
TOWN AND COUNTRY IN REVOLUTION

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Some Thoughts of Gramsci

In his writings on political conflicts in nineteenth-century Italy, Antonio Gramsci returned repeatedly to the relations of rural and urban populations. He had before him the model of the Jacobins during the French Revolution ". . .who succeeded in crushing all the Right parties over to the Girondins on the agrarian question, and not only to forestall a rural coalition against Paris but to multiply their own supporters in the provinces. . ." (Gramsci 1949: 104). The comparison remained at the core of his conception of the rivoluzione mancata: the social revolution which could have occurred during the creation of a unified Italian state, but failed to happen.

In pursuing this problem, Gramsci developed two important ideas about rural-urban political relations. The first is a political distinction between industrial and non-industrial cities. The industrial city, Gramsci tells us, is "always more progressive than the countryside, which depends on it organically" (Gramsci 1949: 95). Hence a revolutionary movement which sweeps industrial cities draws in their hinterlands as well. The non-industrial city is different, at least in Italy. "In this type of city there exists," Gramsci writes, "an ideological unity from which even the nuclei which are most modern because of their civic functions (although such modern nuclei do, in fact, exist) don't escape: it is hate and disdain for the serf, an implicit united front against the demands of the countryside, which would, if granted, make that type of city impossible" (Gramsci 1949: 95-96). In the North, Gramsci saw the industrial city as already dominant in the nineteenth century. In the South the anti-rural city and the anti-rural sentiment prevailed.

To the distinction between the political orientations of industrial and non-industrial cities, Gramsci added an idea which was later to occur to Lin Piao:

In the Risorgimento, furthermore, one can already see the embryonic development of the historical relationship of North and South as like the relationship between a great city and a great rural area. . . (Gramsci 1949: 96).

The rural-urban relationship Gramsci had in mind here was one of domination and exploitation. Thus the rural-urban division within the South and the rural-urban division between the South and the North blocked that union of the oppressed which alone could have brought about a social revolution.

In this analysis, Gramsci's idea of "rural" and "urban" did not depend on the conventional statistical standards: size and density. There are other frequently-used criteria. We can find specialists using a settlement's position in some spatial hierarchy of activities as a criterion of its urbanity--with places which serve as centers for the widest range of activities and/or for the largest geographic areas considered most urban. Others use the population's orientations and life styles as the tests. Still others focus on the structure of social relations in the settlement: the more differentiated, the more urban; the less agricultural, the more urban; and so on. Gramsci's own ideas of "rural" and "urban" come closest to the last category. In essence, areas in which the basic social relations are built around control of the land qualify as rural, in his treatment; they qualify whether they are large or small, whether everyone is a farmer or not.

To be more accurate, Gramsci's basic distinctions depend on the relations of production. The cities of the South were the places

such as Palermo or Naples where resided those numerous gentlemen and merchants who drew their principal incomes from ownership of the soil but took no direct part in its cultivation. In the settlements of the countryside were the thousands of landless and land-poor workers who actually planted, tilled and harvested. The ". . . demands of the countryside, which would, if granted, make that type of city impossible. . ." were, of course, demands for redistribution of the land. The rural-urban division he portrayed was a class division as well. The comparison between the cities of South and North becomes the comparison between "parasitic" and "generative" cities, a comparison which numerous analysts of the non-western world have made in recent decades. And the treatment of the relationship between North and South as an urban-rural relationship likewise calls attention to its exploitative character.

In these terms, then, Gramsci's analysis of nineteenth-century Italy presents a clear and forceful model of the political relations between town and country. To the extent that the prevailing rural-urban division separates exploited agricultural workers from their exploiters, it tells us, we should expect little collaboration between rural and urban classes and little common action from the necessarily fragmented countryside, despite the probability of widespread conflict on a local scale. A revolutionary movement is only likely to bring town and country together where the town is already serving as a generator of rural activity. And in a predominantly agricultural country the revolution is likely to fail if an effective rural-urban coalition of the exploited classes does not appear.

The Gramscian Questions

The problem of the rivoluzione mancata raises a series of questions about town and country in revolution:

- 1) Do rural and urban populations play characteristically different roles in revolution?
- 2) What difference to the outcome of a revolution do the extent and character of rural-urban cleavage make?
- 3) To what extent, and how, does the character of rural-urban division in an area affect the likelihood of revolution in that area?

With some extrapolation, Gramsci's analysis of nineteenth-century Italy yields interesting answers to all four questions.

What does Gramsci say about the first question: the characteristic roles of city and country in revolution? The country struggles over control of the land, while the city struggles over control of labor. The interests of the "subaltern classes" of town and country are necessarily different, although they are not necessarily contradictory. The two are only likely to act in concert when united a) by some linking organization, b) by a common opposition to the dominant classes and to their instrument, the state.

What difference to the outcome of a revolution do the extent and character of rural-urban cleavage make? That is where Gramsci begins. If rural-urban cleavage is great, a successful revolution is less likely; the cleavage separates the natural revolutionaries, the exploited classes of town and country, from each other. This is, however, quite an extrapolation of Gramsci's analysis, since he was

analyzing cases in which both town and country did have important political roles.

Finally, to what extent--and how--does the character of rural-urban division in an area affect the likelihood of revolution in that area? We need another extrapolation: All other things being equal, the more thoroughly the influence of cities pervades the countryside, the more likely is revolution. Revolution, in this case, is the effective transfer of power to a new class. Rebellions of different sorts are quite likely to occur where the working classes of city and country are insulated from each other. But an effective transfer of power requires a union of the two.

Notice that Gramsci avoids two alternative simplifications which have been common in recent analyses of Asian rebellions and revolutionary movements: 1) assuming a one-to-one relationship between the extent of grievance, exploitation or hardship and the degree of rebelliousness, 2) treating the involvement in rebellion of any particular population as a measure of the effectiveness of a revolutionary organization (or, for that matter, of a counter-revolutionary organization) in dealing with that population. Either one can, of course, become true by definition; all it takes is an appropriate criterion for "grievance" in the one case and for "effectiveness" in the other. But we have plenty of analyses which go directly from imputed motives to action, on the one hand, and from organizational effectiveness to revolutionary success, on the other, without passing through tautology.

In the case of Viet Nam, Mitchell's well-known effort to relate insurgency to equality of land distribution (or, more precisely, control by the South Vietnamese regime to inequality, tenancy, previous French

ownership, and so on) is an example of the first simplification. As Sansom points out, a more plausible interpretation of the same findings takes into consideration the strategy of the "insurgents," the effects of their land redistribution where they gained control, and the distinction between the grievances of an area's tenants and the political alliances of its landlords (Sansom 1970; Paige 1970). Gramsci was aware that an elite could persist in the face of mass hostility so long as the mass had no organizational focus and no external allies.

The analysis of Leites and Wolf illustrates the second simplification. (Leites and Wolf wrote Rebellion and Authority in an abstract, generalizing style, but with Viet Nam very much in mind.) Explicitly challenging the "hearts-and minds" version of the first simplification, they reach such conclusions as:

Politically, the capabilities that A must develop and demonstrate involve the capacity to act with speed, consistency, and discrimination. More specifically, A must protect the population; identify desired behavior and reward it by effective programs; and withhold such programs in areas that have failed to perform in desirable ways. A must demonstrate a capacity to act with discrimination and restraint, basing its action on legal and orderly processes that provide a contrast to the putative illegality and disorder of R (Leites and Wolf 1970: 154).

