

Book Reviews

Jeff Goodwin, *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

H. E. Chehabi and Juan J. Linz (eds.), *Sultanistic Regimes*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.

Cynthia McClintock, *Revolutionary Movements in Latin America: El Salvador's FMLN and Peru's Shining Path*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998.

How prevalent is revolution likely to be in the future? Will there be a lot or a little? Will it be a regular feature of world politics, or an exceptional one? The three books examined here do not focus primarily on these questions. However, the arguments presented in them about why revolutions occur and/or why they succeed or fail have very different implications for the future of revolution. This essay will discuss the arguments presented in each of these books and then examine their implications for the future of revolution.

Goodwin

In *No Other Way Out*, Jeff Goodwin sees, in the cases he examined, the political structure of the state as a key indicator of whether a revolutionary movement will rise up against it and of how successful such a movement will be. According to him, the political structure of a state can be measured along three dimensions: 1) type of state organization (bureaucratic/rational or patrimonial/clientelistic); 2) type of political regime (liberal/inclusive or exclusive/repressive); and 3) infrastructural power (strong or weak).

According to Goodwin, a regime that is exclusive/repressive as well as infrastructurally weak serves to incubate revolution in both bureaucratic/rational and patrimonial/clientelistic regimes. Revolutions, though, are more likely to succeed against patrimonial/clientelistic regimes than against bureaucratic/rational ones. This is because "patrimonial states do not easily allow for the implementation of the type of initiatives that can successfully counter a popular revolutionary movement. Patrimonial states cannot

easily jettison unpopular leaders, incorporate new groups into decision-making processes (or state offices), or prosecute a counterrevolutionary war rationally or efficiently” (Goodwin 2001: 30).

What distinguishes a bureaucratic/rational regime from a patrimonial/clientelistic one? Following Max Weber, Goodwin describes appointments in the former as being “based upon achievement in a course of appropriately specialized training to positions...with clearly defined responsibilities” (11) while those in the latter are made “on the basis of political loyalty to a leader or party, kinship, ethnicity, and/or some other characteristic...that has no specific connection to the responsibilities of office” (11-12). Not only are bureaucratic states more efficient than patrimonial ones, but the latter unwittingly strengthen revolutionary movements through weakening other counterrevolutionary elites whom they see as their “chief foes” (50). Goodwin lists as examples of patrimonial regimes those of Diaz (Mexico), Chiang (China), Batista (Cuba), the Shah (Iran), Somoza (Nicaragua), and Ceausescu (Romania).

Goodwin then applies his theory to three sets of cases: 1) Southeast Asia after World War II, 2) Central America in the mid-1980s, and 3) Eastern Europe in 1989. According to Goodwin, communist revolution succeeded in Vietnam and not elsewhere in Southeast Asia “primarily because of the counterproductive policies of the French imperialists whom they confronted” (123). By contrast, the British in Malaya and the Americans in the Philippines defused communist revolution through

decolonization and democratization. In Goodwin’s terms, then, French colonial rule was patrimonial/clientelistic.

A similar process took place in Central America where revolutionaries succeeded in overthrowing the region’s one patrimonial dictatorship (that of Somoza in Nicaragua) and not the authoritarian but bureaucratic/rational ones in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. The East European revolutions of 1989 took place after Gorbachev made it clear that the USSR would not defend the clientelistic communist regimes there.

Chehabi and Linz

The contributors to *Sultanistic Regimes* examine the rise and fall of this type of government. It is clear that what they mean by “sultanistic” and what Goodwin means by “patrimonial” are essentially the same, since the two books use these terms to describe many of the same regimes, including Batista’s Cuba, Somoza’s Nicaragua, and the Shah’s Iran. However, the contributors to *Sultanistic Regimes* discuss cases that Goodwin does not pay much attention to: Trujillo’s Dominican Republic, the Duvaliers’ Haiti, and Marcos’s Philippines.

Although published three years before Goodwin’s book, *Sultanistic Regimes* is a reaction to an earlier version of his thesis which he co-authored with Theda Skocpol (*Politics & Society* 1989). As Richard Snyder, in his chapter on “Paths Out of Sultanistic Regimes,” put it:

Revolution is the path away from sultanism that has received by far the

most attention in comparative studies of sultanistic regimes. These studies, however, have tended to focus exclusively on the revolutionary cases of Somoza Debayle in Nicaragua, Batista in Cuba, and Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in Iran to show that sultanistic regimes are more likely than other types of non-democratic regimes to be overthrown by revolutionaries (67-8).

