

**PARTY POLITICS AND REVOLUTION: STABILIZATION AND
INSURRECTION**

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

Political Parties and Revolution: Stabilization and Insurrection. (May 2015)

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If a nation's political structure is heavily influenced by political parties, it will be more difficult for a successful revolution to take place unless it is through one of the major parties. Political parties offer a wide range of resources – such as monetary capital, human capital, communication, and so forth – that would give a revolutionary movement the kind of social backing that it needs to succeed. Therefore, by researching various nations' revolutions and the strength of the political parties associated with them, it will be possible to determine what exactly the correlation between political parties and revolutions is. If the findings are significant, the thesis will show that a revolution has a higher chance of success if it is entrenched in a political party, allowing for the prediction of insurrection in nations given certain political and social cues.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My professor, Michael Koch, has guided me over two semesters in how to properly conduct research and analysis. Dr. Koch's teachings have inspired me to look deeper into Political Science and he has reignited my interest in the subject.

Texas A&M University provided me with access to the necessary literature and databases to gather my data.

Many A&M professors over the years have encouraged me and guided me to becoming a better student and a better writer. While it would be too long to list all of their names here, some that have stood out have been Roger Schultz, Alfred Bendixen, and Jonathan Meer.

NOMENCLATURE

Revolution	An uprising of a people in a nation or state with the purpose of overthrowing and/or changing the current rule of law, whether by changing the current law or the current lawmakers. For the purpose of this paper, “revolution” covers civil conflicts and intra-state war.
Successful Revolution	When a revolution achieves either all or some of its goals. This accounts for peace treaties and compromises, as the revolutionary group will be given some of its demands, meaning their voice has been heard and the rule of law has been changed.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

My interest in the topic of political party-influenced revolutions came from two different sources. After taking a political science class entitled Political Parties, which I completed a ~20 page paper for honors credit, I was drawn to the topic of political parties and what kind of influence they carried on national political systems. However, after discussing the topic with several faculty members (originally involving Chinese political parties), they suggested I pursue a different topic for my undergraduate research project due to the difficulty of getting proper data from China. Delving into the concept of revolutions was stimulated during an educational excursion to Chile over Spring Break 2014. While what happened in Chile was a military coup, rather than a political revolution, seeing so much of the history and effects of the coup firsthand inspired me to look deeper into the concept of national revolutions and upheavals. My original research project was going to be based on political parties, which I blended with this new interest to make this current research project proposal. Under the advice of my faculty mentor, Dr. Michael Koch, I chose to pursue specifically political party-based revolutions, and not coups like the one in Chile.

This hypothesis of political parties supporting revolutions has supporting evidence from numerous revolutions throughout history. While the Communist Revolution in China was not exactly textbook, it goes to show how vital a political party can be to supporting a successful revolution. Revolutions like the Chinese Civil War will form the basis of the research, with a careful examination of each revolution's origins and the influence of political parties in the state

at the time of the revolution. This will allow me to draw correlations between the political party and the revolutions, determining whether or not each revolution had roots to any political party. However, as I outline in my Methods section, there are several strict criteria for what is a political revolution. For example, political revolutions cannot have interference from other nations, or be a dispute solely based off of territory. My research will carefully analyze different revolutions from across the world, ensuring that they meet the criteria and determining whether or not the revolution was successful. At the same time, I will examine the beginnings of each revolution to see if they have any base in political parties. After all of the data has been charted, I will draw correlations between the two factors (successful/unsuccessful, political parties/no political parties) and work out the percentages of each combination of the two factors. I will conclude this research paper with a look at why this correlation is significant and how exactly this can influence the future of political science.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

The analysis relied on three steps: identifying successful revolutions, determining the influence of political parties on the nations in question, and determining the correlation between the two. \ One of the most vital databases to my research was the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, which provided data on many revolutions across the world since the end of WWII, as well as helping define which conflicts met my criteria. Likewise, *The Encyclopedia of Political Revolutions* provided the backbone of determining any information not covered in the UCDP/PRIO database, such as when the political party influence began, or if it existed at all.

I started out gathering data on revolutions, whether labeled specifically as “revolutions” or by other names, such as “armed/civil conflicts” or “intra-state war”. The UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Database had four different types of “armed conflicts”, such as conflict between a state and an internal opposition group with the help of another. I utilized the PRIO database to narrow my search window down for revolutions that had no outer-state actors, keeping the conflicts purely internal. Its definition of “internal armed conflict” seemed closest to my paper’s definition of revolution, as it describes a conflict between the government of a state and internal opposition group (or groups) without international intervention.

