REVOLUTIONS AND COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE

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FINAL DRAFT

The Task

Suppose we were looking forward to yet another uncertain year in the political life of our country—whichever country it is—and we wanted to reduce our uncertainty. For that year and that country, how could we go about estimating the probability of two conditions: a) that a revolution would occur; b) that more than some minimum proportion (say ten percent) of the country's population would take direct part in collective violence?

These are more or less meteorological questions: what will the political weather be like? Should I get ready for a storm? We might also complicate the problem by turning the two into engineering questions. Suppose we want to produce a revolution, or more than a minimum involvement in collective violence, or both, within that country-year. What would it take?

The turbulent twentieth century has brought plenty of attention to bear on both the meteorological and the engineering versions of these questions. Yet the reliability of our answers to them has not

improved notably over those offered by Aristotle at the very dawn
of systematic thinking about revolution and political violence.
(With no particular embarrassment, indeed, a respectable political
science journal once published an article treating the Quantifica-
tion of Aristotle's Theory of Revolution; see Kort 1952.*) I don't
mean to belittle Aristotle. He was a master political analyst.
His formulations have lasted twenty-four centuries. Some formula-
tions in this essay will be thoroughly Aristotelian. Still, one
might have thought in twenty-four centuries men could have improved
on his politics, as they have on his physics. No doubt Aristotle
would have been baffled by the enormous, powerful national states
which populate today's political world; his theories tend to lose
their shape when stretched over twentieth-century politics. But
the same thing happens when current theories of revolution are
exported to the city-states with which Aristotle was familiar.
In this strict sense of predictability, the systematic formulations
of political scientists improve little on the haphazard formula-
tions of common sense. And the formulations of common sense
improve little on casting dice or reading omens.

I am talking about systematic knowledge; the acid test is
whether it helps us anticipate what will turn up in some as-yet

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*Citations in this form refer to the list of references at the end
of the essay.

unexplored corner of experience with less error than other ways of thought. That sort of knowledge overlaps with several other kinds which have a lot to do with revolution and collective violence. Political philosophy, in examining the principles according to which men attempt to organize their public life, and comparing them with the alternative principles men might employ, has much to say about conflict. Statements of political programs and credos usually include strong ideas concerning the justification--or lack of it-- for violence and revolution. Theoreticians and practitioners have created a vast tactical literature: how to make revolutions, how to foil them, principles of guerilla, principles of "counterin- surgency." Systematic knowledge obviously sets constraints on all these other ways of knowing, but it does not exhaust or replace them. Systematic knowledge concerns us here.

It is possible that the pursuit of systematic knowledge about collective violence and revolution destines the pursuer to failure and irrelevance in all but the longest of long runs. A scheme which will predict elections with no more than 5 percent error embodies quite an intellectual achievement, but it does little good to anyone in a political system in which most elections hang on a margin of less than 5 percent. With every reason to believe that revolutions and collective violence are at least as complicated and contingent as elections, we have to beware of the "quick fix" and resign ourselves to the prospect of repeated

blunders. Any careful examination of the constantly accumulating writings on revolution and collective violence will convince the reader that the blundering has been going on for a long time, and shows no signs of ceasing. Nor do I hope for an instant that this essay will end the trend, or even avoid it.

Available Ideas: General

Like the old-time doctors who gravely sniffed the chamber pots of their patients, we could seek to diagnose the ills of political science by close examination of the large variety of available theories of revolution and collective violence. That unpleasant task will not occupy us much here, as it has been done thoroughly and well elsewhere (see Bienen 1968, Converse 1968, Stone 1966, Gurr 1969, Alberoni 1968: ch.I, Eckstein 1965, Fink 1968). This review will only catalog or criticize established theories where they will clarify the argument. It will follow the riskier course of concentrating on a single approach to political conflict which is promising, which takes into account a good deal of previous thinking and research, but which is also far from accepted or proved.

The task itself needs defining. Whether we are trying to anticipate or to manipulate the political weather, it is quite easy to confuse two different procedures. The first is the explanation of a particular conflict or class of conflicts by moving backward from the effect to the complex of causes which lies behind it: Why the Whiskey Rebellion? Why the recurrent military coups of Latin America? The question is retrospective, moving from outcome

to origin. The second procedure is the assessment of the probable consequences of a given set of circumstances: What effect does rapid industrialization have on the nature or frequency of protest? What sorts of power struggles tend to follow losses in war? What is this year's likelihood of a rebellion in South Africa, under suppositions A, B or C about her relations with the rest of the world? These questions have a prospective character, moving from origin to outcome--or, more likely, to a set of outcomes varying in probability.

The prospective procedure and the retrospective one converge under some special conditions: 1) if a particular outcome follows uniquely and with high probability from a particular antecedent circumstance, and 2) if the only question that matters is the likelihood of that one outcome, or 3) if all the relevant variables are known. In political analysis, these conditions are (to put it gently) rare. Yet in the analysis of revolution, the standard procedure is to draw prospective conclusions from retrospective analyses, going from the fact of revolution in particular to the conditions under which revolutions occur in general.

Although collective violence occurs every day, revolutions are rare events. They don't lend themselves to the sorts of statistical procedures which help us make sense of births, or traffic patterns or shifts in everyday speech. Their occurrence almost certainly depends on the convergence of different conditions, rather than one

sure-fire cause. It is even possible that the phenomenon we label "revolution" is simply the most visible resultant of several relatively independent processes, in the same sense that the change in a city's population is a sum of the effects of in-migration, out-migration, births and deaths. The movement from growth to decline may well have devastating effects on the life of the city; yet it is quite likely that nothing whatsoever happened at the point of transition from growth to decline but the continutation of long-established trends in migration, fertility and mortality.

Tradition and common sense argue against the application of that sort of model to revolution . . . but then tradition and common sense also treat urban growth and urban decline as products of drastically different situations. The probability that revolution is a much more complex process, or bundle of processes, than urban growth should encourage us to break it up into its parts before reconstructing a single model of the revolutionary process.

Deeply-ingrained prejudices struggle against this sort of analytical disaggregation of revolutionary processes. Nineteenth-century sociology bequeathed to us a view of large-scale social structure and social change which remains marvelously compelling despite the mounting evidence against it. The correspondence of the formulations of a Durkheim or a Tönnies to the folk sociology of our era makes them persuasive. So we find ourselves dealing with variations on the theme of a coherent society (conveniently matched

to a national state, with the problem of whether Italian society
existed before 1860, or Canadian society exists today, left con-
veniently vague) precariously integrated by commitment to common
values (conveniently described as those of the dominant elites)
responding to every structural change by a temporary dis-integra-
tion which leads to new efforts at integration.

The adoption of this world view leads almost without effort
to the sharp separation of "orderly" and "disorderly" responses to
structural change, and hence to the argument that the likelihood
of orderly responses to change is a function of a) the strength of
commitment of all members of the society to its common values,
b) the gradualness and evenness of the change. Those who adopt this
vision of the way the world works will find it natural to assume
that mobility is more disruptive for individual and society than
immobility, that crime is performed by people who are "poorly inte-
grated" into routine social life, that a rising suicide rate, a
rising illegitimacy rate and a rising divorce rate are reliable
signs of social disintegration, and that movements of protest draw
their clientele from marginal members of society but--fortunately!--
tend to become more moderate, reasonable and realistic, as well as
to shed their wildest members, in the course of political experience.
All of these can, of course, be made true by definition. Leaving
that trap aside, however, every one of them remains unproved and,
at best, dubious (see Cornelius 1970, Nelson 1969 and 1970, Bienen
1968, Gurr 1969: ch. 4, Kantor 1965).

Dozens of observers of our times, lulled by the retroactive pacification of the past and then shaken by the violence of the present, have supposed that a fixed, instinctive drive to aggression underlies the readiness of men to attack each other. Remove the restraints or flash the signals, goes the argument, and the fateful urge will rise. One popular account relying heavily on animal studies observes:

> We already know that if our populations go on increasing at their present terrifying rate, uncontrollable aggressiveness will become dramatically increased. This has been proved conclusively with laboratory experiments. Gross overcrowding will produce social stresses and tensions that will shatter our community organizations long before it starves us to death. It will work directly against improvements in the intellectual control and will savagely heighten the likelihood of emotional explosion (Morris 1967: 145).

If we adopted this reasoning in detail, we would have to expect that American cities, expecially automobile cities like Dallas and Los Angeles, would be among the least "aggressive" in the world, for they are settled at far lower densities than their European or Asian counterparts, and have been getting less dense for decades. They are not so peaceful as all that. If we take the argument as simply identifying one of the factors behind violence, on the other hand, its capacity to account for the large, genuine variations in violence from time to time, place to place, group to group dwindles. We have as yet no good means of distinguishing the effects of crowding from that of a great many other characteristics of cities. For the present, then, attempts to apply to human aggregates the alleged lessons of animal-aggression studies lead us into a dead end.

A more powerful version of the argument has "aggression" re-
sulting mainly from the amount of frustration endured by men, tem-
pered by existing constraints on the release of that aggression.
A wonderful variety of conditions win nomination as frustrations
capable of producing aggression--not only high densities, but also
sexual repression, sexual freedom, wealth, poverty. If these anal-
yses of aggressive impulses were correct, aggression would rise and
fall regularly with the alteration of the signals, the frustration
and/or the restraints. So far as I can tell, they do not. But
even if such theories of impulse were valid, the necessity of estab-
lishing exactly which conditions were frustrating, or restraining,
or stimulating, would involve us again in analyzing the social rela-
tions which actually turn to violent encounters.

Our nineteenth-century sociology also favors a particular inter-
pretation of political conflict, especially revolution. Revolutions
and other major conflicts arise, in this view, because structural
change builds up unresolved tensions which burst into disorder
when and where restraints are weak. Those tensions build up in sev-
eral ways: through expectations which rise faster than achievement
and thus produce frustration; through the disorientation suffered
by those who cut traditional social ties; through the inherent
psychic costs of mobility, complexity, variety and impersonality;
through the difficulty of performing contradictory roles. The ten-
sions build up in individuals, but eventually achieve collective
expression.

Embedded in this foundation for the study of political con-
flict are a whole series of related fallacies:

1. that rebellion is an individual act intimately dependent
on a certain attitude--a rebellious attitude--toward some
or all authorities;

2. that the likelihood of mass rebellion is a linear func-
tion of the sum of individual hostilities to the regime,
which is in turn a linear function of the sum of depriva-
tions experienced by the individuals;

3. that there is a close correspondence between the sum
of individual intentions of participants in revolution-
ary actions and the changes produced by those actions;

4. that revolution is simply the extreme position on a
scale running from fleeting individual protests to durable
anger on the part of the entire population, which implies
that the extent of discontent and the likelihood of a
transfer of power are closely related to one another;

5. that revolution and revolutionary propensity are con-
ditions of a "society" or a "social system" rather than
of a particular government or a particular population.

This variety of reasoning permits theorists like Chalmers Johnson,

James Davies, Ted Gurr and Neil Smelser to erect schemes in which

some inefficiency in "the system" expands the fund of discontent,

which in turn leads to assaults on those who hold power. These

social scientists concentrate their theorizing

and their research on individual attitudes or on the condition of

the social system as a whole. They neglect the struggles among

classes and power blocs which constitute the bulk of political

conflict.

In the standard social-psychological treatment, the implicit crude model of the whole process therefore looks something like this:

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                    ┌──────────────┐              ┌──────────────┐
                    │ normal       │         ┌──→ │ external     │ ←┐
                    │ tension      │         │    │ restraints   │  │
                    │ release      │         │    └──────────────┘  │
                    │ mechanisms   │              │ -               │
┌──────────────┐    └──────────────┘              ↓                 │
│ rising       │ +     │ -      ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  │
│ expectations │ ──→   ↓        │ accumulation │  │ protest      │  │
└──────────────┘  ┌──→          │     of       │ +│ etc.         │  │
            +  +  │             │   tension    │ ─→└──────────────┘  │
┌──────────────┐ │             └──────────────┘                     │
│ structural   │ │          ↑ +                                     │
│ change       │ ──→ ┌──────────────┐                               │
└──────────────┘  +  │ detachment of│                               │
                     │ individuals  │                               │
                     │ from social  │                               │
                     │ ties         │                               │
                     └──────────────┘                               │
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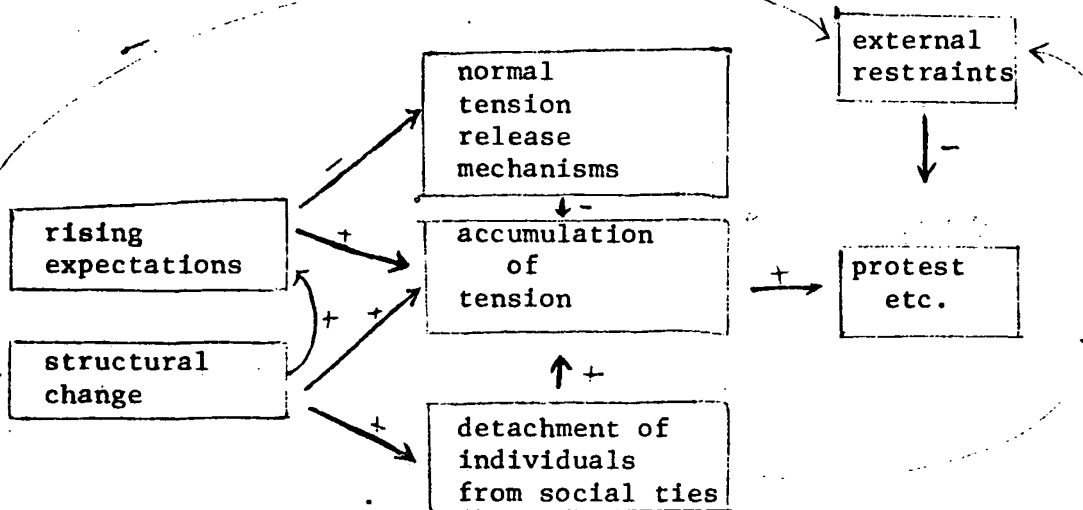
Hence the recipe for avoiding major conflicts goes; slow down the pace of change; dampen unrealistic expectations; expand the opportunities for gradual release of tension; reinforce existing social ties and speed the acquisition of new ones; strengthen external restraints, especially by reinforcing commitments to common values.

This is, to be sure, a caricature. I hope it is recognizable in the same way that Daumier's nineteenth-century caricatures were; it represents a reality. In any case, my plan is not to summon the caricature to life and do battle with him, but to sketch another contrasting figure, and see how much vitality he has.

We have to face some serious problems of definition. Yield to the temptation to single out a small set of "true" revolutions in which a whole class gained power, or an even smaller set in

which deep, long-run structural changes resulted from the transfer of power. The danger is then not only that the number of cases you are working with will be too tiny to permit effective comparison (A distinguished student of political change, commenting on a student's proposal to undertake the study of revolutions, asked, "Which of the four are you studying?") but also that you will be making the wrong comparisons. If, for example, attempts to make revolutions differed fundamentally from all other sorts of political conflicts, but successful and unsuccessful attempts differed only through the intervention of chance, then a lifelong study of successful revolutions alone would probably yield nothing but shaky hypotheses about the causes of revolution. That is not an argument for abandoning the analysis of the so-called Great Revolutions, but for trying to link their study with that of the larger set of events to which they belong. Then we can preserve the distinctness of the Great Revolutions by treating revolutionary character--the extent to which the particular series of events at hand produced class realignments, transformations of government, further structural change, etc.--as a variable.

Social scientists have, I must admit, been giving--and even trying to follow--this brand of advice for some time, without resounding success. We have, for example passed through numerous twists and turns in simply trying to decide what phenomenon is under examination: "rebellion," "violence," "collective violence,"

"internal war," "conflict," "instability," "protest," "disorder." Each of these is plausible. Each carries with it a somewhat different agenda and implicit theory. The failure of any of them to stick and the ease with which writers on revolution and political conflict switch from one to another bespeak both confusion and discord about the nature of the problem at hand.

There are exceptions to the general feebleness of social-scientific work on the subject; only the repeated application of the weight of quantitative evidence assembled by psychologists and sociologists is getting across the fact that the participants in the American ghetto rebellions of the 1960s tended to be young men well-integrated in their local communities, well-convinced that they were battling injustice, and well-supported by many of their kinsmen and neighbors. Again, the general models developed by Lewis Richardson and Kenneth Boulding offer a good deal of analytic power to those who will use them. But they have had little influence on the way students of political conflict actually do their work.

In short, the promise is there in principle. In practice, it has been little realized.

Chalmers Johnson on Revolutionary Change

A glance at Chalmers Johnson's Revolutionary Change and Ted Gurr's Why Men Rebel will give a clearer idea what the model-builders have--and don't have--to offer. The books by Johnson and Gurr resemble each other in bringing to bear on a single model a whole broad tradition of thought. Johnson's Revolutionary Change braids together many fibers of social-system theorizing, which assumes a

functioning system and then follows a sequence of the sort: challenge/ dysfunction/inadequate control/revolution. Gurr's, on the other hand, follows a much more psychological reasoning which finds the cause of rebellion in a widening discrepancy between what men expect of life and what they get from it. Between the two of them, they employ almost all the well-defined ideas concerning the origins of violent conflict which are in common use among American social scientists.

Before writing his general analysis of the revolutionary process, Chalmers Johnson wrote a valuable and well-informed study of the Chinese Revolution, emphasizing the importance of anti-Japanese nationalism as a source of support for the Communists. Whatever weaknesses his theorizing may display, then, do not come from ignorance of the world outside of North America. They come rather, it seems to me, from heavy reliance on the systemic metaphor and from confusion of state with social system.

Johnson identifies three clusters of causes of revolution:

First, there are the pressures created by a disequilibrated social system--a society which is changing and which is in need of further change if it is to continue to exist. Of all the characteristics of the disequilibrated system, the one that contributed most directly to a revolution is power deflation--the fact that during a period of change the integration of a system depends increasingly upon the maintenance and deployment of force by the occupants of the formal authority statuses.

The second cluster of necessary causes revolves around the quality of the purposeful change being undertaken while a system is disequilibrated. This quality depends upon the abilities of the legitimate leaders. If they are unable to develop policies which will maintain the confidence of non-deviant actors in the system and its capacity to move toward resynchronization, a loss of authority

will ensue. Such a loss means that the use of force by
the elite is no longer considered legitimate, although
it does not necessarily mean that a revolution will occur
at once. So long as the leaders can still use the army
successfully to coerce social interaction, the system
will continue to persist. However, the power deflation
will approach maximum proportions, producing a "police
state" (e.g. South Africa today).