Snyder goes on to note that while a sultanistic regime may end up being replaced by a revolutionary one, it may also be replaced by an authoritarian (but not sultanistic) one as in Haiti, or even a democratic one as in the Philippines. The demise of sultanistic regimes, then, does not inevitably lead to revolution.

What determines what type of regime will arise after the downfall of a sultanistic regime? One factor Snyder identifies is the degree of autonomy the military has vis-à-vis the sultanistic ruler. The more autonomy the military has, the more likely it is that it can oust the sultan and prevent revolution. Goodwin, though, might respond with the observation that the more autonomy the military has, the more that the regime it serves is actually a bureaucratic/rational one and not a sultanistic or patrimonial one.

Snyder further suggests that “the key to understanding postsultanistic patterns of political development may often be found in historical events antecedent to the sultanistic episode” (78). In other words, countries like the Philippines that experienced democratization before the sultanistic period have the best chance of democratizing afterward, while those that had authoritarian regimes beforehand are likely to have them afterward too.

McClintock

In her book, Cynthia McClintock sought to explain the causes of the long-lasting, albeit unsuccessful, attempts at revolution in El Salvador and Peru. She argues that the causes of these two attempts at revolution were fundamentally different. In El Salvador, the cause of revolution was essentially political: frustration over the Salvadoran military’s unwillingness to allow any democratization at first, or to allow full democratization later on. Her research indicates that economic issues were not a significant cause of revolution here: those provinces where the revolutionaries were stronger were not significantly worse off than those where they were weaker.

In Peru, by contrast, virtually the opposite conditions prevailed. Poverty there was the main impetus to revolt: Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) was strongest both in the poorest regions and among the poor throughout the country. One reason Peruvians were attracted to Sendero was that, thanks to its links to the drug lords, it could pay its members much higher salaries than could the impecunious Peruvian government.

Also unlike El Salvador, the revolutionaries in Peru were not fighting against a dictatorial regime, but elected governments. Peru, then, was a case of an anti-democratic revolutionary movement fighting against a democratizing (if not fully democratic) government. In Goodwin’s terminology—and very much contrary to the theory he set forth—the fact that Peru’s political regime was liberal/inclusive did not prevent the incubation of a virulent, long-lasting revolution against it (Goodwin saw

Peru and certain other countries as an exception in a chapter he entitled, "Between Success and Failure: Persistent Insurgencies"). McClintock, though, argues that the Peruvian government came perilously close to being overthrown by Sendero.

Visions of the Future

What do the theories presented in these three books imply for the future of revolution? Goodwin explicitly argues that because the Cold War resulted in the virtual end of colonialism, the end of Soviet domination in Eastern Europe, increasing challenges to U.S. hegemony in the Third World, and most importantly, the spread of democracy to many parts of the world, revolution is no longer likely:

The coming decades are unlikely to exhibit the same scale of revolutionary conflict as the Cold War era precisely because of this striking and widespread *political* transformation. The likelihood of future revolutions...rests largely upon the future of democracy. For while we may debate the underlying causes of democratization, and the causes of the most recent wave of democratization in particular, it seems difficult to deny democracy's predominantly counterrevolutionary consequences. *No popular revolutionary movement, it bears emphasizing, has ever overthrown a consolidated democratic regime* (Goodwin 2001:300—emphasis in original).

For Goodwin, then, democracy and revolution are inversely related. The more democratic states there are, the less revolution there can be. And since he sees democracy as spreading, he necessarily sees revolution receding.

The *Sultanistic Regimes* authors do not explicitly prognosticate on the future of revolution, but their analyses suggest some implicit conclusions on this subject. They all seem to agree that, sooner or later, sultanistic regimes are destined to fall and be replaced by either a revolutionary, non-revolutionary authoritarian, or democratic regime. The case studies seem to suggest that external powers can sometimes affect which of these three paths will ultimately be taken. The United States obviously did not prevent sultanistic regimes from being replaced by revolutionary ones in Cuba, Nicaragua, or Iran. On the other hand, American foreign policy did help bring about a rapid transition from sultanism to democracy in the Philippines, and slower such transitions (via an authoritarian interlude) in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Nor was revolution the end point in Nicaragua or Iran; the former made a transition to democracy in 1990 while the latter has become more democratic and less revolutionary since 1997. Cuba is the one case examined in this book in which a revolutionary regime has remained firmly in power following the overthrow of a sultanistic one. But the story there is clearly not over.

The *Sultanistic Regimes* authors, then, also see democracy and revolution as inversely related. Democratization can forestall the replacement of a sultanistic regime by a revolutionary one. Revolutionary regimes can also democratize. And external powers can assist in these processes.