In my search of databases to find which revolutions could be considered successful, I was not able to discover one that was: A. available and B. met the criteria I was looking for. Therefore, I was forced to go through the PRIO database and examine each revolution to determine if it fit

my paper's restrictions or not. This limited my scope of revolutions down to only those following WWII, but it provided a vast amount of information for my paper. Also, the initial dataset provided by the PRIO database had over 2,000 entries. However, many of those entries were simply additional years for each conflict (i.e. a 30-year conflict would have 30 entries). Limiting each conflict to a single, condensed entry drastically reduced the number of entries in the final dataset, even before I subjected the conflicts to my criteria.

I ensured that any data points I gleaned from the database fit the following criteria:

- I. Only internal actors (no support from abroad).
- II. Initialized outside of the military (no military coups)
- III. Involved conflicts over the government/law (no purely territorial disputes)
- IV. Resolved conflicts (no ongoing revolutions)

For the second step in the analysis, I researched each revolution's actors to determine if the revolutionary forces contained political parties or not. Political party influence was easy to identify, since nations typically require political parties to register with the government.

However, it was vital to identify if the political party had been formed before, during, or after the revolution. If it had been formed after, it was nothing more than putting a political face on whatever movement had successfully carried out the revolution. A political party formed during the revolution likewise did not meet my qualifications. The aim of this paper is to determine if a revolution is more likely to succeed if it is founded within a political party, not if it creates one.

Therefore, to meet my criteria, a political party had to have been in existence before the revolution began, and must have played a role in the revolution itself.

The final step consisted of consolidating and comparing the political party influence to the success of the revolution. Reflecting similar methods used by the PRIO database, each revolution was given a “1” if it was successful and a “0” if it was unsuccessful. Likewise, each revolution was given a “1” if it was based out of a political party, and a “0” if it was not. The completed dataset then had three columns: the name of the country, its success rating, and its political party rating.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

I decided against putting the data into graph form, since it consisted purely of 1s and 0s. Instead, I tallied the amount of results for each of the four possible outcomes: successful and party-based, successful but not party-based, unsuccessful and party-based, and unsuccessful and not party-based. Out of the data taken from the PRIO database, I got 52 separate revolutions that fit my criteria. The results are shown below in Table 1. “Success” is the variable coded as a “1” if the revolution succeeded, and coded as a “0” if it did not. “PPA” is the variable coded as a “1” if the revolution’s beginning was affiliated with a political party (or parties), and “0” if it was not. I used the column “TOTAL” to better sort my results when originally calculating the results.

Table 1

Nation	Year(s)	Insurgency Force	Success	PPA	TOTAL
Afghanistan	1978-1979	Communists	1	1	2
Algeria	1954-1962	Islamic Salvation Front	1	1	2
Angola	1974-1975	MPLA/FNLA	1	1	2
Bolivia	1952	MNR	1	1	2
Burundi	1991-1992	Palipehutu	1	1	2
China	-1946	PLA	1	1	2
Djibouti	1991-1999	FRUD	1	1	2
Iran	1978-1979	Multiple	1	1	2
Iraq	1958-1996	SCIRI	1	1	2
Nepal	1996-2006	CPN-M	1	1	2
Nicaragua	1978-1979	FSLN	1	1	2
Rwanda	1991-1994	FPR	1	1	2
Tajikistan	1992-1996	UTO	1	1	2
Thailand	1974-1982	CPT	1	1	2
Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)	1967-1979	ZAPU/ZANU/PF	1	1	2
El Salvador	1979-1991	FMLN	1	1	2

Burundi	1993-2008	CNDD/FNL/Palipehutu	1	0	1
Comoros	1989	Presidential Guard	1	0	1
Macedonia	2001	UCK	1	0	1
Romania	1989	NSF	1	0	1
Sudan	1983-2005	SPLM/A	1	0	1
Suriname	1987	SLA	1	0	1
Argentina	1974-1977	PRT/ERP	0	1	1
Bolivia	1967	ELN	0	1	1
Cameroon	1961	UPC	0	1	1
Myanmar	1948-1988	CPB	0	1	1
Nepal	1960-1962	NC	0	1	1
Pakistan	1990, 1995-1996	MQM	0	1	1
Peru	1963-1965	MIR	0	1	1
Cambodia	1967-1969	KR	0	0	0
Central African Republic	2009-2011	CPJP	0	0	0
Egypt	1993-1998	al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya	0	0	0
Eritrea	1993-2003	EJIM - AS	0	0	0
France	1961-1962	OAS	0	0	0
Greece	1946-1949	DSE	0	0	0
Guinea	2000-2001	RFDG	0	0	0
Iran	1972-2001	MEK	0	0	0
Iran	1979	APCO	0	0	0
Myanmar	1990-1994	ABSDF	0	0	0
Niger	1991-1992	FLAA	0	0	0
Niger	1997	UFRA	0	0	0
Peru	1963-1965	ELN	0	0	0
Peru	1989-1993	MRTA	0	0	0
Saudi Arabia	1979	JSM	0	0	0
Syria	1979-1982	Muslim Brotherhood	0	0	0
Togo	1986	MTD	0	0	0
Trinidad and Tobago	1990	Jamaat al-Muslimeen	0	0	0
Tunisia	1980	Résistance Armée Tunisienne	0	0	0
Turkey	1991-1992	Devrimci Sol	0	0	0
Uruguay	1972	MLN/Tupamaros	0	0	0
Uzbekistan	1999	IMU	0	0	0

