Theories of Revolution: The Third Generation
Revolution and the Transformation of Societies: A Comparative Study of Civilizations. by S. N. Eisenstadt; Agrarian Revolution: Social Movements and Export Agriculture in the Underdeveloped World. by Jeffrey M. Paige; States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China. by Theda Skocpol; Revolution from Above: Military Bureaucrats and Development in Japan, Turkey, Egypt, and Peru. by Kay Ell ...

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THEORIES OF REVOLUTION:
The Third Generation

By JACK A. GOLDSTONE*

Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, xvii, 407 pp., $29.95; $7.95 paper.

In this century, attempts in American social science to explain the nature and origins of revolutions have gone through three distinct phases, or "generations." The first generation, falling roughly between 1900 and 1940, and including the work of LeBon, Ellwood, Sorokin, Edwards, Lederer, Pettee, and Brinton, carefully investigated the pattern of events found in revolutions, but lacked a broad theoretical perspective.\(^1\) The second generation, falling roughly between 1940 and 1975, has dominated the recent study of revolutions; it included Davies, Gurr, Johnson, Smelser, Huntington, and Tilly, and drew heavily on broad theories from psychology (cognitive psychology and frustration-aggression theory), sociology (structural-functionalist theory), and political science (the pluralist theory of interest-group competition).\(^2\)

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Applying these perspectives to the study of revolutions, this second generation of writers developed a fairly sophisticated body of theoretical analysis. In recent years, a number of critical studies (e.g., Eckstein, Oberschall, Muller, Salert, and Skocpol) have uncovered serious weaknesses in the second generation’s work. Thus, a third generation of writers—Paige, Trimberger, Skocpol, and Eisenstadt—has, roughly since 1975, presented alternative analyses of revolutions. The general approach of these writers differs in two major respects from that of previous theorists. They are far better grounded historically: their analyses arise from a detailed examination of a greater variety of revolutions than had been studied by previous analysts. Furthermore, they are more holistic, seeking not only to explain why revolutions occur, but also to account for their diverse outcomes.

In this essay, I shall review briefly the recent criticisms of the second generation of writers on revolution, and discuss in some detail the approach of the third generation, touching on their new points of analytical emphasis and on some of the problems that, despite the advances they have made, still remain.

I. From the First to the Second Generation

The first-generation theorists, though developing many insights that are still useful to students of revolutions, were primarily descriptive in their approach. They sought to identify the major stages of the revolu-

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3 Since Professor Eisenstadt is some 25 years senior to the other members of this group, to label all of them as a single “generation” is not quite correct chronologically. However, Eisenstadt’s writings on revolution have appeared at the same time, and, more importantly, share a similar outlook and structure, with the work of his younger contemporaries; I therefore wish to treat all these theorists as forming a single “generation” of writers on revolutions in order to stress their collective departure from the outlook and models of earlier writers.
tionary process or to describe the social and demographic changes that revolutions produced. But their analyses lacked solid theoretical underpinnings. Such theories of the causes of revolutions as were employed were generally an eclectic group of weakly specified or ad hoc psychological schemata, e.g., mob psychology (LeBon), the breakdown of "social habits" (Ellwood), or the "repression of basic instinctual needs" (Sorokin). In contrast, second-generation analysts sought to develop explicit theories of why and when revolutionary situations arise, grounded in fairly well-developed theories of social behavior drawn from psychology, sociology, and political science.

A number of excellent review essays have appeared, including those by Stone, Krammick, and Zagorin, that summarize the work of the second generation of theorists. Thus my restatement of the second generation's perspective will be brief. Roughly speaking, their work may be divided into three classes, according to the three theoretical traditions on which they drew.

1. Analyses based on cognitive psychology and frustration-aggression theory. The work of Davies, Gurr, the Feierabends and their collaborators, Schwartz, Geschwender, and Morrison falls in this class. These theorists saw the roots of revolution in the state of mind of the masses; they considered revolutions to be likely only when the masses enter a cognitive state of "frustration" or "deprivation" relative to some set of goals. The suggested sources of such frustration or relative deprivation were varied; they included the long-term effects of modernization and urbanization (Feierabend and Feierabend), short-term economic re-

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6 This division follows Skocpol (fn. 3).

versals (Davies), and the systematic closure of political or economic opportunities to selected ethnic or economic groups (Gurr). The authors agreed, however, that the essential, defining factor in a revolutionary situation is widespread frustration with the current political-economic milieu, and that the primary task of a theory of revolutions is to uncover those patterns of events that cause or influence such cognitive attitudes.

2. Analyses based on sociological (structural-functionalist) theory. In this class are the studies by Johnson, Smelser, Jessop, Hart, Tiryakian, and Hagopian. These authors, drawing on the tradition of sociological analysis developed by Talcott Parsons and his school, approached societies as systems whose smooth functioning depends on maintaining an equilibrium both in the total flow of demands and resources between the system and its environment, and between the various subsystems—polity, economy, status, and culture (or value system)—that make up the social system. Thus, any disturbance that severely impairs the equilibrium of demand and resource flows in a society leaves that society in a state of “disequilibrium” (Hagopian), or “dysfunction” (Johnson), in which it is unstable, or prone to revolution. As in the psychological school, a number of different sources of dysfunction were suggested, such as the uneven impact of technology and modernization on the demands and resources of the various subsystems, or exogenous changes in values—e.g., the growth of a new religion or ideology (Johnson); changes in the distribution of power among the elites in the various subsystems (Jessop); or merely dissynchronous changes in the various subsystems (Hagopian). However, all the authors in this school agreed that the essential, defining factor of a revolutionary situation is a state of severe disequilibrium in the society. Hence, the aim of their analyses was to identify and explicate those events that cause or influence systemic stress.

3. Analyses based on political science (pluralist, interest-group conflict theory). The analyses of Tilly, Huntington, Amman, and Stinchcombe fall in this class. These writers drew on the tradition of pluralist


theory in political science, which sees events as the outcome of conflict between competing interest groups. Revolution was treated as the "ultimate" political conflict, in which the normal struggle between interest groups is escalated—by both the intensity of the conflict and the magnitude of resources that interest groups bring to bear—to the point where normal political processes for conflict mediation and resolution fail, and the political system is violently split apart. Thus, the defining concept in this approach is the notion of "multiple sovereignty"; that is, a situation in which (1) competing interest groups are so violently opposed on highly salient issues that their differences cannot be reconciled within the current political system, and (2) two or more competing groups have sufficient resources—political, financial, organizational, military—to establish "sovereignty" over a substantial political or military base, and thus to seek to achieve their goals by force.

