

# *States and Social Revolutions*

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS  
OF FRANCE, RUSSIA, AND CHINA

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*for Bill*

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## Preface

SOME BOOKS PRESENT fresh evidence; others make arguments that urge the reader to see old problems in a new light. This work is decidedly of the latter sort. It offers a frame of reference for analyzing social-revolutionary transformations in modern world history. And it uses comparative history to work out an explanation of the causes and outcomes of the French Revolution of 1787–1800, the Russian Revolution of 1917–1921, and the Chinese Revolution of 1911–1949. Developed through critical reflection on assumptions and types of explanation common to most received theories of revolution, the principles of analysis sketched in the first chapter of the book are meant to reorient our sense of what is characteristic of—and problematic about—revolutions as they actually have occurred historically. Then the remainder of the book attempts to make the program of Chapter 1, calling for new kinds of explanatory arguments, come alive in application. In Part I, the roots of revolutionary crises and conflicts in France, Russia, and China are traced through analyses of the state and class structures and the international situations of the Bourbon, Tsarist, and Imperial Old Regimes. Particular emphasis is placed upon the ways in which the old-regime states came into crisis, and upon the emergence of peasant insurrections during the revolutionary interregnums. Then, in Part II, the Revolutions themselves are traced from the original outbreaks through to the consolidation of relatively stable and distinctively structured New Regimes: the Napoleonic in France, the Stalinist in Russia, and the characteristically Sino-Communist (after the mid-1950s) in China. Here special attention is paid to the state-building efforts of revolutionary leaderships, and to the structures and activities of new state organizations within the revolutionized societies. In their broad sweep from Old to New Regimes, the French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions are treated as three comparable instances of a single, coherent social-revolutionary pattern. As a result, both the similarities and the indi-

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vidual features of these Revolutions are highlighted and explained in ways somewhat different from previous theoretical or historical discussions.

Books grow in unique ways out of the experiences of their authors, and this one is no exception. The ideas for it germinated during my time as a graduate student at Harvard University in the early 1970s. This was—however faint the echoes now—a vivid period of political engagement for many students, myself included. The United States was brutally at war against the Vietnamese Revolution, while at home movements calling for racial justice and for an immediate end to the foreign military involvement challenged the capacities for good and evil of our national political system. The times certainly stimulated my interest in understanding revolutionary change. And it was during these years that my commitment to democratic-socialist ideals matured. Yet it would be a mistake to imply that *States and Social Revolutions* sprang immediately from day-to-day political preoccupations. It didn't. Instead it developed in the relative "ivory tower" quiet of the library and the study. As a graduate student, I pursued studies in macrosociological theory and in comparative social and political history. Puzzles kept emerging at the interface of these sets of studies. My attempts to formulate answers to problematic issues, and then to follow answers through to their conclusions, led me, through many stages of formulation, to the arguments and analyses now embodied here.

There was, for one thing, my early intellectual confrontation with the case of South Africa. The history of that unhappy land struck me as an obvious refutation of Parsonian structure-functionalist explanations of societal order and change, and as an insuperable challenge to commonplace and comforting predictions that mass discontent would lead to revolution against the blatantly oppressive *apartheid* regime. Liberal justice, it seemed, did not inevitably triumph. Marxist class analysis impressed me as much more useful than structure-functionism or relative deprivation theory for understanding the situation of the nonwhites in South Africa and deciphering the long-term tendencies of socioeconomic change. But, working strictly in terms of class analysis, it was difficult to conceptualize, let alone adequately explain, the structure of the South African state and the political role of the Afrikaners. Yet these seemed to be the keys to why no social revolution had occurred—or likely soon would—in South Africa.

Another formative experience was a lengthy, in-depth exploration of the historical origins of the Chinese Revolution. To structure my program of study, I compared and sought to explain the relative successes and failures of the Taiping Rebellion, the Kuomintang Nationalist movement, and the Chinese Communist Party, looking at all three movements in the historically changing overall context of Chinese society. Deeply fascinated by late

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Imperial and modern China, I came away from this research profoundly skeptical about the applicability (to China, and perhaps to other agrarian states as well) of received social-scientific categorizations such as "traditional" or "feudal." I also became convinced that the causes of revolutions could only be understood by looking at the specific interrelations of class and state structures and the complex interplay over time of domestic and international developments.

If most other students of comparative revolutions have moved, so to speak, from the West to the East—interpreting the Russian Revolution in terms of the French, or the Chinese in terms of the Russian—my intellectual journey has been the other way around the globe. After first investigating China, I next learned about France as part of a general program of studies on the comparative political development of Western Europe. Although I realized that France was "supposed" to be like England, her absolutist Old Regime seemed in many ways similar to Imperial China. I also deciphered basic similarities in the French and Chinese revolutionary processes, both of which were launched by landed upper class revolts against absolutist monarchs, and both of which involved peasant revolts and culminated in more centralized and bureaucratic New Regimes. Finally, I came to interpret old-regime and revolutionary Russia in the same analytic terms that I had worked out for China and France. And the emphases on agrarian structures and state building seemed a fruitful way to understand the fate of this "proletarian" revolution after 1917, through 1921 and the early 1930s.

There was yet another peculiarity worth noting about my induction into systematic research on revolutions. Unlike most sociologists who work in this area, I learned a good deal about the histories of actual revolutions *before* I read very extensively in the social-scientific literature that purports to explain revolutions theoretically. When I did survey this literature, I quickly became frustrated with it. The revolutionary process itself was envisaged in ways that corresponded very poorly to the histories I knew. And the causal explanations offered seemed either irrelevant or just plain wrong, given what I had learned about the similarities and differences of countries that had, versus those that had not, experienced revolutions. Before long, I decided (to my own satisfaction, at least) what the fundamental trouble was: Social-scientific theories derived their explanations of revolution from models of how political protest and change were ideally supposed to occur in liberal-democratic or capitalist societies. Thus non-Marxist theories tended to envisage revolutions as particularly radical and ideological variants of the typical social reform movement, and Marxists saw them as class actions spearheaded by the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. No wonder, I said to myself, that these theories offer so little insight

into the causes and accomplishments of revolutions in predominantly agrarian countries with absolutist-monarchical states and peasant-based social orders.

From this *mélange* of intellectual experiences, a possible project, destined to culminate in this book, presented itself to me: Use comparisons among the French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions, and some contrasts of these cases to other countries, to clarify my critique of the inadequacies of existing theories of revolution, and to develop an alternative theoretical approach and explanatory hypotheses. Although I rejected the assumptions and substantive arguments of the theories of revolution I knew, I still had the urge to clarify the general logic that I sensed was at work across the diversely situated major revolutions I had studied. Comparative historical analysis seemed an ideal way to proceed.

To my good fortune, the three Revolutions that I wanted to include in my comparative analysis had been extensively researched by historians and area specialists. A large existing literature may be a bane for the specialist who hopes to make a new contribution based upon previously undiscovered or underexploited primary evidence. But for the comparative sociologist this is the ideal situation. Inevitably, broadly conceived comparative historical projects draw their evidence almost entirely from "secondary sources"—that is, from research monographs and syntheses already published in book or journal-article form by the relevant historical or culture-area specialists. The comparative historian's task—and potential distinctive scholarly contribution—lies not in revealing new data about particular aspects of the large time periods and diverse places surveyed in the comparative study, but rather in establishing the interest and *prima facie* validity of an overall argument about causal regularities across the various historical cases. The comparativist has neither the time nor (all of) the appropriate skills to do the primary research that necessarily constitutes, in large amounts, the foundation upon which comparative studies are built. Instead, the comparativist must concentrate upon searching out and systematically surveying specialists' publications that deal with the issues defined as important by theoretical considerations and by the logic of comparative analysis. If, as is often the case, the points debated by specialists about a particular historical epoch or event are not exactly the ones that seem most important from a comparative perspective, then the comparative analyst must be prepared to adapt the evidence presented in the works of the specialists to analytic purposes somewhat tangential to those they originally envisaged. And the comparativist must be as systematic as possible in searching out information on the same topics from case to case, even though the specialists are likely to emphasize varying topics in their research and polemics from one country to the next. Plainly, the work of the comparativist only becomes possible *after* a large primary literature has been built up by specialists. Only then can the compa-

rativist hope to find at least some material relevant to each topic that must be investigated according to the dictates of the comparative, explanatory argument that he or she is attempting to develop.

As the Bibliography for this book is meant to indicate, I have been able to draw extensively upon rich literatures about France, Russia, and China. Each literature has great depth and scope, and each includes many books and articles originally published in (or translated into) English and French, the two languages that I read most easily. With occasional exceptions attributable to the thinness of interest about particular topics in one historical literature or another, the challenges I have faced have not been due to difficulties of finding basic information. Rather they have been challenges of surveying huge historical literatures and appropriately weighing and using the contributions of specialists, in order to develop a coherent comparative historical argument. How well I have met these challenges is for readers (including historians and area specialists) to judge for themselves. For myself, I shall be satisfied if this book serves in some small measure to provoke debate and inspire further investigations, both among people interested in one particular revolution or another and among people concerned to understand modern revolutions in general, their past causes and accomplishments and their future prospects. Comparative history grows out of the interplay of theory and history, and it should in turn contribute to the further enrichment of each.

Working and reworking the argument of this book over the last few years has often felt like an unending lonely struggle with a giant jig-saw puzzle. But, in actuality, many people have lent a hand, helping me to see better the overall design and pointing out where particular pieces fit, or do not.

My most fundamental scholarly debt is to Barrington Moore, Jr. It was my reading of his *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* while I was still an undergraduate at Michigan State University that introduced me to the magnificent scope of comparative history and taught me that agrarian structures and conflicts offer important keys to the patterns of modern politics. Moreover, the graduate seminars I took from Moore at Harvard were the crucibles within which my capacities to do comparative analysis were forged, even as I was allowed the space to develop my own interpretations. Moore set rigorous tasks and reacted with telling criticisms. And student fellowship in the seminars provided a supportive and intellectually lively atmosphere. In fact, two friends among fellow students in Moore's seminars, Mounira Charrad and John Mollenkopf, have given me encouragement and advice through all stages of this project on comparative revolutions.

Another crucial, longstanding influence has been Ellen Kay Trimberger. I first became aware of her kindred work on "revolutions from above" in

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Japan and Turkey in 1970. And, ever since, Kay's ideas, comments, and friendship have helped me enormously to develop my analysis of France, Russia and China.

Like many first books, this one had an earlier incarnation as a doctoral dissertation. That phase of the project was certainly the most painful, because I undertook too much in too short a time. Nevertheless, in retrospect it was worth it, for a "big" thesis, however imperfect, offers more potential for the subsequent development of a publishable book than a more polished narrow dissertation. For encouraging me to undertake the nearly impossible, I owe thanks to Daniel Bell, who also made detailed and provocative comments on the thesis draft. The dissertation was formally advised by the good and admirable George Caspar Homans, who gave careful feedback and exerted unremitting pressure for me to finish quickly. The remaining member of my thesis committee, Seymour Martin Lipset, made astute suggestions from beginning to end and was kind enough not to hold it against me when the thesis took longer to complete than I had originally planned. Financial support during my final years of Ph.D. work came from a Danforth Graduate Fellowship, which leaves its holders free to pursue research topics of their own choosing.

After the dissertation was completed, Charles Tilly generously offered encouragement and recommendations for the major revisions that lay ahead. Colleagues and students at Harvard, where I teach, helped in innumerable ways to facilitate and stimulate my progress on the book. And once the revisions were partially done, many others helped speed the book to completion. Walter Lippincott, Jr., of Cambridge University Press, arranged for early reviews of the manuscript; these resulted not only in a contract for publication but also in very useful advice on the introduction from John Dunn and Eric Wolf. Peter Evans also made suggestions that helped with the revisions of the first chapter. Mary Fulbrook provided research assistance for revisions of Chapter 3, and her work was paid for by a small grant from the Harvard Graduate Society. I likewise benefited from the Sociology Department's Fund for Junior Faculty Research.

Several friends heroically took the time to make written comments on the entire book draft. These special helpers were: Susan Eckstein, Harriet Friedmann, Walter Goldfrank, Peter Gourevitch, Richard Kraus, Joel Migdal, and Jonathan Zeitlin. In addition, Perry Anderson, Reinhard Bendix, Victoria Bonnell, Shmuel Eisenstadt, Terence Hopkins, Lynn Hunt, Barrington Moore, Jr., Victor Nee, Magali Sarfatti-Larson, Ann Swidler, and Immanuel Wallerstein all made comments on related published articles of mine, comments which substantially influenced subsequent work on the book. Needless to say, whereas the abovementioned people are responsible for much of what may be good about this work, none is to be held accountable for its shortcomings.