"A" and "R" are, of course, Authorities and Rebels. Leites and Wolf make concessions to the demands of potential rebels, but emphasize the tactical importance of the supply of rewards and punishments. The rewards and punishments are, Leites and Wolf point out, much more elastic than the demands.

Such an organizational argument underestimates the extent to which rebels know where their interests lie, and match them with the long-run programs (not just the current tactics) of one side or the

other. It also assumes that the national government recognized by outsiders as the government has the advantage of legitimacy, or at least of priority. Gramsci, by contrast, assumed that each class had a vision and a memory: helped by its avant-garde, it was aware of its long-run interests, acted on them when it could, but often lacked the means of effective action. "No mass action is possible," he declared, "if the mass itself isn't convinced of the ends to be accomplished and of the means to be applied" (Gramsci 1951: 20).

Gramsci worked out most such arguments concretely, with Italian problems in view. One example is his treatment of the position of the socialists around the turn of the century:

The insurrection of the Sicilian peasants in 1894 and the rebellion of Milan in 1898 were the crucial experiment for the Italian bourgeoisie. After the bloody decade of 1890-1900, the bourgeoisie had to give up an overly exclusive, overly violent and overly direct dictatorship: both the southern peasants and the northern workers rebelled against them simultaneously, if not in concert. In the new century the dominant class inaugurated a new policy of class alliance, of class political blocs, that is of bourgeois democracy. It had to choose: either rural democracy, an alliance with the southern peasants, a policy of low tariffs, universal suffrage, administrative decentralization, low prices for industrial products, or a capitalist-worker industrial bloc without universal suffrage, for protectionism, for the maintenance of state centralization (an expression of bourgeois domination over the peasant, especially in the South and the Islands), for a reformist policy on wages and unionization. Not by chance, it chose the second solution; Giolitti personified bourgeois domination, and the Socialist part became the means of Giolittian policy (Gramsci 1951: 22).

Gramsci assumes that the interests and demands of the major classes are known, but their political outcome is much in doubt. The work of a revolutionary party is to mobilize them, synthesize them, and subordinate them to a general revolutionary program (see Cammett 1967: 174-176).

Gramsci's analyses have their inconvenient side. Although he has much to say about the objective interests and demands of particular classes, he offers no general formula for calculating them. We can't move easily from Gramsci's reasoning to generalizations about the revolutionary potential of different kinds of workers or different kinds of peasants. Nor does he have much to say in general about the kinds of countries or the stages of development which are especially favorable to rebellion and/or revolution. His life and thought centered on strategic questions: most of all, how to build a revolution with the materials provided by different forms and stages of western capitalism. For the rest, we must go back to Marx or forward to Mao.

In dealing with our three questions, then, Gramsci provides us with a good start, but no more than that. He aims us away from the analysis of short-run fluctuations in hardship, of expectations, of tradition, and toward the analysis of class, power, organization and communication. The main task of this paper is to present an analysis of town and country in revolution which is Gramscian in tone, if not in detail.

The analysis has three layers. First comes a stark presentation of a general argument, which includes some defining of terms and some elementary model-building. Second, a brief discussion of the way the argument applies to the European experience from which it is derived. Third, some suggestions as to the possible application of the argument to the collective actions and revolutionary involvements of Asian peasants.

Europe and Asia

Before the analysis, a warning. I make no claim that the Asian situation today corresponds closely to the European situation at any time in the past. I explicitly reject the idea of standard paths of "political development" which make it possible to anticipate the experience of "backward" countries by scrutinizing the experiences of "advanced" countries (see C. Tilly 1974a). It is possible that the generalizations I propose--however valid they may be for the European past--have no relevance whatsoever to contemporary Asia.

Let's remember what Europe was like. Five hundred years ago, the European population was, compared to the rest of the world, relatively prosperous, predominantly peasant, fairly homogeneous from a cultural point of view. In these respects, Europe as a whole resembled China, and faintly resembled India or Japan. (The comparison of the continent of Europe with the subcontinent of China makes sense, since in 1500 each had something like 100 million people spread over about 4 million square miles.) However, Europe--again, as compared with the rest of the world of 1500--had an extensive network of cities and a series of elites strongly connected by kinship, by political alliance and by economic interdependence, yet had rather weak structures of patronage and of corporate kinship. Local communities, as such, played an exceptionally significant part in the collective lives of Europeans. That was partly because of the weakness of patronage and corporate kinship, partly because of the historical importance of the parish and the manor as units of settlement, administration and collective action.

Most of the European territory had, of course, once fallen under the control of a single empire governed from Rome. The empire had left its mark on language, religion, social relations and lines of communication. By 1500, however, the territory was broken up into hundreds of separate political units. Although the many governments overlapped and depended upon one another, at least five hundred different rulers exercised some kind of sovereignty somewhere in Europe. Despite the power of the Habsburgs and the pretensions of the Holy Roman Emperor (at that time ordinarily a Habsburg himself), no single political organization outweighed all the rest.

In these respects, Europe differed significantly from China, and from Japan as well; in 1500 it was, perhaps, closer to India. The combination of weak patronage, weak corporate kinship, relatively homogeneous culture and territorial communities which were prominent as units of solidarity and collective action distinguished Europe from most of Asia. There were, to be sure, similarities in individual items: local communities, for example, appear to have had exceptional salience as units of collective action in Viet Nam and (at least from Tokugawa times) in Japan. Any comparison in which one term contains a quarter of the world's population (Europe) and the other term half the world's population (Asia) will suffer many exceptions. Nevertheless, the interesting combination of homogeneity, interdependence and political fragmentation sets Europe off from most of Asia.

After 1500, a few of the hundreds of governments became the cores of expanding national states. The next three centuries brought a tremendous consolidation, centralization, elaboration and increase in power of state structures. By the late nineteenth century, the political map of Europe had simplified into a few dozen territories with well

established sovereignty. These national states had grown up in conjunction with capitalism, industrialism and urbanism. The exact connections of statemaking with these other phenomena are still debatable. Still, it is clear that the states had come to form a system: they were tightly interdependent, exercised collective control over each others' claims outside their own territories, monitored entries into and exits from statehood, comprised a well-established hierarchy, warred with each other within constraints set by that hierarchy (but also as a means of adjusting the hierarchy), and depended on a continental division of economic labor. The European states jointly imposed their power on much of the rest of the world. They exported the particular political forms of their own state-system into the territories they conquered. The nearly continuous rise of states and of a state-system was therefore the fundamental political fact for Europe over the centuries after 1500, in much the same way that the waxing and waning of successive empires was the fundamental political fact for China until at least the middle of the nineteenth century.

All this means that anyone who wants to generalize from the European political experience to that of Asia will probably do better with China, Japan or India than with other parts of Asia, but will probably not do very well even there. The generalizations will have to make allowances for the residues of empire in Europe, for the relative strength of local communities, for the relative weakness of patronage and of corporate kinship, for the long, thorough concentration of power in national states. My modest hope for relevance hangs on two possibilities: 1) that the sorts of questions one can ask fruitfully about the European experience are worth asking in Asia as

well; 2) that some of the general relationships suggested by a Gramscian analysis hold widely, even if the concrete sequences, issues, alliances and outcomes are quite different from the ones Gramsci studied. In pursuing these two possibilities, I will make no attempt to build up an original analysis or a compelling body of evidence. Instead, I will draw freely on other analyses in this volume and on standard treatments of China, Japan, Viet Nam and a few other parts of Asia.