The final, or sufficient, cause of a revolution is some
ingredient, usually contributed by fortune, which deprives
the elite of its chief weapon for enforcing social be-
havior (e.g. an army mutiny), or which leads a group of
revolutionaries to believe that they have the means to
deprive the elite of its weapons of coercion. In this
study, such final, or immediate, causes of revolution
are referred to as "accelerators." They are the pressures,
often easily sustained in functional societies, which
when they impinge on a society experiencing power defla-
tion and a loss of authority immediately catalyze it into
insurrection. They are also the factors which determine,
when an insurrection does occur, whether or not the rev-
olutionaries will succeed in establishing and occupying
new statuses of authority (Johnson 1966: 90-91).

Johnson then attempts to link these very general phenomena to

individual behavior through the sequence: rapid change————⟶

systemic disequilibrium————⟶ overtaxing of existing means of

homeostatic and purposive response to change————⟶ individual

disorientation————⟶ panic-anxiety-shame-guilt-depression etc.

————⟶ formation of movements of protest. True to his predecessors,

he proposes the suicide rate as a prime index of disequilibrium.

Johnson peppers his work with bright ideas and good critiques

of previous analyses of revolution. His scheme, however, has little

value for the systematic analysis of political conflict. One

major reason is that the scheme is retrospective; there appears to

be no way to know whether "homeostatic" and "purposive" responses

to change were adequate except by observing whether a revolution actually occurred. Whether the questions we are asking are meteorological or engineering in style, that is a disappointing outcome. Again, the treatment of a government as an emanation of a "social system," or _vice versa_, leads to proposals for the detection of disequilibrium which are both logically and practically hopeless. "Ideally," as Johnson says, "this index would portray the magnitude of dissynchronization between the structure of values and the social division of labor, thereby indicating the potentiality for termination of a system due to its failure to fulfill its functional prerequisites" (p. 120).

The concrete proposals for predictors which follow from this general principle, according to Johnson, are: rising suicide rates, heightened ideological activity, rising military participation ratio and increases in rates of crime, especially political crime. These items have the advantage of being measurable, at least crudely; we therefore can investigate whether they predict to revolution with better than chance accuracy. Even if they do, however, no test of the theory has occurred. Acceptance of crime, suicide, ideological activity and military participation as indicators of the badness of fit between "values" and "division of labor" requires acceptance of the very theory which is supposedly up for test.

Finally, the argument provides almost no means whatsoever of inferring which people take what parts, when and why. The main

implicit proposition is that those segments of the population most

disoriented by structural change will take the most active part in

revolutionary movements:

> As the disequilibrium of a social system becomes more
> acute, personal tensions are generated in all statuses.
> These tensions may be controlled by some people through
> internal psychological defense mechanisms, and the aliena-
> tive sentiments of others may be dissipated through
> deviant behavior (e.g. fantasies, crime, mental disease,
> and psychosomatic illnesses). However, with the passage
> of time, these mechanisms tend to lose their efficacy,
> and persons subject to highly diverse status protests
> will begin to combine with each other and with deviants
> generally to form a deviant subcultural group or move-
> ment (p. 81).

Again, we are dealing with a proposition which runs a great risk of

becoming true by definition; all it takes is to give a high weight

as "deviant" to those sorts of behavior which happen to be associated

with the adoption of a revolutionary position. Leaving aside that

tendentious way of setting up the problem, however, we simply have

no reliable evidence of a general tendency for revolutionaries,

protestors, rioters or participants in mass movements to come

disproportionately from the marginal, criminal and/or disorgan-

ized parts of the population. In short, Johnson's scheme assumes

that nineteenth-century folk sociology is correct.

Even within the framework of classic sociology, Johnson takes

a step which is open to serious challenge: he essentially equates

state and society. The equation shows up most clearly in the

identification of the societal elite with those who run the state,

but it recurs in general statements throughout:

> The true mark of society, therefore, will be institutions
> charged with the exercise of physical force both to in-
> sure the perpetuation of the division of labor and to
> regulate the use of violence in conflicts of political
> interest. The most typical form of such institutions is
> the state. (p. 18)

> The most important function of the value system in a
> society is to authorize, or legitimatize, the use of
> force. (p. 26)

> Despite numerous efforts over the past century to bring
> about some form of world government, either through
> purposive organization along political lines or through
> the indirect linking of national representatives in task-
> oriented associations (postal unions, health organizations,
> bodies for establishing common standards, and so forth),
> the national state has remained the largest form of self-
> contained social system. (p. 169)

The consequence of this particular equation is to brush aside the

problematic character of the state's very existence and of its

particular boundaries at many moments of rebellion, war, revolution

and counter-revolution. States are organizations which rise, fall,

experience changes of management, and even cease to exist. Only an

extreme view of that mysterious entity called "a society" grants it

those same properties. Only a muddled view equates the experience

of the one entity with the experience of the other.

Ted Gurr on Why Men Rebel

Ted Gurr shows more awareness that these problems are problems.

His side-comments and sub-hypotheses amount to an extensive attempt

to take the organizational characteristics of governments into account.

Yet his basic theory does not permit him to deal with the phenomena

of political conflict much better than Johnson.

In his book Why Men Rebel, Gurr seeks to provide a general

explanation of "political violence." Political violence includes

all collective attacks on major political actors--especially agents
of the state--within a particular political community. Instead of
elaborating a theory of how political communities operate, however,
he concentrates on experiences which happen to individuals and then
cumulate into mass action.

The key ideas have been around a long time. Individuals anger
when they sense a large gap between what they get and what they
deserve. That can happen through a decline in what they get, or a
rise in what they feel they deserve. Given the chance, angry people
rebel. When many people go through that same experience of increas-
ing Relative Deprivation plus widening opportunity for rebellion at
the same time, political violence generalizes. Similar ideas have
often emerged in the analysis of American ghetto rebellions, of
Latin American palace coups, and of the French Revolution. Gurr
has explicated the logic of such analyses, and developed means of
measuring a number of the variables involved. Compared with the
argument of Johnson's Revolutionary Change, the Gurr scheme has the
advantage of avoiding both the assumption of a self-regulating
society and the equation of government with social system.

Seen as a retrospective analysis, Gurr's argument hangs to-
gether very well. It is, indeed, virtually true by definition.
Political violence requires some shared dissatisfaction, granted.
Shared dissatisfaction requires individual dissatisfaction, true.
Individual dissatisfaction results from an unfavorable comparison
between things as they are and things as they ought to be, no

doubt. What, then, have we excluded? The two extremes: 1) purely

instrumental accounts of rebellion, in which violence is simply the

most efficient means available for accomplishing some collective end,

2) treatments of rebellions as emanations of instinct, madness, ran-

dom impulse or occult force. Gurr's theory stands well within west-

ern political philosophy as it rejects the ideas that the most efficient

means may be hurtful to many and that the irrational plays a signifi-

cant part in large political movements. But the sealing off of those

two extremes still leaves a great deal of room between them.

A _prospective_ version of the argument, on the other hand, be-

comes more determinate and more dubious. Now the argument says that

deprivation produces anger while lack of deprivation prevents it;

that under specified conditions individual anger coalesces, with high

regularity, into collective discontent; that under further specified

conditions collective discontent has a high probability of producing

violent action. It is not enough to show that these things happen

sometimes. At the very least, they must happen more often than chance

would predict.

Gurr himself goes at the problem through the analysis of 1,100

"strife events" which occurred in 114 states or colonies from 1961

through 1965. The analysis produces some striking statistical re-

sults (including multiple correlation coefficients on the order of

.80) which Gurr takes to confirm the influence of the variables he

calls Persisting Deprivation, Short-Term Deprivation, Regime Legit-

imacy and, especially, Social and Structural Facilitation.

This last variable, Social and Structural Facilitation, illus-
trates some of the difficulties in interpreting Gurr's results.
After considerable experimentation, Gurr combined three different
indexes:

> 1) a measure of geographic inaccessibility which gave
> high scores to countries with rough terrains and
> poor transport nets;
>
> 2) a measure of the extent to which the Communist party
> was both active and illegal;
>
> 3) a measure of foreign support for domestic "initiators
> of strife."

All of these are plausibly related to the level of conflict--the
Communist Party and foreign support items so much so that one must
wonder whether Gurr has measured the same thing twice. (The same
worry about contamination dogs the interpretation of the finding that
"legitimate" regimes have lower levels of strife.) The considerable
explanatory strength of these variables, however, provides no evidence
whatsoever for the central relative-deprivation argument.

The two measures of deprivation are more crucial to the theory
and more clearly independent of the phenomena Gurr is seeking to ex-
plain, but their interpretation also raises serious problems. First,
the quality of data is low. Second, the 114 polities form a cross-
section at the same point of time; that means one must judge the
effects of long-run changes in deprivation, for example, through the
comparison of regimes which vary in "economic discrimination," "poli-
tical discrimination," "potential separatism," "dependence on private
foreign capital," "religious cleavage," and "educational opportunity"

(for those are the essential criteria of long-run deprivation) at a given moment. Third, the basic variables went through so much selection and re-measurement in the course of Gurr's research (the two deprivation measures, for example, combining in a particular way the 13 sturdiest survivors of the 48 separate measures of deprivation with which Gurr began) that the data may well have become a glove shaped well to one hand, and to no other.* The crucial tests will come when Gurr's model is checked against good data for appropriately-lagged time series, with independently-measured variables covering new time periods and new sets of political units.

The further research is definitely worth undertaking. For one thing, Gurr has reduced to a manageable model the essentials of a shapeless but pervasive set of ideas encountered in branch after branch of political analysis. For another, he has worked out an ingenious series of procedures for measuring the major variables within the model. For once we have a genuine opportunity to confront theory with data.

If the arguments of this essay are correct, that confrontation will fetch a smashing blow to the very social-psychological theory Gurr espouses. To make sure that so crucial a contest proceeds to a fair and full conclusion will require some reworking of the theory. For example, Gurr's definitions eliminate one major category of collective violence: collective violence carried out by agents of the

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*With my own data on collective violence and industrial conflict in Western Europe, a judicious selection of cases, variable lags and models makes it easy to produce multiple correlations above .80.

state. Actually, a good deal of action of this variety slips into
Gurr's analysis disguised as the work of "dissidents." For (contrary
to the image of Dissidents lashing out at Regimes) the great bulk of
the killing and wounding in the course of modern collective violence
is done by troops, police and other specialized repressive forces.
More important, the regime normally has the greater discretion in this
regard. Many demonstrations, for instance, pass peacefully. But a
few bring death, mainly when some representative of the government
decides the demonstrators have gone too far. Nothing in Gurr's scheme
permits us to infer when repressive violence will occur, and to whom.

Likewise, an important portion of collective violence pits con-
tenders for power against each other, rather than rebels against
regimes. Gurr's scheme eliminates such conflicts in principle, while
his data include them in practice. No category in the scheme, further-
more, deals with the probability, or the effect, of agitation, organi-
zation, mobilization, leadership, pooling of resources, development
of internal communications among potential rebels. We have only the
gross differences combined in Social and Structural Facilitation.

One might be able to meet these objections by refocusing the
frustration-aggression analysis on groups within a state, and rela-
tions among them. Gurr makes some valuable, if fleeting, sugges-
tions as to how one might do that: separate discontent scores for
each major segment of the population, and so on. To do that work
seriously, however, would amount to taking up the very sorts of struc-
tural analysis the central argument dismisses.

Alternative Sources of Theory

At this moment, better guidance for those who wish to sort out the historical experience of political conflict is coming from social scientists who have elected to work less abstractly, close to historical fact, with greater attention to divisions and variations within the countries under study, and in a comparative framework. (This might seem inevitable; it is, in fact, exceptional; the strongest influences of social scientific procedures on historical practice, as in the cases of demography, linguistics and economic theory, normally involve complex, abstract theories.)

Barrington Moore's Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, for example, commands the interest and respect of a wide range of historians. Its concentration on the class divisions and alliances which create revolutionary situations, and the coalitions which make the revolutions themselves, strongly counters the sociological tendency to consider revolution as the expression of a critical level of tension, aggression or malfunction in the system as a whole.

The complex web of the book's argument hangs on two pegs: 1) the idea that the class coalitions involved in the great modernizing revolutions, and hence the character of those revolutions, have depended especially on the fates of the agrarian classes in the course of the commercialization of agriculture and the growth of the state, with the liquidation of the peasantry and the co-optation of the aristocracy and gentry, for example, being crucial in England; 2) the further idea that the class coalition making the revolution has strongly

influenced the subsequent political organization of that country, with
a coalition of bureaucrats and landlords, for instance, tending to
produce fascism. Thus parliamentary democracy becomes the historical-
ly-specific consequence of the early emergence of agrarian capitalism
in certain countries, a circumstance perhaps never to be repeated
again. Moore provides evidence for his twin theses via extended compar-
isons of the histories of England, France, the United States, China,
Japan and India, plus numerous excursions to Germany and Russia.

Revolution takes on an interesting role in Moore's scheme. The
major revolution--the English Civil War, the French Revolution, and so
on--acts as a crucial switch in the track along which a particular
country moves. Yet revolution dissolves as a phenomenon sui generis,
for it becomes simply the maximum moment of conflicts which endure
long before and long after the transfer of power itself; indeed, the
case of Germany shows that the fundamental transfers of power which
occupy the center of Moore's analysis can occur without any revolution
at all in the conventional sense of the word:

> The notion that a violent popular revolution is somehow
> necessary in order to sweep away "feudal" obstacles to
> industrialization is pure nonsense, as the course of
> German and Japanese history demonstrates. On the other
> hand, the political consequences from dismounting the
> old order from above are decidely different. As they
> proceeded with conservative modernization, these semi-
> parliamentary governments tried to preserve as much of
> the original social structure as they could, fitting
> large sections into the new building wherever possible.
> The results had some resemblance to present-day Victor-
> ian houses with modern electrical kitchens but in-
> sufficient bathrooms and leaky pipes hidden decorously
> behind newly plastered walls. Ultimately the makeshifts
> collapsed. (Moore 1966: 438).

We find ourselves at the opposite position from Chalmers Johnson's

"disequilibration" and "dysfunction." In Moore's analysis, the

major conflicts which occur--including the revolutions themselves--

are part of the very logic of the political systems they shake apart.

To take one more case in point, Eric Wolf's Peasant Wars of the

Twentieth Century bears a number of resemblances to Moore's daring

synthesis. Wolf, the anthropologist, takes on the revolutions of

Mexico, Russia, China, Viet Nam, Algeria and Cuba. He extracts from

them important lessons about the response of peasants the world over

to being drawn into the capitalist world economy. Even less concerned

to lay out an explicit theoretical structure than Moore, Wolf never-

theless builds an extraordinarily powerful analysis of the structural

foundations of peasant life, the precise ways in which the expansion

of national and international markets shakes those foundations, the

conditions under which peasants resist the threat with force, and the

circumstances under which that resistance (however reactionary its

inception) serves revolutionary ends.

The most general argument is simple and telling:

> The major aim of the peasant is subsistence and social
> status gained within a narrow range of social relation-
> ships. Peasants are thus unlike cultivators, who par-
> ticipate fully in the market and who commit themselves
> to a status game set within a wide social network. To
> ensure continuity upon the land and sustenance for his
> household, the peasant most often keeps the market at
> arm's length, for unlimited involvement in the market
> threatens his hold on his source of livelihood. He
> thus cleaves to traditional arrangements which guarantee
> his access to land and to the labor of kin and neighbors.
> Moreover, he favors production for sale only within the
> context of an assured production for subsistence. Put
> in another way, it may be said that the peasant operates
> in a restricted factor and product market. The factors

of production--land, labor, equipment--are rendered
relatively immobile by prior liens and expectations;
products are sold in the market to produce the extra
margin of returns with which to buy goods one does not
produce on the homestead. In contrast, the farmer enters
the market fully, subjects his land and labor to open
competition, explores alternative uses for the factors
of production in the search for maximum returns, and
favors the more profitable product over the one en-
tailing the smaller risk. The change-over from peasant
to farmer, however, is not merely a change in psycholog-
ical orientation; it involves a major shift in the
institutional context within which men make their
choices. Perhaps it is precisely when the peasant can
no longer rely on his accustomed institutional con-
text to reduce his risks, but when alternative insti-
tutions are either too chaotic or too restrictive to
guarantee a viable commitment to new ways, that the
psychological, economic, social and political tensions
all mount toward peasant rebellion and involvement in
revolution (Wolf 1969: XIV-XV).

From that springboard, Wolf leaps to a close examination of the

experience of the peasantry in each of his countries, to scrutiny

of the conditions under which each of the revolutions in question

broke out, and to comparative analysis of the determinants of the

considerably different forms of involvement of these various peasant

populations in their national movements.

Some common features emerge: the crucial role of the middle

peasants, rather than the rural proletarians or the kulaki; the

influence of alliances with disaffected intellectuals: the initial-

ly defensive and inward-looking character of all the present

rebellions; the frequent occurrence of a deadlock of weak contenders

for power, ultimately favorable to well-organized central groups

allied with military power; the final inability of peasants to

accomplish their political ends, however successful their rebellions

in the short run, in the absence of strong alliances with determined and organized non-peasants.

In the long run, Wolf's sense of the variables involved will probably contribute more to our understanding of political conflict than his enumeration of the constants. He shows very effectively (in a line of argument similar to Moore's) that the coalitions formed by rebellious peasants strongly affect whether their actions go beyond the immediate redress of grievances, that where commercialization has proceeded so far as to dissolve the traditional organization of the peasant community rebellion does not occur (contrary to the mass-society notion that atomized and anguished men make ideal rebels), that a center-outward pattern of rebellion, as in Russia, China and Viet Nam, favors the expanded power of a single party as opposed to an army and/or a national bourgeoisie.

At present, extensions of simple but powerful analyses like Wolf's are likely to aid the systematic study of political conflict more than the borrowing of more elaborate and abstract schemes like those of Johnson and Gurr. It would help to explicate and formalize Wolf's argument, to find quantitative representations of the argument and quantitative evidence to test it out where possible, and to computerize portions of the analysis where the data are rich enough. The choice is not between handwork and apparatus but between strong theory and weak. The junction of the powerful ideas of a Wolf or a Moore with the new methods emerging in historical research will produce exciting results.