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Mrs. Nellie Miller, Louisa Amos, and Lynn McKay did wonderfully speedy and accurate work in typing the final manuscript. Mrs. Miller deserves thanks above all, for she did most of the typing in every stage of revision. I was fortunate indeed to be able to rely upon her perfectionism and intelligence.

Finally, of course, I lovingly acknowledge the help of my husband, Bill Skocpol, to whom this book is dedicated. His comments on all parts of the text through many revisions, his willingness to help with practical chores such as the typing of early thesis versions and the checking of quotes at the end, and his patience in the face of my emotional ups-and-downs throughout the entire process—all of these contributions are embodied in every part of *States and Social Revolutions*. Bill is an experimental physicist, but without his willing aid this work of comparative historical sociology could not have developed to completion.



## Introduction

# 1 Explaining Social Revolutions: Alternatives to Existing Theories

*Revolutions are the locomotives of history.* Karl Marx

*Controversy over different views of "methodology" and "theory" is properly carried on in close and continuous relation with substantive problems . . . The character of these problems limits and suggests the methods and conceptions that are used and how they are used.* C. Wright Mills

SOCIAL REVOLUTIONS have been rare but momentous occurrences in modern world history. From France in the 1790s to Vietnam in the mid-twentieth century, these revolutions have transformed state organizations, class structures, and dominant ideologies. They have given birth to nations whose power and autonomy markedly surpassed their own prerevolutionary pasts and outstripped other countries in similar circumstances. Revolutionary France became suddenly a conquering power in Continental Europe, and the Russian Revolution generated an industrial and military superpower. The Mexican Revolution gave its homeland the political strength to become one of the most industrialized of postcolonial nations and the country in Latin America least prone to military coups. Since World War II, the culmination of a revolutionary process long underway has reunited and transformed a shattered China. And new social revolutions have enabled decolonizing and neocolonial countries such as Vietnam and Cuba to break the chains of extreme dependency.

Nor have social revolutions had only national significance. In some cases social revolutions have given rise to models and ideals of enormous international impact and appeal—especially where the transformed societies have been large and geopolitically important, actual or potential Great Powers. The patriotic armies of revolutionary France mastered much of Europe. Even before the conquests and long after military defeat, the French revolutionary ideals of “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity” fired imaginations in quest of social and national liberation: The effects reached from Geneva to Santo Domingo, from Ireland to Latin America and India, and influenced subsequent revolutionary theorists from Babeuf to Marx and Lenin, to anticolonialists of the twentieth century. The Russian Revo-

lution astounded the capitalist West and whetted the ambitions of the emerging nations by demonstrating that revolutionary state power could, within the space of two generations, transform a backward agrarian country into the second-ranked industrial and military power in the world. What the Russian Revolution was for the first half of the twentieth century, the Chinese has been for the second half. By showing that a Leninist party can lead a peasant majority in economic and military struggles, it "... has brought a great power into being which proclaims itself the revolutionary and developmental model for the poor countries of the world."<sup>1</sup> "The Yen-an Way" and "The Countryside Against the City" have offered fresh ideals and models and renewed hopes for revolutionary nationalists in the mid-twentieth century. Moreover, as Elbaki Hermassi has emphasized, major revolutions affect not only those abroad who would like to imitate them. They also affect those in other countries who oppose revolutionary ideals but are compelled to respond to the challenges or threats posed by the enhanced national power that has been generated. "The world-historical character of revolutions means . . .," says Hermassi, that "they exert a demonstration effect beyond the boundaries of their country of origin, with a potential for triggering waves of revolution and counterrevolution both within and between societies."<sup>2</sup>

To be sure, social revolutions have not been the only forces for change at work in the modern era. Within the matrix of the "Great Transformation" (that is, worldwide commercialization and industrialization, and the rise of national states and expansion of the European states system to encompass the entire globe) political upheavals and socioeconomic changes have happened in every country. But within this matrix, social revolutions deserve special attention, not only because of their extraordinary significance for the histories of nations and the world but also because of their distinctive pattern of sociopolitical change.

Social revolutions are rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures; and they are accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below. Social revolutions are set apart from other sorts of conflicts and transformative processes above all by the combination of two coincidences: the coincidence of societal structural change with class upheaval; and the coincidence of political with social transformation. In contrast, rebellions, even when successful, may involve the revolt of subordinate classes—but they do not eventuate in structural change.<sup>3</sup> Political revolutions transform state structures but not social structures, and they are not necessarily accomplished through class conflict.<sup>4</sup> And processes such as industrialization can transform social structures without necessarily bringing about, or resulting from, sudden political upheavals or basic political-structural changes. What is unique to social

revolution is that basic changes in social structure and in political structure occur together in a mutually reinforcing fashion. And these changes occur through intense sociopolitical conflicts in which class struggles play a key role.

This conception of social revolution differs from many other definitions of revolution in important respects. First, it identifies a *complex* object of explanation, of which there are relatively few historical instances. It does this rather than trying to multiply the number of cases for explanation by concentrating only upon one analytic feature (such as violence or political conflict) shared by many events of heterogeneous nature and outcome.<sup>5</sup> It is my firm belief that analytic oversimplification cannot lead us toward valid, complete explanations of revolutions. If our intention is to understand large-scale conflicts and changes such as those that occurred in France from 1787 to 1800, we cannot make progress by starting with objects of explanation that isolate only the aspects that such revolutionary events share with, say, riots or coups. We must look at the revolutions as wholes, in much of their complexity.

Second, this definition makes successful sociopolitical transformation—*actual change* of state and class structures—part of the specification of what is to be called a social revolution, rather than leaving change contingent in the definition of "revolution" as many other scholars do.<sup>6</sup> The rationale is my belief that successful social revolutions probably emerge from different macro-structural and historical contexts than do either failed social revolutions or political transformations that are not accompanied by transformations of class relations. Because I intend to focus exactly on this question in my comparative historical analysis—in which actual social revolutions will be compared to unsuccessful cases and to non-social-revolutionary transformations—my concept of social revolution necessarily highlights successful change as a basic defining feature.

How, then, are social revolutions to be explained? Where are we to turn for fruitful modes of analyzing their causes and outcomes? In my view, existing social-scientific theories of revolution are not adequate.<sup>7</sup> In consequence, the chief purpose of this chapter is to introduce and defend principles and methods of analysis that represent alternatives to those shared by all (or most) existing approaches. I shall argue that, in contrast to the modes of explanation used by the currently prevalent theories, social revolutions should be analyzed from a structural perspective, with special attention devoted to international contexts and to developments at home and abroad that affect the breakdown of the state organizations of old regimes and the buildup of new, revolutionary state organizations. Furthermore, I shall argue that comparative historical analysis is the most

appropriate way to develop explanations of revolutions that are at once historically grounded and generalizable beyond unique cases.

To facilitate the subsequent presentation of these theoretical and methodological alternatives, it should be helpful to identify major types of social-scientific theories of revolution, briefly sketching the important characteristics of each as embodied in the work of a representative writer. The kinds of theories I am about to summarize in this manner are all properly called "general" theories of revolution—that is, they are rather broadly formulated conceptual schemes and hypotheses meant to be applicable across many particular historical instances. This book itself does not represent exactly the same sort of scholarly endeavor as such general theories. Instead, like other historically grounded, comparative studies of revolutions—such as Barrington Moore, Jr.'s *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Eric Wolf's *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*, and John Dunn's *Modern Revolutions*<sup>8</sup>—this book basically analyzes in depth a set of cases. Yet, also like these sister works (and perhaps even more determinedly than the latter two), this book is concerned not merely with narrating the cases one by one but primarily with understanding and explaining the generalizable logic at work in the entire set of revolutions under discussion. Plainly, the sorts of concepts and hypotheses found in general theories of revolution are potentially relevant to the explanatory task of the comparative historian; in fact, any comparative study either draws upon or reacts against the ideas put forward by social-scientific theorists of revolution from Marx to more contemporary writers. It follows, therefore, that briefly summarizing general theories, though not allowing us to explore the far richer arguments of existing comparative-historical treatments of revolutions, nevertheless does provide an economical way of identifying relevant basic theoretical issues for later commentary.

It is useful, I suggest, to think of currently important social-scientific theories of revolution as grouped into four major families, which I shall take up one by one. The most obviously relevant of these groupings is the Marxist; and the key ideas are best represented in the works of Karl Marx himself. As active proponents of this mode of social change, Marxists have been the social analysts most consistently concerned with understanding social revolutions as such. To be sure, in the tumultuous century since the death of Marx, many divergent tendencies have developed within Marxist intellectual and political traditions: Subsequent Marxist theorists of revolution range from technological determinists such as Nikolai Bukharin (in *Historical Materialism*),<sup>9</sup> to political strategists such as Lenin and Mao,<sup>10</sup> to Western Marxists such as Georg Lukács, Antonio Gramsci, and contemporary "structuralists" such as Louis Althusser.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, Marx's original approach to revolutions has remained the unquestioned, if variously interpreted, basis for all such later Marxists.

The basic elements of Marx's theory can be straightforwardly identified without in any way denying the fact that all of the elements are open to widely varying weights and interpretations. Marx understood revolutions not as isolated episodes of violence or conflict but as class-based movements growing out of objective structural contradictions within historically developing and inherently conflict-ridden societies. For Marx, the key to any society is its mode of production or specific combination of socio-economic forces of production (technology and division of labor) and class relations of property ownership and surplus appropriation. The latter, the relations of production, are especially crucial:

It is always the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers—a relation always naturally corresponding to a definite stage in the development of the methods of labour and thereby its social productivity—which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure, and with it the political form of the relation of sovereignty and dependence, in short, the corresponding specific form of the state.<sup>12</sup>

The basic source of a revolutionary contradiction in society, according to Marx's most general theoretical formulation, is the emergence of a disjuncture within a mode of production between the social forces and social relations of production.

At a certain stage of their development the material forces of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they had been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution.<sup>13</sup>

In turn, this disjuncture expresses itself in intensifying class conflicts. The generation of a nascent mode of production within the confines of an existing one—of capitalism within feudalism; of socialism within capitalism—creates a dynamic basis for the growth of the unity and consciousness of each proto-revolutionary class through on-going struggles with the existing dominant class. Thus, leading up to the European bourgeois revolutions, "the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up, were generated in feudal society."<sup>14</sup>

Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the medieval commune; here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany), there taxable "third estate" of the monarchy (as in France); afterwards, in the period of manufacture proper, serving either the semi-feudal or absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, corner-stone of the great monarchies in gen-

eral—the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway.<sup>15</sup>

Similarly, with the establishment of capitalism the advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination, due to association.<sup>16</sup>

The proletariat goes through various stages of development. With its birth begins its struggle with the bourgeoisie. At first the contest is carried on by individual labourers, then by the workpeople of a factory, then by the operatives of one trade, in one locality . . .

Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of workers. This union is helped on by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry and that place the workers of different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralise the numerous local struggles, all of them of the same character, into one national struggle between classes . . .

[The result is] more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat.<sup>17</sup>

Revolution itself is accomplished through class action led by the self-conscious, rising revolutionary class (i.e., the bourgeoisie in bourgeois revolutions and the proletariat in socialist revolutions). Perhaps the revolutionary class is supported by other class allies such as the peasantry, but these allies are neither fully class-conscious nor politically organized on a national scale. Once successful, a revolution marks the transition from the previous mode of production and form of class dominance to a new mode of production, in which new social relations of production, new political and ideological forms, and, in general, the hegemony of the newly triumphant revolutionary class, create appropriate conditions for the further development of society. In short, Marx sees revolutions as emerging out of class-divided modes of production, and transforming one mode of production into another through class conflict.