Again, many patterns of events may give rise to such conditions: Tilly, for instance, noted that wars, economic modernization, urbanization, or changes in value systems or ideologies may all give rise to new interest groups, as well as change the balance of resources among competing groups. For all these authors, the essential, defining factor of a revolutionary situation was a combination of interest-group conflict and resource control that exceeded the capabilities for conflict mediation of the current political institutions.

The preceding severe simplifications unfortunately understate the sophisticated and often brilliant manner in which the links between certain patterns of events and the situation of potential revolution are detailed. However, they allow us a quick grasp of the structural similarity in all the analyses of the second generation, as revealed in Figure 1.

The second-generation theorists, though their models varied in the degree of sophistication and complexity with which the interconnections pictured in Figure 1 are detailed, saw the development of revolutionary situations as basically a two-step process. First a pattern of events arises that somehow marks a break or change from previous patterns. This change then affects some critical variable—the cognitive state of the masses, the equilibrium of the system, or the magnitude of conflict and resource control of competing interest groups. If the effect

10 Gurr, in particular, offers an extremely complex version of this analysis—with coercion, past violence, legitimation, institutions, and other factors all influencing the psychological deprivation-revolutionary situation nexus. Nonetheless, psychological deprivation remains the driving force of his analysis; other factors are added primarily to moderate the way in which changes in the critical variable lead to political violence.
on the critical variable is of sufficient magnitude, a potentially revolutionary situation occurs.

All these authors agreed that, once a potentially revolutionary situation occurs, a variety of incidental events that a society could ordinarily absorb without collapsing—such as a war, a foolish action by the authorities, a riot, or a bad harvest—may precipitate a revolution. Yet the majority of these writers, including the most sophisticated exponents of each approach (i.e., Gurr, Johnson, and Tilly) also believed that even when a potentially revolutionary situation arises, revolution is not inevitable. Rather, prompt action by elites to manipulate the level of the critical variable—by reform or repression—can still forestall a full-fledged revolution.

**FIGURE 1**

**SECOND-GENERATION ANALYSES OF REVOLUTION**

| Initiating Pattern of Events | Critical Variable | Potentially Revolution \\
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<tr>
<td>War</td>
<td>1. Cognitive attitude of the masses</td>
<td>1. Widespread, intense feelings of deprivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernization</td>
<td>2. System equilibrium</td>
<td>2. Severe system disequilibrium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technological change</td>
<td>3. Magnitude of interest-group conflict</td>
<td>3. &quot;Multiple sovereignty&quot;</td>
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<td>Value changes</td>
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<td>Economic changes</td>
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**II. CRITICISMS OF THE SECOND GENERATION**

Criticisms of the second-generation theorists have developed in two modes. First, weaknesses in their analyses have been extensively cited. Second, several points of analytic emphasis, neglected by these theorists, have been developed by a number of authors in a manner that points out the incompleteness of these analyses. I shall briefly comment here on some of these weaknesses. The development of new points of analytic emphasis is in large part an accomplishment of the third-generation theorists, and will be discussed below.

In Figure 1, several shortcomings of the second-generation analyses are immediately evident. First, the pattern of events taken as possible initiating causes is extremely vague. Almost any kind of social change—economic, cultural, technological, military, demographic, or-
ganizational—may give rise to a potentially revolutionary situation. As Eisenstadt has remarked, such an array of causes has also been cited as leading to the decline of the great historical empires of Rome, Byzantium, the Indian Moguls, and others.\textsuperscript{11} Why these causes should lead to revolution in the case of some empires—for instance Russia, France, and China—rather than to gradual decline and decay is unspecified by the analyses. Moreover, as Eckstein has noted, the array of changes is so great that these analyses seem to allow that revolutions may happen at any time, in any society undergoing rapid change.\textsuperscript{12} Since rapid change has been endemic to the West since 1750 and, spreading with European contact, to the rest of the world since roughly 1850, these theories are generally powerless to explain why, in fact, revolutions have been so rare. They cannot, for example, help us determine why some societies undergoing rapid change—e.g., Britain since 1700, Japan since 1875, or India since 1750—did not experience episodes of revolution. In sum, since the range of occurrences cited as possible initiators of potentially revolutionary situations is so loosely and broadly specified, the explanatory power of these analyses is correspondingly weak.

Second, in all theories the critical variable is extremely difficult to observe in practice. Because one cannot readily measure either the cognitive state of mind of large masses of individuals, or the strain or disequilibrium of a social system, or the magnitude of goal conflict and resources of all competing groups, it is difficult to obtain a correlation between broadly defined “social change” and changes in the level of the critical variables. That is not to say that empirical tests of the response of the critical variables to changing social conditions have not been made. However, these tests have generally relied on using an indicator variable to represent the critical variable, rather than on attempting to measure the critical variable itself. For example, the most sophisticated empirical testing of second-generation theories has been in the class of psychological theories—specifically, the work of Gurr and the Feierabends. However, the indicators for changes in the cognitive frustration variable have been education (Feierabends), or economic stress, religious cleavages, and other macro-social rather than individual cognitive variables (Gurr). Thus, the correlations between violence and the critical variable presented by Gurr and the Feierabends could as well be correlations between general macro-social changes and increased civil conflict, adding little to either the specificity or the empir-


\textsuperscript{12} Eckstein (fn. 3).
cal weight of their analyses. More limited attempts to measure directly the correlations between personal cognitive states and social changes in America, Nigeria, and Uganda, using interviews and psychological scaling questionnaires, have failed to find the expected correlations between cognitive dissatisfaction and either prior social dislocation and modernization or a revolutionary, anti-regime orientation. Thus, the only direct attempts to uncover the predicted correlations have yielded negative results.

Although no comparable empirical tests have been made of the analysis of social disequilibrium, similar problems of measurement would arise. Tiryakian has suggested that urbanization, non-institutional religious movements, and promiscuity would provide useful "lead indicators" of social strain. However, as in the macro-social indicators of Gurr and the Feierabends, the connection with the critical variable—system equilibrium—may be questioned. For example, if an increase in urbanization were found to correlate with revolutions, it would imply only that urbanization is associated with revolutionary situations; any connection with system equilibrium would remain hypothetical. To date, no system theorist has developed or tested a reliable measure for social disequilibrium; indeed, given the vagueness of this variable, none is likely to succeed in doing so.

The political conflict analysis has been the subject of considerable testing by Tilly and his collaborators. Yet the measures of the critical conditions—the intensity of conflict and the resources mobilized by competing groups—are simply correlated with episodes of civil violence, not revolution. For example, Tilly's methods of study would certainly class as situations of multiple sovereignty the periodic wars of succession in the Ottoman and Mogul empires, the English War of the Roses, and the American and Nigerian civil wars. None of these situations, however, is considered to be a revolution in the sense of the French, Russian, Chinese, or Mexican Revolutions. Thus, some factor that bridges the gap between mere violence and revolution is required for Tilly's measures of multiple sovereignty to be useful in explicating the occurrence of revolution, rather than merely domestic turmoil.