Concepts and Arguments

Within any arbitrarily defined population, we may identify at least as many possible social categories as there are possible combinations of all the status distinctions made by members of the population. At any given point in time, the members of the population are only distinguishing a small proportion of all those categories from each other. Only a small proportion of those active categories, furthermore, consist of people who are exerting collective control over resources. They are groups. We may call an increase in a group's collective control over resources mobilization, and a decrease demobilization. To the extent that a group applies resources to a common end, it carries on collective action. To the extent that it applies those resources to influence governmental action, it is contending for power. We have a sort of political continuum: no category/ category/group/collective action/contention for power. We will add to the continuum in a moment.

Within the arbitrarily defined population, we can also locate the principal concentrated means of coercion. If there is an organization which controls that concentrated means of coercion, it is a government. (If there is no such concentration or no organization controlling it, there is no government; if there is more than one organization

controlling the concentrated means of coercion, there is more than one government; to the extent that the organization is centralized, autonomous and differentiated, and the territory it controls contiguous and bounded, the organization is a state.) Over some arbitrarily defined period of time, we can observe the interactions between the government and the population under its control. As I have already said, any group which collectively applies resources to influence the government during that period, is a contender for power. Some contenders have routine means of making claims on the government which are accepted by other contenders and by agents of the government; collectively, such contenders make up the polity related to a particular government; individually, we call them members of the polity. Jointly (but usually unequally) the members control the government. Contenders which do not have routine, accepted means of making claims on the government are not members of the polity; they are challengers.

Every polity has its own rules of membership. Established ways in which challengers become members, and vice versa. How those rules vary, and how hard or easy they make changes in membership are among the prime problems of comparative politics. However, the rules of admission operating at any particular time appear to depend heavily on the past history of admissions to the polity. They almost always include the requirement that the contender demonstrate control over extensive resources, especially manpower. By and large, existing members of a polity resist new admissions; they work to have the rules applied stringently. Yet at times a member forms a coalition with a challenger: the member gains access to resources under the challenger's

control, as the challenger gains a degree of protection from repression and a degree of support in its bid for membership. Members test each other intermittently, and individually resist loss of membership in the polity.

Whatever else they do, then, governments extract resources from the populations under their control, apply the resources to activities favored by the members of the polity, and constrain the collective action of contenders--especially of challengers. To the extent that any governmental activity raises the cost of collective action, it is repressive. The quintessential repressive forces are armies, police and intelligence nets; they specialize in raising the cost of collective action to one group or another. In some circumstances, bandits, pirates, private armies, secret societies and other nongovernmental groups controlling substantial means of force align themselves conditionally with governments and become significant repressive forces; those circumstances appear to have occurred more frequently in Asia than in Europe over the last few centuries. Nevertheless, in Europe as well as in Asia, such irregulars have often played crucial roles where governmental authority was weak or divided.

If we wanted to know how repressive a government was in general, we would have to a) choose some particular contender as our point of reference, and assay the net effect of governmental activity on its collective action or b) sum over all contenders, making allowances for the variable effects of the same governmental action on different groups. In a situation of competition, for example, raising the cost of collective action to one contender will automatically lower the cost of collective action to at least one other contender.

This dense series of abstractions opens the way to interesting hypotheses about collective violence, and then about revolution. Up to this point the statements have been almost purely definitional. From here on the frequency of definitions declines, and the pace of generalization rises. As the generalizations begin, I should emphasize again that they come mainly from European experience since 1500. That is the only experience I have studied seriously in this regard. Nor can I guarantee that they hold up in every particular for Europe itself. They merely sum up my current understanding of what happened there. My suggestions concerning Asia, then, are the reflections of an interested outsider.

Forms of Collective Action

In the European experience, three fundamental forms of collective action (each with many variants) have led to violence. The first form we can call competitive: members of a group which defines another particular group as an enemy, rival or competitor act to control the resources of that enemy-rival-competitor. The action may consist of damaging, seizing, asserting a claim to, denying the other's claim to or blocking access to the resources in question. Thus armed peasants attack the farms of large landlords, two groups of bandits fight with each other, one carpenters' society interrupts the annual procession of a rival carpenters' society.

The second form is reactive. After some group, or its agent, lays claim to a resource currently under control of another particular group, the members of the second group resist the exercise of that claim. The response of the second group is reactive. Thus villagers bar the recruiters who have come to claim their young men for the

army; members of a national assembly drive out a crowd which has sought to take the assembly's place; a new landlord fences in part of the commons, and the users of the commons tear the fence down. While the competitive forms of collective action have a high probability of producing violence (in the sense of damage or forceful seizure of persons or objects), these reactive forms may well be non-violent. The resistance may consist of the filing of a legal action or an appeal to friends in power; it may consist of shouts and symbolic acts; it may consist of concealing the resources or withholding information about them. Just so long as a group does these things together, they qualify as collective action.

The third form is proactive. It involves an initiative on the part of the acting group. Some group carries out an action which, under the prevailing rules, lays claim to a resource not previously accorded to that group. If collective violence occurs, it characteristically begins when at least one other group intervenes in the action and resists the claim. As a consequence, of two struggling groups, one will often be carrying on a proactive, the other a reactive, form of action. Some examples of proaction: strikers seize possession of a mine, organized squatters move onto vacant land, a junta declares itself the new government.

In all three forms, the "resources" involved cover quite a range: they include land, people, private spaces, rights to act in certain ways. The competitive, reactive and proactive forms resemble each other in centering on the sequence:

ASSERTION OF CLAIM → CHALLENGE TO CLAIM

But they differ considerably with respect to the current status of that claim and who is making it: Is the claim new? Are the resources already in particular hands?

The characteristic position of authorities is to declare (and perhaps to believe) that competitive action is the predominant source of violence: members of a group which defines another particular group (including the government) as a rival, competitor or enemy attack the resources of that rival or enemy. Authorities tend to favor such an interpretation because a) it is part of the folk conception of violence; b) it justifies their intervention as guardians of public order; c) the authorities exclude seizure and damage performed by agents of the government--police, troops, and so on--from the category of "violence"; d) there is, in fact, a broad division of labor between contenders and government: contenders are somewhat more likely to attack resources, governmental repressive forces to attack persons.

In the European experience since 1500, the reactive and proactive forms of collective action have played a much larger part in the production of violence than has the competitive form. The repressive forces of European states, furthermore, have played an extraordinarily large part in them. To be more precise, the recent European experience falls into three rough phases:

1. Into the seventeenth century: Local and regional rivalries of various kinds play the major part in collective violence. Competitive action appears as vendetta, competition among groups of craftsmen, religious wars, dynastic struggles, intercommunal rivalries, and so on.

2. Seventeenth to nineteenth centuries: As the local claims of agents of national states, of large organizations and of international markets increase, reactive collective action comes to predominate as the context for collective violence. Tax rebellions, food riots and movements against military conscription become the most frequent types.

3. Nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Once the predominance of these national and international structures is assured, the focus shifts to proactive forms. Contenders make new claims, and others--especially repressive forces of the state--resist them. Strikes, demonstrations, coups become characteristic forms of collective action, and characteristic settings for collective violence.

