸

Once favorable opportunities emerge, collectivities and classes that are organized have a greater potential to engage in collective action than those that are unorganized. "Individuals are not magically mobilized for participation in some group enterprise, regardless of how angry, sullen, hostile or frustrated they may feel. Their aggression may be channeled to collective ends only through the coordinating, directing functions of an organization, be it formal or informal . . . otherwise, the unhappy merely brood passively on the sidelines" (Shorter and Tilly 1974:338). Organizations provide communication networks essential for collective action, adopt tactics and strategies, and coordinate the actions of large numbers of people (Morris 1984:282). Most significantly, organizations are most effective when they can mobilize preexisting solidarities and stimulate larger publics into collective action (Tarrow 1994:150). Such organizations, of course, must be independent of the structures they attack. For this reason, those alternative channels of mobilization that are not restricted by government repression may have a decisive impact on the outcome of the conflicts.

In the absence of prior state breakdown or military victory by insurgents, various social classes and collectivities must form broad coalitions to neutralize government repression and overthrow the regime. But coalition formation is often a difficult process because of the existence of disparate interests and ideologies in any society at any point in time. The nature of the state and level of state intervention affect the likelihood of coalition formation. A high level of state intervention encourages the likelihood of coalition formation because it tends to become the target of attack for every major social class and collectivity. The nature of the political system may also affect coalition formation. Exclusive rule also tends to limit options for change and weaken or repress the moderate

⁸ Charles Kurzman (1996) has criticized political opportunity theorists for ignoring subjective perceptions in the analysis of revolutions.