13 Muller (fn. 3); Oberschall (fn. 3).
15 Tilly's latest work, From Mobilization to Revolution (fn. 2), defines revolutions in terms of both the level of political violence and the extent of displacement of the political elite. Though Tilly has not yet done any empirical work based on this slightly revised definition, the problem remains. That is, even with this refinement, such violent but non-revolutionary episodes as the War of the Roses and various wars of succession would still be classed as revolutions by Tilly's measures.
In sum, for all second-generation theorists, the critical variable is extremely difficult to observe. Attempts to do so have led to negative findings, or to correlations that fail to link the critical variable convincingly either to prior social changes or to specifically revolutionary situations.

The third weakness of these analyses follows largely from the preceding one. If the critical variable is difficult to measure, it is almost impossible to specify the level that portends a potentially revolutionary situation. In fact, none of the second-generation theorists was able to go beyond a qualitative specification—that is, a "high level" of cognitive frustration, or of social strain, or of political conflict and resource mobilization. Thus, these analyses are incapable of denoting exactly when a potentially revolutionary situation has arisen. Again, the explanatory precision and power of these theories is hamstrung by their inability to specify precisely how changes in the critical variable may be observed.

A fourth reservation involves the conclusion, drawn by most of the second-generation theorists, that a revolution can be forestalled by the actions of the ruling elites. In fact, these writers often stated that the inaction, or "intransigence" of elites (in Johnson's words), was requisite to the transformation of a potentially revolutionary situation into a full-fledged revolution. Insofar as these theorists required changes in the critical variable to be abetted by the blindness or inaction of the ruling elites, their analyses seem to rest on a weak foundation. The elites of France and Russia, prior to the revolutions, were not intransigent or inactive; both, but especially the Russian authorities, were largely reforming elites, seeking to implement modern agricultural and economic practices.16 And, as de Tocqueville first noted, the reforms instituted by the French monarchy appeared to accelerate, rather than to retard, the transformation of a potentially revolutionary situation into a revolution.17

The occurrence of revolutions despite the reforming efforts by elites implies that there are good reasons why elites in those specific situations were incapable of, or severely hindered from, taking action to avert their own downfall. The second-generation theorists failed to give any attention to such hindrances or obstructions to elite action. Instead, contrary to historical fact, the intransigence of elites is often cited as a factor in the outbreak of full-fledged revolutions.

Finally, the second-generation theorists failed to account effectively

for the variations in outcomes of different revolutions. For example, there is no basis in any of their analyses for explaining why in some revolutions—that is, the American, English, and French—the outcome was a pluralist, open polity, while in others—that is, the Russian, Chinese, and Vietnamese—the outcome was a one-party, socialist, authoritarian regime.

III. The Third Generation

The development of new points of analytic emphasis, in addition to the weaknesses described above, has provided materials for constructing new analyses of revolutions. Some of these points have been most forcefully developed by the third-generation theorists, but many were introduced over the preceding twenty years by scholars writing in the fields of international conflict, development and modernization, anthropology and peasant studies, as well as specifically on revolutions. Chief among them were Barrington Moore, Jr. and Eric Wolf. Important contributions were also made by Gillis, Neumann, Rosenau, Kelly and Miller, Hermassi, Migdal, Landsberger, Linz, Prosterman, Russell, and Chorley. These writers did not advance theories of revolution per se; however, they raised specific issues and achieved major insights which have formed the basis for the third generation’s theorizing.

A. New Points of Analytic Emphasis

There are five main points that were omitted from the second genera-


tion’s analyses. They are: (1) the variable goals and structures of states; (2) the systematic intrusion, over time, of international political and economic pressures on the domestic political and economic organization of societies; (3) the structure of peasant communities; (4) the coherence or weakness of the armed forces; and (5) the variables affecting elite behavior.

1. The variable goals and structures of states. Second-generation theorists— with the partial exceptions of Tilly and Huntington—paid little attention to the structural details or specific government programs of different states. These theorists often saw the state—the government and the administrative and institutional machinery it wields—simply as the arena for the expression and resolution of conflict among varied groups, or sometimes more starkly as the means for the coercion of certain elements of society by others. However, third-generation theorists have emphasized that the state is not merely an arena for conflict or a means of coercion, but an autonomous entity, and that there exists among states a diversity of goals as well as of structures, which affects the possibilities for revolutionary change. Eisenstadt, in particular, has argued that only a certain kind of state—the feudal-imperial state—is prone to revolutionary transformation. Only this kind of state, he maintains, combines the kind of goals that seek “not only to extract resources from [the society] but also to permeate it, to reconstruct it symbolically, and structurally to mobilize it” (p. 86) and the kind of structure—relatively inaccessible, elite-monopolized political and cultural-religious institutions—that make revolutionary change likely. Skocpol and Trimberger have emphasized that the goals of certain states—such as the goal of modernization of the industrial base in pre-revolutionary China, Russia, Turkey, and Japan—were in conflict with the resource capabilities, or elite class privileges, of those societies. In these cases, the incompatibility of the states’ goals with aspects of the societies’ political or economic structures became a source of the revolutionary crisis.

2. The intrusion of international political and economic pressures. A great many writers, including Neumann, Rosenau, Kelly and Miller, Hermassi, Wolf, Moore, and Paige, have noted that social change, and revolution in particular, is often triggered by international political conflicts or by the impingement of international capitalist markets on previously local agriculture and trade systems. Second-generation theorists noted that wars could push unstable societies over the brink of revolution; yet they often neglected to consider the long-term destabilizing
effects of other international pressures. Third-generation theorists have systematically pointed out that, as states are drawn into international military and economic competition, substantial changes are engendered in a variety of aspects of domestic organization. For example, states faced with increasing military competition may seek greater centralized control of resources, or attempt to raise their extraction of resources from the society; in addition, as capitalist markets intrude on local markets, landlords may seek to rationalize peasant production, or attempt to secure greater cash benefits instead of in-kind payments from their tenants. In short, the intrusion of international political and economic pressures may introduce incentives—or imperative needs—that bring states and landlords into opposition with basic aspects of the agrarian, economic, and political organization of their society, thus creating an impetus to revolutionary change.