The other three families of theories of revolution have taken basic shape much more recently than Marxism (though they all draw particular themes from the classical social theorists, including Tocqueville, Durkheim, and Weber, as well as Marx). Indeed, during the last two decades, theories of revolution have sprung up thick and fast in American social science. This

recent outgrowth has been concerned above all with understanding the roots of social instability and political violence, not infrequently for the declared purpose of helping established authorities to prevent or ameliorate these conditions at home and abroad. Whatever the intended applications, though, elaborate theories have been developed that purport either to explain revolutions as such or to subsume revolutions explicitly within some still broader class of phenomena which they claim to explain. Most of these recent theories can be identified with one or another of three major approaches: *aggregate-psychological* theories, which attempt to explain revolutions in terms of people's psychological motivations for engaging in political violence or joining oppositional movements,<sup>18</sup> *systems/value consensus* theories, which attempt to explain revolutions as violent responses of ideological movements to severe disequilibrium in social systems;<sup>19</sup> and *political-conflict* theories, which argue that conflict among governments and various organized groups contending for power must be placed at the center of attention to explain collective violence and revolutions.<sup>20</sup> An important and representative theoretical work has been produced within each perspective: Ted Gurr's *Why Men Rebel* within the aggregate-psychological; Chalmers Johnson's *Revolutionary Change* within the systems/value consensus; and Charles Tilly's *From Mobilization to Revolution* within the political-conflict approach.

In *Why Men Rebel*,<sup>21</sup> Ted Gurr aims to develop a general, psychologically based theory of the magnitude and forms of "political violence," defined as

all collective attacks within a political community against the political regime, its actors—including competing political groups as well as incumbents—or its policies. The concept represents a set of events, a common property of which is the actual or threatened use of violence . . . The concept subsumes revolution . . . It also includes guerilla wars, coups d'état, rebellions, and riots.<sup>22</sup>

Gurr's theory is complex and full of interesting nuances in its full elaboration but is simple enough in essence: Political violence occurs when many people in society become angry, especially if existing cultural and practical conditions provide encouragement for aggression against political targets. And people become angry when there occurs a gap between the valued things and opportunities they feel entitled to and the things and opportunities they actually get—a condition known as "relative deprivation." Gurr offers special models to explain different major forms of political violence. He distinguishes "turmoil," "conspiracy," and "internal war" as the major forms. Revolutions are included in the internal-war category, along with large-scale terrorism, guerrilla wars, and civil wars. What sets internal wars apart from the other forms is that they are more organized than turmoil and more mass-based than conspiracy. Logically, therefore, revo-

lutions are explained as basically due to the occurrence in a society of widespread, intense, and multifaceted relative deprivation that touches both masses and elite aspirants.<sup>23</sup> For if potential leaders and followers alike are intensely frustrated, then both broad participation in, and deliberate organization of, political violence are probable, and the fundamental conditions for internal war are present.

Charles Tilly's *From Mobilization to Revolution*<sup>24</sup> represents, so to speak, a culminating theoretical statement for a political-conflict approach that was born in polemic opposition to frustration-aggression explanations of political violence such as Ted Gurr's. The basic counterarguments are convincing and easily specified. Political-conflict theorists argue that no matter how discontented an aggregate of people may become, they cannot engage in political action (including violence) unless they are part of at least minimally organized groups with access to some resources. Even then, governments or competing groups may successfully repress the will to engage in collective action by making the costs too high to bear. Moreover, political-conflict theorists contend, as Tilly puts it,

that revolutions and collective violence tend to flow directly out of a population's central political processes, instead of expressing diffuse strains and discontents within the population; . . . that the specific claims and counterclaims being made on the existing government by various mobilized groups are more important than the general satisfaction or discontent of those groups, and that claims for established places within the structure of power are crucial.<sup>25</sup>

In fact, Tilly refuses to make violence as such his object of analysis, because he maintains that incidents of collective violence are in actuality only by-products of normal processes of group competition over power and conflicting goals. Instead, the objective of analysis is "collective action," defined as "people's acting together in pursuit of common interests."<sup>26</sup> Tilly analyzes collective action with the aid of two general models, a "polity model" and a "mobilization model."<sup>27</sup> The major elements of the polity model are governments (organizations that control the principal concentrated means of coercion in a population) and groups contending for power, including both members (contenders that have routine, low-cost access to government resources), and challengers (all other contenders). The mobilization model includes variables designed to explain the pattern of collective action engaged in by given contenders. These variables refer to group interests, to degrees of organization, to amounts of resources under collective control, and to the opportunities and threats that given contenders face in their relationships to governments and other contending groups.

Revolution for Tilly is a special case of collective action in which the contenders both (or all) fight for ultimate political sovereignty over a

population, and in which challengers succeed at least to some degree in displacing existing power-holders.<sup>28</sup> Given this conception, the causes of a revolutionary situation of "multiple sovereignty" include the following. The first considerations should be any long-term societal trends that shift resources from some groups in society to others (particularly if those who gain were formerly excluded from the polity). Second, it is important to examine any medium-term occurrences, such as the proliferation of revolutionary ideologies and the increase of popular discontent, that make revolutionary contenders for sovereignty likely to emerge and large elements of the population likely to support their claims. Finally:

The revolutionary moment arrives when previously acquiescent members of . . . [a] 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 to it, provide men for its armies, feed its functionaries, honor its symbols, give time to its service, or yield other resources, despite the prohibition of the still-existing government that they formerly obeyed. Multiple sovereignty has begun.<sup>29</sup>

Successful revolutions, in turn, depend not only upon the emergence of multiple sovereignty. They also probably depend upon "the formation of coalitions between members of the polity and the contenders advancing exclusive alternative claims to control over the government."<sup>30</sup> And they definitely depend upon the "control of substantial force by the revolutionary coalition."<sup>31</sup> For only if these additional conditions hold are the revolutionary challengers likely to be able to defeat and displace existing power-holders.

Whereas Ted Gurr and Charles Tilly analyze revolutions as special types of political events explicable in terms of general theories of political violence or collective action, Chalmers Johnson in *Revolutionary Change*<sup>32</sup> parallels Marx in analyzing revolutions from the perspective of a macro-sociological theory of societal integration and change. Like the study of physiology and pathology, Johnson argues, the "analysis of revolution intermeshes with the analysis of viable, functioning societies."<sup>33</sup> Borrowing his sociological wisdom from the Parsonians, Johnson posits that a normal, crisis-free society should be conceived as a "value-coordinated social system," functionally adapted to the exigencies of its environment. Such a social system is an internally consistent set of institutions that express and specify core societal value-orientations in norms and roles. The value orientations have also been internalized through processes of socialization to serve as the personal moral and reality-defining standards for the vast majority of normal adult members of the society. Moreover, political authority in society must be legitimated in terms of societal values.

Revolutions are both defined and explained by Johnson on the basis of

this value-coordinated social system model. Violence and change are, Johnson says, the distinctive features of revolution: "To make a revolution is to accept violence for the purpose of causing the system to change; more exactly, it is the purposive implementation of a strategy of violence in order to effect a change in social structure."<sup>34</sup> When they succeed, what revolutions change above all are the core value-orientations of a society. And the purposive attempt to do this takes the form of a value-oriented ideological movement that is prepared to use violence against existing authorities. Yet such a movement will not emerge in the first place unless the existing social system comes into crisis. This occurs, according to Johnson, whenever values and environment become seriously "dis-synchronized," due to either external or internal intrusions—especially of new values or technologies. Once dis-synchronization sets in, people in the society become disoriented, and hence open to conversion to the alternative values proposed by a revolutionary movement. As this happens, existing authorities lose their legitimacy and have to rely more and more upon coercion to maintain order. Yet they can do this successfully only for a while. If the authorities are smart, flexible, and skillful, they will implement reforms to "resynchronize" values and environment. But if the authorities are stubbornly "intransigent," then revolution will instead accomplish systemic change violently. This occurs as soon as some "factor contributed by fortune" comes along to undercut the authorities' necessarily tenuous and temporary ability to rely upon coercion.

Superior force may delay the eruption of violence; nevertheless, a division of labor maintained by Cossacks is no longer a community of value-sharers, and in such a situation (e.g., South Africa today [1966]), revolution is endemic and, *ceteris paribus*, an insurrection is inevitable. This fact reveals . . . the necessity of investigating a system's value structure and its problems in order to conceptualize the revolutionary situation in any meaningful way.<sup>35</sup>

Successful revolution finally accomplishes the resynchronization of the social system's values and environment that the incompetent or intransigent old-regime authorities were unable to accomplish. Indeed in Johnson's view, revolution rather than evolutionary change becomes possible and necessary only because the prerevolutionary authorities thus fail and lose their legitimacy. For Johnson's theory of society and social change makes value orientations and political legitimacy the key elements for explaining the emergence of revolutionary situations, the options of existing authorities, and the nature and success of revolutionary forces.

Even from such brief sketches as these, it should be readily apparent that there are enormous disagreements among the major types of social-scientific theories, not only about how to explain revolutions, but even about

how to define them. In this book there is certainly no pretense of neutrality with respect to such disagreements. Quite evidently, the conception of social revolution used here draws heavily upon Marxist emphases on social-structural change and class conflict. And it refuses either to abstract away from issues of structural transformation, as Gurr and Tilly do, or to make societal value reorientation the key to revolutionary social change, as Johnson does. Moreover, in my overall analysis of the causes and outcomes of social revolutions, I shall leave aside explanatory hypotheses about relative deprivation and discontent—essentially because I accept the critiques of such ideas that have been developed by political conflict theorists. I shall also leave aside (for reasons that will become apparent as the argument proceeds) notions of system disequilibrium, delegitimation of authority, and ideological conversion to revolutionary world-views. Instead, for the specific purpose of understanding some of the conflicts involved in social revolutions, I shall rely extensively upon certain ideas adapted from the Marxist and political-conflict perspectives.

The Marxist conception of class relations as rooted in the control of productive property and the appropriation of economic surpluses from direct producers by nonproducers is, in my view, an indispensable theoretical tool for identifying one sort of basic contradiction in society. Class relations are always a potential source of patterned social and political conflict, and class conflicts and changes in class relations actually do figure prominently in successful social-revolutionary transformations. For the cases to be studied in depth in this book—France, Russia, and China—class relations between peasants and landlords need especially to be analyzed. These relations were the site of underlying tensions that influenced the economic and political dynamics of the prerevolutionary Old Regimes, even during periods when overt class conflicts did not erupt. Moreover, during the French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions, peasants *did* directly strike out at the class privileges of landlords, and these class conflicts in the countryside contributed both directly and indirectly to the overall sociopolitical transformations accomplished by the Revolutions. Plainly, therefore, it will be important to understand why and exactly how these overt class conflicts developed during the Revolutions.

For this purpose, class analysis must be supplemented by the ideas of political-conflict theorists. It is one thing to identify underlying, potential tensions rooted in objective class relations understood in a Marxist manner. It is another thing to understand how and when class members find themselves *able* to struggle effectively for their interests. When and how can subordinate classes fight successfully against those who exploit them? And when and how do dominant classes have the capacity for collective political action? For answering such questions, the political-conflict argument that collective action is based upon group organization and access to

resources, often including coercive resources, is especially fruitful. Thus, in the historical case analyses of this book, I shall not only identify classes and their interests. I shall also investigate the presence or absence (and the exact forms) of the organization and resources available to members of classes for waging struggles based upon their interests.

In these specific ways, therefore, I find aspects of two of the existing theoretical approaches relevant to the project of understanding social revolutions. Nevertheless, as has already been suggested, the overriding purpose of this chapter is not to weigh the relative strengths and weaknesses of the various families of theories of revolution. It is rather to take issue with certain conceptions, assumptions, and modes of explanation that they all, despite their evident differences, in fact share.

Three major principles of analysis need to be established as alternatives to features shared by all of the currently prevalent theories of revolution. In the first place, an adequate understanding of social revolutions requires that the analyst take a nonvoluntarist, structural perspective on their causes and processes. But all existing approaches theorize on the basis of a voluntarist image of how revolutions happen. In the second place, social revolutions cannot be explained without systematic reference to *international* structures and world-historical developments. Existing theories, however, focus primarily or exclusively upon *intranational* conflicts and processes of modernization. In the third place, in order to explain the causes and outcomes of social revolutions, it is essential to conceive of states as administrative and coercive organizations—organizations that are potentially autonomous from (though of course conditioned by) socioeconomic interests and structures. But currently prevalent theories of revolution instead either analytically collapse state and society or they reduce political and state actions to representations of socioeconomic forces and interests.

Each of these assertions is of fundamental importance, not only as a critique of the shared shortcomings of existing theories but also as a basis for the analysis of social revolutions in this book as a whole. Each thus deserves systematic elaboration in turn.