If this summary is correct, governments and their agents are not simply onlookers, arbiters or cleaners-up in collective violence. They are often major participants in the action. Governments often lay new claims which other parties challenge. 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.

The three forms are so broad that they might seem, like the definitions laid out earlier, to exhaust the logical possibilities. They don't. All three forms relate mobilized groups to each other. They exclude action by chance crowds, by the general population and by the disorganized castoffs of routine social life. By the same token, they exclude random, expressive, purely destructive acts.

If my summary of the European experience is adequate, indeed, several drastic conclusions concerning conventional ways of analyzing collective violence follow: First, there is no reason to think that collective violence should covary with murder, suicide, theft, family instability and other forms of behavior which authorities commonly lump together with it under the heading of "disorder." Second, efforts to reason from situations of hardship, relative deprivation, rapid change or dissolution of social ties to some form of discontent and thence to violence as a form of "protest" are doomed to failure; violence is a by-product of an interaction rather than a direct expression of the propensities of one of the participants in the interaction; furthermore, most of these conditions tend to demobilize the social groups they affect. Third, there is an intimate dependency between violent and nonviolent forms of collective action--one is simply a special case of the other--rather than some moral, political or tactical divide between them. As a corollary, the forms of violent action any particular group carries on bear strong marks of that group's day-to-day organization, instead of falling into a special realm governed by the laws of "collective behavior" or "aggression."

The typology of forms rests on the argument that collective violence results primarily from the interaction of contenders for

power (some of them often acting via the government instead of intervening directly in the action) which are engaged in disputes over rights and justice. In that case, a valid theory of collective violence will be a special case of a general theory of collective action. In modern Europe, the rules governing that special case have to do mainly with the ways governments exercise their extractive and repressive powers: mobilization, collective action and contention for power on the one side, governmental extraction and repression on the other, the interplay between the two producing variations in the frequency, intensity and character of collective violence.

This formulation has some resemblance to Samuel Huntington's. He treats political "stability" as an outcome of the balance between popular mobilization and governmental institutionalization. The situations in which governments are multiple, fragmented or weak relative to other concentrations of coercive power, however, resist that simple formulation. They are, as it happens, precisely the situations which are likely to interest the student of nineteenth-century Italy or of contemporary Asia. They are also, as we shall see, similar in important regards to revolutionary situations. To the extent that governments are multiple, fragmented or weak relative to other concentrations of coercive power, we may expect them a) to be involved in competitive collective action as rivals of other governments and quasi-governments, b) to become coalition partners with the exploited contenders in reactive collective action involving rival governments and quasi-governments, c) to seek to stabilize and make exclusive their control over the populations under their immediate jurisdictions by

means of stalemates and coalitions holding off the adjacent concentrations of coercive power.

Under such circumstances, a nice paradox will emerge: since only a minority of these concentrations of power will receive the consecration of political scientists, historians or other governments as genuine governments, a great deal of conflict will involve nominally private violence; yet the governments and quasi-governments will play an even larger part than usual in the collective violence which actually occurs. This is, I think, the normal situation where secret societies, organized bandits and phenomena like Mafia prevail (see Blok 1973).

The concentration of coercive power is an essential part of the formation of national states. It reduces the importance of competitive collective action as the matrix of violence within the territory in question, accelerates reactive collective action as different groups resist the expansion of the state's powers of coercion and extraction, and eventually produces a transition to proactive collective action. Competitive collective action producing violence then survives mainly in the guise of wars among states-- which is to say that the total amount of destruction produced by competition may well increase, despite any implications of my argument that the transition is orderly and benign.

Revolution

All this is a far cry from conventional analyses of revolution. I hope to show, however, that some of the processes we have been discussing are revolutionary processes. They are revolutionary when they appear in the proper combinations.

To show that, I'm afraid that I have to continue the conceptualizing a bit longer. Let us refashion Trotsky's useful notion of dual sovereignty. A revolution occurs 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, and ends when a single polity regains control over the government. Most readers will reject that definition because it doesn't correspond to their intuitive notions of revolution. But some will reject it as too broad; they want a genuine transformation of social structure, a massive realignment of social classes or a movement with a program to have a part in the process. Others will reject it as too narrow; they want to include transfers of power and transformations of social life which occur without any apparent break in the continuity of government. Still others will ask for a sideward displacement of the definition: away from a strongly political conception toward one which emphasizes control over the means of production, states of consciousness, or something else.

The largest disparities in definitions of revolution come from the time spans the definers want to consider. In a short time span, we have definitions which concentrate on a central event: a certain kind of bid for power, a temporary dissolution of government, a transfer of power. In a medium time span, we have definitions which examine the population or government before, during and after such a crucial event, and ask whether any significant change occurred; a coup d'état which substituted one military faction for another might qualify as a revolution under the short-run definition, but not under the medium-run definition. Long-run definitions, on the other hand, relate the

crucial event and the changes (if any) surrounding it to a reading of broad historical trends--for example, by restricting the name of revolution to those transfers of power which produce the durable substitution of one whole class for another.

In general, the longer the time span, the fewer events will qualify as revolutions. The long time span, however, does raise the logical possibility of a gradual revolution, or at least of one in which the transformation occurs without violence and without an apparent break in political continuity. As Maurice Meisner suggests elsewhere in this volume, Marxist definitions of revolution refer to long spans of history, even where the crucial transformations are supposed to take place rapidly; Mao's "populist" version of revolution requires a very long time span indeed--and restricts the number of revolutions which have so far occurred to zero or one.

Despite a great interest in the long-run transformations, I choose the short time span. The political definition of revolution as multiple sovereignty a) is the closest thing we have to common ground among numerous competing conceptions, b) permits the creation of all other standard definitions and types by means of further specifications, c) escapes the more obvious difficulties--tautology, limitation to post factum explanation, dependence on relatively inaccessible features of the phenomenon to be defined, etc.--of common definitions of revolution, d) hooks together neatly the analysis of revolutionary and non-revolutionary political action.

How can the multiplication of polities occur? There are four main possibilities:

1. The members of one polity seek to subordinate another previously distinct polity; where one of the polities is not somehow subordinate to the other at the outset, this circumstance falls into a gray area between revolution and war.
2. The members of a previously subordinate polity assert sovereignty.
3. Challengers form into a block which seizes control over some portion of the governmental apparatus.
4. A polity fragments into two or more blocs, each exercising control over some part of the government.

Anger, revolutionary plans, the broadcast of claims, even widespread collective violence are not enough. In any of these versions, the revolution begins when previously acquiescent people begin taking orders from a new authority. It ends when only that authority, or only one of its rivals, is giving orders that are obeyed. Of course, this way of stating the problem requires us to set some minimum to the number of people, the range of orders, and the degree of obedience. The necessity simply calls attention to the kinship between revolutionary and nonrevolutionary situations.

The analysis so far identifies three conditions as necessary for revolution, and a fourth as strongly facilitating. The necessary conditions are: first, 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 (the contenders in question may consist of, or include, some members of the polity); second, commitment to those claims by a significant

segment of the subject population; third, incapacity or unwillingness of the agents of the government to suppress the alternative coalition or the commitment to its claims. The facilitating condition is the formation of coalitions between members of the polity and the contenders advancing the alternative claims--coalitions which ally the members with the alternative bloc without committing them completely to it.