3. The structure of peasant communities. Although peasants have often played a decisive role in revolutions, the variables determining the nature of peasant participation have proven extremely complex and difficult to decipher. The studies by Wolf, Moore, Migdal, Landsberger, Linz, Paige, and Prosterman have shown that the nature of peasant revolutionary activity depends on the relation of peasants to landlords and to the state, on the type of crops and agricultural techniques used, on the mode of village organization, on the degree of landholding or landlessness, whether production is for local or for market sale, and whether taxes and other obligations are paid in cash, in labor, or in kind. Since peasant participation often determines the course of revolutions, these variables have become a vital concern in third-generation theories.

4. The coherence of the armed forces. Russell’s fascinating study of the role of the armed forces in revolutionary crises, building on the pathbreaking work of Chorley, has demonstrated that revolution is impossible where the armed forces of a state are intact and effectively used. While second-generation authors generally agreed that coercion and the use of armed force is crucial in determining whether or not a potentially revolutionary situation yields to full-fledged revolution, they did not study the variables that affect the ability of a state to utilize its armed forces in domestic crises. Thus, the conditions of military coherence and of structural constraints on the state’s use of armed force remain key issues for third-generation theorists.

5. Variables affecting elite behavior. The second-generation theorists
noted the importance of elite behavior, but their treatment was generally rudimentary, simply stating that the intransigence of the elite often abetted revolution. However, as Eisenstadt, Skocpol, and Trimberger have shown, the range of elite behaviors is great, and is significantly determined by structural conditions. Eisenstadt has noted that revolutionary elites with close ties to other elites are more likely to build relatively pluralist, "open," postrevolutionary polities, while isolated elites, if victorious in a revolutionary situation, will tend to form coercive, "closed" regimes. Moreover, Skocpol has found that isolated or "marginal" elites are likely to have the greatest inclination, as well as the greatest tactical mobility, to pursue radical revolutionary policies, while traditional landed elites—such as the French aristocracy and the Chinese gentry—are likely to obstruct the state's attempts to achieve even modest reforms, particularly if such reforms involve greater state centralization and diminution of the elite's control of resources. Finally, Trimberger has argued that elites with few ties to landholding groups—such as the Japanese and Turkish civil/military elites—are quite capable of bringing about revolutionary social change by concerted government action. In sum, the range of elite behavior and the factors influencing elite actions form a further key point in the third-generation analyses of revolution.

B. THEORIES OF REVOLUTION—THE THIRD GENERATION

Though all of the third-generation theorists pay careful attention to the new analytical points of emphasis discussed above, their scope ranges from Paige's fairly limited analysis to Eisenstadt's ambitious cross-civilization survey.

In Agrarian Revolution, Paige concentrates his analysis upon the effects of agrarian social structure on the potential for revolution. He develops a theory of rural conflict in which the structure of peasant/landlord relations—namely, whether peasants and landlords derive their income from land ownership, from wages and capital, or from diverse combinations—determines the type of rural conflict that occurs. Specifically, a mass peasant revolution is likely only where landlords draw their wealth and income from land ownership, but peasants gain their livelihood from a form of wage payment—either sharecropping or migratory labor. Where peasants and landlords both depend on land ownership, peasant/landlord conflict is more likely to take the form of spontaneous peasant jacqueries; where landlords depend primarily on income from commercial capital (that is, capital-intensive plantations),
peasant/landlord conflict is likely to be resolved through labor movements or commodity reform.

The root of Paige’s argument is that landlords whose wealth depends primarily on the possession of land tend to have few options for maintaining their income and privileges; moreover, such landlords generally need state support to protect their holdings. The combination of land-dependent upper classes with wage-earning or sharecropping cultivators combine[s] the inflexible behavior of the cultivators of a landed estate with the strong cultivator organizations of the corporate plantation. When both conditions exist simultaneously, the result is likely to be an agrarian revolution in which a strong peasant-based guerilla movement organized by a nationalist or communist party attempts to destroy both the rural upper class and the institutions of the state and establish a new society (pp. 358-59).

The theory is developed through in-depth case studies of historical patterns of rural conflict and agrarian structure in Peru, Angola, and Vietnam. Paige adds considerable detail to demonstrate how the impingement of international markets contributes to conditions of rural conflict, and how the basic theory may be modified by the influence of various crop and technology parameters. Moreover, Paige supports his theory with an impressive array of data, including a crossnational study of rural conflict and agrarian structure in 135 export sectors of 70 developing countries.

Yet Paige’s work is limited in its aims. For example, he neglects the interaction of rural class conflict with urban and intra-elite conflicts; nor does he seek to specify the circumstances in which rural conflicts can lead to the transformation of political and cultural institutions which constitutes a successful revolution. In all, Paige’s work is an original, detailed analysis of the ways in which agrarian structure affects the possibilities for revolution, though it is not—nor does it claim to be—a full analysis of revolutions.20

On the other hand, Trimberger, in Revolution from Above, seeks to give a rather full explanation of one kind of revolution. She analyzes four cases—Ataturk’s takeover of Turkey in 1923, the Meiji Restoration of Japan in 1868, and the coups by Nasser in Egypt (1952) and Velasco

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in Peru (1968)—in which high military and civil bureaucrats overthrew traditional rulers and instituted programs of modernization incorporating substantial social and economic reforms. She presents an explanation of when such revolutions from above are likely, and of the probable outcomes of such revolutions.

The critical factor in the genesis of revolution from above is a distinctive kind of elite structure, namely, the separation of bureaucratic and military officials from the landlord and merchant classes. Trimberger argues that in a centralized, bureaucratic state, where the officialdom is a solitary professional body with a service tradition but without great personal landholdings or ties to landlord classes, the reaction to international political and economic pressures is likely to be a revolution from above. Leading officials, by seizing control of the central civil/military administrative apparatus, will seek to reshape the pattern of resource distribution and extraction so as to meet the military and economic pressures that threaten the state. Lacking a vested interest in the current economic structure, such officials are free to respond to international pressures by implementing radical reforms—including land reform, abolition of traditional status distinctions, and rapid industrialization.

Yet, in examining the outcomes of such revolutions, Trimberger finds that they have generally met with limited success. Catching up with Western economies requires the diversion of large surpluses from agriculture for capital investment. However, since the revolutions from above attempted to achieve modernization without mobilization of the masses, such surpluses could only be extracted with the cooperation of local landlords. As a result, officials were forced into alliances with local landlords to maintain the flow of agricultural surpluses required to finance their ambitious modernization plans. Trimberger argues that, while the initial phases of modernization may have been successful, the unavoidable alliance of officials with local landlords, and the consequent entrenchment of those landlords, ruled out the emergence of domestic capitalist economies that were not heavily dependent on the more advanced Western economies.