Collective History

I have in mind especially the increasing richness of the work now being done in collective history: history from the bottom up. Collective history is the systematic accumulation of comparable information on numerous social units (most often individuals, but sometimes families, firms, communities or other units) in order to detect some structure or some change which is not readily visible to the participants or the observers. The sharpest examples come from demography, where changes in the average age at marriage or in the death rate have none of the dramatic visibility of the death of a king or the outbreak of a war, but often have more profound effects on the living conditions of large populations than the dramatic events do. Historical demographers like E. A. Wrigley and Louis Henry have been transforming our knowledge of European society with their ingenious exploitation of everyday sources like parish registers and genealogies. The logic of many studies of elites and of social mobility resembles that of historical demography: assemble small, uniform and ostensibly trivial fragments of information about individuals into evidence of major changes in structure. Essentially similar procedures should make it possible to renew psychological history, the history of consumption and production, intellectual history and the history of political power; so far they have been little tried.

In studies of political conflict, they <u>have</u> been tried, with
resounding success. The French and the francophiles have led.
Georges Lefebvre, the great, long-lived historian of the Revolution,
provided much of the inspiration, if not much of the technique. He
forwarded the idea of multiple, semi-autonomous revolutions converg-
ing into a single Revolution. More important methodologically, he
demonstrated that the semi-autonomous revolutions—especially the
peasant revolution—were accessible to study from the bottom up.
But he did not systematize the study of the populations involved.
Albert Soboul did. Soboul has no doubt been Lefebvre's most in-
fluential heir in both regards. His 1958 thesis, <u>Les</u> <u>sans-culottes</u>
<u>parisiens</u> <u>en</u> <u>l'an</u> <u>II</u>, shone a spotlight on faces previously deep
in shadow—the faces of the day-to-day activists of the Parisian
sections. (The "sections" were essentially neighborhood governments
and political associations.) It did so mainly through the straight-
forward but extremely demanding analysis of the papers of the
sections themselves, and the painstaking reconstitution of their
membership.

At about the same time, Richard Cobb was carrying out a close
study of the composition and characteristics of the volunteer Revo-
lutionary Armies which played such a crucial role in the early
years of the Revolution, Kåre Tønnesson was following the Parisian
sans-culottes through the Year III, George Rude was analyzing the
actual composition of the revolutionary crowds of the great <u>Journées</u>,
Adeline Daumard, Louis Chevalier and François Furet were closely
scrutinizing the changing composition and wealth of the Parisian

population from the late eighteenth century to 1848, and Rémi

Gossez was applying many of the same microscopic procedures to

the Revolution of 1848. These historians vary greatly in preconcep-

tions, techniques and subject matter. What brings them together,

with dozens of their compatriots, as exponents of a new brand of

history is the deliberate accumulation of uniform dossiers on numer-

ous ordinary individuals in order to produce solid information on

collective characteristics not readily visible in the experiences of

any one of them. The solid information was often quantitative, al-

though the quantification involved was ordinarily elementary.

The adoption of collective history did not, of course, guarantee

success. It could have been a terrible waste of time. Indeed, it

should have been, if old theories about the blind spontaneity of

the masses were correct. As it turned out, however, collective

history yielded great returns when applied to French political con-

flicts. Historians now understand how wide and deep was the politi-

cal mobilization of ordinary Frenchmen in 1789 and 1848, how coher-

ent the action of the so-called mob, how sharp the rifts within the

coalition which made the Revolution had become by 1793. The Marxist

approach to the study of French political conflicts gained new

strength, both because Marxists were more inclined than others to take

up the close study of the "little people" which this sort of collect-

ive history involved, and because the Marxist tradition provided

more powerful means of analyzing major divisions within the popu-

lation than its rivals did.

Although much more has been accomplished along these lines in French history than elsewhere, the cosmopolitan George Rudé brought the procedures he perfected in dealing with French crowds back across the channel to Britain, while students of the Puritan Revolution, of the American Revolution and of modern Germany have been devising versions of collective history which also promise to renew their areas of study. In some of these enterprises the unit under examination is not the individual but the event, the declaration, the movement, or something else. But the logic is still the same: comparable information about numerous units summed into patterns and changes which are otherwise difficult to detect.

These developments in historical research make it possible, as never before, to join together the richness of the historical record, the strength of the kinds of historically-based theory elaborated by Moore and Wolf, and the searching analytic procedures of contemporary social science. Not that we should abandon the study of the present. The point, on the contrary, is to integrate the examination of today with the investigation of yesterday.

That integration will be easier if we stop treating the past as a repository of Great Revolutions and the present as a container of other kinds of conflicts. In particular, the attempt to place the great struggles for power in the context of the whole range of political conflict will itself bring out many of the continuities between past and present.

An Approach and Some Concepts

Of course, such an expansion of the field of vision presents its own problems. If revolution is indeed a multi-dimensional phenomenon, along which dimensions should we expand? For example, one easy but inadequate formulation treats revolution as an extreme case of a more general phenomenon called "violence." If we were to manufacture a Violence Detector which would clang louder and louder as it passed greater and greater degrees of damage to persons or property, however, it would raise a hullabaloo around wars, hockey games, barrom brawls or everyday life in prisons, mental hospitals and housing projects, while only chiming gently in the vicinity of a great many coups d'etat, demonstrations, general strikes and so-called rebellions. If violence and revolution go together to some extent, it is not because violence is the essence of revolution, but because men turn to unlimited means of coercion in the fluidity of a revolutionary situation, as in a number of other fluid situations.

Let us return to the exact relationship between violence and political conflict later on. For now, the important point is that violence by itself does not define a continuum of "revolutionness" at one end of which we find the full-fledged Great Revolution. The same applies to all the other obvious possibilities: a) transfer of power as a continuum, with the largest transfer (however "large" is defined) the most revolutionary; b) "social change" as a continuum, with the most rapid and/or most far-reaching the most revolutionary; c) illegitimacy of political

action, with the most illegitimate the most revolutionary; d) scale of collective action, with large-scale more revolutionary; e) locus of action, with action by underdogs more revolutionary. Each of these identifies some significant link between revolutions and other events. None of them singly defines the range of phenomena including revolution.

For the moment, then, let us assume that we are exploring the area of convergence of _all_ these roads. We can call the entire region "political conflict," and leave its outer limits indefinite. The more violent, power-transferring, illegitimate etc. etc. the event, the closer we are coming to home. As we work, we can decide which roads are actually dead ends, and which ones main highways.

A preliminary map of the region should include several important landmarks: a government, a polity, contenders for power. For any specified population, let us identify the organizations which control the principal concentrated means of coercion; such organizations are _governments_. In any particular population there may be several governments operating, or none at all. To the extent that such an organization is formally coordinated, centralized, differentiated from other organizations and territorially exclusive it is a _state_, but many governments are not states. Let us now single out every group within the population which during some specified span of time collectively apply resources to the influence of a particular government; they are _contenders for power_ with respect to that government. That does not mean they are equally powerful or

equally successful. To the extent that a contender exercises a routine claim to response on the part of agents of the government, the contender is a member of the polity; the polity consists of all contenders routinely and successfully laying claims on the government. The nonmembers which are contending for power we may call challengers. Most groups within any particular population are not contenders, many contenders are not members, and some members are able to exercise far larger control over the activity of the government than other members. Obviously, a group may contend for power in more than one polity (and even be a member of more than one) if more than one government is operating within a population. These are simply matters of definition.

I lay out these ungainly definitions (and others, alas, still to come) with trembling hands. Albert Hirschman (1970)--no mean wielder of paradigms himself--has warned eloquently against "the search for paradigms as a hindrance to understanding" revolutions and political conflict. Sociologists and political scientists are exceedingly vulnerable to the old magical misconception that naming a phenomenon has the effect of taming it. Most conceptual schemes are, as Hirschman claims, more trouble than they are worth: blinders, not telescopes. The tests of a scheme's value come from the understanding, the further explorations, the new hypotheses, the verifiable propositions which spring from its use. The scheme at hand is little tested in any of these regards.

Yet the definitions make it possible to map out a set of relations among contenders, polities and governments. (The mapping is, of course, hypothetical, in the same way that one might envision a straight road between London and Paris, only to discover the inconvenient fact of the English Channel.) Every polity, let us say, establishes tests of membership. The tests may include proof of sanctity, or wealth, or any number of other characteristics, but they always include the ability to mobilize or coerce significant numbers of people. Members of a polity repeatedly test each other's qualifications. When a member fails a partial test, more serious challenges to their membership follow; repeated failure leads to exclusion from the polity. New members enter by passing the tests of membership; old members exit by failing them. Each entry and each exit changes the criteria of membership in a direction favorable to the resulting set of members, and the members of the polity come to treat the prevailing criteria as matters of right, justice and principle.

Within the polity, according to this hypothetical construction, several different kinds of interactions are constantly going on:

1. members of the polity are routinely applying resources to the influence of the government;

2. non-members are also attempting to influence the government and to acquire membership in the polity, and members (acting mostly through agencies of the government) are resisting those attempts;

3. members are testing each other through a wide range
of interactions which could include contested elections,
parliamentary debates, ceremonial displays, gang wars or
advantageous marriages.

The testing process by which contenders acquire or lose membership

tends to increase the extent of collective violence when the member-

ship of the polity is changing fast. Prospective members ordinarily

treat admission to the polity as due them on general grounds, and

therefore fight in the name of large principles. Existing members

on the way out ordinarily treat their privileged position as guar-

anteed by particular agreements and customs, and therefore fight

in the name of the defense of hollowed rights. Either of these

orientations increases the willingness of the individuals in the

group to risk damage or injury, thus to participate in violence.

(Note, however, that over the long run contenders entering and leav-

ing the polity tend to _receive_ more damage and injury than they in-

flict, since the concentrated and effective means of coercion are

under the control of the members via their influence over the gov-

ernment. We shall return to this problem later on.) If this general

line of reasoning is correct, most collective violence will oppose

members of the polity to non-members, members to members, and agents

of the government to non-members. Violent conflicts of agents

of government against each other, agents against members and

non-members against non-members will be correspondingly rare.

Mobilization and Contention for Power

How do contenders for power come and go? Here the idea of

mobilization is helpful (see Deutsch 1953, Etzioni 1968, Nettl 1967).

Men get their work done by accumulating and employing a great

variety of resources to influence each other and to transform the
world around them. The resources include loyalties, knowledge,
wealth, machines, communication lines and any number of other things.
We can conveniently group them into three categories: normative,
coercive, and utilitarian (the terminology comes from Etzioni 1968,
but the general idea is commonplace). Normative resources include
the commitments of men to ideals, groups and other men; coercive
resources include means of punishing other men and limiting the
alternatives open to them; utilitarian resources include all the
rest, especially those things men find it rewarding to acquire.

When a group increases its collective control over any
of these three varieties of resources, we say the group is mobili-
zing; when its collective control over such resources decreases,
we say it is demobilizing. The group in question may range from a
family to a tribe to a state to an international federation of
states; the important thing is that the group as a whole acquires or
loses collective control of resources. No group can take any sort
of collective action without some degree of mobilization; demobili-
zation ultimately destroys a group's capacity for collective action.

Although the terminology may be ponderous, the core meaning
comes close to a standard notion of active revolutionaries. In one
of his most influential statements of strategy during the resistance
to Japan, Mao Tse-Tung wrote as follows:

> What does political mobilization mean? First, it means
> telling the army and the people about the political aim
> of the war. It is necessary for every soldier and civilian
> to see why the war must be fought and how it concerns him.

> . . . Secondly, it is not enough merely to explain the
> aim to them; the steps and policies for its attainment
> must also be given, that is, there must be a political
> programme . . . Thirdly, how should we mobilize them?
> By word of mouth, by leaflets and bulletins, by news-
> papers, books and pamphlets, through plays and films,
> through schools, through the mass organizations and
> through our cadres. What has been done so far in the
> Kuomintang areas is only a drop in the ocean, and more-
> over it has been done in a manner ill-suited to the
> people's tastes and in a spirit uncongenial to them;
> this must be drastically changed. Fourthly, to mobilize
> once is not enough; political mobilization for the War
> of Resistance must be continuous. Our job is not to
> recite our political programme to the people, for no-
> body will listen to such recitations; we must link the
> political mobilization for the war with developments
> in the war and with the life of the soldiers and the
> people, and make it a continuous movement (Mao 1965b:
> 155).

All the current idea of mobilization does, then, is to broaden Mao's

central notion to explicitly include control over objects and organ-

izations as well as commitments of individuals.

We are now piling definitions on definitions. Nevertheless

these ideas of mobilization make it easier to see the properties that

a wide range of group activities have in common: accumulating a

strike fund, building an ethnic identity, storing weapons, sending

members off to school, working out a secret ritual, laying a claim to

a certain part of every member's time, building a headquarters, and

so on. Some of these do not increase the total resources members

of the group possess, but simply transfer resources from individual

to group. All of them, on the other hand, increase the resources of

which the group as a whole can dispose.

The structure, the environment and the already-accumulated resources of a group greatly limit the avenues toward mobilization open to it at any point in its history. Resources spent properly bring in new resources of a different kind, as when an ethnic leader uses his group's funds to bribe a politician disposing of jobs for his people, or a revolutionary committee activates the loyalties it commands to bring in cash contributions from its following. Whether the net effect of such exchanges is additional mobilization depends on the terms of trade between jobs and bribes on the one hand and between depletion of reserve loyalties and augmentation of the treasury on the other. Again, the environment may be abundant, yielding resources readily with little effort, or harsh, full of competitors and barren of resources. All other things being equal, an abundant environment obviously facilitates mobilization.

Finally, the group's organizational structure limits the means of mobilization. Perhaps the most important dimension in this regard is the one which runs from communal to associational organization. (The basic idea is one of the oldest in sociology; it has frequently been abused through the assumption that it describes the basic path of human evolution, the disguising of the fact that it lumps together several variables which do not always change in the same direction and the implicit assertion that the one end is good, the other bad; here I offer it only as a preliminary sorting device.) Communal structures are small, local and relatively undifferentiated in structure. They recruit largely through inheritance. Among

frequent contenders for power at one level or another in the world

of the last few centuries, corporate kin groups, peasant villages,

craft brotherhoods and religious congregations tend toward this ex-

treme type. Associational structures are large, extensive and com-

plex. They recruit largely through open tests of intention and per-

formance. In the modern world, parties, firms, trade unions and

voluntary organizations are frequent contenders of this type.

To the extent that a contender is communal in structure, it is

unlikely to be able to expand its manpower rapidly, but it is quite

likely to be able to generate strong loyalties on the part of the

members it does possess. To the extent that a contender is associa-

tional in structure, the accumulation of intense commitments is

likely to be very costly, while the acquisition of a range of special-

ized skills will be relatively easy. Whether the possession of in-

tense commitments will be more or less advantageous than the posses-

sion of specialized skills, of course, depends entirely on the nature

of the collective tasks at hand and the character of the surrounding

world.

The organizational structure of the contenders for power

within a particular polity also has a strong impact on the typical

forms of collective violence within the polity. To be more exact, it

affects the kinds of collective actions which ordinarily produce

violence. With communal contenders, collective action tends to be un-

coordinated, localized, raggedly bounded in time and space, respon-

sive to routines of congregation such as those of religious observance,

festivals, planting, marketing and so on. Violence engaging communal
contenders therefore tends to spring from such settings. The free-
for-all between gilds and the rural tax rebellion illustrate what
I have in mind.

With associational contenders, the collective action (and hence
the setting of collective violence) tends to be planned, scheduled,
bounded, disciplined and large in scale. The violent strike and the
turbulent demonstration are typical cases. This does not necessarily
mean that they are more serious or more destructive than the violence
involving communal contenders. In fact, peasant revolts are legen-
dary for their bloodletting; associational participants in violence
often have the advantage of being able to call off their forces as
soon as they have won, or lost. Nevertheless, collective violence
on a large scale rarely occurs without the significant involvement
of associations.

In the western experience on which this analysis is based,
there is a tight connection between a contender's organizational
structure and the locus of its power. The tightness of the connection
may have led me to misstate the relationship between organizational
structure and collective action. For the most part, communal groups
wield power at a small scale, in local polities. To an important
degree, associational groups wield power at a large scale, especially in
national polities. If the correspondence were perfect, we would have
no problem: localism and communal organization would simply be two
features of the same phenomenon. But organizations such as gilds

and sworn brotherhoods have complex formal structures, yet often
operate at a purely local scale; likewise, ethnic and religious
groups sometimes band together, without any single association to
unify them, at a national scale. One could make a plausible case
that local gilds and sworn brotherhoods behave the same as other
local groups which lack their complex formal structures, that
national ethnic and religious groups behave the same as national
associations. Or scale and formality of structure could have
distinct effects. As I use it here, then, the communal-associa-
tional scheme contains two hypotheses which should be treated as
hypothetical: 1) in general, the larger, the more extensive, the
more complex the organization, the larger the scale at which it
wields power; 2) the scale at which a group wields power, as such,
does not significantly affect its predominant forms of collective
action. At least the hypotheses are plausible, and open to
empirical examination.

Types of Collective Action

These statements deal with collective action, not with
violence itself. Violence is an interaction among people or
between people and objects. Let's save the discussion of defini-
tions and shades of meaning for later. For now, a simple obser-
vation. In the western experience, three fundamental forms of
collective action (each with many variants) have led to violence.
Form 1, competitive action: members of a group which defines another
particular group as a rival or as an enemy attacks the resources

of that rival or enemy. Thus two armies fight it out; members of

a cabinet-makers' gild vandalize the headquarters of a rival gild;

armed peasants lay waste the castles of the local nobility. Groups

which are members of some particular polity are likely to employ

competitive actions with respect to other members of the same

polity. If we maintain the distinction between communal and

associational groups, then it will be convenient to call the

communal group's version of competitive collective action primitive,

and the associational group's version interest-group.

Form 2, reactive collective action: some group, or its agent,

lays claim to a resource currently under the control of another

particular group, and the members of the second resist the exercise

of that claim. The action of the second group is reactive. Thus

the government's tax collector arrives to enforce a new levy, and

the villagers drive him out of town; a group of bandits abduct a

young woman, and her kinsmen arm to hunt down the bandits; Socialists

burst into a Communist meeting and seize the podium, only to be

beaten up by the Communists. I suggest that contenders which are

losing membership in a polity are especially prone to reaction

collective action. For communal contenders, the subtitle reactionary

seems appropriate; for associational contenders, defensive.