This statement of proximate conditions for revolution does not contain much analytic news. It is essentially an explication of the definition offered earlier, in terms of the concepts laid out before that. Nevertheless, it orients the search for explanations of revolution. It orients the search away from the assessment of aggregate characteristics of the population--levels of tension, disaffection, deprivation and the like--toward patterns of mobilization, collective action and contention for power. That is, I think, an advance.

Every element of this scheme needs refinement, criticism and confrontation with the facts. This is not, however, the place to undertake a general review of its adequacy. (For more of that, see Tilly 1974b.) The point is to use it as a means of analyzing the roles of town and country in revolution.

Although that is a big problem, it is far smaller than a general analysis of revolution, or even of the conditions under which peasants or workers join (or make) revolutionary movements. The main thing we are trying to do here is to specify what effect the rural-urban relations prevailing in a population have on the likelihood of

a revolution in that population, and on the form and outcome of the revolution, if it occurs.

Perhaps the answer is: none. The regularities in revolutionary processes may lie elsewhere. But if the character of rural-urban relations has no regular effects on the likelihood, form or outcome of revolution, then Gramsci wasted a good deal of his analytic effort, and a lot of other theories will have to be revised. However the inquiry comes out, it is therefore worth trying.

Let's return, renewed, to the questions we extracted from Gramsci early in the discussion: 1) Do rural and urban populations play characteristically different roles in revolution? 2) What difference to the outcome of a revolution do the extent and character of rural-urban cleavage make? 3) To what extent, and how, does the character of rural-urban division in an area affect the likelihood of revolution in that area? In elaborating new concepts and definitions, I have shifted away from Gramsci's view of revolution as the effective transfer of power from the ruling classes to the "subaltern" classes. But there is no reason why we can't ask both versions of the basic questions: about revolution as multiple sovereignty, and about revolution as an effective transfer of power. Gramsci's question presupposes mine.

Let me offer quick comments on the first two questions, then expand on the third.

Different Roles for City and Country?

Our initial question has at least two interesting variants. First, over and above the effect of the pre-existing rural-urban division on the character and likelihood of revolution, what difference

does it make to the workings of a revolution whether the chief locations of the action are rural or urban? Second, given the fact of revolution, do systematically different things happen in urban and rural areas?

A lot depends on how much the instruments of government are concentrated in cities and towns. Throughout most of the world, administrators, repressive forces and means of government in general concentrate in urban locations. They generate urban locations, for that matter, where they go. Asia is no exception. There, despite the overwhelmingly rural locus of the population, governmental organizations have long based themselves mainly in cities.

In general, the larger governments have dealt with the countryside indirectly, by means of some sort of compact with rural landlords. In Japan, John W. Hall shows us the Tokugawa regime displacing the Samurai to castle towns, and cutting them off from effective control of the land. But the overlords then became the pivots of the system. They were the Japanese Junkers: officials from one angle, great landlords from another. The overlords then relied on village headmen to extend their rule into rural areas; the headmen, as chiefs of major lineages, were in effect substantial landlords (Smith 1966: 59). In such a system, the individuals at each level down from the top have considerable autonomy within their own spheres, yet control resources and coercion with the backing of those higher up. That puts them in a good position to rebel, and sometimes offers them the incentive to do it. But in the same sort of system a rebellion whose chief actions take place in towns and cities is likely to be in closer contact with the instruments of government from its inception than one whose actions are primarily rural.

Remember the four paths to multiple sovereignty: 1) the members of one polity seek to subordinate another previously distinct polity; 2) the members of a previously subordinate polity assert sovereignty; 3) challengers form into a bloc which seizes control over some portion of the governmental apparatus; 4) a polity fragments into two or more blocs each exercising control over some part of the government. The rural or urban locus probably does not affect the likelihood of path 1. But it matters to the other three.

Path 2, which is essentially separatist, is a likely path for predominantly rural areas which are already organized into subordinate polities. In Asia those rebellious subordinate polities have often been composed of linguistic and religious minorities which have managed to create or retain their own instruments of government: hill peoples in Viet Nam, Chinese in Indonesia and Malaya. The other major Asian form has been the polity controlled by a successful warlord, vassal or frontier commander, as in the multiple governments which asserted themselves in Japan before the Tokugawa ascendancy.

Path 3 (in which the powerless rise up and take over—a favorite image and a rare occurrence) requires offensive mobilization. It is, I think, only likely to occur in a relatively urban setting, where challengers can use dense, centralized means of communication and organization to establish contact with each other. Donald Zagoria's enumeration of conditions for success of Communist leaders in Asian rural areas (elsewhere in this volume: that the leaders have semi-rural origins, establish links with the rural intelligentsia, do their homework, be flexible, give priority to rural problems) is

plausible. But those conditions are unlikely to lead to revolution except where such leaders are well linked to urban bases.

The likelihood of the fourth path (one polity fragmenting into two or more) is probably indifferent to the urbanity or rurality of the setting. Yet its exact course does seem to differ along the urban continuum. We can profitably distinguish between center-out and periphery-in revolutions: a) the alternative coalition first establishing control at major centers of governmental power and then extending control into the rest of the territory, b) the alternative coalition first establishing itself in areas of relatively weak governmental power and then closing in on the power centers. Center-out has been the standard pattern in modern European revolutions. There, the reestablishment of central control over the periphery has often taken a greater effort than the initial seizure of power at the center.

Twentieth-century guerrilla doctrine, on the other hand, has called for periphery-in revolutions. Asia has the prime example of China to pull it in this direction. But the Huks in the Philippines, the Viet Minh in Viet Nam and the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army all moved the same way. Although there have been plenty of center-out revolutions in modern Asia--the multiple coups of Afghanistan, Burma or China being fine examples--on balance Asia has been more hospitable to periphery-in revolutions during the last few centuries than Europe has. No doubt the overwhelmingly rural character of the Asian population has something to do with it. The relative weakness of central governments and the prior existence of subordinate polities built around common beliefs, languages and systems of kinship,

however, probably account more directly for the difference between Asia and Europe.

In highly urban settings, only the center-out pattern has much chance to occur or to succeed. Where rural area and population are extensive, both center-out and periphery-in revolutions occur, depending on the degree to which communications channels, supply lines, means of coercion and sheer territory are under the control and surveillance of cities; the less effective and centralized the control, the more possible a periphery-in revolution. The bulk of periphery-in revolutions, however, probably follow path 2: a previously subordinate polity (for example, the "native" segment of a colonial government) asserts its own sovereignty.

Given the fact of revolution, do systematically different things happen in urban and rural areas? Gramsci gave us the general teaching: the population of the city struggles over control of labor, while the population of the country struggles over control of land. That is broadly true in Asia as well as in Europe. Yet it becomes less true in the very cases on which Gramsci pinned his greatest revolutionary hopes: where urban labor markets have penetrated farthest into the countryside. Where wage-labor has become dominant in the country as well as the city, we may find collective drives for collective control of the land, but we should not expect to find collective drives for individual control of the land.