For example, 27 years after Ataturk’s takeover, local landlords in Turkey succeeded in wresting control of the government from the bureaucratic reformers, and in abolishing taxes on agriculture. State-led modernization was thus halted, and Turkey has since then remained severely dependent on foreign capital for its development. By contrast, landlords in Japan were unable to keep the state from draining surpluses from agriculture for industrialization; however, they were able
to hold the exploited peasantry in a relatively depressed and destitute state. While they thereby maintained their status, Japan was for decades deprived of an internal market for its industrial products. Japanese industry therefore had to be geared to export markets, resulting in a dependency on penetrating foreign markets that still marks the Japanese economy.

Trimberger concludes that in any revolution from above, such a need for an alliance between reforming bureaucrats and local landlords is likely to arise, and that the entrenchment of local landlords will follow—with the result that modernization will soon become dependent either on foreign capital, as in Turkey, or on foreign markets, as in Japan. In sum, revolution from above will occur only when a state with a centralized, bureaucratic government and a particular kind of elite structure—a separation of state officials from landed and merchant classes—is confronted with strong international pressures. Moreover, the outcome of such a revolution is likely to be a drive for modernization that is blunted by the need to enlist the support of local landlords, and an economy that is still dependent on more advanced foreign economies.

Skocpol's analytical scheme in *States and Social Revolutions* is presented in Figure 2. It is in many respects similar to those of Paige and Trimberger, emphasizing the role of specific agrarian and elite structures as preconditions, and international pressures as catalysts, of revolution. Yet Skocpol aims at far greater generality. In her words, by studying "the specific interrelations of class and state structures, and the complex interplay . . . of domestic and international developments," she hopes to illuminate "relationships that remain . . . useful for describing the logic of social revolutionary causes and outcomes, from France in the 1790's to Ethiopia in the 1970's" (p. 292). She succeeds to an impressive degree.

Skocpol begins by noting that social revolutions have only occurred in "agrarian-bureaucratic" societies. These are societies in which a more or less centralized bureaucracy, with the aid of locally powerful landlords, subsists on the surplus of a predominantly agricultural economy. The weaknesses of such societies are three-fold: first, conflicts can develop between the central bureaucratic government and the landlords over the division of the surplus; second, the vast peasant population can form a well of discontent and potential revolt; third, since the surplus that supports the bureaucracy and the landlords is derived from traditional agriculture, it cannot be readily increased if external pressures
(war, or foreign economic invasion of domestic markets) threaten to absorb or reduce the surplus.

As Skocpol notes, such weaknesses are present in all agrarian bureaucratic societies; yet not all such societies experience social revolutions. Thus Skocpol spends the first half of her book studying, in masterful detail, why social revolutions occurred in France, Russia, and China, but not in Prussia, Japan, or England, during similar periods of stress.

Skocpol's answer is that the intensity of bureaucratic/landed class conflict and of peasant revolts is influenced by specific structural factors—namely, agrarian social structure and elite structure. Thus, structural differences between France, Russia, and China on the one hand, and Prussia, Japan, and England on the other—together with differences in international pressures—account for the fact that successful social revolutions occurred in the former, but not in the latter.

First, Skocpol argues that the intensity of peasant revolts depended on the autonomy and organizational strength of peasant communities. For example, French and Russian peasants lived in relatively autono-
mous villages with a substantial political structure. Such conditions gave the peasants a base for organized, concerted revolts against landlords. By contrast, the peasantries of eastern Prussia and 17th-century England were fragmented; they were closely supervised by landlords and lacked any autonomy or organization. This was in large part due to the early transition to capitalist agriculture in these societies, which broke up traditional peasant and manorial communities, giving rise instead to closely supervised agricultural laborers. Thus, in the Prussian revolution of 1848, and in the English Civil War, no peasant risings on the scale of those in France in 1789 or Russia in 1917 shook the state.

Second, the intensity of conflict between the monarchy and the landed class depended on the extent to which that class had leverage within the bureaucratic machinery, and the extent to which it controlled resources that could be used against that machinery. For example, the Chinese monarchy recruited its bureaucratic personnel primarily from the landed class. And the French administration, though drawing personnel from all classes, retained the noble-controlled parlements, which were used by the nobility to block and challenge the directives issued by the crown. In both societies, cooperation of the landed classes with the monarchy was essential to the operation of the central government. Thus, when differences between the monarchy and the landed class arose—as in China after Western penetration, and in France in the 18th century—the landed classes were able to paralyze the central government, opening the way for peasant revolts to blossom into full-scale revolutions. On the other hand, the central governments of Japan and Prussia were largely independent of landlords, who had strictly local power. Thus, conflicts between the central government and the landed class, though leading to reforms in the relations between them, did not destroy the effectiveness of the central bureaucracy.

Finally, international pressures may vary according to the differences in economic advancement and military power between competing nations. Here Russia presents an extreme case. Since Russia was both economically and militarily far behind Imperial Germany, the tsar’s government was unable to mobilize sufficient resources to meet the German threat in World War I. The resulting widespread military defeats crushed the organization and effectiveness of the Russian army. When the peasants, facing the exactions of a war economy in a country barely able to sustain itself in peacetime, seized the landed estates, the tsar could raise no force to challenge them. By contrast, Prussia faced far less external pressure in the revolution of 1848. The army was still
intact, and could readily be used by the king to suppress the urban disorders threatening his reign.

Skocpol further highlights the factors affecting the outcomes of social revolutions, through comparisons of Russia, China, and France. Here the main factors are the resources of revolutionary contenders, both political and economic, and international pressures.

Skocpol contends that if the revolutionary regime cannot control large-scale industries on a centralized basis (as, for example, in France in 1789), a regime based on private control of property is likely to develop. On the other hand, where the rudiments of a centralized industrial base exist as a legacy from the old regime—for instance, in Russia's industrial centers and China's Manchuria—a centralized state-socialist regime becomes a possible, and likely, outcome.

In addition, the social base of the revolutionary regime constrains its actions. The French National Assembly, based on the support of peasants seeking private property in land, and of artisans, merchants, and proprietors of small businesses, could not mount an attack on private property. The Bolsheviks and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), though in a position to direct much of the economy centrally, were also constrained. The Bolsheviks lacked ties to the peasantry; resting on the support of an industrial proletariat, they had to wage “war” against the peasants to secure grain for their urban economic and political base. The CCP, however, was strongly tied to a rural, peasant base, and proceeded with a more balanced effort at industrialization, focusing on the development of rural industry and improved peasant agriculture, as well as on urban-based industrialization. In sum, differing economic legacies from the old regimes and the differing social bases of the post-revolutionary elites led to significant differences in outcomes among the cases studied.