Form 3, proactive collective action: some group carries out an

action which, under the prevailing rules, lays claim to a resource

not previously accorded to that group; at least one other group

intervenes in the action and resists the claim. The action of the first group is proactive; obviously proactive motions by one group often lead to reactive motions by another. Thus an unauthorized association holds a public meeting, and police break it up; organized squatters move onto vacant land, and the landlords try to drive them away; demonstrators seize the city hall, and counter-demonstrators attack them. I suggest that contenders which are gaining membership in polities have an especial propensity to proactive collective action. Here, I suggest the name "revitalization" for the communal version, on the basis of work by Anthony F.C. Wallace. Revitalization movements, in Wallace's analysis, form around a whole new way of understanding the world. My speculation is twofold: a) that a communal group is not likely to mobilize extensively, bid for membership in a polity and therefore become newly involved in collective violence unless its members are undergoing a major collective transformation of their perception of the world; a millennarian movement would be a type case; b) that no rapid change in the membership of a polity composed mainly of communal contenders is likely to occur except through the creation of an entirely new group identity via a drastic revitalization process. The associational form of proactive collective action we may simply call "offensive".
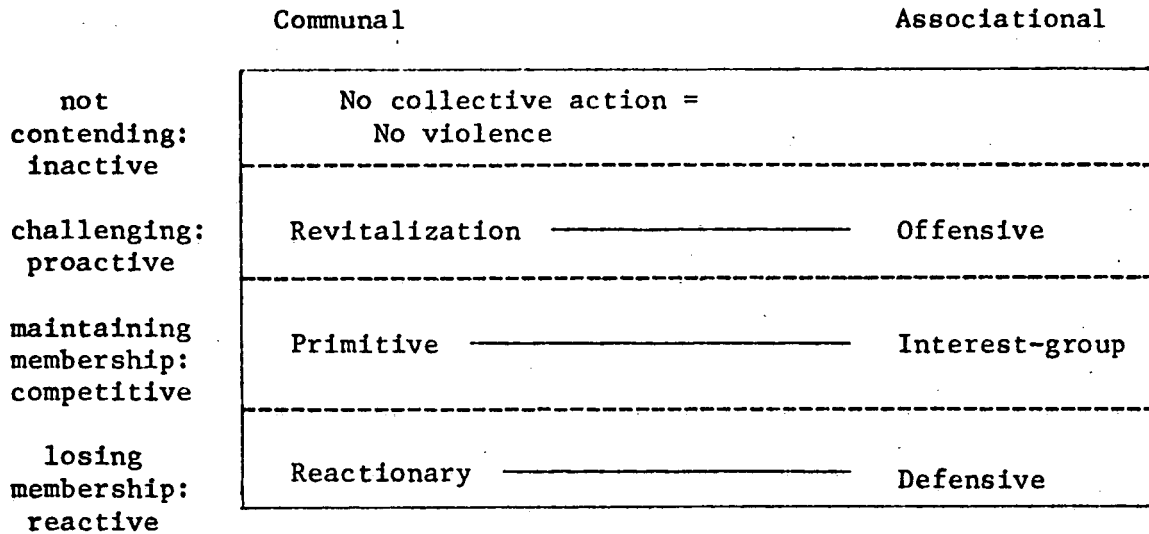
In all three basic forms, the "resources" involved cover quite a range; they include people, land, private spaces, rights to act in certain ways. Reactive and proactive forms resemble each other in

centering on the sequence assertion of claim/challenge to claim/ damage to one party by another. Although they have a gray area between them, they differ: in the reactive form the resources in question are already under the control of some particular group. In the competitive form, the disagreement between groups may very well center on claim and counter-claim, but the immediate action does not consist of the exercising of claims.

The three forms are so broad that they might seem to exhaust the logical possibilities. Not so. All three forms relate specific groups to each other, and thereby exclude action by chance crowds, by the general population and by the disorganized dregs of social life. By the same token, they exclude random, expressive, purely destructive actions. The typology rests on the argument that the excluded forms of collective action -- spontaneous, disorganized, random, etc. -- are rare or nonexistent.

The observations made so far on mobilization, contention and collective action crystallize into a useful classification of the forms of collective action leading to violence in which different kinds of contenders are likely to be involved. We distinguish first among groups which are not contending/challenging/maintaining membership/losing membership. Then we array the organizational structures of contenders from communal to associational:

	Communal	Associational
not contending: inactive	No collective action = No violence	
challenging: proactive	Revitalization ———————	Offensive
maintaining membership: competitive	Primitive ———————	Interest-group
losing membership: reactive	Reactionary ———————	Defensive

The diagram incorporates several hypotheses, some of them quite
speculative. The first hypothesis represents one of the chief
arguments of this essay: segments of the population which are
unmobilized and not contending for power are rarely involved in
collective violence. Remaining on the communal side of the
continuum, the diagram indicates that communal contenders maintaining
membership in a polity will ordinarily test each other via "primitive"
actions of the type of ceremonials, games, drinking bouts or contacts
in routine assemblies, and that these occasions will constitute their
opportunities for collective violence. Those losing membership, on
the other hand, will find themselves banding together to defend
prerogatives or to resist encroachments, and will therefore form
the nucleus of classic older forms of collective violence like the
food riot, machine-breaking, the tax rebellion or true guerrilla.

On the other side, the diagram tells us that the collective

action likely to involve an associational challenger in violence--

"offensive" action--will center on displays of the facts that the

contender meets the tests of membership in the polity, attempts to

coerce existing members and agents of the government, concerted

efforts to acquire some lasting control over the actions of the gov-

ernment. Interest-group actions (especially orderly shows of strength

like parades) will be the main occasions on which associational mem-

bers of the polity are involved in collective violence. And the

word "defensive," applied to associationally-organized contenders

losing their membership, calls to mind the extensively-organized

movement to resist change, secure old privileges, reactivate old

symbols, bolster faltering strength.

The propositions embedded in the scheme are imprecise where they

are not speculative or tautologial; the main use of the scheme is as

a classification. Nevertheless, the taxonomy as a whole emphasizes

two ideas: 1) unmobilized segments of the population are little in-

volved in collective violence, while certain kinds of mobilized groups

are heavily involved in it; 2) the form of collective violence depends

closely on the relationship of the participants to the existing struc-

ture of power.

Another assertion likewise lurks in the typology: governments

and their agents are not simply on lookers, arbiters or cleaners-up

in collective violence, but are often major participants in the
action. Governments often lay new claims which other parties chal-
lenge. Governments often resist the exercise of new claims. In war
and elsewhere, governments often play a major part in violence among
rivals and enemies--at the extreme, arrogating to themselves the
sole right to employ force in such encounters. To what extent gov-
ernments act autonomously in such circumstances, and to what extent
they act on behalf of particular members of the polity, undoubted-
ly vary considerably from one kind of government to another. What
those variations are, and how much autonomy the average government
has in this regard, make up two of the most important political
questions of our time.

Applying the Model to Western Political Experience

The scheme provides a convenient means of summing up the larg-
est trends in the evolution of collective violence in western countries
over the last four or five centuries. Two main processes have dom-
inated all the rest: 1) the rise of national states to preeminent
positions in a wide variety of political activities; 2) the increas-
ingly associational character of the principal contenders for power
at the local as well as the national level. In 1500, no full-fledged
national state with unquestioned priority over the other governments
within its territory existed anywhere in the West. England was
probably the closest approximation. Most statelike organizations
faced serious challenges to their hegemony from both inside and out-
side the territory; in fact, only a small minority of the hundreds

of more or less autonomous governments survived the next two centuries or statemaking. Most power was concentrated in polities of smaller than national scale: communities, city-states, principalities, semi-autonomous provinces. Most contenders for power in those polities were essentially communal in structure: craft brotherhoods, families, peasant communities. The predominant forms of collective violence registered these circumstances: wars between rival governments, brawls between groups of artisans, battles among the youth of neighboring communes, attacks by one religious group on another.

The rise of the state, however, threatened the power (and often the very survival) of all these small-scale polities. They resisted; the statemakers only won their struggle for predominance over the furious resistance of princes, communes, provinces and peasant communities. For several centuries the principal forms of collective violence followed what I have called the "reactionary" pattern: communally-based contenders fighting against loss of membership in polities, in fact against the very destruction of the polities in which their power was invested. Collective resistance to conscription, to taxation, to billeting, to a whole variety of other exactions of the state exemplify this reactionary variety of collective action characteristically producing violence.

Two things eventually put an end to the predominance of the reactionary forms, although at times and tempos which varied markedly from one part of the West to another. First, the state won almost everywhere. One may ask how complete the victory of the state

was in the remote sections of vast territories like Canada, Australia, or Brazil, and speculate whether recent surges of sectionalism in Belgium, Great Britain, and even France presage the end of state control. But on the whole the two centuries after 1700 produced an enormous concentration of resources and means of coercion under the control of national states, to the virtual exclusion of other levels of government. Second, a whole series of organizational changes closely linked to urbanization and industrialization greatly reduced the role of the communal group as a setting for mobilization and repository for power, while the association of one kind or another came to be the characteristic vehicle for collective action. The rise of the joint-stock company, the political party, the labor union, the club all belong to the same general trend.

Working together, the victory of the state and the rise of the association transformed the collective actions which most commonly produced violence. In country after country, politics nationalized; the polity which mattered was the one which controlled the national state; the crucial struggles for power went on at a national scale. And the participants in those struggles were most often associational in organization. Revitalization, primitive and reactionary collective actions declined in prevalence and importance, while offensive, interest-group and defensive collective actions took over. The strike, the demonstration, the party conspiracy, the organized march on the capital, the parliamentary session, the mass meeting

became the usual settings for collective violence. And the state

became an interested participant in almost all collective violence--

as policeman, as party to the conflict, and as <u>tertius gaudens</u>.

That brings us back to contention for power. Contenders for

power with respect to any particular government are groups which

collectively apply resources to the influence of that government.

In theory, a group can mobilize without contending for power, if it

applies its collective resources entirely to recreation, the search

for enlightenment or some other non-political end. A commune or

religious community retiring from the world moves in that direction.

Within the modern world, however, governments are so likely to claim

the power to regulate and to extract resources from any mobilizing

group that (above some low minimum) mobilization usually propels

a group into contention for power over one government or another.

Eric Wolf's analysis of the involvement of peasant communities in

revolutions, for example, shows how regularly they mobilize and then

contend for power in self-defense.

Wolf's analysis also tells us how crucial to the success of

that contention for power are the coalitions peasant communities

make with other groups outside. No coalition = lost revolution.

In a great many situations, a single contender does not have enough

resources--enough committed men, enough guns, enough trained lawyers,

enough cash--to influence the government by itself. A coalition

with another contender which has overlapping or complementary de-

signs on the government will then increase the joint power of the

contenders to accomplish those designs.

While coalitions most commonly occur between members of the polity (that is, between groups which can already routinely lay claims to response and to delivery of resources by agents of the government) or between nonmembers of the polity (between groups which have no routine claims to response and delivery of resources), coalitions between members and nonmembers frequently occur when the members are seeking ends for which there are not enough coalition partners within the polity, and for which the resources being mobilized by the nonmembers would be useful. This happens when a party wins an election by buying off the support of a tribe through promises of jobs and influence, or when a dissident but established group of intellectuals forms an alliance with a new workers' movement. These coalitions take on special importance because they often open the way to the new contender's acquisition of membership in the polity, or the way to a revolutionary alliance.

Member-nonmember coalitions also matter because they appear to strongly affect the amount of violence which grows out of contention for power. Under most conditions a coalition with a member reduces the violence which attends the acquisition of power by a nonmember. The coalitions of the woman's suffrage and temperance movements in England and the United States with other established segments of the middle classes, for example, almost certainly restrained the use of force against them. Where the effect of the coalition is to split the polity into factions making exclusive and incompatible claims on the government, however, a high degree of collective violence is likely to follow.

Violence

In order to understand why this should be so, we ought to look more closely at the nature of "violence." The term often serves as a catchall containing all the varieties of protest, militancy, coercion, destruction or muscle-flexing which a given observer happens to fear or condemn. Violence, as Henry Bienen (1968: 4) comments, "carries overtones of 'violating,' and we often use violence to refer to illegitimate force." (cf. Converse 1968: 481-485). With that usage, we shall never be able to make systematic statements about the conditions of violence. If we restrict our attention to human actions which damage persons or property, however, we have at least a chance to sort out the regularities in their appearance. Even that restriction calls immediately for further distinctions; violence so defined still includes:

--cut thumbs

--murders

--hockey games

--rebellions

--normal wear of automobiles or the roads they drive on

--disposal of noxious wastes

--cigarette smoking

The obvious temptation is to add some qualifications concerning the intentions of the actors: they want to destroy, they are angry, they seek power, or something else. The trouble with letting a lot depend on intentions is intentions are mixed and hard to discern.

The judgements outsiders make concerning the intentions of partici-
pants in conflicts usually include implicit theories of causation
and responsibility. Even with full knowledge, intentions often
turn out to be mixed and divergent, often change or misfire in the
course of the action. We must ask whose intentions when. Violence
is rarely a solo performance; it usually grows out of an interaction
of opponents. Whose intentions should count: the small group of
demonstrators who gather on the steps of the capital, the larger
group of spectators who eventually get drawn into the action, the
police who first stand guard and then struggle to disperse the crowd?
Both in theory and in practice, then, intentions provide very shaky
criteria for the distinction of violence from nonviolence.

In her brilliant essay on violence, Hannah Arendt (1970) urges
a fundamental distinction between power and violence. Power, in
her view, is "the human ability not just to act but to act in concert."
But the difficulties with which we are now wrestling come out in one
fact: Arendt never quite defines violence. This is the closest
approach:

> Violence, finally, as I have said, is distinguished by
> its instrumental character. Phenomenologically, it is
> close to strength, since the implements of violence,
> like all other tools, are designed and used for the
> purpose of multiplying natural strength until, in the
> last stage of their development, they can substitute
> for it (Arendt 1970: 46).

As a distinction in political philosophy--that is, in the principles
upon which we can reasonably found a system of government and by
which we can justify or condemn public actions--I find Arendt's

treatment of power and violence illuminating. As a guide to obser-
vation of acting men, however, it has the fatal flaw of resting
exactly on the features of collective action which observers and
participants dispute most passionately, precisely because they are
the features of action which will bring on it justification from
some and condemnation from others. The justification and condemna-
tion are important business, but they are not our business here.

Nor do any easy alternatives lie close at hand. We may try
to define "normal" or "expected" or "legitimate" uses of force in
social life, and define deviations from them as violent; that ap-
proach not only requires the (rather difficult) assessment of the
normal expected state of affairs but also tends to define away
violence exerted by professional specialists in coercion. If, on
the other hand, we turn to the amount of damage sustained by the
individuals involved, we face the difficulty of determining how
direct and material the damage must be: Does a firm's dumping of
garbage which promotes disease count? Does the psychic burden of
enslavement count?

I recite these tedious complications in order to emphasize
that in the present state of knowledge and theory concerning violence
any definition will be arbitrary in some regards and debatable in
many others. Men do not agree on what they will call violent; what
is more, their disagreement springs to an important extent from
differences in political perspective. My own inclination is toward
what Terry Nardin calls a "brute harm" conception of violence: any

observable interaction in the course of which persons or objects are
seized or physically damaged over resistance. (Direct or indirect
resistance, in the form of attacks on persons, erection of barriers,
standing in the way, holding on to the persons or objects at issue,
and so on, enters the definition in order to exclude self-destruction,
potlatches, ceremonial mutilation, urban renewal and other collective
damage in which all parties are more or less agreed to the action.)

Further distinctions start from there: collective vs. indivi-
dual, depending on the number of parties to the inter-action; games
vs. nongames, depending on the extent to which all participants begin
with an agreement to work toward a determinate set of alternative
outcomes by following some standard rules; continuous vs. discontinous,
depending on how great a time span we observe and how large an inter-
val we permit to elapse before we call the action at an end; and so
forth.

A Way of Defining and Studying Collective Violence

Within this broad field, let us concentrate on collective
violence within a population under the control of a single govern-
ment. Let us agree to pay little attention to war, to full fledged
games, to individual violence or to highly discontinuous interac-
tions. We are then still free to examine events in which agents of
the government do all the damaging, and other events in which the
damage was only incidental to the aims of most of those involved.
In a series of investigations of collective violence in modern
Europe, my own research group has discovered that we can, without

enormous uncertainty, single out events occurring within a parti-
cular national state in which at least one group of fifty or more
persons seizes or damages someone or something from another group.
Below that scale, collective violence begins to fade into banditry,
brawling, vandalism, terrorism and a wide variety of threatening
nonviolent events, so far as our ability to distinguish them on the
basis of the historical record is concerned.

We use the community-population-day as an elementary unit.
On a particular day, did this segment of the population of this
community engage in collective violence, as just defined? If so,
we have the elementary unit of a violent incident. Did an over-
lapping set of people carry on the action in an adjacent community?
If so, both communities were involved in the same incident. Did
an overlapping set of people continue the action the following day?
If so, the incident lasted at least two days. Introduce a break
in time, space or personnel, and we are dealing with two or more
distinct incidents. The result of this modular reasoning is both
to greatly simplify the problem of bounding the "same" incident
and to fragment into many separate incidents series of interactions
(like the Spanish Civil War as a whole) which many analysts have
been willing to treat as a single unit.

For some purposes, like the comparative study of revolutions,
a broader criterion may serve better. Still other investigations
will require more stringent standards: more participants, a certain
duration, someone killed, a particular minimum of property damage.

But the general reasoning of such choices would be the same: identify all the events above a certain magnitude, or at least a representative sample of them, before trying to sort them out in terms of legitimacy or in terms of the aims of the participants.

Once collective violence is defined in these terms, interesting conclusions begin to emerge from the close examination of the actual record of violent incidents. Our study of thousands of violent incidents occurring in western Europe since 1800 reveals several strong tendencies which affect our understanding of the roots of violence.

First, most collective violence--in the sense of interactions which actually produce direct damage to persons and property--grows out of actions which are not intrinsically violent, and which are basically similar to a much larger number of collective actions occurring without violence in the same periods and settings. The clearest example is the demonstration, in which some group displays its strength and determination in the presence of the public, of the agents of the state, and perhaps of its enemies as well. The overwhelming majority of demonstrations pass without direct damage to persons or property. But a small proportion do turn to violent encounters between police and demonstrators, or attacks on property by the demonstrators. The demonstration is such a common way of doing political business in modern Europe that even that small proportion of violent outcomes is enough to make the demonstration the most common setting for collective violence. The strike, the parliamentary session, the public meeting, the fiesta follow something

like the same pattern: the great majority of them going off without violence, the violent ones not differing in any fundamental way from the nonviolent ones.