#### A STRUCTURAL PERSPECTIVE

If one steps back from the clashes among the leading perspectives on revolution, what seems most striking is the sameness of the image of the overall revolutionary process that underlies and informs all four approaches. According to that shared image: First, changes in social systems or societies give rise to grievances, social disorientation, or new class or group interests and potentials for collective mobilization. Then there develops a purposive, mass-based movement—coalescing with the aid of ideol-

ogy and organization—that consciously undertakes to overthrow the existing government and perhaps the entire social order. Finally, the revolutionary movement fights it out with the authorities or dominant class and, if it wins, undertakes to establish its own authority and program.

Something like this model of the generic revolutionary process as a movement informed or guided by purpose is assumed by all of the theoretical perspectives we have reviewed (with such variations as the distinctive theoretical and methodological features of each perspective require). None of these perspectives ever questions the premise that, for the occurrence of a revolution, a necessary causal condition is the emergence of a deliberate effort—an effort tying together leaders and followers that is aimed at overthrowing the existing political or social order. Thus for Ted Gurr, “the primary causal sequence in political violence is first the development of discontent, second the politicization of that discontent, and finally its actualization in violent action against political objects and actors”.<sup>36</sup> And, as indicated in the above summary of Gurr’s argument, revolutions in particular are actualized only if leaders deliberately organize the expression of mass discontent. Similarly, Chalmers Johnson places emphasis upon widespread personal disorientation followed by conversion to the alternative values put forward by a revolutionary ideological movement that then clashes with the existing authorities. Tilly focuses most of his theoretical attention upon the final phase of the purposive revolutionary process—the clash of organized revolutionaries competing for sovereignty with the government. Yet he also refers to the psychological and ideological causes highlighted by the relative deprivation and systems theorists in order to explain the emergence and popular support of the revolutionary organization. Finally, it is evident that Marxism, too, generally adheres to a version of the premise that revolutions are made by purposive movements. For Marxists see the emergence, albeit through prolonged preparatory struggles, of an organized and self-conscious “class-for-itself”<sup>37</sup> as the necessary intermediate condition for the development of a successful revolutionary transformation out of the contradictions of a mode of production. Moreover, many of the theoretical developments within Marxism since Marx have disproportionately accentuated the most voluntarist elements inherent in Marx’s original theory of revolutions. Of course this was not true of most theorists of the Second International. But a stress on voluntarism has been characteristic of Leninism and Maoism, with their emphasis on the role of the vanguard party in organizing “the will of the proletariat.” And it has also been characteristic of those Western Marxists, such as Lukács and Gramsci, who argue the importance of class consciousness or hegemony for translating objective economic contradictions into actual revolutions.

It is perhaps worth noting that adherence to a purposive image of the



process by which revolutions develop coaxes even theories intended to be social-structural into social-psychological explanations. For, according to the image, revolutionary crises come about only (or primarily) through the appearance of dissatisfied or disoriented people, or groups mobilizable for revolutionary goals. And the destruction and transformation of the old regime happens only because a purposive revolutionary movement has formed to accomplish that end. Consequently, analysts are inexorably encouraged to consider peoples' feelings of dissatisfaction or their consciousness of fundamentally oppositional goals and values as the central problematic issues. Tilly, for example, originally developed his theory of collective action with its emphasis on group social organization and access to resources as a clear-cut alternative to social-psychological theories of political violence. Yet because he defines revolutionary situations in terms of the *special goal*—ultimate sovereignty—for which contenders are fighting, Tilly ends up echoing Johnson's arguments about revolutionary ideological leaderships and Gurr's hypotheses about discontent as an explanation for mass support of revolutionary organizations.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, as neo-Marxists have come to consider class consciousness and party organization to be the key problematic issues about revolutions, they have become less and less interested in exploring questions about the objective, structural conditions for revolutions. Instead, taking for granted the adequacy of Marx's economic analysis of the objective sociohistorical conditions for revolution, they have invested innovative theoretical energy in exploring what are rightly or wrongly considered to be the more politically manipulable subjective conditions for realizing a potential revolution when the objective conditions are present.

What is wrong with the purposive image of how revolutions develop? For one thing, it strongly suggests that societal order rests, either fundamentally or proximately, upon a consensus of the majority (or of the lower classes) that their needs are being met. This image suggests that the ultimate and sufficient condition for revolution is the withdrawal of this consensual support and, conversely, that no regime could survive if the masses were consciously disgruntled. Though of course such ideas could never be completely accepted by Marxists, they can creep in by implication along with emphases on class consciousness or hegemony. Gurr and Johnson, not surprisingly, embrace these notions quite explicitly.<sup>39</sup> And Tilly slides into a version of them when he portrays governments and revolutionary organizations as competitors for popular support, with popular choices determining whether or not a revolutionary situation develops.<sup>40</sup> Yet, surely, any such consensual and voluntaristic conceptions of societal order and disruption or change are quite naive. They are belied in the most obvious fashion by the prolonged survival of such blatantly repressive and domestically illegitimate regimes as the South African.<sup>41</sup>

More important, the purposive image is very misleading about both the causes and the processes of social revolutions that have actually occurred historically. As for causes, no matter what form social revolutions conceivably might take in the future (say in an industrialized, liberal-democratic nation), the fact is that historically no successful social revolution has ever been "made" by a mass-mobilizing, avowedly revolutionary movement. As Jeremy Brecher has aptly put it: "In fact, revolutionary movements rarely begin with a revolutionary intention; this only develops in the course of the struggle itself."<sup>42</sup> True enough, revolutionary organizations and ideologies have helped to cement the solidarity of radical vanguards before and/or during revolutionary crises. And they have greatly facilitated the consolidation of new regimes. But in no sense did such vanguards—let alone vanguards with large, mobilized, and ideologically imbued mass followings—ever create the revolutionary crises they exploited. Instead, as we shall see in later chapters, revolutionary situations have developed due to the emergence of politico-military crises of state and class domination. And only because of the possibilities thus created have revolutionary leaderships and rebellious masses contributed to the accomplishment of revolutionary transformations. Besides, the rebellious masses have quite often acted on their own, without being directly organized or ideologically inspired by avowedly revolutionary leaders and goals. As far as the causes of historical social revolutions go, Wendell Phillips was quite correct when he once declared: "Revolutions are not made; they come."<sup>43</sup>

The purposive image is just as misleading about the processes and outcomes of historical revolutions as it is about their causes. For the image strongly suggests that revolutionary processes and outcomes can be understood in terms of the activity and intentions or interests of the key group(s) who launched the revolution in the first place. Thus, although Gurr does not seem to envision revolutions as much more than acts of sheer destruction, he maintains that this is straightforwardly due to the activity of the frustrated and angry masses and leaders who originally caused the revolution. For Johnson, the violent value-reorientation accomplished by revolution is the doing of the ideological movement that grew up within the old, dis-synchronized social system. And Marxists not infrequently attribute the underlying logic of revolutionary processes to the interests and actions of the historically relevant class-for-itself, either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat.

But such notions are much too simple.<sup>44</sup> In fact, in historical revolutions, differently situated and motivated groups have become participants in complex unfoldings of multiple conflicts. These conflicts have been powerfully shaped and limited by existing socioeconomic and international conditions. And they have proceeded in different ways depending upon how each revolutionary situation emerged in the first place. The logic of

these conflicts has not been controlled by any one class or group, no matter how seemingly central in the revolutionary process. And the revolutionary conflicts have invariably given rise to outcomes neither fully foreseen nor intended by—nor perfectly serving the interests of—any of the particular groups involved. It simply will not do, therefore, to try to decipher the logic of the processes or outcomes of a social revolution by adopting the perspective or following the actions of any one class or elite or organization—no matter how important its participatory role. As Eric Hobsbawm has very neatly put it, “the evident importance of the actors in the drama . . . does not mean that they are also dramatist, producer, and stage-designer.” “Consequently,” Hobsbawm concludes, “theories which overstress the voluntarist or subjective elements in revolution, are to be treated with caution.”<sup>45</sup>

Any valid explanation of revolution depends upon the analyst’s “rising above” the viewpoints of participants to find important regularities across given historical instances—including similar institutional and historical patterns in the situations where revolutions have occurred, and similar patterns of conflict in the processes by which they have developed. As the historian Gordon Wood points out:

It is not that men’s motives are unimportant; they indeed make events, including revolutions. But the purposes of men, especially in a revolution, are so numerous, so varied, and so contradictory that their complex interaction produces results that no one intended or could even foresee. It is this interaction and these results that recent historians are referring to when they speak so disparagingly of these “underlying determinants” and “impersonal and inexorable forces” bringing on the Revolution. Historical explanation which does not account for these “forces,” which, in other words, relies simply on understanding the conscious intentions of the actors, will thus be limited.<sup>46</sup>

To explain social revolutions, one must find problematic, first, the emergence (not “making”) of a revolutionary situation within an old regime. Then, one must be able to identify the objectively conditioned and complex intermeshing of the various actions of the diversely situated groups—an intermeshing that shapes the revolutionary process and gives rise to the new regime. One can begin to make sense of such complexity only by focusing simultaneously upon the institutionally determined situations and relations of groups within society and upon the interrelations of societies within world-historically developing international structures. To take such an impersonal and nonsubjective viewpoint—one that emphasizes patterns of relationships among groups and societies—is to work from what may in some generic sense be called a structural perspective on sociohistorical reality. Such a perspective is essential for the analysis of social revolutions.

## INTERNATIONAL AND WORLD-HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

If a structural perspective means a focus on relationships, this must include transnational relations as well as relations among differently situated groups within given countries. Transnational relations have contributed to the emergence of all social-revolutionary crises and have invariably helped to shape revolutionary struggles and outcomes. All modern social revolutions, in fact, must be seen as closely related in their causes and accomplishments to the internationally uneven spread of capitalist economic development and nation-state formation on a world scale. Unfortunately, existing theories of revolution have not explicitly taken this perspective. To be sure, they have suggested that revolutions are related to “modernization”—but this has entailed an almost exclusive focus on socioeconomic tendencies and conflicts *within* national societies, taken one by one in isolation.

As Reinhard Bendix has pointed out, all conceptions of modernizing processes necessarily take off from the Western European experience, because that is where the commercial-industrial and national revolutions originated.<sup>47</sup> However, the theoretical approaches that have been dominant until recently—structural-functional evolutionism and unilineal Marxism—have generalized too specifically from the apparent logic of English development in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Essentially, modernization has been conceived as a dynamic internal to a nation. Economic development—conceived either as innovation in technology and increasing division of labor, or as accumulation of capital and the rise of the bourgeoisie—is viewed as initiating an interrelated system of complementary changes in other spheres of social life. The assumption has typically been that every nation, perhaps stimulated by the example or influence of earlier-developing countries, would sooner or later undergo a more or less compressed version of the same fundamental kind of transformation apparently experienced by England. As Marx put it in 1867, “The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future.”<sup>48</sup> A century later, American social scientists might express uneasiness about the degree to which concrete historical patterns of national development could be expected to be exactly alike. But virtually all of them still delineated their “ideal type” concepts according to the same logic.<sup>49</sup>

Notions of modernization as an intranational socioeconomic dynamic harmonize nicely with conceptions of revolutions as purposive movements grounded in and facilitating societal development. Perhaps rapid and disjointed economic expansion stimulates and then frustrates mass expectations, giving rise to widespread discontent and political violence that destroys the existing government. Or else social differentiation outruns and

overwhelms the integration of the social system, based upon value consensus. Then, in turn, ideological movements are stimulated that overthrow the existing authorities and reorient societal values. Or possibly the gestation of a new mode of production within the womb of the old provides a base for the rise of a new class, which establishes a new mode of production through revolution. In any case, modernization gives rise to revolution through changing the temper, value commitments, or potential for collective mobilization of people or groups in society. And revolution itself creates conditions for (or at least removes obstacles to) further socioeconomic development.