But Skocpol points out important similarities as well; here international pressures are the key. In each society, the revolutionary crisis was in part due to foreign threats which the old regime could not meet because of inadequate resources. These threats do not go away when the old regime falls. Thus, in France, Russia, and China, the outcome of the revolutions was a highly centralized, coercive, bureaucratic, mass-mobilizing government. By abolishing the special privileges of the landed class, these governments were able to free resources and to provide the administrative machinery to utilize them. The Committee on Public Safety, the Bolsheviks, and the CCP had in common their willingness to use tight discipline and force to meet the challenges
facing their societies from abroad. Only such groups can consolidate a social revolution successfully, and their stamp is left on the postrevolutionary government in every case.

The above sketch fails to do justice to the richness of Skocpol's in-depth studies of the particulars of each case. However, the logic of her argument, as depicted in Figure 2, is elegant and straightforward.

Three facets of Skocpol's analysis should be noted: first, her causal explanation of different revolutions is not uniform. She maintains that a social revolution is only possible where an organized peasantry exists, and a crisis arises that incapacitates the state's ability to suppress that peasantry. Yet peasant organization may originate either in the traditional village community, as in France and Russia, or in a mass-mobilizing party, as in China. And an incapacitating crisis may arise from overwhelming external pressures (as in Russia), or from less severe pressures that precipitate a struggle for resources between the central government and landed classes with leverage against the government (as in China and France). In sum, Skocpol notes that various combinations of structural patterns and international pressures can lead to revolutions; a specific array of structural factors must be studied in each case.

Second, Skocpol places very little emphasis on urban revolts as contributors to social revolution; she does not consider them to be sufficient to determine the outbreak or the outcome of social revolutions. Urban revolts often occur in highly unsuccessful revolutions, such as the Paris Commune or the revolutions of 1848 in Germany and Austria. Moreover, the major outcome of social revolution is a diminution of the power of landlords over the peasantry (that is, a change in agrarian social relations) rather than any change in the social organization of the cities. Thus, for Skocpol it is primarily the combination of peasant revolts with the breakdown of central government that precipitates social revolution.

Finally, Skocpol's treatment of the rise of capitalism and its contribution to revolution is rather unusual. Many analysts, particularly Eric Wolf, have suggested that the rise of capitalism destabilizes traditional economies, and is thus a factor leading to revolution. Skocpol argues just the reverse; namely, that in those countries which made a transition to capitalist agriculture, such as England and Prussia, the conversion of the peasantry into supervised agricultural laborers markedly reduced their revolutionary potential. Only the societies that incubated highly traditional peasantries, with strong village organization, found themselves faced with massive peasant revolts. According to Skocpol,
the destabilizing effects of the rise of capitalism operate more powerfully in the international sphere. There, the more advanced countries—such as England and, later, Germany—posed major military and economic threats to less advanced countries, such as France and Russia; it is this competition with more advanced states that can lead to severe external pressures and political breakdown.

In many respects, Eisenstadt, whose analysis is schematically shown in Figure 3, takes an approach analogous to Skocpol’s.

**Figure 3**

**Eisenstadt’s Analysis of Revolutions**

In *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies*, he notes that certain preconditions of state and elite structure must be present for a revolutionary situation to arise. Specifically, there must be a marked differentiation of the society’s political and symbolic center from the rest of the society (the “periphery”), as well as active attempts by the center to influence the periphery; the center must be fairly closed, and elite-dominated; and the elites must be divided and competing rather than unitary. Moreover, the elites must control sufficient “free” resources—
that is, resources that are not completely tied up in subsistence or in fully prescribed tasks—to be able to exercise a substantial degree of autonomy. Eisenstadt also notes that intensifying international pressures, and the resulting fiscal and military exigencies, are primary causes of the downfall of traditional regimes; they open the way for competing elites, with recruited mass support, to attempt to build new regimes. However, Eisenstadt goes beyond these observations to make a profound and original contribution: the role of “cultural orientations” in the genesis of revolutions.

In the first portion of his book, Eisenstadt examines patterns of change in traditional patrimonial, tribal, imperial, and city-state societies. He notes that, while many of the structural preconditions for revolutions existed in these societies, no revolutions occurred. Change did occur, at various times, in the political, social, and cultural/religious spheres; but it was not the sudden, simultaneous, all-embracing change in all these spheres that is typical of true revolutions. Eisenstadt thus distinguishes between segregative change—unconnected changes in the various cultural and institutional spheres at various times—and coalescent change, in which religious heterodoxy, political rebellion, and demands for social change tend to combine in seeking far-reaching transformation of the existing political and social regime. Only when the cultural orientation of a society predisposes it to such coalescent patterns of change is revolution likely.

What are the requisite cultural orientations? Eisenstadt states that the tendency toward coalescence is likely to be greatest in societies characterized by a cultural order that recognizes “a high level of tension between the transcendental and the mundane order, a relatively strong this-worldly orientation for resolution of this tension, and/or a high level of commitment to these orders, which are not taken as given.” Conversely, “tendencies toward a relative segregation of movements of rebellion, heterodoxy, institution-building and political protest” are pronounced in cultures where there is “either a low level of distinction and tension between the transcendental and the mundane order or a high level of distinction combined with otherworldly resolution of tension between the orders; and a low level of commitment to the sociopolitical and even the cultural order and a tendency to accept them as given” (p. 101).

Thus, for example, the great patrimonial empires and city-state societies lacked the strong tension between the transcendental and mundane orders that could generate a movement for a total restructuring of the mundane order on transcendentally “ideal” lines. Similarly,
Japan, which lacked such transcendental/mundane tension, has exhibited a strong tendency to conservative change: substantial political and social changes have occurred, but without the concomitant growth of a revolutionary ideology. Rather, traditional symbols of legitimacy and continuity with the past have been emphasized.

Eisenstadt also discusses factors influencing the outcome of revolutions. In addition to noting the impact of elites’ resources and of international pressures on the outcome of inter-elite struggles and the process of postrevolutionary institution-building, he observes that the structure of the competing revolutionary elites also influences outcomes. Where the successful revolutionary elite had, prior to the revolution, solidary ties to other elite elements and to peripheral groups, the postrevolutionary regime tended to be more open and less coercive—as in America, England, and the Netherlands. On the other hand, where the successful revolutionary elite was an “isolated elite” (the Bolsheviks in Russia and the CCP in China) a greater degree of coerciveness and monopolization of power is likely in reconstructing postrevolutionary society.