A second important feature of collective violence which stands out in the modern European record is the heavy involvement of agents of the state, especially repressive agents like police and soldiers. This is, unsurprisingly, a matter of scale: the fewer the people involved, the less likely that repressive agents will be there. But it does not mean simply that the larger the scale of violence, the more likely the police are to step in. For in the modern European experience repressive forces are themselves the most consistent initiators and performers of collective violence. There is a sort of division of labor: repressive forces do the largest part of the killing and wounding, while the groups they are seeking to control do most of the damage to property. The division of labor follows from the usual advantage repressive forces have with respect to arms and military discipline; from the common tactics of demonstrators, strikers and other frequent participants in collective violence, which are to violate symbolically-charged rules and prohibitions whose enforcement is the business of agents of government; from the typical sequence of events, in which demonstrators are carrying on an action which is illegal yet nonviolent, and repressive forces receive the order to stop them.

Since no one has done the necessary detailed studies of contemporary Latin America, North America, Africa or Asia, it is hard

to say how generally these generalizations apply. The fragments of evidence now available indicate that they apply very widely in contemporary countries with strong governments. Jerome Skolnick (1969: 258) says in summary of one part of his analysis of contemporary American protests, "It is misleading to ignore the part played by social control agencies in aggravating and sometimes creating a riot. It is not unusual, as the Kerner Commission observed, for a riot to begin and end with police violence." A chronological review of violence in American labor-management disputes makes it clear both that over the long run police, troops, and plant guards have done the bulk of the killing and wounding, and that the typical starting point has been some sort of illegal but nonviolent collective action by the workers--a walkout, a sitdown, a demonstration, picketing, sending of delegations. In their sketch of the usual circumstances in which the total of at least 700 persons died in American "labor violence" during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the authors report:

> Facing inflexible opposition, union leaders and their members frequently found that nothing, neither peaceful persuasion nor the intervention of heads of government, could move the employer towards recognition. Frustration and desperation impelled pickets to react to strikebreakers with anger. Many violent outbreaks followed efforts of strikers to restrain the entry of strikebreakers and raw materials into the struck plant. Such conduct, obviously illegal, opened the opportunity for forceful police measures. In the long run, the employer's side was better equipped for success. The use of force by pickets was illegal on its face, but the action of the police and company guards were in vindication of the employers' rights (Taft and Ross 1969: 289-290).

The same general pattern recurs in the bulk of contemporary American collective violence: a group undertakes an illegal and/or politically unacceptable action, forces of order seek to check the group, a violent encounter ensues, the "rioters"--for that is the label the group acquires at the moment of violent contact with police or troops-- sustain most of the casualties.

Reflecting on the long succession of violent encounters between contenders for power and power-holders in America, Richard Rubenstein (1970: 15-16) makes an important observation:

> At the outset, one thing seems clear: those groups which achieved success without participating in sustained rioting, guerrilla terrorism or outright insurrection were not necessarily more talented, hardworking or "American" than those that resorted to higher levels of violence. The resistance of more powerful groups to change is one key struggle; another is the match between out-group characteristics and the needs of a changing political-economic system.

Then he goes on to contrast the fluidity of the economic and political arrangements open to the immigrants of 1880-1920 with the formation, in the 1930s and 1940s, of a new ruling coalition quite resistant to displacement: "Ironically, since these are the groups most wedded to the myth of peaceful progress and the culpability of the violent--it is the existence of this coalition, exercising power through a highly centralized federal bureaucracy, which helps keep emerging groups powerless and dependent" (p. 17). The consequence, in Rubenstein's view, is that recent bids for power have met determined resistance and brought forth the pious recommendation that the members of the groups involved attempt to enter the system as

individuals, on their own merits, rather than destroying the system through collective efforts to wrest benefits from it.

Rubenstein's analysis includes both an idea of how the American system usually works and a notion of the changes it has undergone since the 1930s. The general picture corresponds to William Gamson's portrayal of "stable unrepresentation" in American politics: " . . . the American political system normally operates to prevent incipient competitors from achieving full entry into the political arena" (Gamson 1968b: 18). That description applies to all political systems; the real questions are: How great are the obstacles? How do they vary from system to system and time to time?

That brings up the second part. Has the American system closed down since the 1930s? To try that question out seriously, we shall need much more precise information than we now have concerning the fates of successive challengers. Gamson's investigation, indeed, is one of several current efforts to attack that very problem. In the meantime, it is not obvious that recent challengers -- antiwar students, organized blacks, gay activists and aircraft manufacturers are likely candidates for the post-1940 list -- met more resistance than craft unions, Prohibitionists or Abolitionists had in the nineteenth century. There is probably variation over time, and there may well be a long-run trend. But both are no doubt too subtle to show up in a few offhand comparisons.

P.M.G. Harris has taken a close look at the elite figures of
the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries described in the Dictionary
of American Biography. He finds both that there was some decline
over the nineteenth century in the proportion of elite men coming
from working-class and lower-middle-class origins, and that there
were cyclical variations in the recruitment of elites; he suggests
a connection with Kuznets cycles of economic activity. IF a) Harris'
conclusions are correct and IF b) fluctuations in individual
mobility into the national elite correspond to group movements into
the national polity, THEN it is plausible that American entries and
exits change over time in response to the rhythms of economic life.
If that were the case, I would be surprised to see Rubenstein's
treatment of the period since the New Deal onward as a single
block hold up to close scrutiny. The discovery that he was wrong
in that regard would not challenge, however, his basic analysis of
the difficulties of acquiring power.

Political Action and Involvement in Violence

In the terms we were using earlier, Rubenstein is saying that
members of the polity, acting mainly through agents of the state,
have banded together to resist the claims of newly-mobilized
contenders for membership. His most prominent case is organized
blacks, but the analysis applies more generally to the past and
present contention of wheat farmers, women, believers in Temperance,
students and organized labor. In these cases and many others, the

acceptance of the group's collective claims would significantly

reallocate the resources under the control of the polity, redefine

the rules of membership for further contenders, change the likely

coalitions inside and outside the polity. In such cases, the main

link between violence and contention for power consists of the

repeated sequence in which members of the challenging group

publicly lay claim to some space, object, privilege, protection or

other resource which they consider due them on general grounds,

and the agents of the government (backed by the members of the polity)

forcibly resist their claims. Proactive collective action on the

one side, reactive collective action on the other.

A complete picture of the process linking contention and

violence, however, requires a distinction between nonmembers bidding

for power and members on their way out of the polity. Members losing

their position are more likely to find themselves trying to maintain

exclusive claims to some particular resource -- a school, a distinctive

costume, a source of income, a tax exemption—and unable to enlist the support of other members or of agents of the government in maintaining those claims. Under those circumstances, they commonly attempt to exert those claims on their own, and to keep others from claiming the same resources. We have reactive collective action.

Then two different sequences are likely to produce collective violence involving declining members of a polity. The first is like the one involving new claimants for membership in the polity, in that agents of the government directly resist the claims of the parting member to keep exerting their former rights to certain resources. The second pits the parting member directly against others seeking to acquire the disputed resources; vigilante movements, private armies, and gangs of thugs are especially likely to enter the action at this point, as the old member seeks to substitute its own force for that of the now-unreliable government. The regional movement of resistance against a centralizing state commonly takes this form. So does the classic European food riot, in which the members of a community collectively dispute the right of anyone to store grain in times of hunger or ship grain out of the community when local people still need food, and reinforce their dispute by acting in the traditional role of the authorities: inventorying the grain on hand, accumulating it in a public place, and selling it off at a price locally determined to be just and reasonable. So finally, do a variety of fascist movements formed in opposition to the threatening claims of a mobilized working class.

The sequence involving new contenders and declining members mean that collective violence tends to cluster around entries into the polity and exits from it. When membership is stable, collective violence is less prevalent. And the most important single reason for that clustering is the propensity of the government's repressive forces to act against new contenders and declining members.

I do not mean that the sequences I have described are the only ones which produce collective violence, just that they are the most regular and reliable. Routine testing among established members of a polity produces a certain amount of violent conflict, but it tends to be limited, and treated as a regrettable error. Conventional combats among teams, communities, youth groups or schools sometimes fit the pattern of "testing violence," but more often escape it; they, too, operate on a small scale, within large restrictions. Drunken brawls, private vengeance, festival madness, impulsive vandalism, all reach a dangerous magnitude now and then. What is more, the frequency of conventional combats, brawls, vendetta and so on undoubtedly varies with the basic conceptions of honor, obligation and solidarity which prevail within a population. Nevertheless, I would say that in populations under the control of states all these forms account for only a small proportion of the collective violence which occurs, and change far too gradually to account for the abrupt surges and recessions of collective violence which appear in such populations. The chief source of variation in collective violence is the operation of the polity.

Nor do I mean that most collective violence goes on in cal-
culating calm. Far from it. Both those who are arguing for the
acquisition of rights on the basis of general principals and those
who are fighting for the defense of privilege on the basis of cus-
tom and precedent are usually indignant, and often enraged. Moments
of dangerous confrontation (as Louis Girard says of the French
revolutions of 1830 and 1848, and almost everyone says of the French
Events of May, 1968) frequently bring an air of festival, of exhili-
ration, of release from ordinary restrictions. Plenty of individual
venting of resentments and settling of old scores takes place under
the cover of collective action in the name of high principle. The
argument up to this point simply denies the conclusion that the rage,
the exhiliration or the resentment <u>cause</u> the collective violence.

Revolution

A <u>fortiori</u>, the argument denies that accumulated rage, exhilira-
tion or resentment causes revolutions. It leads instead to a concep-
tion of revolution as an extreme condition of the normal political
process. The distinguishing characteristic of a revolutionary
situation, as Leon Trotsky said long ago, is the presence of more than
one bloc effectively exercising control over a significant part of
the state apparatus. Trotsky built into this idea of "dual sover-
eignty" two restrictions which appear unnecessary: 1) that each of
the blocs consist of a single social class; 2) that there be only
two such blocs at any point in time. Either of these restrictions
would eliminate most of the standard cases of revolution, including
the French, Chinese and Mexican classics.

Trotsky's idea retains its analytic strength if expanded to include blocs consisting of coalitions of classes and/or other groups and to allow for the possibility of three or more simultaneous blocs. Multiple sovereignty is then the identifying feature of revolutions. A revolution begins when a government previously under the control of a single, sovereign polity becomes the object of effective, competing, mutually exclusive claims on the part of two or more distinct polities; it ends when a single sovereign polity regains control over the government.

Such a multiplication of polities can occur under four different conditions:

1. The members of one polity attempt to subordinate another previously distinct polity. Where the two polities are clearly sovereign and independent at the outset we are more likely to consider this conflict a special variety of war. Circumstances like the annexation of Texas to the United States or the transfers of power to various communist regimes in Eastern Europe at the end of the second world war fall, in fact, into an uncertain area between war and revolution.

2. The members of a previously subordinate polity, such as the group of contenders holding power over a regional government, assert sovereignty. Here the words "rebellion" and "revolt" spring readily to mind. Yet in recent years it has become quite usual to call one version of such events a colonial or national revolution.

3. Contenders not holding membership in the existing polity mobilize into a bloc successfully exerting control over some portion of the governmental apparatus. Despite the attractiveness of this version to leaders of the dispossessed, it rarely, if ever, occurs in a pure form.

4. The more usual circumstance is the fragmentation of an existing polity into two or more blocs each exercising control over some part of the government. That fragmentation frequently involves the emergence of coalitions between established members of the polity and mobilizing non-members.

How would we recognize the onset of multiple sovereignty? The question is stickier than it seems at first glance. Neither the presence or expansion of areas of autonomy or of resistance on the part of the subject population is a reliable sign; all governments excite some sorts of resistance, and all governments exert incomplete control over their subjects. Most states face continuing marginal challenges to their sovereignty: from within, bandits, vigilantes, religious communities, national minorities or uncompromising separatists hold them off; from without, powerful states infiltrate them and encroach on their perogatives. All of these circumstances have some distant kinship to revolution, but they do not constitute revolution. Even rival claims to those of the existing polity by the adherents of displaced regimes, revolutionary movements or outside states are quite common. The claims themselves do not amount to revolution.

The question is whether some significant part of the subject population honors the claim. The revolutionary moment arrives when previously acquiescent members of that population find themselves confronted with strictly incompatible demands from the government and from an alternative body claiming control over the government. . .and obey the alternative body. They pay taxes, provide men to its armies, feed its functionaries, honor its symbols, give time to its service, or yield other resources despite the prohibitions of a still-existing government they formerly obeyed. Multiple sovereignty has begun. When only one polity exerting exclusive control over the government remains, and no

rivals are successfully pressing their claims--however that happens--
the revolution has ended.

Proximate Conditions of Revolution

If this is the case, a revolutionary meteorologist would keep
his eyes peeled for the following conditions, and a revolutionary engineer
would try to create them:

1. the appearance of contenders, or coalitions of contenders,
advancing exclusive alternative claims to the control over
the government currently exerted by the members of the polity;

2. commitment to those claims by a significant segment of
the subject population (especially when those commitments are
not simply acknowledged in principle, but activated in the
face of prohibitions or contrary directives from the govern-
ment);

3. formation of coalitions between members of the polity and
the contenders advancing the alternative claims;

4. incapacity or unwillingness of the agents of the government
to suppress the alternative coalition or the commitment to its
claims.

1, 2, and 4 are necessary conditions for revolution. The third con-
dition, the formation of coalitions, is not logically necessary. It
may not even be practically necessary, but it greatly facilitates
condition 4. Coalitions between members and challengers, that is,
make it less likely that suppression of the challengers will work.
That is one reason for the importance of a "symptom" to which Crane
Brinton and many other analysts of revolution have devoted considerable
attention: the transfer of intellectuals and elites to the revolutionary
opposition. Historically, the incapacity or neutralization of the
armed forces has often followed this sort of division of the polity

and has usually been essential to the success of the revolutionary coalition.

The explanation, prediction or production of revolution therefore comes down to the specification, detection or creation of the circumstances under which condition 1 to 4 occur. The five proximate conditions leave out a number of things which have often been considered defining features of revolution: permanent transfer of power, displacement of one ruling class by another, extensive structural change, high levels of violence, widespread participation, action by the oppressed, activation in the name of a vision of a transformed world.

Of course, anyone has the right to restrict his category of True Revolutions to those displaying any or all of these additional features. All of them are related as likely cause or probable effect to the particular form of multiple sovereignty which characterizes the revolution. Yet each of them has occurred historically in the absence of multiple sovereignty. Multiple sovereignty has, moreover, occurred in the absence of each of them; none is a necessary condition. (I am not sure whether multiple sovereignty has ever occured in the absence of all of the conditions.) Hence, the desirability of distinguishing the conditions for transfers of power, extensive structural change, high levels of violence, etc.from the conditions for revolution.

Most analysts of revolution have taken a different tack. They have restricted the meaning of revolution in two ways: 1) by

insisting that the actors and the action meet some demanding

standards--that they based on an oppressed class, that they have a

comprehensive program of social transformation in view, or some

other gauge of seriousness--2) by dealing only with cases in which

power actually changed hands. Peter Calvert, to take a recent

example, builds the following elements into his conception of revolu-

tion:

> (a) A process in which the political direction of a state
> becomes increasingly discredited in the eyes of either the
> population as a whole or certain key sections of it. . .
>
> (b) A change of government (transition) at a clearly defined
> point in time by the use of armed force, or the credible
> threat of its use; namely, an _event_.
>
> (c) A more-or-less coherent programme of change in either
> the political or the social institutions of a state, or both,
> induced by the political leadership after a revolutionary
> event, the transition of power, has occured.
>
> (d) A political myth that gives to the political leadership
> resulting from a revolutionary transition short-term status
> as the legitimate government of the state (Calvert 1970: 4).

Thus, he goes on, "in order to investigate fully the concept of revolu-

tion it would be necessary to study in detail process, event, programme,

and myth as distinct phenomena" (Calvert 1970: 4). He confines his

own study to revolutionary events: changes of government accomplished

by force. That greatly increases the number of cases he has to examine.

Yet the insistence on armed force and on an actual transfer of power

eliminates a number of cases in which multiple sovereignty appeared with-

out the use of armed force or, especially, a change of government.

His general definition is quite narrow, and even his working definition

of revolutionary _events_ is somewhat narrower than the definition

of revolution I have proposed.

My reasons for preferring a broad definition are at once the-

oretical and practical. Theoretically, I am not convinced that

revolutions in the narrow sense of violent, extensive transfers of

power are phenomena _sui generis_. On the contrary, I am impressed

with the carryover of routine forms of political action into

revolutionary situations, the apparently small initial differences

separating "successful" from "unsuccessful" revolutions, and the

apparent contingency of the degree of violence itself. Yet multiple

sovereignty does seem to mark out a domain of situations which have

a good deal of homogeneity by comparison with all cases of single

sovereignty. Practically, the usual criteria of revolution--the extent

and durability of the transfer of power, the amount of social change

called for by the revolutionary program, the prominence of the power-

less in the revolutionary action, for instance--single out as defining

conditions features of the event which are likely to be mixed, con-

troversial and ambiguous. That is, to say the least, inconvenient.

Multiple sovereignty has its own difficulties. But it is rather

easier to identify than is, say, "fundamental social change."

We might hold onto the classic questions by adopting a taxo-

nomic strategy. We could classify revolutions initially identified

by the presence of multiple sovereignty as

    violent/nonviolent

    no transfer/little transfer /much transfer

and so on. The taxonomies of revolution which follow most directly from the argument unfolding here, however, differentiate among a) processes leading to multiple sovereignty, b) processes leading to the termination of multiple sovereignty, c) patterns of mobilization, coalition and opposition among the contenders involved. A <u>coup d'état</u>, then, would turn out to be a revolution in which one member of a polity attempted to displace another via a temporary seizure of a major instrument of government, with only a brief interval of multiple sovereignty. A <u>civil war</u> would be a revolution in which the blocs of contenders had distinct territorial bases. And so on.

Proceeding in this way, it would not be hard to work out a comprehensive classification scheme. There is no point in doing that here. In such a scheme, whether the revolution was "successful" or "unsuccessful," whether one group of participants hoped to transform the entire structure of power, whether fundamental social change went on before the revolution, whether important transformations occurred as a result of it, whether many people died during the conflict would remain important questions, but that would not enter into the classification of revolutions.