But conceptions of modernization as an intranational socioeconomic process that occurs in parallel ways from country to country cannot make sense even of the original changes in Europe—much less of the subsequent transformations in the rest of the world. From the start, international relations have intersected with preexisting class and political structures to promote and shape divergent as well as similar changes in various countries. Certainly this has been true of economic developments, commercial and industrial. As capitalism has spread across the globe, transnational flows of trade and investment have affected all countries—though in uneven and often contrasting ways. England's original breakthroughs to capitalist agriculture and industry depended in part upon her strong positions within international markets from the seventeenth century onward. Subsequent national industrializations in the nineteenth century were partially—and variously—shaped by international flows of goods, migrants, and investment capital, and by the attempts of each national state to influence these flows. Moreover, as “peripheral” areas of the globe were incorporated into world economic networks centered on the more industrially advanced countries, their preexisting economic structures and class relations were often reinforced or modified in ways inimical to subsequent self-sustaining and diversified growth. Even if conditions later changed, so that industrialization got under way in some of these areas, the process inevitably proceeded in forms quite different from those characteristic of earlier national industrializations. We need not necessarily accept arguments that national economic developments are actually determined by the overall structure and market dynamics of a “world capitalist system.” We can, however, certainly note that historically developing transnational economic relations have always strongly (and differentially) influenced national economic developments.<sup>50</sup>

Another kind of transnational structure—an international system of competing states—has also shaped the dynamic and uneven course of modern world history. Europe was the site not only of capitalist economic breakthroughs but also of a continental political structure in which no one imperial state controlled the entire territory of Europe and her overseas

conquests (after 1450). Economic interchanges occurred systematically over a wider territory than any one state ever controlled. This meant, for one thing, that the increased wealth that was generated by European geographical expansion and by the development of capitalism never was simply diverted to the maintenance of a cumbersome imperial superstructure sprawling over an entire continent. Such had always been the eventual fate of riches generated in other world-economies encompassed by political empires—such as Rome and China. But the European world-economy was unique in that it developed within a system of competing states.<sup>51</sup> In the words of Walter Dorn:

It is [the] very competitive character of the state system of modern Europe that distinguishes it from the political life of all previous and non-European civilizations of the world. Its essence lies in the coexistence of independent and coordinate states, whose expansionist drive provoked incessant military conflicts . . . and above all the prevention of any single power from reducing the others to a state of permanent subjection.<sup>52</sup>

Especially as England underwent commercialization and the first national industrialization, competition within the European states system spurred modernizing developments throughout Europe.<sup>53</sup> Recurrent warfare within the system of states prompted European monarchs and statesmen to centralize, regiment, and technologically upgrade armies and fiscal administrations. And, from the French Revolution on, such conflicts caused them to mobilize citizen masses with patriotic appeals. Political developments, in turn, reacted to modify patterns of economic development, first through bureaucratic attempts to guide or administer industrialization from above, and ultimately also through the harnessing of mass involvement by revolutionary regimes, as in Soviet Russia.

Moreover, as Europe experienced economic breakthroughs from the sixteenth century on, the competitive dynamism of the European states system promoted the spread of European “civilization” across the entire globe. Initially, the competition of states was one condition facilitating and prompting Iberian colonial expansion into the New World. Later England, spurred by worldwide competition with France, struggled for, and ultimately achieved, formal control or de facto hegemony over virtually the whole of Europe's new colonial acquisitions and former New World holdings. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the competition of more nearly equal European industrial powers contributed to the carving up of Africa and much of Asia into colonial territories. Eventually, in the wake of the massive economic and geopolitical shifts occasioned by World War II, these colonies would emerge as new, formally independent nations within the now global states system. By then even Japan and China, countries that had traditionally remained aloof from the West and had escaped

colonization, would also be fully incorporated into the states system. By preindustrial standards, Japan and China were advanced and powerful agrarian states; and both avoided ultimate or permanent subjugation in large part because Western intrusions set afoot revolutionary upheavals that culminated sooner or later in vastly enhanced powers of national defense and assertion *within* the international states system.

Some theorists of world capitalism, including most notably Immanuel Wallerstein, attempt to explain in economically reductionist terms the structure and dynamics of this (originally European and ultimately global) international states system.<sup>54</sup> In order to do this, such theorists typically assume that individual nation-states are instruments used by economically dominant groups to pursue world-market oriented development at home and international economic advantages abroad. But a different perspective is adopted here, one which holds that nation-states are, more fundamentally, organizations geared to maintain control of home territories and populations and to undertake actual or potential military competition with other states in the international system. The international states system as a transnational structure of military competition was not originally created by capitalism. Throughout modern world history, it represents an analytically autonomous level of transnational reality—*interdependent* in its structure and dynamics with world capitalism, but *not* reducible to it.<sup>55</sup> The militarily relevant strengths and international advantages (or disadvantages) of states are not entirely explicable in terms of their domestic economies or international economic positions. Such factors as state administrative efficiency, political capacities for mass mobilization, and international geographical position are also relevant.<sup>56</sup> In addition, the will and capacity of states to undertake national economic transformations (which may also have international ramifications) are influenced by their military situations and their preexisting, militarily relevant administrative and political capacities.<sup>57</sup> Just as capitalist economic development has spurred transformations of states and of the international state system, so have these “acted back” upon the course and forms of capital accumulation within nations and on a world scale.

Right from the European beginnings, therefore, modernization has always meant national developments only within the contexts of historically developing transnational structures, both economic and military. The social analyst can make sense of transformations at the national level, including social revolutions, only through a kind of conceptual juggling act. As long as nation-states and their competition remain important realities, it is best (at least for analyzing phenomena that centrally involve states) to employ the state/society as the basic unit of analysis. Yet along with variables referring to patterns and processes internal to these units, transnational factors must also be taken into consideration as key contextual

variables.<sup>58</sup> Two different sorts of transnational contexts are relevant. On the one hand, there are the *structures* of the world capitalist economy and the international states system, within which individual nations are situated in different positions. And, on the other hand, there are changes and transmissions in “world time,” which affect both the overall world contexts within which revolutions occur and the particular models and options for action that can be borrowed from abroad by revolutionary leaderships.

The involvement within transnational structures of countries (actually or potentially) undergoing social revolutions is relevant in several ways. Historically, unequal or competitive transnational relations have helped to shape any given country's state and class structures, thus influencing the existing “domestic” context from which revolution emerges (or not). Furthermore, transnational relations influence the course of events during actual revolutionary conjunctures. Modern social revolutions have happened only in countries situated in disadvantaged positions within international arenas. In particular, the realities of military backwardness or political dependency have crucially affected the occurrence and course of social revolutions. Although uneven economic development always lies in the background, developments within the international states system as such—especially defeats in wars or threats of invasion and struggles over colonial controls—have directly contributed to virtually all outbreaks of revolutionary crises. For such developments have helped to undermine existing political authorities and state controls, thus opening the way for basic conflicts and structural transformations. International military balances and conflicts have, moreover, provided the “space” necessary for the completion and political consolidation of social revolutions. This is true because such balances and conflicts have divided the efforts or diverted the attention of foreign enemies interested in preventing revolutionary successes or in taking advantage of revolutionized nations during their periods of internal crisis. In the final analysis, too, the outcomes of social revolutions have always been powerfully conditioned not only by international politics but also by the world-economic constraints and opportunities faced by emergent new regimes.

As for the dimension of “world time,” some aspects of “modernization” have been unique processes affecting the world as a whole.<sup>59</sup> With state/societies as the units of analysis, limited generalizations about similar, recurrent national developments can be formulated. But, even as this is done, attention should be paid to the effects of historical orderings and of world-historical changes. Possibilities relevant to comparing and explaining social revolutions come quickly to mind. One possibility is that actors in later revolutions may be influenced by developments in earlier ones; for example, the Chinese Communists became conscious emulators of the Bol-

sheviks and received, for a time, direct advice and aid from the Russian revolutionary regime. Another possibility is that crucial world-historically significant "breakthroughs"—such as the Industrial Revolution or the innovation of the Leninist form of party organization—may intervene between the occurrence of one broadly similar revolution and another. As a result new opportunities or necessities are created for the development of the latter revolution that were not open to, or pressed upon, the former, because it occurred at an earlier phase of modern world history.

A concluding point is relevant for both sorts of transnational contextual influences. In analyzing the domestic effects of transnational relations, one should never simply assume—as current theorists of revolution almost invariably seem to do—that any such effects will influence primarily the situation, wants, and ideas of "the people." This may, of course, happen (as, for example, with shifts in international trade patterns that suddenly throw the people of an entire industry out of work). But, actually, it is state rulers, necessarily oriented to acting within international arenas, who are equally or more likely to be the ones who transmit transnational influences into domestic politics. Thus the intersection of the old (governmental) regime and, later, of the emergent revolutionary regime with international arenas—and especially with the international states system—should be a most promising place to look in order to comprehend how epochal modernizing dynamics in part cause and shape revolutionary transformations.

No valid theoretical perspective on revolutions can afford to ignore the international and world-historical contexts within which revolutions occur. If, for the most part, theories of revolutions have so far tried to ignore these contexts, it has been because they have operated with inadequate intranationally focused ideas about the nature of "modernization" and its interrelations with revolutions. As a corrective, this section has briefly highlighted the transnational aspects of modernization and has suggested ways in which these aspects are relevant to analyzing revolutions—with special emphasis upon the importance of the international states system. This emphasis, in effect, foreshadows arguments to be made in the next section about the centrality of potentially autonomous state organizations in social-revolutionary transformations.

#### THE POTENTIAL AUTONOMY OF THE STATE

Virtually everyone who writes about social revolutions recognizes that they begin with overtly political crises—such as the financial imbroglio of the French monarchy and the calling of the Estates-General in 1787–9. It is likewise apparent to everyone that revolutions proceed through struggles in which organized political parties and factions are prominently involved.

And it is recognized that they culminate in the consolidation of new state organizations, whose power may be used not only to reinforce socioeconomic transformations that have already occurred but also to promote further changes. No one denies the reality of these political aspects of social revolutions. Nevertheless, most theorists of revolution tend to regard the political crises that launch revolutions either as incidental triggers or as little more than epiphenomenal indicators of more fundamental contradictions or strains located in the social structure of the old regime. Similarly, the political groups involved in social-revolutionary struggles are seen as representatives of social forces. And the structure and activities of the new state organizations that arise from social revolutions are treated as expressions of the interests of whatever socioeconomic or sociocultural force was deemed victorious in the revolutionary conflicts.

An assumption that always lies, if only implicitly, behind such reasoning is that political structures and struggles can somehow be reduced (at least "in the last instance") to socioeconomic forces and conflicts. The state is viewed as nothing but *an arena* in which conflicts over basic social and economic interests are fought out. What makes the state-as-political-arena special is simply that actors operating within it resort to distinctive means for waging social and economic conflicts—means such as coercion or slogans appealing to the public good. This general way of thinking about the state is, in fact, common to both liberal and Marxist varieties of social theory. Between these two broad traditions of social theory, the crucial difference of opinion is over which means the political arena distinctively embodies: fundamentally consensually based legitimate authority, or fundamentally coercive domination. And this difference parallels the different views about the bases of societal order held by each theoretical tradition.

One ideal-typical view is that the state is the arena of legitimate authority embodied in the rules of the political game and in governmental leadership and policies. These are supported by some combination of normative consensus and majority preference of the members of society. Of course this view resonates well with liberal, pluralist visions of society, which see it as being composed of freely competing groups and members socialized into a commitment to common societal values. In the theoretical literature on revolutions, one finds versions of these ideas about state and society especially in the arguments of the relative-deprivation theorist Ted Gurr and the systems theorist Chalmers Johnson. For them, what matters in explaining the outbreak of a revolution is whether the existing governmental authorities lose their legitimacy. This happens when socially discontented or disoriented masses come to feel that it is acceptable to engage in violence, or else become converted to new values wielded by revolutionary ideologists. Both Gurr and Johnson feel that governmental power and stability depend directly upon societal trends and popular support. Neither

believes that state coercive organizations can effectively repress (for long) discontented or disapproving majorities of people in society.<sup>60</sup> The state in their theories is an aspect of either utilitarian consensus (Gurr) or value consensus (Johnson) in society. The state can wield force in the name of popular consensus and legitimacy, but it is not fundamentally founded in organized coercion.

In contrast, Marxist theorists—and to a considerable degree the political-conflict theorist Charles Tilly, as well—do see the state as basically organized coercion. An important part of Tilly's polity model, recall, is a government defined as "an organization which controls the principal concentrated means of coercion within the population."<sup>61</sup> Similarly, Lenin, the foremost Marxist theorist of the political aspect of revolutions, declares: "A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power. But how can it be otherwise?"<sup>62</sup> Neither Lenin nor (for the most part) Tilly<sup>63</sup> see state coercion as dependent for its effectiveness upon value consensus or popular contentment. And both are quite aware that states can repress popular forces and revolutionary movements. Not surprisingly, therefore, in accounting for revolutionary success, both Tilly and Lenin place emphasis on the breakdown of the old regime's monopoly of coercion and the buildup of armed forces by revolutionaries.