The richness of Eisenstadt’s insight into the effect of cultural orientations on political change is manifest, but a significant defect of his book should be mentioned. Eisenstadt discusses patterns of change in societies ranging from ancient empires to modern Vietnam, with commentaries on Hebrew tribal politics and on all of Asia, Europe, and Latin America. The result is necessarily a somewhat discursive, illustrative approach, with dozens of powerful and fascinating insights; but few cases of revolution are probed in depth. Despite the enormous historical learning that Eisenstadt brings to his work, the argument thus remains at a fairly abstract level. The richness of the analytical scheme and the range of cases touched on are exciting, but the reader remains curious to see how the structural and cultural elements of the scheme would be applied in an extended analysis—for example, to explain the success of the English and French Revolutions in contrast to the unsuccessful revolutions of 1848 and 1918 in Germany.

In sum, Eisenstadt’s book is rich and provocative, and makes an enormous contribution to the theory of revolution in pointing out the impact of cultural orientations. Still, a more detailed application of these ideas in one or two in-depth case studies would be of benefit, particularly elaborating the interconnection between the structural and cultural preconditions of revolution.

The process of revolution as depicted in these analyses may be con-
trasted with that of second-generation theorists. For the latter, pressures on the society from any of a number of sources created a situation of instability—widespread cognitive frustration, system disequilibrium, or intense conflict between interest groups. In such an unstable situation, elite action may stabilize the society, or a chance incident—a riot or a bad harvest—may trigger a revolution.

The third-generation theorists, however, do not consider instability as developing simply from a broad pattern of social change or events. Rather, certain structural conditions must exist prior to any pressures or social change. Then, when political and economic competition with other states places special demands or incentives on states and landlords—such as the need for increased extraction of resources, or rationalization of economic organization—such goals will be incompatible with agrarian and elite structures that restrict the state’s access to resources and constrain administrative action. In short, a “contradiction” develops between the needs of states and landlords to respond to the pressures of the international system and the range of options allowed by the agrarian and elite structures. When the crisis becomes sufficiently acute, continued resource extraction and administrative actions by the state may be sufficiently obstructed for the state to lose effective control of its armed forces. At this point—depending on the variables of peasant community structure, elite structure, and cultural orientation—the old regime may fall through decay and segregative change, or through elite and/or agrarian revolts that precipitate a full-fledged revolution.

The advantages of the third generation’s analyses vis-à-vis those of the second generation are fairly clear. First, the former has no difficulty in explaining the comparative rarity of revolutions. Though the pressures of the international political-economic system are widespread, only states with certain kinds of agrarian, state, and elite structures are likely to respond to these pressures by revolution.

Second, these structural preconditions are not as vague or as difficult to measure as the amorphous critical variables of the second-generation theorists. Paige has shown that types of agrarian structure can be utilized as a variable in the analysis of crossnational data. Moreover, elements of elite structure—such as whether or not elites have landholding interests—are simple categorical variables, subject to empirical determination. The coherence and reliability of the armed forces can also be studied quantitatively, as Russell has demonstrated. Even factors such as the resource bases of elites can be simplified, in the framework of these analyses, to categorical variables—whether or not centralized resource bases (e.g., centers of heavy industry and rail networks) exist or
not, or whether elites draw their wealth from land (e.g., England, France, China) or solely from service in state administration (e.g., Turkey and Japan). In sum, the variables of the third-generation analyses, though in some cases perhaps still in need of greater specification (e.g., "cultural orientation"), are, on the whole, much more amenable to observation than the critical variables of the second-generation analyses.

Third, the question of the timing of revolutions is greatly simplified. For the second-generation analysts, revolutions are possible any time the level of the critical variable is "too high." Thus, a sensitive indicator of when such high levels in the critical variables arise is required in order to determine when and where a revolution is likely to occur; such an indicator, as noted, has proven extremely difficult to develop. No such problem exists in the third-generation analyses. Instead of a possible brief period of instability, they stipulate that continued pressure from the international system, conjoined with certain structural characteristics, precipitates revolution. Thus, if one were to suggest (though the third-generation theorists do not explicitly do so) that, when a society has the structural preconditions for revolution and is subjected to direct military or economic pressure from more advanced states, revolution is likely to occur within fifty to a hundred years, then the timing of the major revolutions—in England in the 17th century, in America and France in the 18th century, in Central Europe in the 19th century, and in the Third World (including Russia), in the 20th century—becomes comprehensible as corresponding to the order in which these nations were confronted with sustained military-economic competition from more advanced capitalist nations.

Moreover, the problem of the elite's blindness or intransigence as an essential, abetting factor in revolutions is eliminated. Preconditions such as the agrarian social structure and the elite's privileges and control of resources have generally been in place for centuries; the goals that bring states and landlords into conflict with these structures—including increased centralization and resource extraction by states, and increased rationalization and profit-taking by landlords—are responses required by the pressures of the international political-economic system. There is no easy way out. When the states' and the landlords' responses to these pressures become incompatible with the basic elite and agrarian structures of the society, no action short of revolution is likely to resolve the crisis. Hence, the elite is not capable of forestalling revolution; depending on its resources and tactical position, it can either institute revolution from above, as in Turkey and Japan, or contend
for power during the revolutionary crisis that arises when the state loses the ability to marshal sufficient resources and coercive force to meet its financial, military, and domestic exigencies.

Finally, the range of outcomes of revolutions is not, as it is for the second-generation theorists, left unspecified, but is included as a basic part of the third-generation theorists' analyses of revolutions.

IV. The Third Generation—Criticism and Challenges

Although the analyses of the third generation provide a more sophisticated and empirically useful theory of revolutions than those of their predecessors, a number of key problems and challenges remain. The following five major challenges to the third-generation theories are not meant to constitute a comprehensive list of criticisms, but to enumerate the most active areas of controversy, as well as the most fruitful areas for further research.

1. When is a social transformation a “revolution”? Despite the schematic similarities of third-generation analyses, the theorists are sharply divided on the issue of which instances of social transformation are in fact revolutions. Skocpol lists the Chinese, French, Russian, and Mexican Revolutions. Eisenstadt, however, does not consider the Mexican Revolution to be a “true” revolution in the same sense as the French, Russian, and Chinese. Rather, he classes the Mexican Revolution as a special variant of social transformation labeled “neo-patrimonial revolutions.” Trimberger regards both the Japanese Meiji Restoration and the Turkish Revolution as “revolutions from above,” to be differentiated from the French, Russian, and Chinese “revolutions from below.” Yet Eisenstadt views the Turkish Revolution as essentially akin to the French, Russian, and Chinese, while he considers the Meiji Restoration to be an instance of non-revolutionary change. The third-generation theorists, including Paige, further differ on whether or not the Cuban, Egyptian, and Peruvian experiences of social change are instances of “true” revolution. Additional work is clearly needed to develop classifications or typologies of social and political transformations that can be widely accepted as a basis for research. Without further clarification of the defining characteristics of revolutions, the third-generation analyses of revolution will be difficult to apply to, and test against, varied instances of social change.