Up to this extreme, we should expect to find the people of the countryside, in times of revolution, mobilizing more slowly than the people of town and city--and demobilizing more rapidly than them as well. That, for two reasons: first, because mobilization is

intrinsically easier, all other things being equal, at centers of communication than in peripheral locations; second, because demands for control of the land are on the whole more local in scope (hence a less steady ground for a wide coalition) than demands for control of the conditions of labor. Jean Chesneaux sums up the problem for China:

The peasantry showed itself especially capable of carrying on the mass armed struggle against the national enemy. Nevertheless, peasant intervention remained within geographically limited areas; that is as true of the Boxer movement or of the areas of peasant agitation against the Manchus in southern China before 1911 as of the guerrilla bases of the period 1937-1949. The very nature of technological and economic relations within the peasantry (small-scale cultivation, semi-autarky, weakly-developed flows of commodities and information) did not permit it to carry on a unified struggle at the scale of the whole country, with, for example, the range of the great "pan-Chinese" strikes of June 1925. When that level was reached (for example at the end of the war against Japan) it was because a political apparatus which reached beyond the peasantry gave it direction (Chesneaux 1971a: 577).

Governments can equalize the rural-urban balance either by concentrating their repression in cities or by attacking whatever local control of the land exists, and thereby increasing the incentives to reactive collective action.

Rural-Urban Cleavage and Revolutionary Outcomes

What difference do the extent and character of rural-urban cleavage make to the outcome of revolutions? We can distinguish three broad alternative outcomes of multiple sovereignty:

1. The pre-existing polity reappears approximately as before, or minus former members who had joined the alternative polity; most observers would call this a "lost" revolution;

2. an alternative polity establishes control of the government and of the population subject to it; most observers would consider this revolution to have "won", although some would want evidence that the new holders of power were going to act in the interests of the population they represented;
3. some members of the alternative polity which produced the revolutionary situation, with or without members of the pre-existing polity, establishes control of the government and of the population subject to it, while other members of the alternative polity lose their membership as the new regime consolidates its hold; this is the most common revolutionary outcome; it is also the one which incites the angriest debates about whether the revolution has "won" or "lost".

The burden of the earlier Gramscian analysis is that sharp rural-urban cleavage favors the first outcome (a "lost" revolution), a coalition involving newly-mobilized rural populations and well-organized urban revolutionaries favors the third outcome (a revolution "won" for some and "lost" for others), and the revolutionary rural-urban coalition is only likely to continue into power in an unusual circumstance: when the countryside is durably organized on a large scale. Japanese rebellions illustrate the lost revolution. The Chinese communist revolution provides the best example of rural-urban success. And India's drive to independence (despite its rural décor) provides us with an exemplary case of mixed urban success and rural failure.

On the whole, the Gramscian generalizations stand up well to Asian experience. The greatest doubt attaches to the first proposition: that sharp rural-urban cleavage favors lost revolutions. At least one set of conditions appears to be favorable at once to bitter rural-urban conflict, to multiple sovereignty and to transfer of power: the situation in which an urban-based government faced with a well-organized opposition in its own centers attempts to step up the pace, or change the character, of its demands on a solidary rural population. This situation promotes all the basic conditions of revolution--formation of an alternative polity, commitment to its claims, repressive incapacity of the government, and creation of coalitions between members of the alternative and pre-existing polities.

Again China is the type case--but this time the revolution of 1911 is the relevant moment. In the Waichow rising of 1911, for instance, Winston Hsieh shows us a coalition of clan-feud bands, local militias and secret-society troops acting together against the rising Ch'ing pressure for tax revenues, especially for revenues from the salt monopoly. In Hsieh's view, the Triads (who were closely connected with the salt-smugglers of the region) played the crucial connective role in the uprising. Furthermore, they carried out the major part of the action in the market towns and the city.

There are, it appears, more paths to the crucial rural-urban coalition than via the city's revolutionary indoctrination of the peasantry. Gramsci does not quite prepare us for the salience of secret societies in Chinese insurrections. Perhaps that is because the bandits and mafiosi of Gramsci's Italy generally played a conservative political game, surviving through the patronage or indulgence

of the powers that were. In Asia, one of the paths to rural-urban coalition depends on the prior existence of large networks of bandits or secret societies which are opposed to the government and well-connected in both rural and urban areas. They substitute, to some degree, for a revolutionary party.

A more general condition for rural-urban coalition lies behind both the cases of which Gramsci was aware and the different circumstances of Asia. Under most forms of predominantly agrarian social organization, a single local elite controls the major links between any particular rural area and the national structure of power. Most often it is a landowning elite. So long as the elite is in place and has effective ties to the national structure, no large mobilization of the countryside occurs without their collaboration; that is probably for two related reasons: 1) because the rest of the rural population has so much invested in their patronage and good will, 2) because the national ties permit the elite to call on punishing force to put down opposition.

When the ties of the local elite weaken--however that happens--the costs of independent mobilization go down as its possible benefits rise. The Tokugawa regime deliberately undercut the position of the samurai, and thereby facilitated the independent mobilization of the peasants. The French accomplished the same result unintentionally in Viet Nam. As Jeffrey Race describes the process elsewhere in this book, French administrative reforms eroded the authority--as well as the repressive and cooptative power--of the village council. Thus the French unwittingly tipped the balance away from the local elite and toward people who could form new structures of collective action. It

was at that point, according to Race's analysis, that effective anti-French organization began to link rural communities to cities as well as to each other.

If the Asian experience identifies the dissolution of the national connections of elites as a facilitator of rural-urban coalition, it also identifies a major obstacle to coalition. That is the existence of sharp linguistic, religious and ethnic barriers between the rural and urban populations. The great Asian migrations of the last few centuries have created many situations in which the rural-urban distinction is also largely an ethnic distinction: Malaya, Indonesia, Thailand and elsewhere. If Rex Mortimer's analysis of Sarawak and Michael Stenson's analysis of Malaya are correct, the great urban concentration of the Chinese in both those areas seriously hampered the efforts of the communists (who were recruited mainly from the Chinese) to organize the countryside. Despite the earlier successes of the communists in fronts against the Japanese, and to some extent against the British, the urban-Chinese base of the party ruined the prospects of its effort, in 1948, to make revolution through guerrilla.

Generally speaking, rural revolutionaries who want to win need urban allies more than urban revolutionaries need them. An independent rural group can initiate multiple sovereignty with relative ease. But how will it end? Coalition with urban allies provides the the coordination and communication necessary to transcend the village or the region, and thence to produce a transfer of power at a national level. It facilitates the transition from reactive to proactive movements, to movements which will not dissolve when the first round

of demands has been met. It also makes access to armed force easier.

The last point is not incidental. No transfer of power is likely unless the alternative coalition acquires control of substantial armed force early in the revolutionary process (Russell 1973). That can happen through organization of a revolutionary army, through the absorption of existing armed irregulars, or through the defection of governmental troops. All three happened in China. None of the three happened in Indonesia. As Rex Mortimer sees it, the Javanese communists opted for adaptation and short-run success and did well by it; but the adaptation stifled their revolutionary potential. One of the ways it did so was by denying them any strong armed force when a military coup came to dislodge both them and their ally, Sukarno.

These relationships change over the course of urbanization and of state centralization. Urban allies for rural revolutionaries become more probable, but also more indispensable. In a fundamentally urban population, the extent and character of rural-urban cleavage does not much affect the outcome of such revolutions as may occur. In a strongly centralized state, likewise, what happens at the periphery matters little to those who can seize the central apparatus; they may lose some of the periphery, but they won't be dislodged from power. (It probably follows that the more centralized a state, all other things being equal, the more liable it is to military coups.) In a fundamentally rural population, on the other hand, those towns that do exist carry a large share of the burden of administration, coordination and communication. Yet they remain highly vulnerable to the withholding of supplies of food, goods, manpower and information.