It remains true, however, that Marxists and political-conflict theorists like Tilly are as guilty as Gurr and Johnson of treating the state primarily as an arena in which social conflicts are resolved, though of course they see resolution through domination rather than voluntary consensus. For, in one way or another, both Marxists and Tilly regard the state as a system of organized coercion that invariably functions to support the superordinant position of dominant classes or groups over subordinate classes or groups.

In Tilly's collective-action theory, state and society seem to be literally collapsed. Tilly labels and discusses intergroup relations in political terms; he talks not about classes or social groups, but about "member" groups and alliances that have power in the polity, and those "challenger" groups that are excluded from it. His very definition of member groups—"any contender which has routine, low-cost access to resources controlled by the government"<sup>64</sup>—strongly suggests a virtually complete overlap between dominant-group power and the power of the state. The state becomes a (fundamentally coercive) instrument wielded by the "member" groups of the polity, those that have power within the population in question.

Classical Marxist theorists do not analytically collapse state and society. Marxists view societal order as founded upon class conflict and domination. State power is a specialized kind of power in society, not equivalent to or encompassing all dominant class power. Nevertheless, Marxist theorists still explain the basic function of the state in social terms: Whatever

the variations in its historical forms, the state as such is seen as a feature of all class-divided modes of production; and, invariably, the one necessary and inescapable function of the state—by definition—is to contain class conflict and to undertake other policies in support of the dominance of the surplus-appropriating and property-owning class(es).<sup>65</sup>

Thus, neither in classical Marxism nor in Tilly's collective-action theory is the state treated as an autonomous structure—a structure with a logic and interests of its own not necessarily equivalent to, or fused with, the interests of the dominant class in society or the full set of member groups in the polity. Within the terms of these theories, it is consequently virtually impossible even to raise the possibility that fundamental conflicts of interest might arise between the existing dominant class or set of groups, on the one hand, and the state rulers on the other. Society is characterized by intergroup domination and power struggles. And the state, based upon concentrated means of coercion, fits in as a form of instrumental or objective domination and as an object of struggle, but not as an organization-for-itself.

Yet what about the more recent developments in Marxism? Lately there has certainly been a renewed interest among Marxist-oriented intellectuals in the problem of the state.<sup>66</sup> In critical reaction to what had become a widespread vulgarization—the notion that states were nothing but instruments manipulated consciously and directly by leaders and interest groups representing the dominant class—contemporary analysts such as Ralph Miliband,<sup>67</sup> Nicos Poulantzas,<sup>68</sup> Perry Anderson,<sup>69</sup> Göran Therborn,<sup>70</sup> and Claus Offe<sup>71</sup> have raised the issue of "the relative autonomy of the state" from direct control by the dominant class. Interest in this possibility has been focused especially upon capitalist societies, but also upon the absolutist phase of European feudalism. Theoretical attention has been devoted to elucidating the broad structural constraints that an existing mode of production places upon the range of possibilities for state structures and actions. And, in a more innovative vein, the argument has been developed that state rulers may have to be free of control by specific dominant-class groups and personnel if they are to be able to implement policies that serve the fundamental interest of an entire dominant class. That interest is, of course, its need to preserve the class structure and mode of production as a whole.

Recurrently as this recent debate has unfolded, certain participants—especially those most concerned with understanding how states could act against dominant-class resistance to preserve an existing mode of production—have seemed on the verge of asserting that states are potentially autonomous not only over against dominant classes but also vis-à-vis entire class structures or modes of production.<sup>72</sup> However, this possible line of argument has been for the most part carefully avoided.<sup>73</sup> Instead, some

analysts, such as Claus Offe, have simply hypothesized that although state structures and policies are causally important in their own right, they objectively function because of in-built "selection mechanisms," to preserve the existing mode of production.<sup>74</sup> Others, especially the so-called structuralist Marxists, have replaced the discredited dominant-class instrumentalism with what might be labeled a class-struggle reductionism.<sup>75</sup> According to this view, state structures and functions are not simply controlled by dominant classes alone. Rather they are shaped and buffeted by the class struggle between dominant and subordinate classes—a struggle that goes on within the objective limits of the given economy and class structure as a whole. Finally, a very recent contribution to the debate has been made by Göran Therborn in a new book that focuses directly on state structures as such. Working in a related yet somewhat different vein from the class-struggle theorists, Therborn constructs and contrasts typological models of the different forms and functions of state organizations and activities in the feudal, capitalist, and socialist modes of production, respectively. He attempts for each mode to derive the state structure directly from the corresponding basic class relations. For, along with the "structuralist" theorist Nicos Poulantzas, Therborn maintains that "the state should be regarded neither as a specific institution nor as an instrument, but as a relation—a materialized concentration of the class relations of a given society."<sup>76</sup>

Thus the recent Marxist debate on the state stops short at the problem of the autonomy of the state, since most participants in the debate tend either to treat the state in a completely functionalist manner, or to regard it as an aspect of class relations or struggle. It is unquestionably an advance to establish (or reestablish, since this surely was the classical Marxist position) that states are not simply created and manipulated by dominant classes. Nevertheless, it is still essential for Marxists to face more directly the questions of what states are in their own right, and how their structures vary and their activities develop in relation to socioeconomic structures. So far, virtually all Marxists continue simply to assume that state forms and activities vary in correspondence with modes of production, and that state rulers cannot possibly act against the basic interests of a dominant class. Arguments remain confined to issues of *how* states vary with, and function for, modes of production and dominant classes. The result is that still hardly anyone questions this Marxist version of the enduring sociological proclivity to absorb the state into society.

Question this enduring sociological proclivity we must, however, if we are to be well prepared to analyze social revolutions. At first glance, a social-structural determinist perspective (especially one that embodies a mode of class analysis) seems an obviously fruitful approach. This seems to be the case because social revolutions do, after all, centrally involve

class struggles and result in basic social-structural transformations. Nevertheless, the historical realities of social revolutions insistently suggest the need for a more state-centered approach. As the core chapters of this book will elaborate, the political crises that have launched social revolutions have not at all been epiphenomenal reflections of societal strains or class contradictions. Rather they have been direct expressions of contradictions centered in the structures of old-regime states. The political-conflict groups that have figured in social-revolutionary struggles have not merely represented social interests and forces. Rather they have formed as interest groups within and fought about the forms of state structures. The vanguard parties that have emerged during the radical phases of social revolutions have been uniquely responsible for building centralized armies and administrations without which revolutionary transformations could not have been consolidated. Social revolutions, moreover, have changed state structures as much or more as they have changed class relations, societal values, and social institutions. And, the effects of social revolutions upon the subsequent economic and sociopolitical development of the nations that they have transformed have been due not only to the changes in class structures, but also to the changes in state structures and functions that the revolutions accomplished. In sum, the class upheavals and socioeconomic transformations that have characterized social revolutions have been closely intertwined with the collapse of the state organizations of the old regimes and with the consolidation and functioning of the state organizations of the new regimes.

We can make sense of social-revolutionary transformations only if we take the state seriously as a macro-structure. The state properly conceived is no mere arena in which socioeconomic struggles are fought out. It is, rather, a set of administrative, policing, and military organizations headed, and more or less well coordinated by, an executive authority. Any state first and fundamentally extracts resources from society and deploys these to create and support coercive and administrative organizations.<sup>77</sup> Of course, these basic state organizations are built up and must operate within the context of class-divided socioeconomic relations, as well as within the context of national and international economic dynamics. Moreover, coercive and administrative organizations are only parts of overall political systems. These systems also may contain institutions through which social interests are represented in state policymaking as well as institutions through which nonstate actors are mobilized to participate in policy implementation. Nevertheless, the administrative and coercive organizations are the basis of state power as such.

Where they exist, these fundamental state organizations are at least potentially autonomous from direct dominant-class control. The extent to which they *actually* are autonomous, and to what effect, varies from case

to case. It is worth emphasizing that the actual extent and consequences of state autonomy can only be analyzed and explained in terms specific to particular types of sociopolitical systems and to particular sets of historical international circumstances. That is why the introduction to Chapter 2 will include a discussion of the institutional forms of state power in agrarian states such as prerevolutionary France, Russia, and China. Also, the likely lines of conflict between landed dominant classes and state rulers in such agrarian states will be indicated. There is no need to go into this discussion now. For the purposes of the argument at hand, it is enough to note that states are potentially autonomous and to explore what distinct interests they *might* pursue.

State organizations necessarily compete to some extent with the dominant class(es) in appropriating resources from the economy and society. And the objectives to which the resources, once appropriated, are devoted may very well be at variance with existing dominant-class interests. Resources may be used to strengthen the bulk and autonomy of the state itself—something necessarily threatening to the dominant class unless the greater state power is indispensably needed and actually used to support dominant-class interests. But the use of state power to support dominant-class interests is not inevitable. Indeed, attempts of state rulers merely to perform the state's "own" functions may create conflicts of interest with the dominant class. The state normally performs two basic sets of tasks: It maintains order, and it competes with other actual or potential states. As Marxists have pointed out, states usually do function to preserve existing economic and class structures, for that is normally the smoothest way to enforce order. Nevertheless, the state has its own distinct interests vis-à-vis subordinate classes. Although both the state and the dominant class(es) share a broad interest in keeping the subordinate classes in place in society and at work in the existing economy, the state's own fundamental interest in maintaining sheer physical order and political peace may lead it—especially in periods of crisis—to enforce concessions to subordinate-class demands. These concessions may be at the expense of the interests of the dominant class, but not contrary to the state's own interests in controlling the population and collecting taxes and military recruits.

Moreover, we should not forget that states also always exist in determinant geopolitical environments, in interaction with other actual or potential states. An existing economy and class structure condition and influence a given state structure and the activities of the rulers. So, too, do geopolitical environments create tasks and opportunities for states and place limits on their capacities to cope with either external or internal tasks or crises. As the German historian Otto Hintze once wrote, two phenomena above all condition "the real organization of the state. These are, first, the structure of social classes, and second, the external ordering of the states—their position

relative to each other, and their over-all position in the world."<sup>78</sup> Indeed, a state's involvement in an international network of states is a basis for potential autonomy of action over and against groups and economic arrangements within its jurisdiction—even including the dominant class and existing relations of production. For international military pressures and opportunities can prompt state rulers to attempt policies that conflict with, and even in extreme instances contradict, the fundamental interests of a dominant class. State rulers may, for example, undertake military adventures abroad that drain resources from economic development at home, or that have the immediate or ultimate effect of undermining the position of dominant socioeconomic interests. And, to give a different example, rulers may respond to foreign military competition or threats of conquest by attempting to impose fundamental socioeconomic reforms or by trying to reorient the course of national economic development through state intervention. Such programs may or may not be successfully implemented. But even if they are not carried through, the sheer attempt may create a contradictory clash of interests between the state and the existing dominant class.

The perspective on the state advanced here might appropriately be labeled "organizational" and "realist." In contrast to most (especially recent) Marxist theories, this view refuses to treat states as if they were mere analytic aspects of abstractly conceived modes of production, or even political aspects of concrete class relations and struggles. Rather it insists that states are actual organizations controlling (or attempting to control) territories and people. Thus the analyst of revolutions must explore not only class relations but also relations of states to one another and relations of states to dominant and subordinate classes. For the historical cases of social revolutions to be discussed in the core chapters of this book, the analysis of old-regime contradictions and the emergence of revolutionary crises will center especially upon the relationships of states to military competitors abroad and to dominant classes and existing socioeconomic structures at home. And the analysis of the emergence and structure of new regimes will focus especially on the relationships of state-building revolutionary movements to international circumstances and to those subordinate classes, invariably including the peasantry, who were key insurrectionary participants in the conflicts of the revolutions. The state organizations of both old and new regimes will have a more central and autonomous place in the analysis than they would in a straightforward Marxist explanation.