Table 2 below shows the breakdown of the four different combinations of revolution/political party types, as well as the total amount of each variable in the sample size.

Table 2

	Political Party-based	Not Political Party-based	Total
Successful Revolution	16	6	22
Unsuccessful Revolution	7	22	29
Total	23	28	51

Table 3 shows the percentage chances of each event happening in proportion to the dependent and independent variables.

Table 3

	Political Party-based	Not Political Party-based
Successful Revolution	69.6%	21.4%
Unsuccessful Revolution	30.4%	78.6%
Total	100%	100%

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Table 3 allows me to conclude my hypothesis about political parties and revolutions. First, to restate the hypothesis: a revolution has a higher chance of success if it is entrenched in a political party. Comparing the results in table 3 reveals that when a revolution is based out of a political party, it will have a high chance of succeeding (70%), but a non-political party-based revolution will only have a 21% chance of succeeding. This shows that a revolution not based in a political party will be successful approximately 1 out of 5 times, while the probability of a party-based revolution succeeding is more than 2 out of 3 times. That means that if the revolutionary force is based out of a political party, they will more than double their chances of achieving their goals.

It's important to discuss why I selected such restrictive criteria that essentially limited my dataset so much. Military coups typically already have a fairly strong backing through the military, and I was looking at purely civil-born revolts, so all of the military coups were ignored in the original data set. Also, the conflict had to be over governmental/law matters, since purely territorial disputes rarely had to do with changing the rule of law. Conflicts that were over both law and land would be included, but there were none matching the other three criteria, so no joint conflicts were in the data used. Rather obviously, the revolutions had to be completed, since I was unable to properly judge if a revolution was "successful" or not if the conflict was still happening. Finally – and possibly the most limiting factor – neither side of the conflict could have direct support from abroad, or it would tend to give that side an unfair advantage over the other.

The last restriction (no external support) severely limited which revolutions I could include, and if I had not had that limitation, the amount of data in my research would have been several times higher than what it ended up being. For instance, in the Paraguayan Civil War, it initially looked like a clean case that would provide good data on revolutions (multiple parties banded together against the government). However, the government got support from the US and Argentina and was able to turn around from certain defeat to certain victory. This leads me to the point that external states may tend to sympathize with one side or the other, leading to different strategies for the insurrection forces and the government.

All of this said, the data seems to support the case that revolutions that are based out of a political party tend to have more stability when it comes to revolutions. The revolutions may not necessarily be quicker or cleaner, but they tend to be successful the majority of the time. Political parties can provide resources – most importantly, public support – for a cause that the revolution hinges upon. However, this is not to imply that all political parties are time bombs waiting to happen. After all, out of the hundreds of political parties that have existed and those that currently exist today, only a handful have been involved in revolutions, much less involved in successful revolutions. This paper isn't trying to tell us to fear political parties, but rather that political parties provide groups with the resources necessary to let their voice be heard, whether it is by revolution or by democracy.

What This Means for Political Science

Political Science has an abundance of literature on revolutions. They are a strong force that can turn a government into a dictatorship and back again, destroy the economy of a nation, and transform a state's culture for decades to come. Many papers theorize ways to predict revolutions, such as signs that can indicate when one will form, how long they will last, and what will their aftereffects be. This paper's theory – political parties support successful revolutions – fits in as another piece of the revolutionary prediction puzzle. As shown by my theory, a revolution will have a greater chance of success if it is initialized out of a political party. As specific as that is when it comes to the wide-reaching literature of revolutions, it will allow future researchers and analysts to build off of it and create larger-scale models to better predict revolutions and their actions.

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