As the population approaches the rural extreme, then, transfers of power are likely to be fairly easy to accomplish so long as the rural population remains passive. But given the mobilization of the rural population or the involvement of a rural elite which retains effective control over the rest of the population, the winning coalition--whether "revolutionary" or "counter-revolutionary"--will be the one that unites rural and urban contenders.

Rural-Urban Division and the Likelihood of Revolution

So far, for the most part, we have taken the presence of revolution for granted, and have asked what difference the rural-urban configuration makes to the way a revolution works itself out. Now we must ask whether the rural-urban configuration affects the probability that a revolution will occur at all. Remember that we are entertaining two different definitions of revolution: one as the onset of multiple sovereignty, the other as a durable transfer of power. The conditions for one are not the same as the conditions for the other. Nor is one simply an extrapolation of the other. In fact, they are partly contradictory: many of the circumstances which promote the onset of multiple sovereignty frustrate the durable transfer of power, and vice versa.

Strictly speaking, rural-urban divisions are probably irrelevant to the likelihood of revolution. They become relevant only to the extent that they affect (or at least correlate with) the predominant forms of mobilization, collective action, contention for power, coalition-formation and repression. The effects and correlations have to do mainly with changes in rural-urban divisions rather than with stable configurations.

The most obvious is the increase of urban control over rural political, economic and demographic life. Eric Wolf's Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century presents a series of studies around that theme. Wolf deals, of course, with peasant populations, not with rural populations in general. He portrays a process which has occurred widely at the leading edge of capitalist expansion: the rising demand from distant markets encourages local capitalists to accumulate control over the land and to shift toward cash-crop production; taxation and monetization draw or drive peasants into the market; patron-client relationships decay; opportunities for wage-labor simultaneously stimulate population increase within the village and increase the proportion of the population which is vulnerable and responsive to fluctuations in the markets for labor and commodities; sooner or later the ability of peasants to meet their major local obligations (which had been guaranteed by what were, in effect, liens on all the factors of production) decline.

These changes may seem subtle and abstract--only visible in retrospect, and then only to the keen eye of an anthropologist. Yet they have some perfectly tangible manifestations. They show up as bourgeois encroachment on common lands, imposition of new taxes which require peasants to sell portions of their crops or of their capital, and so on. By the early twentieth century, Wolf tells us, these changes were going on in Mexico, Russia, Viet Nam, China, and many other parts of the world. The analyses of Asia in this volume tend to agree. Although Donald Zagoria, for example, emphasizes the current revolutionary propensities of rural tenants and proletarians, the

processes his survey shows us as creating these revolutionary classes and exacerbating their fates are the same processes Wolf describes.

By the end of such a process, peasants are no longer peasants, and communities have lost their collective capacities to resist. That is the dialectic: if the economic, political and demographic threats to the survival of the community mount faster than its bases of solidarity dissolve, concerted resistance occurs. When a new demand for taxes, a new exclusion of peasants from gleaning, hunting or gathering on formerly open lands occurs, defensive mobilization begins. The collective action which prevails in these circumstances is the reactive form outlined earlier (claims over already-controlled resources/ counterclaim). Jeffrey Race shows us just such a sequence occurring in northern Thailand; there government pressure on hill tribes helped align them with the rebels and encouraged them to develop supra-village organization where none had previously existed. Likewise, Se He Yoo suggests that Japanese interference with slash-and-burn agriculture helped drive the peasants of Hamyong Province, Korea, into red peasant unions. By many standards, these reactive movements are conservative, even traditional. Yet, as Wolf and Race demonstrate, they sometimes have revolutionary outcomes. Conservatism, tradition and revolution are not so incompatible as conventional wisdom holds.

When? The basic conditions for resistance are 1) a focussed threat to peasant survival, with well-defined agents having visible external connections, occurring simultaneously in a number of localities which are already in communication with each other, 2) a significant local framework for collective action, in the form of mutual obligations, communications lines and justifiable common claims

on resources. From Wolf's accounts of twentieth-century peasant wars and from a general survey of modern European experience, it is reasonable to add an important facilitating condition: 3) the availability of urban-based allies in the form of intellectuals, liberal bourgeois, labor leaders, military chiefs, professional politicians or others.

The "focussed threat to peasant survival" appears to lie behind the widespread, reactive peasant rebellions of Tokugawa Japan (Borton 1937). The Japanese movements against merchants, tax collectors, and encroaching landlords between 1750 and the Meiji Restoration have many features in common with European rural movements of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. Taxes and rents do not only bite into the peasant household's means of survival; when assessed in money, they drive peasants into the market (Ardant 1965; Ardant 1971-1972). Where the terms of trade are unfavorable, the market mechanisms are ill-developed or customary claims on the commodities to be marketed are extensive, the necessity of marketing does more damage to the peasant household than an equivalent loss of resources through theft or natural disaster.

One of Borton's many relevant accounts describes an uprising of 1823 in the Province of Kii. "Plotting with two of their fellow officials," Borton tells us,

two of the bugyō decided to store goods for their own profit. Rice exchanges were established throughout the realm, the price of sake was forced up, the importation of rice from outside was prohibited, and tickets were required on all rice bags, sake tubs and similar articles to prove that they had not come from the neighboring domain of Koyasan. Added to this, the taxation of the land was increased, while taxes were ordered collected not only on new lands, but also on all waste land (Borton 1968: 81).

Eventually more than 100,000 farmers marched on Wakayama, "destroying the sake and rice shops, pawn shops, and places of the shōya and men in charge of the rice exchanges" (Borton 1968: 82). On the evening of the attack the authorities received the following demands:

1. The fixed taxes be as during the time of Tokugawa Yorinobu. .
2. The tax on wet lands. . . be similar to that on dry lands.
3. There be exemption from opening up old waste land.
4. There be omission of maikuchi.
5. The storing of goods for profit cease.
6. There be exemption from the repairs of water ditches for irrigation and drainage, and the cutting of the boundary. . .
7. Inspection be made of the standing crop [to assure a fair tax]. (Borton 1968: 82)

These demands were characteristic of the time's peasant uprisings.

As Barrington Moore says in his review of these same accounts ". . . the intrusion of commercial relationships into the feudal organization of the countryside was creating increasingly severe problems for the ruling group. There were three main strands to the peasant violence: opposition to the feudal overlord, to the merchant, and to emerging landlordism" (Moore 1966: 256).

Japanese rebellions of the eighteenth and nineteenth century also illustrate the importance of a significant local framework for collective action. As in Europe, the village was both a fiscal unit and the possessor of collective rights to the land. And it remained a vehicle of collective action. This appears to set off rural Japan from most of China. In China, communities as such had relatively

little collective life, few common rights, and not much collective action. Kinship groups and secret societies (the two not being entirely distinct from each other), by contrast, seem to have played extraordinary roles in collective action; they cut across individual communities, and facilitated actions on a scale larger than the village.

Perhaps I have misstated the contrast. Following G. W. Skinner, it might be better to distinguish between the bottom-up system of central places exemplified by the hierarchy of market areas and the top-down system of administrative units doing the work of the empire. The Chinese imperial structure did not ordinarily reach down to the level of the village, however heavy was the indirect weight of imperial demands. The smaller-scale governments of Europe--and apparently of Japan and India as well--managed to incorporate villages directly into their structures. They became fiscal, administrative and even military units; the administrative pressure enhanced their importance as vehicles of collective action, ironically fortifying the resistance to the very extractive processes which built them up.