The critical signs of revolution, in this perspective, are signs of the emergence of an alternative polity. These signs may possibly be related to rising discontent, value conflict, frustration or relative deprivation. The relationship must, however, be proved and not assumed. Even if it is proved that discontent, value conflict, frustration and relative deprivation do fluctuate in close correspondence

to the emergence and disappearance of alternative polities—a result which would surprise me—the thing to watch for would still be the commitment of a significant part of the population, regardless of their motives, to exclusive alternative claims to the control over the government currently exerted by the members of the polity.

We have narrowed the focus of explanation and prediction considerably. It now comes down to specifying and detecting the conditions under which five related outcomes occur: 1) the appearance of contenders making exclusive alternative claims, 2) significant commitment to those claims, 3) formation of coalitions with the contenders, 4) repressive incapacity of the government, 5) activation of the commitments. The short-run conditions for these outcomes may, of course, be quite different from the long-run changes which make them possible. Let us concentrate for the moment on the short-run conditions.

Alternatives to the Existing Polity

What I mean by "exclusive alternative claims to control of the government" comes out dramatically in an article written about a year after the October Revolution, as the other parties which had joined the revolutionary coalition were being squeezed out of power:

> Now, however, the course of world events and the bitter
> lessons derived from the alliance of all the Russian mon-
> archists with Anglo-French and American imperialism are
> proving in practice that a democratic republic is a
> bourgeois-democratic republic, which is already out of
> date from the point of view of the problems which im-
> perialism has placed before history. They show that there
> is no other alternative: either Soviet government triumphs
> in every advanced country in the world, or the most
> reactionary imperialism triumphs, the most savage im-
> perialism, which is throttling the small and weak
> nations and reinstating reaction all over the world—

> Anglo-American imperialism, which has perfectly masterd
> the art of using the form of a democratic republic.
>
> One or the other.
>
> There is no middle course; until quite recently this view was
> regarded as the blind fanaticism of the Bolsheviks.
>
> But it turned out to be true   (Lenin 1967a: 35).

These claims came, of course, from a party already in power, but

they were addressed to revolutionary strategists in other countries

who wished to continue a collaborative approach within Russia itself.

When can we expect the appearance of contenders (or coali-

tions of contenders) advancing exclusive alternative claims to the

control of the government currently exerted by the members of the

polity? The question is a trifle misleading, for such contenders

are almost always with us in the form of millennial cults, radical

cells or rejects from positions of power. The real question is when

such contenders proliferate and/or mobilize.

Two paths lead to that proliferation and/or mobilization.

The first is the flourishing of groups which from their inception

hold to transforming aims which are incompatible with the continued

power of the members of the polity. Truly other-worldly and re-

treatist groups seeking total withdrawal from contemporary life do

not fully qualify, since in principle they can prosper so long as

the rest of the world lets them alone. True radicals, true reaction-

aries, anarchists, preachers of theocracy, monists of almost every

persuasion come closer to the mark. The second path is the turning

of contenders from objectives which are compatible with the survival

of the polity to objectives which spell its doom: a claim
to all power, a demand for criteria of membership which would ex-
haust all the available resources, or exclude all its present members.

Why and how the first sort of group--the group committed
from the start to fundamental transformation of the structure of power--
forms remains one of the mysteries of our time. Of course, Max Weber
taught that such groups formed around charismatic individuals who
offered alternative visions of the world, visions that made sense
of the contemporary chaos. Marx suggested that from time to time a
few individuals would swing so free of their assigned places in
the existing class structure that they could view the structure as
a whole and the historical process producing it; they could then
teach their view to others who were still caught in the structure.
Since Marx and Weber we have had some heroic conceptualizing and
cataloging of the varieties of intrinsically revolutionary groups
(see Smelser 1963, Lipset and Raab 1970, Gamson 1968). But the
rise and fall of diverse movements of protest since World War 11
has shown us that we still have almost no power to anticipate where
and when such committed groups will appear.

The turning of contenders from compatible objectives is rather
less of a mystery, because we can witness its occurence as old members
lose their position in the polity and as challengers are refused
access to power. The former is the recurrent history of right-wing
activism, the latter the standard condition for left-wing activism.
Marx himself gave the classic analysis of the process of radicalization

away from some sort of accomodation with the existing system
toward an exclusive, revolutionary position. His argument was pre-
cisely that through repeated victimization under bourgeois democracy
(a victimization, to be sure, dictated by the logic of capitalism)
workers would gradually turn away from its illusions toward class-
conscious militancy. That he should have overestimated the polarizing
effects of industrial capitalism and underestimated the absorptive
capacity of the polities it supported does not reduce the accuracy of
his perception of the relationships. So far as Marx was concerned
a newly-forming and growing class was the only candidate for such a
transformation. In fact, the general principle appears to apply as
well to national minorities, age-sex groups, regional populations or
any other mobilizing group which makes repeated unsuccessful bids for
power.

The elaboration of new ideologies, new theories of how the
world works, new creeds is part and parcel of both paths to a revolu-
tionary position: the emergence of brand-new challengers and the
turning of existing contenders. Most likely the articulation of
ideologies which capture and formulate the problems of such con-
tenders in itself accelerates their mobilization and change of
direction; how great an independent weight to attribute to ideological
innovation is another recurrent puzzle in the analysis of revolution.
The need for elaboration of ideologies is one of the chief reasons
for the exceptional importance of intellectuals in revolutionary move-
ments. The reflections of a leading French Marxist intellectual on

current political strategy are revealing:

> The revolutionary party's capacity for hegemony is
> directly linked to the extent of its influence in the
> professions and in intellectual circles. It can counter
> bourgeois ideology to the degree that it inspires their
> inquiries and draws their vanguard into reflection on
> an "alternative model," while respecting the indepen-
> dence of these inquiries. The mediation of the intel-
> lectual vanguard is indispensable in combatting and
> destroying the grip of the dominant ideology. It is
> also necessary in order to give the dominated classes
> a language and a means of expression which will make
> them conscious of the reality of their subordination
> and exploitation (Gorz 1969: 241-242).

This is, of course, a congenial doctrine for an intellectual to hold.

Yet, it corresponds to a vigorous reality: an outpouring of new

thought articulating objectives incompatible with the continuation

of the existing polity is probably our single most reliable sign

that the first condition of a revolutionary situation is being ful-

filled.

Acceptance of Alternative Claims

The second condition is commitment to the claims by a sig-

nificant segment of the subject population. The first and second

conditions overlap, since the veering of an already-mobilized con-

tender toward exclusive alternative claims to control of the govern-

ment simultaneously establishes the claims and produces commitment

to them. Yet expansion of commitment can occur without the establish-

ment of any new exclusive claims through a) the further mobilization

of the contenders involved, and b) the acceptance of those claims

by other individuals and groups. It is in accounting for the expan-

sion and contraction fo this sort of commitment that attitudinal

analyses of the type conducted by Ted Gurr, James Davies and Neil
Smelser should have their greatest power.

Two classes of action by governments have a strong tendency
to expand commitment to revolutionary claims. The first is the sudden
failure of the government to meet specific obligations which members
of the subject population regard as well established and crucial to
their own welfare. I have in mind obligations to provide employment,
welfare services, protection, access to justice, and the other major
services of government.

Italy, for example, experienced a series of crises of this
sort at the end of World War I, despite the fact that she had ended
up on the "winning" side. The demobilization of the army threw over
two million men on a soft labor market, the fluctuation and relaxa-
tion of controls over food supplies and prices aggrieved millions of
consumers, and peasants (including demobilized soldiers) began to
take into their own hands the redistribution of land they argued
the government had promised during the war. The consequent with-
drawal of commitment from the government opened the way to fascism.
Both Right and Left mobilized in response to the government's in-
ability to deliver on its promises. In the event, the regime chose
to tolerate or support the Fascist strong-arm squadri in their effort
to destroy the most effective working class organizations. For that
reason (rather than any fundamental similarity in their social bases)
the initial geographic distribution of Italian Fascism resembled the
distribution of socialist strength: the Po Valley, the northern

industrial cities, and so forth. The Right: Far Right coalition
worked, more or less, in crushing the organized segments of the Left.
But it left the Fascists in nearly autonomous control of large parts
of Italy: multiple sovereignty.

The case of postwar Italy has a three fold importance, for
it illustrates a process which was widespread (although generally
less acute) elsewhere in Europe at the same time, falls into a very
general pattern in which the end of war (victorious or not) produces
a crisis of governmental incapacity and demonstrates the way in which
movements of protest themselves not clearly "right" or "left" in
orientation sometime open the way to a right-wing (or, for that
matter, left-wing) seizure of power.

The second class of governmental action which commonly expands
the commitment of important segments of the population to revolu-
tionary claims is a rapid or unexpected increase in the government's
demand for surrender of resources by its subject population. An
increase in taxes is the clearest example, but military conscrip-
tion, the commandeering of land, crops or farm animals and the im-
position of corvees have all played an historical role in the in-
citement of opposition. Gabriel Ardant (1965) argues, with wide-
spread evidence, that increased taxation has been the single most
important stimulus to popular rebellion throughout western history.
Furthermore, he points out that the characteristic circumstances of
tax rebellions in Europe since 1500 are not what most historians
have thought. Instead of being either the last resort of those who

are in such misery that any more taxation will destroy them or the first resort of privileged parties who refuse to let anything slip away from them, the rebellion against new taxes most commonly arises where communities find themselves incapable of marketing enough of their goods to acquire the funds demanded by the government.

Ardant considers "incapable of marketing" to mean either that the local economy is insufficiently commercialized or that the market for the particular products of the community in question has contracted. Eric Wolf's analysis of the relationship between peasants and the market, however, suggests that "incapability" refers more generally to any demands which would make it impossible for people to fulfill the obligations which bind them to the local community, and whose fulfillment makes them honorable men. It follows directly from Wolf's argument that increased taxation in the face of little commercialization or the contraction of demand for the products already being marketed by a peasant community tends to have devasting effects on the structure of the community.

Other types of communities face different versions of the same problems. The consequence is that rapidly increased extraction of resources by the government--which in western countries has most frequently occurred in preparations for war--regularly persuades some segment of the population that the government is no longer legitimate, while those who oppose it are.

Such a shift in position sometimes occurs rapidly, with little advance warning. This appears to be especially likely when

a contender or set of contenders mobilizes quickly in response to a general threat to its position--an invasion, an economic crisis, a major attempt by landlords, the state or someone else to deprive them of crucial resources. We find the villagers of northern England rising in a Pilgrimage of Grace to oppose Henry VIII's dispossession of the monasteries, Mexican peasants banding together to resist the threat of takeover of their common lands, Japanese countrymen recurrently joining bloodly uprisings against the imposition of new taxes.

This defensive mobilization is not simply a cumulation of individual dissatisfactions with hardship or a mechanical group response to deprivation. Whether it occurs at all depends very much, as Eric Wolf and others have shown, on the pre-existing structure of power and solidarity within the population experiencing the threat. Furthermore, its character is not intrinsically either "revolutionary" or "counter-revolutionary"; that depends mainly on the coalitions the potential rebels make. This defensive mobilization is the most volatile feature of a revolutionary situation, both because it often occurs fast and because new coalitions between a rapidly-mobilized group and established contenders for power can suddenly create a significant commitment to an alternative polity.

If that is the case, there may be something to the common notion that revolutions are most likely to occur when a sharp contraction in well-being follows a long period of improvement. James Davies has recently propounded the idea under the label of "J-curve

hypothesis" and Ted Gurr has treated it as one of the chief variants

of his general condition for rebellion: a widening of the ex-

pectation-achievement gap. All the attempts to test these attitu-

dinal versions of the theory have been dogged by the difficulty

of measuring changes in expectations and achievements for large

populations over substantial blocks of time and by the tendency

of most analysts to work from the fact of revolution back to the

search for evidence of short-run deprivation and then further back

to the search for evidence of long-run improvement, not necessarily

with respect to the same presumed wants, needs or expectations. The

latter procedure has the advantage of almost always producing a fit

between the data and the theory, and the disadvantage of not being

a reliable test of the theory. The question remains open.

Assuming that sharp contractions following long expansions

do produce revolutions with exceptional frequency, however, the

line of argument pursued here leads to an interesting alternative

explanation of the J-curve phenomenon. It is that during a long

run of expanding resources, the government tends to take on com-

mitments to redistribute resources to new contenders and the polity

tends to admit challengers more easily because the relative cost

to existing members is lower when resources are expanding. In the

event of quick contraction, the government has greater commitments,

new matters of right, to members of the polity, and has acquited

partial commitments to new contenders, perhaps not members of the

polity, but very likely forming coalitions with members. The government

faces a choice between 1) greatly increasing the coercion applied
to the more vulnerable segments of the population in order to bring
up the yield of resources for reallocation or 2) breaking commitments
where that will incite the least dangerous opposition. Either
step is likely to lead to a defensive mobilization, and thence
to a threat of revolution. Such a situation does, to be sure,
promote the disappointment of rising expectations. But the
principal link between the J-curve and the revolution, in this
hypothesis lies in the changing relations between contenders and
government likely to occur in a period of expanding resources.

This is speculation bolstered by hypothesis. In the present
state of the evidence both the existence of the J-curve phenomenon
and any proposed explanation of it remain little more than informed
guesswork. A proper verification that the phenomenon exists will
require comparisons of periods of J-curve, U-curve, M-curve and no
curve as well as between revolutions and non-revolutions, in order
to see whether there is in fact an affinity of one for the other.

In a longer historical view, the changes which have most often
produced the rapid shifts in commitment away from existing govern-
ments and established polities are processes which directly affect
the autonomy of smaller units within the span of the government: the
rise and fall of centralized states, the expansion and contraction of
national markets, the concentration and dispersion of control over
property. Prosperity and depression, urbanization and ruralization,
industrialization and deindustrialization, sanctification and secularization

occur in a dispersed and incremental fashion. Although state-making, the expansion and contraction of markets and property shifts also develop incrementally most of the time, they are especially susceptible of producing dramatic confrontations of rights, privileges and principles; this tax collector wants the family cow, this merchant proposes to buy the village commons, this prince fails to protect his subjects from bandits. S.N. Eisenstadt (1963) has brought out the extreme vulnerability of vast bureaucratic empires to overexpansion and to damage at the center; both, in his analysis, tend to produce rebellions in which peripheral agents of the empire seek to establish autonomous control over the lands, men, organizations and wealth first mobilized by the empire. Fernand Braudel (1966) has stressed the frequency with which banditry and related struggles for local power prolifer-ated as the ephemeral states of seventeenth-century Europe con-tracted. In all these cases, spokesmen for large-scale organiza-tion and centripetal processes find themselves locked in struggle with advocates of small-scale autonomy.

In order to produce multiple sovereignty, and thus become revolutionary, commitments to some alternative claimant must be activated in the face of prohibitions or contrary directives from the government. The moment at which some men belonging to members of the alternative coalition seize control over some portion of the government, and other men not previously attached to the coali-tion honor their directives marks the beginning of a revolution. That acceptance of directives may, to be sure, occur as a result of

duress or deception as well of conversion to the cause. A mix-
ture of duress, deception and conversion will often do the job.

The presence of a coherent revolutionary organization makes
a great difference at exactly this point. An organization facilitates
the initial seizure of control, spreads the news, activates the
commitments already made by specific men. If so, Lenin provides a
more reliable guide to revolutionary strategy than Sorel; his closely-
directed conspiratorial party contrasts sharply with the spontaneous
and purifying rebellion in which Sorel placed his hopes. But the
existence of such an organization also makes the start of revolution
more closely dependent on the decisions of a small number of men--
and thus, paradoxically, subject to chance and idiosyncrasy.

In the last analysis, activation of revolutionary commitments
happens through an extension of the same processes which create the
commitments. Conspiratorial organization simply happens to be the
one which maximizes the opportunity of the committed to calculate
the right moment to strike against the government. The government's
sudden inability to meet its own responsibilities (as in the German
insurrections during the disintegration of the imperial war effort
in 1918) or its violation of the established rights of its subject
population (as in the 1640 rebellions of Portugal and Catalonia
against Castile, which followed Olivares' attempt to squeeze ex-
ceptional resources from those reluctant provinces for the conduct
of his war with France) can simultaneously spread and activate the
commitment to its revolutionary opposition.

In a case like that of the Taiping rebellion, the rapid
mobilization of a contender advancing exclusive alternative claims
to control over the government itself leads quickly and inevitably
to a break and to an armed struggle. The dramatic weakening of a
government's repressive capacity through war, defection or catas-
trophe can simultaneously create the possibility of revolution and
encourage the revolutionaries to make their bid; the quick succession
of the French revolution of 1870 to the defeat of the Emperor by
Prussia falls into this category.

Coalitions between Members and Challengers

The third revolutionary condition is the formation of coali-
tions between members of the polity and the contenders advancing
exclusive alternative claims to control over the government. Ob-
viously, this condition and the first one (the appearance of al-
ternative claims etc.) overlap, both because by definition no such
coalition can occur until the alternative exists and because a
coalition sometimes turns into a commitment to the alternative claims.
Yet this is a separate condition, as some reflection on the coali-
tion between industrialists and the Nazis before 1933 will suggest.
The nature of such a coalition is for a member of the polity to
trade resources with a challenger, for example, an exchange of jobs
for electoral support. Such a coalition is always risky, since the
challenger will always be on the losing end of the exchange as
compared with the value of the resources when traded among members
of the polity, and therefore disposed to move its extensive mobilized

resources elsewhere. Nevertheless the challenger is likely to
accept a coalition where it offers a defense against repression
or devaluation of its resources and the member is likely to accept
it when the polity is closely divided, or when no coalition partners
are available within the polity, or when its own membership is in
jeopardy for want of resources. Standard coalition theory applies
here (see esp. Gamson 1968).

A classic revolutionary tactic also falls under the heading
of challenger-member coalition: the penetration of an organization
which already has an established place in the structure of power.
As early as 1901, Lenin was clearly enunciating such an approach
to trade unions:

> Every Social-Democratic worker should as far as possible
> assist and actively work in these organizations. But,
> while this is true, it is certainly not in our interest
> to demand that only Social-Democrats should be eligible
> for membership in the "trade" unions, since that would
> only narrow the scope of our influence upon the masses.
> Let every worker who understands the need to unite for the
> struggle against the employers and the governments join
> the trade unions. The very aim of the trade unions would
> be impossible of achievement, if they did not unite all who
> have attained at least this elementary degree of under-
> standing, if they were not very broad organizations. The
> broader these organizations, the broader will be our
> influence over them—an influence due, not only to the
> "spontaneous" development of the economic struggle, but
> to the direct and conscious effort of the socialist trade
> union members to influence their comrades. (Lenin 1967b:
> 191).