Like Goodwin, McClintock explicitly discusses the future of revolution. Her vision of this, however, is very different from his. With the

spread of democratization in Latin America, she sees politically motivated attempts at revolution against authoritarian regimes, like the one in El Salvador, as a thing of the past. Democratization, though, has by no means ended economic hardship in the region. Hence, she sees economically motivated revolution led by anti-democratic movements against democratizing governments, as in Peru, as the wave of the future. And this type of revolution will be far more difficult to deal with:

Now, however, when most countries in the region are already politically inclusive, the simple call for political opening is insufficient. At a time when free market transitions have dashed middle-class expectations and exacerbated poverty in many countries, and also when ample resources may be available to possibly fundamentalist revolutionary organizations, the determination of an appropriate response to the challenge may be extremely complex. At century's end, 'democracy'—defined as elections—is not enough to doom revolution (McClintock 1998: 312).

She sees authoritarian revolutionary movements on the rise not just in Latin America, but in the Middle East and Africa also (306). For McClintock, then, revolution and democracy are not inversely related. Instead, revolution and democratization are positively related.

Conclusion

Which of these theories is right? There appears to be an especially stark disagreement about the future of revolution between Goodwin and

the *Sultanistic Regimes* authors on the one hand and McClintock on the other. The former do not see democratization as leading to revolution while the latter does. The contradiction, though, is not complete: the Peruvian case which McClintock sees as a harbinger for the future was a case of failed revolution, and so does not violate Goodwin's observation that no popular revolutionary movement has ever overthrown a consolidated democratic regime. And even if it had, the proviso about only "consolidated" democracies not being overthrown would allow Goodwin to claim that any democratizing states that are overthrown must simply not be sufficiently consolidated. Indeed, Goodwin makes just this argument in a footnote: "Rightist movements did destroy democratic regimes in Germany, Italy, and Spain, although these regimes were of recent vintage and far from fully institutionalized" (300). The *Sultanistic Regimes* authors, for their part, simply do not discuss the possibility that democratization might lead to revolution, and so do not rule it out. Finally, while McClintock sees their diminished numbers as making them a less likely cause of revolution, she does not rule out the possibility that authoritarian regimes will foster politically motivated revolution against them in the future.

These three books, however, do give very different indications about how much revolution there will be in the future. While Goodwin and the *Sultanistic Regimes* authors predict (explicitly or implicitly) that there will be few successful revolutions in the future, McClintock predicts that there will be a lot of revolutionary activity—and that the countries ex-

periencing it will be ravaged, as Peru has been, even if these revolutions are ultimately unsuccessful.

It is, of course, impossible to tell in advance which of these visions of the future of revolution will prove correct. Indeed, theories of revolution are notoriously difficult to apply prospectively. In Goodwin's case, for example, it seems clear in retrospect that Nicaragua under Somoza was a patrimonial regime and hence succumbed to revolution while the Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Honduran regimes were sufficiently bureaucratic/rational that they did not. But can it be confidently predicted in advance whether authoritarian regimes elsewhere—such as in the Arabian Peninsula or Central Asia—are bureaucratic/rational enough to resist revolution, or are so patrimonial that they cannot? Similarly in the *Sultanistic Regimes* case, it is difficult to tell in advance whether a ruler's armed forces will prove autonomous enough to forestall a revolution. Finally, in McClintock's case, it is not always possible to tell whether a government is more authoritarian or democratic, or whether revolutionary activity against it will enhance or retard democratization. While the revolution in El Salvador was ultimately forestalled through democratization, many in the FMLN appeared not to have been fighting to democratize the regime, but to establish a Marxist revolutionary regime instead.

Yet while it may not yet be possible to tell which of these visions of the future of revolution will prove correct, the three books together appear to sketch out what the range of possibilities are. All three make important contributions to the study of

revolution as well as the debate about its future.

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James Mahoney, *The Legacies of Liberalism: Path Dependence and Political Regimes in Central America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

With this fine book and his other writings, James Mahoney joins that select few among sociologists who are clearly Latin Americanists by vocation, but whose writings do and will command the attention of *all* sociologists interested in the themes set in play here.

Some years ago, Forrest Colburn told me of an unnamed (to protect the ludicrous) political scientist who dismissed a major analysis of democracy in India as unimportant because it was...about India (subtext: not some "important" European nation). Said "scholar" might also dismiss Mahoney's book, for it is a "big" work done on "little" cases: the five nations of Central America (well, okay, the usual suspects: Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Honduras; and to find the last nation so very well studied is both rare and gratifying).