2. The range of cases dealt with by third-generation theorists is extremely limited. Most of the third generation's work, with the partial
exception of Eisenstadt’s, has been based on very few cases. Skocpol
builds her analysis mainly on comparative study of five instances of
social change: the French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions, the Meiji
Restoration, and the abortive German revolution of 1848. Trimberger
explicates only four cases—Egypt, Peru, Turkey, and Japan. And Paige,
though offering an excellent crossnational test of one aspect of his
theory, presents case analyses only for Peru, Angola, and Vietnam.
Eisenstadt does attempt to deal with a wide range of social change in
the West and in non-Western civilization; but his treatments of specific
cases are so brief as to fail to be true tests of his analytical scheme.

Examination of other revolutions, such as those in Bolivia, Yugos-
slavia, Ethiopia, Algeria, and recently in Nicaragua and Iran, would be
useful. The study of revolutions would also gain greatly from sharp
comparisons of the causes and effects of the revolutions examined by
these theorists with those of other kinds of political and institutional
changes—such as coups, or the communist-led revolutions “from with-
out” in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Mongo-
lia, and Korea. Susan Eckstein and Peter Evans, in an all too brief com-
parison of the effects of the Mexican Revolution and the Brazilian coups
of 1930 and 1964, have demonstrated the value of such studies.21

Undoubtedly, broadening the empirical base for such analyses will
require a substantial amount of time. However, in recent years his-
torians and anthropologists have produced a number of excellent com-
parative studies of revolution, covering early modern, late modern, and
non-Western revolutions, from the Netherlands Revolt to the Algerian
and Cuban Revolutions.22 In addition, historians have provided a sub-
stantial literature on political and social transformations in the pre-
modern world, including ancient Greece,23 Rome,24 Byzantium,25 and

21 Eckstein and Evans, “Revolution as Cataclysm and Coup: Political Transformation
and Economic Development in Mexico and Brazil,” Comparative Studies in Sociology,
1 (1978), 129-56. An effort to test the value of second- and third-generation theories in
explaining the Mexican Revolution has also recently appeared in Walter Goldfrank’s
excellent essay “Theories of Revolution and Revolution without Theory: Mexico,”
Theory and Society, vii (March 1979), 135-55.

22 Robert Forster and Jack P. Greene, eds., Preconditions of Revolution in Early
Modern Europe (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970); Wolf (fn. 18, 1966); Lawren-
ce Kaplan, ed., Revolutions: A Comparative Study, From Cromwell to Castro
(New York: Vintage Books, 1973); John Dunn, Modern Revolutions: An Introduction
to the Analysis of a Political Phenomenon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
1972).

23 Alexander Fuks, “Patterns and Types of Social-Economic Revolution in Greece
from the Fourth to the Second Century B.C.,” Ancient Society, v (1974), 51-81; W. G.


25 George Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers
Islam. If the range and validity of their analyses is to be thoroughly tested, it is incumbent upon third-generation theorists to draw upon such resources in order to provide a significant expansion of the cases subjected to detailed study.

3. Studies of the impact of agrarian structure on peasant revolutionary participation have yielded contradictory results. Although agrarian social structure is regarded by third-generation theorists as a key variable in determining the participation of peasants in revolutions, the effect of a given aspect of agrarian structure on peasant revolutionary activity is viewed differently by different authors. Paige, for example, asserts that landless peasants, not middle peasants, are most likely to engage in revolutionary action. His empirical work is further abetted in the studies by Prosterman and by Linz, which correlate landlessness with radical political behavior. Wolf and Denitch argue the opposite: their case studies of revolution in Russia, China, Algeria, Vietnam, Mexico, Cuba, and Yugoslavia show that it was precisely the middle peasants, with modest landholdings, who were the primary base for revolutionary action. Skocpol, drawing on the cases of France, Russia, and China, argues that it is not landholding that determines revolutionary action, but the structure of the peasant community as a whole. Peasant communities may have a sphere of autonomy in which peasant leaders have traditionally organized them for communal tasks, subject to coercive sanctions only from central authorities; or they may lack autonomy, and be held in check by local, landlord-maintained militia and police. According to Skocpol, the former type of community structure is conducive to revolutionary activity; the latter is not. Thus, considerable dispute exists over the elements of agrarian structure that are the critical determinants of peasant action, and on how particular structural elements—for instance, landlessness—influence peasant behavior.

4. Third-generation analyses fail to account for common features in the unfolding of the revolutionary process. Although the "natural history" school of writers on revolution from the first generation (e.g., Edwards, Brinton) did not have a broad theoretical perspective, they noted several patterns of events that seem common to revolutions: the development of an "alternative government," such as the Jacobin clubs, Soviets, CCP, Irish Sinn Fein, during the revolutionary struggle; the

27 Prosterman (fn. 19); Linz (fn. 19).
28 Wolf (fn. 18); Bogdan Denitch, "Violence and Social Change in the Yugoslav Revolution," Comparative Politics, vii (April 1976), 465-78.
presence of successive “moderate” and “radical” phases of the revolution; and the emergence of a charismatic, authoritarian leader—Cromwell, Napoleon, Lenin, Ataturk, Mao, Castro. Phenomena that occur so often in the course of revolutions seem to call for some explanation of their frequency and likelihood. The third generation largely fails to provide such explanations.

5. *Neglect of demographic data.* In Sorokin’s early work on revolution, he made a fairly thorough examination of the impact of the French and Russian Revolutions on mobility, marriage and divorce rates, birth and death rates, abortions, serious crimes, etc. All of these demographic variables were found to have been profoundly altered by the revolutions. Thus, several questions are raised: What are the effects of revolutions on the major demographic characteristics of a society? Are there any demographic trends that predict revolutions—such as trends that correlate with the increasing pressure of capitalist markets and military competition on societies? Are there any patterns of demographic characteristics associated with revolutionary crises? Wolf, for example, notes that population growth is strongly associated with the development of revolutionary situations. His data demonstrate that the population doubled and in many cases tripled over the three generations immediately preceding the revolutions in Russia, China, Algeria, Cuba, Mexico, and Vietnam. Aside from this tantalizing hint, however, there have been no attempts by recent students of revolution to link their theoretical analyses to changes in demographic variables.

Lawrence Stone once remarked that “the more historically minded of the social scientists have a great deal to offer. . . . They can ask new questions and suggest new ways of looking at old ones. They can supply new categories, and as a result may suggest new ideas.” His comments aptly describe the third-generation theorists of revolution.

29 Wolf (fn. 18, 1969), 281.
30 Stone (fn. 5), 175-76.