In China, secret societies and the rebellions associated with them rarely began with whole communities, but they did rely heavily on local units. According to Chiang Siang-Tseh (1954: 37-38), the Nien rebels acquired whole communities under circumstances which fit neatly with the top-down/bottom-up distinction. After the governmental authorities organized local militias in defense against the Taipings who were in Anwei--thus extending the central structure downward to an extraordinary degree--the chiefs of the local militias began to assume political power within the villages, and to exercise

it with considerable autonomy. In fact, they frequently took the whole village over to the Niens. Philip Kuhn (1970) treats this dialectic of government-promoted local militarization/acquisition of autonomy by military units as one of the chief factors in the final crumbling of the empire. The Taipings likewise contributed to their own destruction by their extraordinary, revolutionary effort to build a top-down structure rivaling that of the empire itself; it was incapable, as was the empire, of extending durable control to the village level in the face of local defensive militarization.

The experiences of Japan and China are alike in underscoring the significance of urban-based allies for rural rebellions. Such allies matter because they can make the difference between one more fragmented peasant rebellion and a coordinated revolutionary force. The general pattern of rebellion in Japan and China was outside-in, or bottom-up: first in the periphery and/or the countryside, only later in the cities. That is unlike the modern European experience, in which most large-scale rebellions had urban bases, regardless of how many peasants they recruited. But in Japan and China successful rebellions had to take over urban centers; control of cities was part of the definition of success, the only means of seizing or supplanting the existing administrative apparatus.

The Revolution of 1911--which was, in its way, successful--provides numerous examples of the advantages of rural-urban alliance. John Lust's description of the insurrection in Kwangtung links republican Canton with People's Armies of "hired agricultural workers, handicraft workmen, discharged troops, local banditti, and militia" around nuclei of "a merger of outlaws, Triads, and peasants" led by "T'ung-meng

Hui members, by bandit chiefs who had previously adopted the republican cause, and by veteran Triad leaders" (Lust 1972: 192-193). The description resembles Hsieh's portrait of the nearby Waichow rising.

As the rebels of Kwangtung won:

In Canton, as the result of pressures from the bourgeoisie, and probably also from chiefs of People's Armies, an administration with a strong T'ung-meng Hui representation replaced the compromise regime. In the pungent if patronizing mot of the old consul-general, Jamieson, bandit armies had put a compradore government into power (Lust 1972: 193).

The subsequent effort of the "compradores" to rid themselves of their plebeian allies is also a phase familiar to students of western revolutions. The personnel and organization of Asian revolutions differ quite a bit from those of Europe, but the broad conditions for revolution in the two continents have something in common.

The basic conditions for rural resistance--a focussed threat to peasant survival, a significant local framework for collective action and the availability of urban-based allies--are revolutionary conditions. They are revolutionary because they promote the appearance of coalitions of contenders advancing exclusive alternative claims to control of government in the rural areas, commitment to those claims by a significant segment of the rural population, and incapacity of the agents of the government to suppress both the alternative coalition and the commitment to its claims. The alternative claims of rural rebels are often negative and/or separatist demands rather than proposals to take over the central government; that does not make them less revolutionary. They are unlikely, however, to lead to a fundamental transfer of power in an entire state unless the negative or separatist contenders fashion

coalitions with others at the centers of power, including some who have control of armed force.

Generally speaking, these conditions are more likely to occur 1) where urbanization is rapid, 2) early in a long phase of urbanization, 3) where the rural population is extensive and dispersed, yet predominantly peasant. Such a summary can only be a crude approximation, since the real news is in the relative rates of change of urban-based extraction, urban-based repression and defensive rural mobilization. If the trend of my argument is correct, Gramsci was only partly right in thinking that the more thoroughly the influence of cities pervades the countryside, the more likely revolution is. Pervasive urban influence makes an effective rural-urban coalition more likely. After a point, however, it also makes reactive mobilization less likely. Gramsci needed a distinction between the necessary conditions for revolution in the sense of multiple sovereignty and the necessary conditions for revolution in the sense of a fundamental transfer of power.

The reactive forms of rural rebellion are only half the matter. In the European experience, they were the larger half: once the peasant revolts of the nineteenth century had faded away, most rural areas stayed quiet. Nevertheless, some European rural populations acted together after peasant revolts, and peasants as well, became historical memories. Andalusia's rural anarchism, Sicily's Fasci, the Po Valley's socialism all drew their strength from rural proletarians, not from peasants. All had a proactive urge to them that was lacking in the older peasant movements: amid nostalgia for a past that never was and

anger about present exploitation, the actors claimed rights and rewards which had never before been theirs.

To avoid confusion, let us remember who peasants are. . .at least in the present discussion. They are agricultural producers organized in households which yield a surplus to outsiders, but have substantial control over the land they work and raise the bulk of what they consume. By such a definition, agrarian capitalism eventually destroys the peasantry. To the extent that agricultural land, labor and capital all become responsive to external markets, the cultivators stop being peasants. That can happen through the creation of an agricultural proletariat or through the conversion of everyone who remains in agriculture into a cash-crop farmer.

In looking at reactive peasant movements, then, we were only examining the first phase of the process. Late in the process, something quite different occasionally happens: associations of workers or of producers form, make claims, and act together. Proletarianization occurs through the expansion of markets for land, labor and capital into the countryside, through the stepped-up demand for taxes in cash, through the concentration of land in large holdings. Where the process occurs, it not only creates a rural population polarized into a land-poor mass and a land-controlling elite, it also tends to weaken the political position of the old rural elite. If the government to which the old elite was tied weakens at the same time, the result is the disappearance of one of the great barriers to a large-scale rural revolutionary movement.

Elsewhere in this volume, both Christine White and Jeffrey Race argue that the French promoted this entire process in Viet Nam as a

consequence of their eagerness for cash revenues from the colony. In Viet Nam, by their accounts, it took the Viet Minh to articulate and coordinate the existing rural demands for land reform, control of the food supply, and protection from exploitation by large landlords.

Conclusion

Considering the recency of capitalism's penetration into much of Asia, we should not expect to find many pure examples of proactive rural movements in Asia. The bulk of the many Asian rural rebellions of the last century have been reactive in character: attempts to defend existing rights against encroachment by landlords, tax-collectors and other exploiters. Even the great Chinese revolution articulated and integrated a great many essentially reactive demands: against the Japanese, against the rich. If that is the case, it becomes idle to search for correlations between radical attitudes and revolutionary actions, idler still to gauge the revolutionary potential of different segments of the rural population by means of their ideological orientations.

Looking for active grievances comes closer, yet misses nevertheless. Grievances are fundamental to rebellion as oxygen is fundamental to combustion. But just as fluctuations in the oxygen content of the air account for little of the distribution of fire in the workaday world, fluctuations in grievances are not a major cause of the presence or absence of rebellion. For that, the political means of acting on grievances which people have at their disposal matter a good deal more. Properly adapted to twentieth-century Asia, Antonio Gramsci's analysis of the political conditions for revolution provides us with an excellent start in determining the place of Asian

peasants, and of rural proletarians, in contemporary revolutionary movements.

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