In these cases, the trade unions were normally established members
of their respective polities, while the Social Democrats in question
were challengers still outside the polity. In this same message,

Lenin concludes by recommending the control of the large, open, legal union by the secret, closed, disciplined revolutionary party.

Splinter groups of intellectuals appear to have a special propensity to form coalitions outside the polity. They trade off ideological work publicity for the demands of the challenger, leadership skills and access to persons in high places for various forms of support: personnel for demonstrations, electoral strength, defense against other threatening challengers, and so on. Analysts of revolution as diverse as Crane Brinton (1948) and Barrington Moore (1969) have considered the "desertion of the intellectuals" to be a crucial early omen of a revolutionary situation. The "desertion" may, of course, consist of individual acceptance of exclusive alternative claims to control of the government. It may also take the form of rejecting all claims, in good anarchist fashion. But the shifts in commitment by intellectuals which contribute most to hasten a revolutionary situation, in my view, consist of coalitions between revolutionary challengers and groups of intellectuals having membership in the polity. The propensity of French left-wing intellectuals to form such coalitions--without quite relinquishing their own claims to power and privilege--is legendary.

Governmental Inaction

Condition four is the incapacity or unwillingness of the agents of the government to suppress the alternative coalition or the commitment to its claims. Three paths are possible: a) sheer insufficiency of the available means of coercion; b) inefficiency in

applying the means; c) inhibitions to their application. The
starkest cases of insufficiency occur when the balance of coercive
resources between the government and the alternative coalition
swings suddenly toward the latter, because the government has suf-
fered a sudden depletion of its resources (as in a lost war), be-
cause the alternative coalition has managed a sudden mobilization
of resources (as in the pooling of private arms) or because a new
contender with abundant coercive resources has joined the coalition
(as in the defection of troops or foreign intervention). However,
the massing of rebels in locations remote from the centers of coer-
cive strength, the implantation of the alternative coalition if a
rough and unknown terrain and the adoption of tactics unfamiliar to
the professional forces of the government all raise the costs of
suppression as well.

Ted Gurr (1969: 235-236) develops an interesting argument about
the balance of coercive resources between a government and its op-
ponents. In his phrasing, "The likelihood of internal war increases
as the ratio of dissident to regime coercive control approaches
equality." He is referring directly to the probably magnitude of
collective violence; where the balance strongly favors the government,
goes the argument, only dispersed acts of rebellion occur; where
the balance strongly favors its opponents, the government tends to
be a pawn in their hands. The analysis applies even more plausibly
to the likelihood of revolution, for an alternative coalition with
large coercive resources is likely to seize control with at most an

instant of multiple sovereignty, while an alternative coalition with small coercive resources will never get multiple sovereignty started.

Inefficiency in applying means which are, in principle, sufficient is harder to pin down and explain; the inefficient almost always plead insufficient means. William Langer (1969 esp. 321-322) contends that had the authorities not bungled their repression of various popular movements the European revolutions of 1848 would never have occurred. To have confidence in his conclusion we have to assess the balance of coercive means between popular movements and governments as well as the political inhibitions to repression. In pre-revolutionary 1848 the governments clearly had the edge in men, weapons, supplies and coercive technique. The strong commitment of the new bourgeois who had been acquiring significant roles in European governments to certain kinds of civil liberties and various working-class movements, however, both stayed the government's hand. From a strictly instrumental perspective, all such inhibitions are "inefficient." Yet not to distinguish them from the apparent incompetence of the Egyptian regime toppled in 1952 or the Turkish sultanate displaced in 1919 blurs the essential explanation of these events.

Inhibitions to the application of available coercive means are more interesting than shortages or inefficiency, because they are so likely to flow from the political process itself. The great importance of coalitions between established members of the polity and

revolutionary challengers exemplifies the point very well. The
United States of the 1960s witnessed the constant formation and
reformation of coalitions between groups of intellectuals, opposi-
tion politicians, black liberation movements, students and peace
activists, some within the American polity and some outside it.
The total effect of these coalitions fell considerably short of
revolution, but while operating they shielded those whose principles
offered the greatest challenge to the existing distribution of power
from the treatment they received from police, troops and other re-
pressors when acting on their own.

Despite the implications of this example, however, the most
crucial coalitions over the whole range of revolutions surely link
challengers directly with military forces. The Egyptian and Turkish
revolutions stand near the extreme at which the chief claims to al-
ternative control of the government come from within the military
itself; in both cases soldiers dominated a coalition linking dis-
sident politicians and local movements of resistance. In the midst
of the range we find events like the Russian revolution, in which
the military were far from paramount, but important segments of the
military defected, disintegrated or refused to repress their brethren.
The more extensive the pre-revolutionary coalitions between chal-
lengers and military units, the more likely this is to happen.

In this respect and others, war bears a crucial relationship
to revolution. Walter Laqueur (1968: 501) puts it this way:

"War appears to have been the decisive factor in the
emergence of revolutionary situations in modern times;
most modern revolutions, both successful and abortive,
have followed in the wake of war (the Paris Commune of
1871, the Russian revolution of 1905, the various revo-
lutions after the two World Wars, including the Chinese
revolutions). These have occurred not only in the
countries that suffered defeat. The general dislocation
caused by war, the material losses and human sacrifices,
creat a climate conducive to radical change. A large
section of the population has been armed; human life
seems considerably less valuable than in peacetime. In
a defeated country authority tends to disintegrate, and
acute social dissatisfaction receives additional impetus
from a sense of wounded national prestige (the Young
Turks in 1908, Naguib and Nasser in 1952). The old
leadership is discredited by defeat, and the appeal for
radical social change and national reassertion thus
falls on fertile ground."

No doubt the statement suffers from a superabundance of explanations.

Still it points out the essential relationship between war and the

repressive capacity of the government. Although war temporarily

places large coercive resources under the control of a government,

it does not guarantee that they will be adequate to the demands

placed upon them, that they will be used efficiently, or that they

will even remain under the government's firm control. Defeat and/or

demobilization provide especially favorable circumstances for rev-

olution because they combine the presence of substantial coercive

resources with uncertain control over their use.

War also matters in quite a different way. By and large, wars

have always provided the principal occasions on which states have

rapidly increased their levies of resources from their subject popu-

lations. Conscription is only the self-evident case. Demands for

taxes, forced loans, food, non-military labor, manufactured goods and

raw materials follow the same pattern. The increased exactions al-
most always meet widespread resistance, which the agents of states
counter with persuasion and force. Despite the advantage of having
extensive estates to squeeze and a wealthy church to dispossess, the
Tudors pressed their England hard to support the military forces
they committed to sixteenth-century warfare. They faced serious
rebellion in 1489, 1497, 1536, 1547, 1549, 1553 and 1569. The last
three--Kett's, Wyatt's and the Northern Rebellion--centered on dynas-
tic issues and consisted largely of risings engineered by regional
magnates. The first four, on the other hand, were popular rebel-
lions; every one of them began with the crown's sudden laying hand
on resources previously outside its control. The general pattern
is the same as I have already described for tax rebellions: the rapid
mobilization of an entire population which then challenges the very
justice of the royal demand for men, money or goods.

On the other hand, the contention model makes it appear likely
that once multiple sovereignty begins, collective violence will
continue at high levels long after the basic issue is decided, and
will taper off gradually. Schematically, the contrast is this:
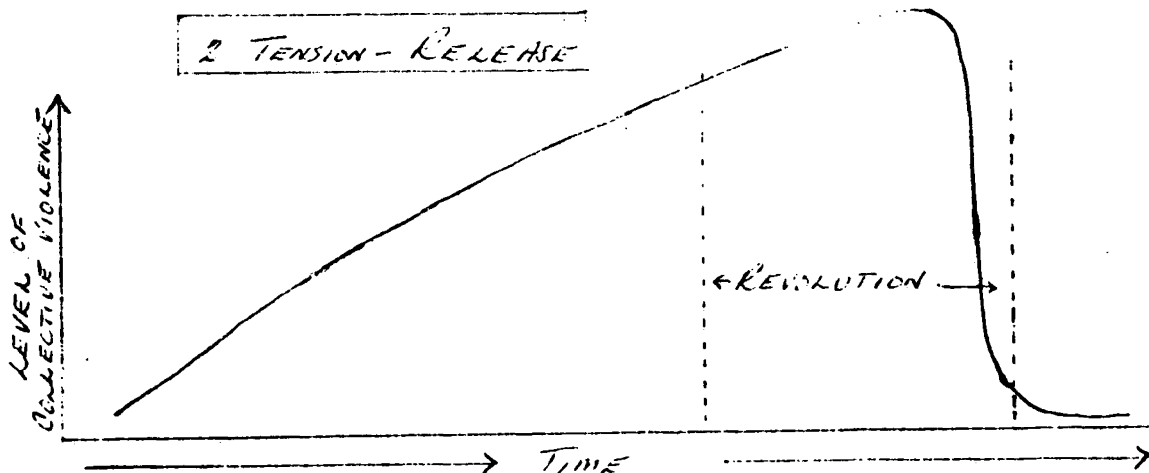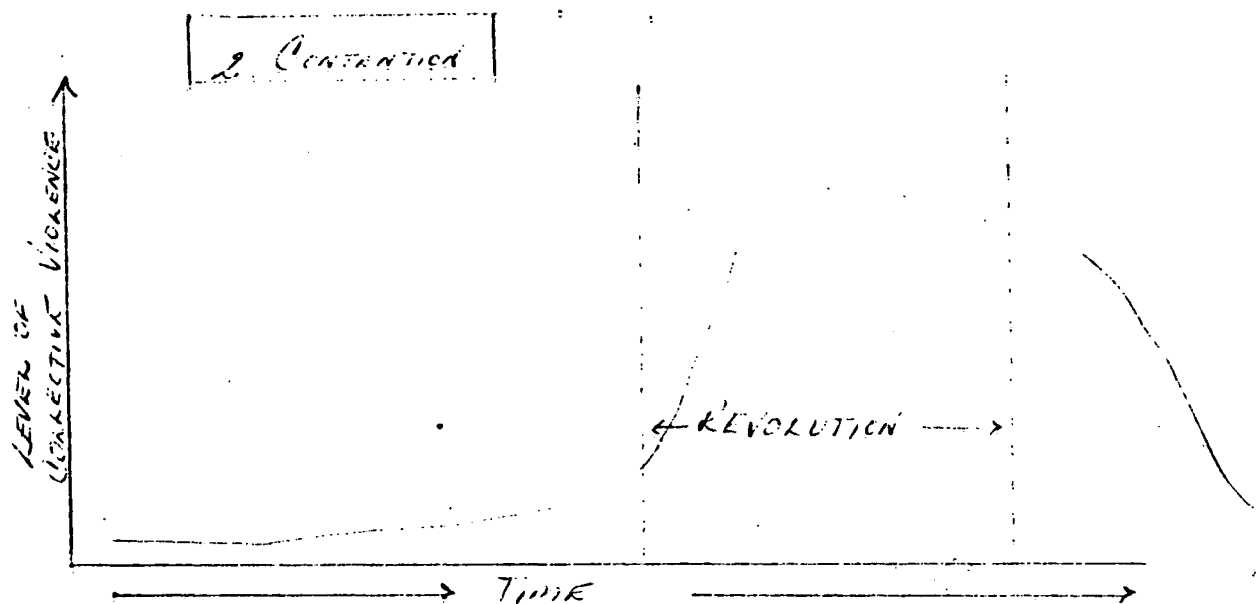
There are several reasons for this general prediction. First, the appearance of multiple sovereignty puts into question the achieved position of every single contender, whether a member of the polity or not, and therefore tends to initiate a general round of mutual testing among contenders. That testing in itself produces collective violence.

Second, the struggle of one polity against its rival amounts to war: a battle fought with unlimited means. Since control of the entire government is at stake, high costs and high risks are justified. High costs and high risks include destruction of persons and property.

Third, the revolutionary coalition is likely to fragment once the initial seizure of control over the central governmental apparatus occurs, and that fragmentation itself tends to produce further struggles involving violence. The revolutionary coalition fragments for several reasons: it takes a larger mobilized mass to seize power

than to maintain it; the inevitable divergence of some major objectives of the contenders within the coalition will come to the fore once the common objective of seizure of power has been accomplished; those contenders which have mobilized rapidly up to the point of revolution are also likely to demobilize rapidly due to the underdevelopment of their organization for the management of the mobilized resources, and thus will tend to lose position in the next rounds of testing.

Fourth, the victorious polity still faces the problem of re-imposing routine governmental control over the subject population even after multiple sovereignty has ended. As the government returns to its work of extracting and redistributing resources, it finds people reluctant to pay taxes, give up their land, send their sons to war, devote their time to local administration. And so a new round of violent imposition and violent resistance begins. Where the initial locus of the revolution is constricted, this is likely to show up as a spread of collective violence to other parts of the population. In a centralized governmental system, the most common sequence is therefore likely to be a large and decisive struggle at the center followed by a more widespread but less critical series of battles through the rest of the territory.

To sum up, we might put together an ideal sequence for revolutions:

1. gradual mobilization of contenders making exclusive claims to governmental control and/or unacceptable to the members of the polity.

2. rapid increase in the number of people accepting those
claims and/or rapid expansion of the coalition including the
unacceptable or exclusive contenders;

3. unsuccessful efforts by the government (at the behest of
members of the polity) to suppress the alternative coalition
and/or the acceptance of its claims; this may well include
attempts at forced demobilization--seizure, devaluation or
dispersion of the resources at the disposal of contenders;

4. establishment by the alternative coalition of effective
control over some portion of the government--a territorial
branch, a functional subdivision, a portion of its personnel;

5. struggles of the alternative coalition to maintain or expand
that control;

6. reconstruction of a single polity through the victory of
the alternative coalition, through its defeat, or through the
establishment of a modus vivendi between the alternative coali-
tion and some or all of the old members; fragmentation of the
revolutionary coalition;

7. reimposition of routine governmental control throughout
the subject population.

This series of stages suffers from the same defects as all "natural

histories" of revolution. It consists mainly of an explication of

a definition, and yet has an unjustified air of inevitability. I

lay it out merely to summarize and clarify the previous argument.

Some Related Generalizations

Within this framework, several conditions appear likely to

affect the overall level of violence produced by a revolution. In

general, the larger the number of contenders involved in the struggle

for power (holding constant the number of people involved), the

higher the level of violence, because the number of mutual tests of

position between contenders likely rises exponentially with the

number of contenders. The greater the fluctuation in control of

various segments of the government by different coalitions of

contenders, the higher the level of violence, both because the seizure of control itself brings violent resistance and because each change of control sets off further testing of position. Finally, the character of the repressive means under government control strongly affects the degree of violence. The connections are obvious yet complicated: the use of lethal weapons for crowd control increases deaths through collective violence, the division of labor between specialists in domestic order (police) and war (armies) probably decreases it, the relationship to overall repressive capacity of the government is probably curvilinear (little damage to persons or property where the government has great repressive capacity, little damage where its repressive capacity is slight), the level of violence probably rises as the armament of the government and of its opponents approaches equality. All of these relationships and more are plausible, but no more than slivers of systematic evidence for their actual validity exist.

If these generalizations have something to them, the extent of collective violence produced by a revolution should be only weakly and indirectly related to the extent to which the distribution of power changes. A zero redistribution of power (which most of us would call a failure of the revolution) can occur as an outcome of any of the ideal stages presented before, although it becomes less probably as the stages proceed. A glance back at that scheme will make clear how complicated any tracing of general conditions for "success" or "failure" must be.

A single best-established relationship is an obvious and funda-
mental one: the pivotal influence of control over the major organ-
ized means of coercion within the population. Within all contempor-
ary states, that means control of the military forces. No transfer
of power at all is likely in a revolution if the government retains
control of the military past the revolution's beginning, although
defection of the military is by no means a sufficient condition for
a takeover by the rebels (Chorley 1943, Andreski 1968, Russell
Ekman 1970).

It follows more or less directly that the greater the coercive
resources --including private armies, weapons and segments of the
national armed forces--initially controlled by the revolutionary
coalition, the more likely a transfer of power. Likewise, the
earlier the transfer of coercive resources to the alternative
coalition, the more likely a transfer. The mobilization
of other resources, normative and utilitarian, probably affects the
chances of acquiring power significantly as well, but at a much
lower than the mobilization of coercive resources. It also follows
that the presence of existing members of the polity in the revolu-
tionary coalition will increase the chances for some transfer of
power (although it reduces the chances for a complete wresting of
power from members of the polity) both because of the additional
resources it brings to the coalition and because of the greater
likelihood that the armed forces will defect, waver or remain
neutral when confronted with established members of the polity.

Beyond these rather banal conclusions, I find myself rummag-
ing around in vintage clichés about tactics, terrain, leadership,

chance and information. That is surprising, considering the huge amount that has been written about success and failure in revolution. Perhaps the poverty of systematic conclusions comes from the essential unpredictability of transfers of power. I am more inclined to think it comes from our failure to bring keen analytic intelligence to bear.

I fear the same is true of the next question which springs to mind: under what conditions does extensive structural change accompany or result from a revolution? To the degree that structural change means transfer of power from class to class, party to party, contender to contender, to be sure, we have just examined the question. But if it means further redistribution of resources, changes in the quality of life, urbanization, industrialization, moral reconstruction, everything depends on the time scale one adopts.

Relatively few permanent changes of this sort actually occur in the course of revolutions. Engels, Sorel and Fanon all held out the hope of a vast moral regeneration within the act of revolution itself, but the historical experience is sadly lacking in examples thereof. The other structural rearrangements which occur in the course of revolutions are typically temporary: the mobilization of men, loyalties, organizational talents and weapons at a national level which recedes as the new structure of power crystallizes, the disruption of daily routines for festivals, deliberations, emergencies, the provisional appearance of commissars, governing committees, task forces. Michael Walzer has brilliantly portrayed a revolutionary

outlook for seventeenth century England, Richard Cobb a revolution-
ary mentality for eighteenth century France; nevertheless, for the
outlooks and mentalities of most people, revolutions are but passing
moments.