Yet not only does an organizational, realist perspective on the state entail differences from Marxist approaches, it also contrasts with non-Marxist approaches that treat the *legitimacy* of political authorities as an important explanatory concept. If state organizations cope with whatever tasks they already claim smoothly and efficiently, legitimacy—either in the



sense of moral approval or in the probably much more usual sense of sheer acceptance of the status quo—will probably be accorded to the state's form and rulers by most groups in society. In any event, what matters most is always the support or acquiescence not of the popular majority of society but of the politically powerful and mobilized groups, invariably including the regime's own cadres. Loss of legitimacy, especially among these crucial groups, tends to ensue with a vengeance if and when (for reasons that are always open to sociological and historical explanation) the state fails consistently to cope with existing tasks, or proves unable to cope with new tasks suddenly thrust upon it by crisis circumstances. Even after great loss of legitimacy has occurred, a state can remain quite stable—and certainly invulnerable to internal mass-based revolts—especially if its coercive organizations remain coherent and effective.<sup>79</sup> Consequently, the structure of those organizations, their place within the state apparatus as a whole, and their linkages to class forces and to politically mobilized groups in society are all important issues for the analyst of states in revolutionary situations, actual or potential. Such an analytic focus seems certain to prove more fruitful than any focus primarily or exclusively upon political legitimation. The ebbing of a regime's legitimacy in the eyes of its own cadres and other politically powerful groups may figure as a mediating variable in an analysis of regime breakdown. But the basic causes will be found in the structure and capacities of state organizations, as these are conditioned by developments in the economy and class structure and also by developments in the international situation.

The state, in short, is fundamentally Janus-faced, with an intrinsically dual anchorage in class-divided socioeconomic structures and an international system of states. If our aim is to understand the breakdown and building-up of state organizations in revolutions, we must look not only at the activities of social groups. We must also focus upon the points of intersection between international conditions and pressures, on the one hand, and class-structured economies and politically organized interests, on the other hand. State executives and their followers will be found maneuvering to extract resources and build administrative and coercive organizations precisely at this intersection. Here, consequently, is the place to look for the political contradictions that help launch social revolutions. Here, also, will be found the forces that shape the rebuilding of state organizations within social-revolutionary crises.

In the part of the chapter just completed, three principles of analysis shared by existing theories of revolution have been critically discussed. And alternative theoretical principles have been proposed in their stead. In fact, all of the shared tendencies for which the existing theories have been taken to task are closely interrelated: A purposive image of the causes of

social revolutions complements an intranational perspective on modernization. And each is most readily consistent with a socioeconomic reductionist understanding of the state. Not surprisingly, therefore, the alternative principles being proposed here are also mutually complementary. We shall analyze the causes and processes of social revolutions from a nonvoluntarist, structural perspective, attending to international and world-historical, as well as intranational, structures and processes. And an important theoretical concomitant will be to move states—understood as potentially autonomous organizations located at the interface of class structures and international situations—to the very center of attention.

The next part discusses the method of analysis that is appropriate to the task of explaining social revolutions.

#### A COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL METHOD

“Social revolutions” as defined at the beginning of this work—rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures, accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below—have been relatively rare occurrences in modern world history. Each such revolution, furthermore, has occurred in a particular way in a unique set of social-structural and international circumstances. How, then can a sociologist hope to develop historically valid explanations of social revolution as such?

The study of social revolutions in their own right has been avoided in recent American social science because scholars believe that only phenomena of which there are a large number of cases can be studied in a truly scientific manner. There has been a self-conscious reaction against the “natural history” approach to revolutions favored by an earlier generation of American social scientists. The “natural historians,” chiefly Lyford Edwards, Crane Brinton, and George Pettee, examined handfuls of cases in an attempt to develop generalizations about the typical process of revolution.<sup>80</sup> Spurning this approach as too “historical,” later students of revolution sought, instead, to theorize only about large numbers of cases. Thus, in the introduction to a 1964 book entitled *Internal War*, Harry Eckstein defines “a theoretical subject” as “a set of phenomena about which one can develop informative, testable generalizations that hold for all instances of the subject, and some of which apply to those instances alone,”<sup>81</sup> and he goes on to assert that whereas “a statement about two or three cases is certainly a generalization in the dictionary sense, a generalization in the methodological sense must usually be based on more; it ought to cover a number of cases large enough for certain rigorous testing procedures like statistical analysis to be used.”<sup>82</sup> Many other contemporary students of revolution agree with Eckstein. Consequently, the favored strategies for

explaining revolutions have been premised upon subsuming them within much broader categories. These include structure–functionalist social-system categories (e.g., Chalmers Johnson) and categories such as “political violence” (e.g., Ted Gurr) or “collective action” (e.g., Charles Tilly) that refer to aspects shared by many types of political events.<sup>83</sup>

It is not that contemporary analysts of revolution-subsuming phenomena see their theories as irrelevant to social revolutions. They believe, of course, that their general theories should be “applied” to instances of revolution by historians or by social scientists who do analyses of single cases. In a sense, theories such as those of Johnson, Gurr, and Tilly certainly are applicable to individual cases of social revolution: One can find relative deprivation, multiple sovereignty, and system disequilibria and value-oriented ideological movements in any and all instances of social revolution. Historians or case analysts thus could, in principle, use any or all of these ideas in a discussion of a given revolution. Indeed, because the contemporary social-scientific theories are framed in such general conceptual terms, it is very difficult to tell if they ever *do not* apply to a given case. What society, for example, lacks widespread relative deprivation of one sort or another? And how do we tell a synchronized social system when we see one? Ironically, theoretical approaches that set out to avoid the pitfalls of a too-historical approach to revolutions can end up providing little more than pointers toward various factors that case analysts might want to take into account, with no valid way to favor certain explanations over others.

Marxist theory works with less general, more historically grounded categories than the recent social-scientific theories, and it offers a more elegant and complete explanation of social-revolutionary transformations as such (rather than, say, political violence in general). It is thus no accident that Marxism has been the social-scientific theory most consistently and fruitfully used by historians to elucidate various particular revolutions.<sup>84</sup> Yet the interaction between Marxist theory and history is incomplete because historical cases have not been used to test and modify the explanations offered by the theory. Marxist analysts have devoted themselves to highlighting the class conflicts and changes in class relations that certainly do occur during revolutions. But they have not devised ways to test whether these factors really distinguish between revolutions and other kinds of transformations or between successful and abortive revolutionary outbreaks. Perhaps especially because the factors that they consider are indeed an important part of the story, Marxists have failed to notice a crucial point: Causal variables referring to the strength and structure of old-regime states and the relations of state organizations to class structures may discriminate between cases of successful revolution and cases of failure or nonoccurrence far better than do variables referring to class

relations and patterns of economic development alone. Similarly, in their explanations of the outcomes of revolutions, Marxist-oriented scholars emphasize changes in class structures and even very long-run economic developments. But they virtually ignore the often much more striking and immediate transformations that occur in the structure and functions of state organizations such as armies and administrations, and in the relations between the state and social classes. Again, this has meant that they have missed identifying the distinctive political-institutional changes that set revolutions apart from nonrevolutionary patterns of national development.

A gap of one sort or another between theory and history thus plagues both Marxist scholarship and recent academic social-science theories about revolution. Historians, especially, note the existence of this gap from time to time. Some of them complain about the vagueness of recent social-scientific theories of revolution.<sup>85</sup> Others polemically assert the inappropriateness of Marxist concepts or explanations for whatever case they are concerned to analyze.<sup>86</sup> Unfortunately, disillusioned historians sometimes conclude that their discipline should avoid social-scientific theories altogether.<sup>87</sup> They advocate instead analyzing revolutions case by case, each in its own analytic terms, or else each in terms of the language of the actors at that time and place. In practice, no such relativist approaches are really possible, for historians must always draw, at least implicitly, upon theoretical ideas and comparative points of reference.<sup>88</sup> But a hiatus of communication between historians and area specialists, on the one hand, and social theorists, on the other, *is* always possible. To the extent that such a hiatus exists, as it always does to some degree, it only encourages, simultaneously, the proliferation of putatively general theories of (or about) revolution that do not actually illuminate historical revolutions and an increase of specialists’ accounts of particular cases that are not self-consciously informed by more general principles of analysis and explanation. The way to counter such a split, however, is not to deplore it from a vantage point above the fray. Rather, the only effective antidote is the actual development of explanations of revolutions that illuminate truly general patterns of causes and outcomes, without either ignoring or totally abstracting away from the aspects particular to each revolution and its context.

Fortunately, a method is available to aid in the development of such explanations of revolutions, at once generalizable across cases and historically sensitive. Social revolutions as such *can* be treated as a theoretical subject; there is no inescapable requirement to formulate explanatory hypotheses only about categories with large numbers of cases. Nor need theorists content themselves only with applying general concepts to particular cases. To generalize about social revolutions, to develop explanations of their causes and outcomes, one can employ comparative historical analysis with selected slices of national historical trajectories as the units of

comparison. "Comparative history" is commonly used rather loosely to refer to any and all studies in which two or more historical trajectories of nation-states, institutional complexes, or civilizations are juxtaposed. In this very broad sense, the term refers to studies with very different kinds of purposes. Some comparative histories, such as *The Rebellious Century 1830–1930* by Charles, Louise, and Richard Tilly, are meant to show that a particular general sociological model holds across different national contexts.<sup>89</sup> Other studies, such as Reinhard Bendix's *Nation-building and Citizenship* and Perry Anderson's *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, use comparisons primarily to bring out contrasts among nations or civilizations taken as synthetic wholes.<sup>90</sup> But there is still a third version of comparative history—which I am here labeling the method of comparative historical analysis—in which the overriding intent is to develop, test, and refine causal, explanatory hypotheses about events or structures integral to macro-units such as nation-states.

Comparative historical analysis has a long and distinguished pedigree in social science. Its logic was explicitly laid out by John Stuart Mill in his *A System of Logic*.<sup>91</sup> The method was applied to powerful effect by such classical social and historical analysts as Alexis de Tocqueville and Marc Bloch.<sup>92</sup> And it continues to be elaborated and applied by contemporary scholars, including (perhaps most notably) Barrington Moore, Jr., in *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*.<sup>93</sup> Comparative historical analysis is distinctively appropriate for developing explanations of macro-historical phenomena of which there are inherently only a few cases. This is in contrast to more plentiful and manipulable kinds of phenomena suitable for experimental investigations, and in contrast to other phenomena where there are the large numbers of cases required for statistical analyses. Comparative historical analysis is, in fact, the mode of multivariate analysis to which one resorts when there are too many variables and not enough cases.

Logically speaking, how does comparative historical analysis work? Basically one tries to establish valid associations of potential causes with the given phenomenon one is trying to explain. There are two main ways to proceed. First, one can try to establish that several cases having in common the phenomenon one is trying to explain also have in common a set of causal factors, although they vary in other ways that might have seemed causally relevant. This approach is what Mill called the "Method of Agreement." Second, one can contrast the cases in which the phenomenon to be explained and the hypothesized causes are present to other cases in which the phenomenon and the causes are both absent, but which are otherwise as similar as possible to the positive cases. This procedure Mill labeled the "Method of Difference." Taken alone, it is a more powerful method than the Method of Agreement alone for establishing valid causal associations

(provided that one can find suitable negative cases for the required contrasts). In practice, though, it is often possible, and certainly desirable, to combine these two comparative logics. This is done by using at once several positive cases along with suitable negative cases as contrasts.

That will be the approach of this book. France, Russia, and China will serve as three positive cases of successful social revolution, and I shall argue that these cases reveal similar causal patterns despite their many other differences. In addition, I shall invoke negative cases for the purpose of validating various particular parts of the causal argument. In so doing, I shall always construct contrasts that maximize the similarities of the negative case(s) to the positive case(s) in every apparently relevant respect except the causal sequence that the contrast is supposed to validate. Thus, for example, the abortive Russian Revolution of 1905 will be contrasted to the successful Revolution of 1917 in order to validate arguments about the crucial contribution to social-revolutionary success in Russia of war-related processes that led to the breakdown of state repressive capacities. Moreover, selected aspects of English, Japanese, and German history will be used in various places to strengthen arguments about the causes of revolutionary political crises and peasant revolts in France, Russia, and China. These cases are suitable as contrasts because they were comparable countries that underwent non-social-revolutionary political crises and transformations in broadly similar times and circumstances to France, Russia, and China.