The lure and profit of such a comparative grouping are quite compelling. The lure is well established because of unified colonial administration—at one point all were part of the "Kingdom of Guatemala"—and even a brief period of confederacy after independence. Despite those commonalities, social and economic structures have varied significantly

across the five, as have their respective post-colonial trajectories, and that variety has provided much of the grist for many comparative analyses. Indeed, their five histories provide a quasi-experimental setting through which social theories can be evaluated. (If Robert Merton were penning this review, he might term them “strategic research sites.”) In terms of profit, most recent scholarly work on Central America has gone well beyond the repetitive chorus of “Costa Rica is different”—an old but still valid saw. Instead, to select two books only, crucial comparisons of three or four of these nations drive the powerful arguments of two fine, yet very different books: Jeffery Paige’s *Coffee and Power* and (much of) Jeff Goodwin’s *No Other Way Out*.

Paige asked how Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Nicaragua could move from such different class-structural beginnings through various (non-) revolutionary trajectories to arrive at rather similar late twentieth-century polities (flawed neo-liberal democracies). Mahoney seriously questions Paige’s recourse to class-structural ur-forces as his theoretical *primum mobile*, and asks us instead to take far more seriously the choices made by state actors, and the regime patterns that ensue. To adapt Weber’s idea, those political forces have acted as “historical switchmen,” and set national political trajectories along new tracks that, once in place, preclude a return to earlier (less constrained?) choice-points. Moreover, he argues that the late twentieth-century moves toward democratization by the four democratic latecomers (not Costa Rica) cannot be explained via any type of class-structural logic.

Mahoney is not engaged in any such debate with Jeff Goodwin, since they are hunting for rather different theoretical game. Goodwin’s form of argumentation would, nonetheless, draw both praise and criticism from Mahoney: praise for its careful attention to state structures and the actions of state managers, criticism for its tendency to extract (analytically) those state traits at single points in time to deploy as explanatory forces, rather than following them historically as they are transformed.

The great bulk of the book provides highly detailed narratives of events from the five nations over roughly a century and a half, but those narratives always serve his theoretical agenda. Even so, I have no sense that he is “forcing” historical data or events to fit a Procrustean bed. Indeed, where I came to an argument with severe doubts—as when he described Honduras as “foreign dominated” (by foreign corporate-agricultural interests) in a manner analytically parallel to Nicaragua (U.S. occupation for many years)—I came to be persuaded that the analogy was deep enough to hold explanatory power. At many junctures Mahoney also draws contrasts between two nations that he otherwise treats as parallel; there is a subtle, nuanced mind at work here. Along those lines of nuance, at the end he pursues a nicely judged comparison of his own analysis with the important, partly parallel researches of Barrington Moore, Jr., Gregory Luebbert, and Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier. His endnotes confirm an extraordinarily well-researched work, including a swath of dissertation sources on obscure topics. Indeed, my only real quibble with

the book involves failures of proof-reading numerous enough to annoy.

The core of his argument: each nation's state managers came to embrace "liberalism" by the later 1800s. By this he means an anti-communal, anti-corporatist, pro-market set of policies that favored the market economy over (roughly) the "moral economy." One key result was the regular, often massive, transformation of church and village landholdings into private, often elite, ownership. Most radical in such changes were Guatemala and El Salvador, least so Honduras and Nicaragua ("aborted"), while Costa Rica pursued a reformist variant. The radical and reformist variants "naturally" generated a politically weighty agrarian-cum-commercial upper class, but also a powerful centralized state (and the latter was *not* reducible to the former), while aborted liberalism left both of those collective actors largely un-gelled. But in Guatemala and El Salvador, class structures in the countryside came to be so polarized that only a powerful coercive apparatus could keep potential volcanic uprisings in check. Once all these systems were put into place (over decades), Mahoney discusses the various "aftermath" periods, including social-movement mobilization (or not) against the installed regimes, various experiments (many failed) with democracy, late-century democratization, etc. He makes a number of clever and subtle argu-

ments, at times going well against the grain of received wisdom.

Overall I am mostly—but still not utterly—persuaded by his argument that the choices state actors made were not deeply constrained by, for example, domestic class structures or international pressures. That is, in terms of Jeffrey Alexander's spectrum which slides from pure constraining structure all the way to pure agency,¹ perhaps Mahoney has moved too far in the direction of agency. But *that* contentious issue is one I look forward to pondering over a longer period of time with this book, as I reflect on the groundbreaking service Mahoney has rendered to fellow scholars.

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Note

1. To encounter his antinomies effectively put to use, see Alexander (1987).

References

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