A few great revolutions provide exceptions to this absence of
short-run transformation; that is perhaps what permits us to call
them great revolutions. Although the nobles and the clergy regained
some of their position in France with and after Napoleon, the con-
fiscation and sale of aristocratic and ecclesiastical property from
1790 to 1793 permanently shifted the weight away from those two power-
ful classes. The soviets survived the Bolshevik Revolution. The
Chinese communists began reorganizing village structure almost as
soon as they were on the scene. Contrary to the world-weary view
of Crane Brinton, who argued that a revolution took a country through
tremendous turmoil to a position approximately the same as it would
have occupied anyway after an equivalent lapse of time, it may be
that the extent of structural alteration occurring while multiple
sovereignty persists is our best sign of the depth of the permanent
change to be produced by the revolution.

Over the long run, revolutions appear to change the direction
of structural transformation to the extent that they produce a trans-
fer of power. Where there is a large transfer of power among classes,
the particular coalition which gains profoundly shapes the subsequent
political development of the country. Barrington Moore's comparison
of India, Japan, China, the U. S., France, England, Germany and

Russia makes precisely that point. Military coups almost never produce any significant structural change--despite the declarations of national renovation which ritually accompany them these days-- because they involve minor rearrangements among extremely limited sets of contenders. The apparent exceptions to this rule, revolutions from above like those of Japan and Turkey, ordinarily have a reform-ing segment of the ruling elite effectively cutting off their fel-lows from further access to power, and forming coalitions with classes previously excluded from power.

However, the organizational means available to those who emerge from the revolution with power affect the degree of structural trans-formation deliberately promoted by the government in post-revolution-ary years. In a discussion of the effect of the "confining conditions" under which a revolutionary coalition seized power on its subsequent capacity to transform social organization, Otto Kirchheimer comes to the conclusion that the emergency powers accruing to states dur-ing twentieth-century crises like World War I drastically reduced the confinement of power-holders:

> The revolution of the 20th Century obliterates the dis-
> tinction between emergency and normalcy. Movement plus
> state can organize the masses because: (a) the tech-
> nical and intellectual equipment is now at hand to direct
> them toward major societal programs rather than simply
> liberating their energies from the bonds of tradition;
> (b) they have the means at hand to control people's
> livelihood by means of job assignments and graduated re-
> wards unavailable under the largely agricultural and
> artisanal structure of the 1790s and still unavailable
> to the small enterprise and commission-merchant-type
> economy of the 1850s and 1860s; (c) they have fallen heir
> to endlessly and technically refined propaganda devices
> substituting for the uncertain leader-mass relations of

the previous periods; and (d) they faced state organizations
shaken up by war dislocation and economic crisis. Under
these conditions Soviet Russia could carry through simul-
taneously the job of an economic and a political, a bour-
geois and a post-bourgeois revolution in spite of the ex-
ceedingly narrow basis of its political elite. On the
other hand, the premature revolutionary combination of
1793-94 not only dissolved quickly, but left its most ad-
vanced sector, the sans-culottes, with only the melancholy
choice between desperate rioting--Germinal 1795--or falling
back into a pre-organized stage of utter helplessness and
agony (Kirchheimer 1965: 973).

This analysis can be generalized. Despite the "confining conditions"

faced by the French revolutionary coalitions of 1789-94, they seized

a state apparatus which was already exceptionally centralized and

powerful by comparison with those which had grown up elsewhere in

the world. They were able to use that great power, in fact, to

destroy the juridical structure of feudalism, effect large trans-

fers of wealth, subjugate the Church, build a mass army. The nine-

teenth-century revolutionaries who repeatedly seized control of

the Spanish state grabbed an apparatus whose extractive and repres-

sive capacities were insufficient to any task of national trans-

formation. It is true that the mobilization of contenders which

occurs before and during a revolution may itself facilitate a further

national mobiliza tio n,   putting resources at the disposal of the

state which were simply unavailable before the revolution: property,

energy, information, loyalties. That is, indeed, a characteristic

strategy of contemporary national revolutions. Yet I am inclined

to think that in general the already-accrued power of the state af-

fects the probability that fundamental structural change will issue

from the revolution much more strongly than the extent of mobiliza-
tion during the revolution itself does.

These facile generalizations, I confess, do not do justice to
a critical question. For on our estimate of the long-run effects
of different kinds of revolution must rest our judgement as to
whether any particular revolution, or revolutionary opportunity, is
worth its cost. I estimate some revolutions as worth it, but at
present no one has enough systematic knowledge about the probable
structural consequences of one variety of revolution or another to
make such estimates with confidence.

Except, perhaps, in retrospect. Historians continue to debate
what the English, French and Russian revolutions cost and what they
accomplished, but in those cases (at least in principle) they are
dealing with actualities rather than probabilities. That potential
certainty, however, has a self-destructive side; when it comes to
an event as sweeping as the English Revolution, almost every prev-
ious event which left some trace in seventeenth-century England is
in some sense a "cause", and almost every subsequent event in the
country and its ambit is in some sense an "effect." Making cause-
and-effect analysis manageable in this context means reducing the
revolution to certain essentials, identifying the sufficient condi-
tions for those essentials, and then specifying subsequent events
which would have been unlikely without the revolutionary essentials.
So in fact the causal analysis of real, historic revolutions and
of revolutions in general converge on statements of probability.

Historical Application of the Scheme

How, then, could we set concrete historical experience into the frame developed in this essay? If the point were to account for the revolutions and the various forms of collective violence occurring within that experience--and that would have to be the point of employing this particular scheme--the historical work would consist of grouping political actions within that experience into governments, contenders, polities, coalitions, processes of mobilization, and so on. Other fundamental phenomena like changes in beliefs, demographic change or economic crisis would only enter the account in so far as they affected the pattern of contention for power.

In the case of France since 1500, for example, the largest frame for analysis would be set by the interplay of a gradually industrializing and urbanizing population with a national state which was first emerging, then establishing priority, then con-solidating its hold on the population. The two sets of processes did, of course, depend on each other to some degree--for example, in the way that expanding taxation drove peasants to market goods they would otherwise have kept at home, on the one hand, and the way that the degree of commercialization of land, labor and agricultur-al production set stringent limits on the return from land taxes, income taxes or excise taxes, on the other. But their timing dif-fered. The epic periods of French statemaking were the times of Louis XIII and Louis XIV. Those periods had their share of economic turmoil; furthermore, they saw both an important increase in the

importance of Paris and a few other major cities for the life of
France as a whole and the spread of trade and small-scale manufact-
uring through the towns and villages of the entire country. Yet in
terms of productivity, organization, sheer numbers of persons in-
volved, the urbanization and industrialization of the nineteenth
and twentieth centuries produced incomparably greater changes. To
oversimplify outrageously, the drama consists of two acts: first
a fast-growing state acting on a slow-moving population and economy;
then a fast-changing population and economy dealing with a consoli-
dating state.

In analyzing this interplay, we need to ask over and over for
different places and points in time what contenders for power (poten-
tial and actual) the existing social structure made available, and
what governments the existing stage of statemaking left them to
contend over. The most strenuous current debates over the history
of the turbulent French seventeenth century, for example, pivot,
first, on the extent to which the national government squeezed out
its provincial rivals and acquired firm control over French social
life; second, and even more strenuously, on the extent to which
the operative divisions of the population were social classes in
something like a Marxian sense (see Mousnier 1970, Lebrun 1967,
Porchnev 1963, Lublinskaya 1968). The analytic scheme I have laid
out provides no pat answers to those serious questions; if it did,
one would have to suspect that its principal assertions were true
by definition. It does suggest that the tracing of the actual

issues, locations and personnel of violent encounters in seventeenth-century France will provide crucial evidence on the pace and extent of political centralization, as well as on the nature of the groups which were then engaged in struggles for power. The basic research remains to be done. Yet the recurrent importance of new taxation in seventeenth-century rebellions, the apparent subsidence of those rebellions toward the end of the century, and the frequent involvement of whole peasant communities in resistance to the demands of the crown all point toward a decisive seventeenth-century battle among local and national polities.

Not that all struggle ended then. As Tocqueville declared long ago, the Revolution of 1789 pitted centralizers against guardians of provincial autonomies, The contest between crown and provincial parlements (which led quite directly to the calling for the Estates General, which in turn became the locus of multiple sovereignty in 1789) continued the struggle of the seventeenth century. Throughout the Revolution, in fact, the issue of predominance of Paris and the national government remained open, with tax rebellions, movements against conscription and resistance to the calls of the nation for food recurring when the center weakened and when its demands increased sharply. Most of the events of the so-called peasant revolt of 1789 took the form of food riots and other classic eighteenth-century local conflicts.

Yet they did not just represent "more of the same," because they came in extraordinary clusters, because they occurred in the presence of multiple sovereignty, and because the participants began to form coalitions with other contenders for power. Now, the exact contours of the major contenders and the precise nature of their shifting alliances are the central issues of the big debates about the history of the Revolution (see e.g. Cobban 1964, Mazauric 1970). But it is at least roughly true to say that a loose coalition among peasants, officials, urban commercial classes and small but crucial groups of urban craftsmen and shopkeepers carried the revolution through its first few years, but began to fall apart irrevocably in 1792 and 1793. Looked at from the point of view of coalition-formation and multiple sovereignty, the Revolution breaks into a whole series of revolutions, from the first declaraction of sovereignty by the Third Estate in 1789 to the final defeat of Napoleon in 1815.

Again, in this perspective we begin to grasp the significance of materially trivial events like the taking of the Bastille. For the attack by Parisians on the old fortress finally set a crowd unambiguously against the regime, revealed the uncertain commitment of part of the armed forces to the government, brought the King to his first accessions to the popular movement (his trip to the National Assembly on the 15th of July and his trip to Paris on the 17th) and stimulated a series of minor coups in the provinces:

> Until July 14th the handful of revolutionary institutions
> set up in the provinces were disparate and isolated.
> Henceforward most of the towns and many of the villages
> of France were to imitate Paris with extraordinary swift-
> ness. During the weeks that followed the fall of the
> Bastille there arose everywhere revolutionary Town Councils
> of permanent committees, and citizen militias which soon
> assumed the name of national guards (Godechot 1970: 273).

So if we date the start of multiple sovereignty from the Third Estate's
Tennis Court Oath to remain assembled despite the prohibitions of
the King, we still have to treat July 14th and its immediate after-
math as a great expansion of the revolutionary coalition.

Obviously the four proximate conditions for revolution enumer-
ated earlier--coalitions of contenders advancing exclusive alterna-
tive claims, commitment to those claims, failure of the government
to suppress them, coalitions between members of the polity and the
revolutionary contenders--appeared in the France of 1789. What
cannot be obvious from a mere chronicle of the events is how long
each of the conditions existed, what caused them and whether they
were sufficient to cause the collapse of the old regime. At least
these are researchable questions, as contrasted with attempts to
ask directly whether the rise of the bourgeoisie, the increase in
relative deprivation or the decay of the old elite "caused" the
Revolution. What is more, they call attention to the probable im-
portance of shifting coalitions among lawyers, officials, provincial
magnates, peasants and workers in the nationwide political maneuver-
ing of 1787 to 1789, as well as to the effect of "defensive" mobili-
zation of peasants and workers in response to the multiple pressures
impinging on them in 1789.

The Revolution produced a great transfer of power. It stamped out a new and distinctive political system. Despite the Restoration of 1815, the nobility and the clergy never recovered their pre-revolutionary position, some segments of the bourgeoisie greatly enhanced their power over the national government, and the priority of that national government over all others increased permanently. In Barrington Moor's analysis, whose main lines appear correct to me, the predominance of the coalition of officials, bourgeois and peasant in the decisive early phases of the Revolution promoted the emergence of the attenuated parliamentary democracy which characterizes post-revolutionary France (Moore 1966, ch. II; for explication and critique see Rokkan 1969, Rothman 1970a, Stone 1967). At that scale and in the details of public administration, education, ideology and life style, the Revolution left a durable heritage.

None of the old conflicts, nevertheless, disappeared completely with the Revolution. The counter-revolutionary Vendée, despite having come close to destruction in 1793, again rose in rebellion in 1794, 1795, 1799, 1815 and 1832. Further revolutions overcame France as a whole in 1830, 1848, and 1870. Most of the characteristic forms of resistance to demands from the center--food riots, tax rebellions, movements against conscription, and so on--continued well into the nineteenth century. Indeed, these "reactionary" forms of collective action reached their climax around the Revolution of 1848 before fading rapidly to insignificance.

From that mid-century crisis we can date the definitive reduc-
tion of the smaller polities in which Frenchmen had once done most
of their political business, the virtual disappearance of communal
contenders for power, the shift of all contenders toward associa-
tional organization and action at a national level. The massive
urbanization and industrialization of France which gained momentum
after 1830 transformed the available contenders for power, espe-
cially by creating a large, new urban working class based in fac-
tories and other large organizations. From that point on, the
demonstration, the meeting, the strike were the usual matrices of
collective violence as well as the settings in which an enormous
proportion of all struggles for power went on. Collective violence
evolved with the organization of public life and the structure of
political action.

Qualifications and Conclusions

This all-too-quick sketch of the evolution of political con-
flict in France lacks two elements which belong to the conventional
wisdom: the explanation of popular protests before the Revolution
as angry or impulsive responses to economic crisis and the explana-
tion of popular protests after the Revolution as angry or impulsive
responses to the strains of rapid industrialization and urbaniza-
tion. Before the Revolution, the characteristic forms of "protest"
were much more closely tied to the major political transformations
of the time than any such account makes plausible. After the
Revolution, such detailed studies of conflicts and collective
violence as we have reveal no particular tendency for "protest" to

come in the wake of rapid and unsettling structural change. Indeed, the evidence runs in the other direction, with rapid urbanization and industrialization appearing to <u>reduce</u> the capacity for collective action of the populations most directly affected, and thereby to reduce their involvement in collective violence.

The general implications of our analytic scheme also run in that direction. We have good reason to expect large structural transformations to change the character of collective violence and the probability of revolution through their effects on the emergence and decline of different contenders for power. So far the most coherent general theory of those linkages we have comes from the Marxist tradition. We have no reason, on the other hand, to expect a close relationship between the pace of structural transformation (or even the amount of displacement and personal disruption it causes) and the extent of protest, conflict and collective violence. The mediating variables are political ones: the nature of repression, the established means for acquisition and loss of power, the predominant modes of mobilization, the possibilities for coalition-making, the concentration or dispersion of government.

I have to admit that the method this essay has employed in building up to that conclusion has some unfair facets to it. The discussion has often taken on the air of confident demonstration, when at best it actually contains a series of illustrations of an incompletely-articulated theoretical scheme. Worse still, the discussion has often proceeded as though "polity," "contender," and

other entities were acting realities rather than hypothetical constructs. The truly responsible alternative would have been, first to present the full scheme as a wholly theoretical statement and, only then, to review the evidence pro and con. I fear, however, that under those conditions all readers would fall exhausted before the end. The high level of abstraction of the first part would leave them gasping and groggy; the second part would drown them in the sea of diverse details one would have to amass to make a reasonable case in the present scattered evidence. So I have fashioned a lifesaving compromise.

The systematic evidence required to put the scheme to the test would fall into three parts. First would come the examination of individual polities working out from governments to the persons interacting with them, to see whether the behavior of men with respect to those governments falls into sufficiently coherent patterns of mobilization and contention for power to justify the use of those concepts, and to determine whether the patterns are measurable in some reliable way. Second would come the tracing of the operation of those polities over considerable spans of time, in order to determine whether frequent changes of membership do accelerate the rate of collective violence, whether challenger-member coalitions do characteristically precede revolutions, and so on. Third—if the process got that far—would come systematic comparisons among similar and dissimilar polities in order both to make sure that the negative cases behave as predicted and to detect the major variables producing

differences in the experience of revolution and collective violence between one kind of political organization and another. We stand a long, long way from that third test.

Even if the scheme does encompass the materials reviewed here, it may well have a much more limited application than my discussion has implied. I have worked out the scheme with the experience of western Europe over the last few hundred years very much in view. That is an important experience, but only a small portion of man's total political life. The arguments embedded in the scheme tend to assume two conditions which are generally characteristic of modern western Europe, and rather uncommon in world-historical perspective: 1) the presence of relatively exclusive, strong, centralized instruments of government, especially in the form of states; 2) the unimportance of corporate solidarities like large kin groups which crosscut and penetrate the governmental structure. The first limitation makes the scheme fit Prussia a little more comfortably than Spain. The second limitation causes less uncertainty in northern Europe than around the Mediterranean. Outside of Europe and its immediate offshoots, the difficulties multiply.

No doubt one could attempt to generalize the analysis by converting the importance of the states and the power of corporate solidarities into variables to be accounted for in their own right. For my part, I have too little confidence in the strength of the argument on its home ground and too little certainty that the word "revolution" retains any common meaning when extended beyond the

world of relatively strong states and weak corporate solidarities to propose that extension now. The first problem is to examine systematically the fit between the model and the range of modern western experience. My excuse for imposing the argument on readers whose primary interests may lie with Africa or Oceania is the sense that most areas of the world are now moving willy-nilly toward a condition of strong states and weak corporate solidarities. To the extent that such a view of the world is mistaken, most theories of collective violence and revolution based on modern western experience--including the one unfolded in this essay--will prove irrelevant to the future of political conflict.

All qualifications and apologies understood, what sorts of answers does this argumentation yield for the meteorological and engineering questions with which we began? The likelihood of collective violence within a given country in a given period depends especially on the number of mobilized challengers bidding for membership in the politics of that country without effective coalitions with members of the respective polities, the number of established members losing position within those polities, and the extent to which the agents of the governments involved routinely employ violence in the repression of collective action. If that is the case, the ways to raise the level of collective violence are to mobilize new contenders, break existing coalitions between challengers and members, accelerate the loss of position by established members, and increase the routine use of violence in repression.

The analysis of revolutions identified four proximate conditions: 1) the emergence of coalitions of contenders making exclusive alternative claims to control of the government; 2) the expansion of commitment to those claims by members of the population under control of that government; 3) the formation of coalitions between members of the polity and members of the revolutionary bloc; 4) repressive incapacity of the government's agents. A revolutionary strategy is therefore to mobilize new contenders with exclusive claims to control of the government, encourage acceptance of those claims by people outside the contenders, form coalitions with established members of the polity, and neutralize the government's repressive capacity. Which is, come to think of it, more or less what effective revolutionaries have been doing all along.

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