At first glance, comparative historical analysis may not seem so very different from the approach of the "natural historians" Lyford Edwards, Crane Brinton, and George Pettee. They, too, analyzed and compared a few historical cases in depth. Actually, however, comparative-historical and natural-history approaches to revolutions differ both in objective and in method of analysis. Whereas the goal of comparative historical analysis is to establish causes of revolutions, the natural historians sought to describe the characteristic cycle, or sequence of stages, that should typically occur in the processes of revolutions. As Robert Park put it in his introduction to Lyford Edwards's *The Natural History of Revolutions*,

Every social change that is capable of description in conceptual terms will have . . . its characteristic cycle. This is one of the presuppositions upon which this study is based. As a matter of scientific method, this description of the cycle seems to be the first step in the analysis of social change everywhere.<sup>94</sup>

Methodologically, the natural historians analyzed revolutions by trying to fit either parts of various cases (e.g., Edwards) or a few entire cases (e.g., Brinton) to metaphors that seemed to best describe their shared stages of development, hence the sequence putatively "natural" to revolutions. Brinton, for example, explicitly employed a metaphor of disease that had also been used implicitly by Edwards:

We shall regard revolutions as a kind of fever . . . In the society during the generation or so before the outbreak of revolution . . . there will be found signs of the coming disturbance . . . They are . . . [well] described as *prodromal* signs, indications to the very keen diagnostician that a disease is on its way, but not yet sufficiently developed to be the disease. Then comes a time when the full symptoms disclose themselves, and when we can say the fever of revolution has begun. This works up, not regularly but with advances and retreats, to a crisis, frequently accompanied by delirium, the rule of the most violent revolutionists, the Reign of Terror. After the crisis comes a period of convalescence, usually marked by a relapse or two. Finally the fever is over, and the patient is himself again, perhaps in some respects actually strengthened by the experience, immunized at least for a while from a similar attack, but certainly not wholly made over . . .<sup>95</sup>

To be sure, the natural historians also offered, at least implicitly, some theoretical hypotheses about the causes of revolution. These were primarily social-psychological, and—the significant point for our purposes—little attempt was made to use comparisons of historical cases to validate them. Instead, the theoretical hypotheses were simply applied to the analysis as a whole, and the historical materials used primarily to illustrate the metaphorical stage sequence. The resulting natural-history analyses were certainly not without value—indeed, they offer many insights into revolutionary processes and can still be read with profit today—but they were very different from a comparative historical analysis. Such an analysis uses comparisons among positive cases, and between positive and negative cases, to identify and validate causes, rather than descriptions, of revolutions. Moreover, a comparative historical analysis does not in any way assume or attempt to argue that revolutionary processes should appear descriptively similar in their concrete trajectories from case to case. For analytically similar sets of causes can be operative across cases even if the nature and timing of conflicts during the revolutions are different, and even if, for example, one case culminates in a conservative reaction, whereas another does not (at all or in the same way). In a comparative historical analysis, such differences are not obstacles to the identification of similar causes across cases of revolution. At the same time, they represent variations that can themselves be explained by comparisons of the positive historical cases among themselves.

Of course, comparative history is not without its difficulties and limitations, and several especially relevant ones deserve brief discussion. There are, in the first place, inevitable difficulties in applying the method according to its given logic. Often it is impossible to find exactly the historical cases that one needs for the logic of a certain comparison. And even when the cases are roughly appropriate, perfect controls for all potentially rele-

vant variables can never be achieved. Thus, strategic guesses have to be made about what causes are actually likely to be operative—that is, which ones could, or could not actually affect the object of study. The upshot is that there always are unexamined contextual features of the historical cases that interact with the causes being explicitly examined in ways the comparative historical analysis either does not reveal, or must simply assume to be irrelevant.<sup>96</sup>

Another set of problems stems from the fact that comparative historical analysis necessarily assumes (like any multivariate logic) that the units being compared are independent of one another. But actually, this assumption is rarely if ever fully valid for macro-phenomena such as revolutions. For, as we have already noted, these phenomena occur in unique world-historical contexts that change over time, and they happen within international structures that tie societies to one another. For much of any given comparative analysis the fiction of independent units can often be maintained. Thus, for example, I am willing to treat old-regime France, Russia, and China as basically similar and unrelated agrarian states for the purposes of exploring the causes of the French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions. But, sooner or later in most macro-analyses, one must make allowance for the unique effects of the world setting and timing, and for interrelations among the units. Thus, I shall work into my analysis the effects of the unique world-historical contexts of the eighteenth-century French versus the twentieth-century Russian and Chinese Revolutions, and I shall take into account the fact that Russian revolutionaries actually played a role in the Chinese Revolution through the transmission of Communist party models and policies via the Comintern.

Finally, it needs to be stressed that comparative historical analysis is no substitute for theory. Indeed, it can be applied only with the indispensable aid of theoretical concepts and hypotheses. For the comparative method alone cannot define the phenomenon to be studied. It cannot select appropriate units of analysis or say which historical cases should be studied. Nor can it provide the causal hypotheses to be explored. All of these must come from the macro-sociological imagination, informed by the theoretical debates of the day, and sensitive to the patterns of evidence for sets of historical cases.

Still, comparative historical analysis does provide a valuable check, or anchor, for theoretical speculation. It encourages one to spell out the actual causal arguments suggested by grand theoretical perspectives, and to combine diverse arguments if necessary in order to remain faithful to the ultimate objective—which is, of course, the actual illumination of causal regularities across sets of historical cases. Whatever the source(s) of theoretical inspiration, comparative history succeeds only if it convincingly fulfills this goal. And when it *is* successfully employed, comparative his-

torical analysis serves as an ideal strategy for mediating between theory and history. Provided that it is not mechanically applied, it can prompt both theoretical extensions and reformulations, on the one hand, and new ways of looking at concrete historical cases, on the other.

## WHY FRANCE, RUSSIA, AND CHINA?

The preceding parts of this chapter have sketched a theoretical frame of reference and introduced a method of analysis, both of which are in principle applicable to the investigation of many possible sets of social revolutions. This book does not, of course, analyze in depth all available historical cases of social revolution. Nor does it analyze a "random" sample from the entire universe of possible cases. In fact, comparative historical analysis works best when applied to a set of a few cases that share certain basic features. Cases need to be carefully selected and the criteria for grouping them together made explicit. In the following chapters, the French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions are to be treated together as basically similar examples of successful social-revolutionary transformations. At this point, therefore, some words are in order to justify this selection of cases.

There are some important practical reasons why these social revolutions rather than others were chosen for analysis. All of them, for one thing, happened in countries whose state and class structures had not been recently created or basically altered under colonial domination. This consideration eliminates many complexities that would need to be systematically included in any analysis of revolutions in postcolonial or neocolonial settings. Furthermore, the French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions all broke out and—after more or less protracted processes of class and political struggle—culminated in the consolidation of revolutionary state power, long-ago enough in the past to allow a study and comparison to be made of all three as *entire* revolutionary transformations. It is possible, in other words, to trace each Revolution from the demise of the old regime through to the emergence of a distinctively structured new regime. For comparative history, Hegel's maxim indubitably holds: The owl of Minerva flies at dusk.

Stronger reasons than these, however, are needed to explain not only why France, Russia, and China have each been selected for intense study, but also why all three have been grouped together as fundamentally *similar* cases of social revolution. For, according to most existing ways of defining and grouping revolutions for comparative study, France, Russia, and China simply do not belong together—certainly not all of them in one set.<sup>97</sup> France was a pre-twentieth-century European revolution, typically understood as bourgeois-capitalist or liberal-democratic in nature. De-

pending upon one's category scheme, Russia was either an antiabsolutist revolution, or a statist-developmental revolution, or a proletarian-communist revolution. Some analysts might be willing to group it with France, others with China, but none would agree that it belongs together with both.<sup>98</sup> For China, especially, is not considered legitimately classifiable with France, either because the French Revolution was "bourgeois" or "liberal" and the Chinese obviously neither, or else because China should be grouped with Third World national-liberation revolutions and not with European revolutions of any sort.

But it is the premise of this work that France, Russia, and China exhibited important similarities in their Old Regimes and revolutionary processes and outcomes—similarities more than sufficient to warrant their treatment together as one pattern calling for a coherent causal explanation. All three Revolutions occurred in wealthy and politically ambitious agrarian states, none of which was ever colonially subjugated. These Old Regimes were proto-bureaucratic autocracies that suddenly had to confront more economically developed military competitors. In all three Revolutions, the externally mediated crises combined with internal structural conditions and trends to produce a conjuncture of: (1) the incapacitation of the central state machineries of the Old Regimes; (2) widespread rebellions by the lower classes, most crucially peasants; and (3) attempts by mass-mobilizing political leaderships to consolidate revolutionary state power. The revolutionary outcome in each instance was a centralized, bureaucratic, and mass-incorporating nation-state with enhanced great-power potential in the international arena. Obstacles to national social change associated with the prerevolutionary positions of the landed upper class were removed (or greatly curtailed), and new potentials for development were created by the greater state centralization and mass political incorporation of the New Regimes.

Whatever other category systems may assume, the French and Chinese Revolutions—the two "polar" cases of my trio—were not so different from one another, nor so similar (respectively) to early European, liberal revolutions and to Third World, nation-building revolutions, as their contrasting spatio-temporal and cultural settings might suggest. The French Revolution actually was in important respects strikingly different from the English Revolution of the seventeenth century, and rather similar to the Chinese and Russian Revolutions. Peasant revolts played a key role in the process of the French Revolution, and the political result was a more centralized and bureaucratic state, not a liberal-parliamentary regime. As for the Chinese Revolution, it seems remarkably shortsighted in historical terms to regard it as a new-nation-building revolution of the mid-twentieth century. China had an imperial Old Regime with a cultural and political history stretching back many hundreds of years. And the

Chinese Revolution as an entire process was launched in 1911 by an upper-class revolt against an absolute monarchical state, not unlike the aristocratic revolt that started the French Revolution.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, the Chinese Revolution eventually gave rise to a developmentally oriented Communist regime that is certainly as much or more similar to the post-revolutionary Soviet regime as to contemporary, noncommunist Third World governments.

Given that there are, indeed, sufficient similarities to allow these three Revolutions to be grouped together for comparative historical analysis, much is to be gained by actually doing so. The similar sociopolitical features of the French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions can be highlighted and explained in ways that would necessarily be missed by analysts determined to keep them segregated in separate type categories. Above all, there is much to be learned from the juxtaposition of these Revolutions about the causes and results of peasant participation in social revolutions. There is also much to be learned about the dynamics of the breakdown and reconstruction of state administrative and coercive organizations from old to new regimes. It is not incidental that these aspects of revolutions tend either to be played down or assumed away by many other comparative analyses. This happens because most of the alternative category schemes serve to highlight instead either bourgeois/proletarian class configurations or patterns of legitimate political authority and the ideological self-conceptions of old and new regimes.

But we shall not only emphasize the common patterns shared by the French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions. Given the flexibility and the historical sensitivity of the comparative method, attention can also be paid to the particular features of each of the three Revolutions. There will be no need to deny that the French Revolution had bourgeois and liberal features, that the Russian Revolution was extremely statist in its outcome, or that the Chinese Revolution had in its process elements of a national-liberation struggle. For even as we primarily look for and attempt to explain patterns common to France, Russia, and China, we can also attend to the variations that characterize pairs of cases or single cases. These can then be explained as due in part to variations on the shared causal patterns, in part to contrasts among the social structures of France, Russia, and China, and in part to differences in the world-historical timing and succession of the three great Revolutions. As a result, exactly those distinctive characteristics of the Revolutions and their world-historical setting that have prompted other scholars to segregate them into separate type categories will be cast in a new explanatory light as they are studied against the background of the patterns shared by all three Revolutions.

*Looking Ahead*

The chapters to come present a comparative historical analysis of the French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions—an analysis conceived and executed within the frame of reference developed in this first chapter. Part I discusses the structural and historical conditions for the emergence of objective revolutionary situations in old-regime France, Russia, and China: Chapter 2 focuses upon the political crises of the absolutist states, and Chapter 3 analyzes the situation of the peasantry. In order to help validate the main lines of the argument, particular subsections of Chapters 2 and 3 briefly show that the conditions hypothesized to be crucial for producing social-revolutionary situations in France, Russia, and China were absent, or not present all together, at relevant periods in Japan, Prussia/Germany, and England. Thus the logic of comparison in Part I primarily stresses ways in which France, Russia, and China were similar. And this is underlined through contrasts to negative cases.

In Part II, on the other hand, the logic of comparison focuses entirely upon the similarities and differences among the positive cases of social revolution. For in Part II it is taken for granted that France, Russia, and China shared similarly caused revolutionary situations. The objective is to explain the revolutionary outcomes against that background. Hence this part demonstrates how the conflicts unleashed in the revolutionary crises led to social-revolutionary outcomes, with certain patterns common to all three Revolutions and others distinctive to one or two of them. Within Part II, Chapter 4 introduces the major analytic considerations to be explored for each Revolution; and Chapters 5, 6, and 7 deal with the revolutionary conflicts and outcomes of France, Russia, and China, respectively.