7

Revolutionary Trajectories

Let us begin to put the approach developed in Part II to a greater test. There we settled for showing that similar mechanisms can be identified in dissimilar episodes and used to clarify causal connections within those episodes. Now we ask if the sorts of mechanisms we uncovered within those episodes can illuminate the complex processes that others have lumped together as "revolutions," "nationalism," and "democratization." We will see that they do. To make our case, we extend the comparison of episodes to very large transformations that are usually compared only to each other. Chapter 7 compares revolutionary processes and their successes and failures in late twentieth century Nicaragua and China. Chapter 8 compares state integration and disintegration in nineteenth century Italy with their counterparts in the twentieth century Soviet Union. Chapter 9 closes the trilogy by comparing processes of democratization (and sometimes of de-democratization) in nineteenth century Switzerland and twentieth century Mexico. In Chapter 10 we turn to some unanswered questions and further test the robustness of our approach by applying some combinations of mechanisms that we identified from one set of cases to others in our repertoire as well as to three entirely new episodes.

Between Origins and Outcomes in the Comparative Study of Revolution

In an influential review essay, Jack Goldstone described two early generations in studies of revolution, the first focussing on "natural histories" of revolution and the second on "structural strain" (Goldstone 1980). In the first, scholars pictured trajectories of revolution in rigid stages; while in the second, no attention was paid to process at all, with the origins of

revolutions deduced directly from underlying social strains. Goldstone went on to describe what he called a "third generation" of theory in the study of revolution – a comparative approach emphasizing the role of structural factors in the origins of revolution. Among the most important factors in that tradition were broad political, economic, and demographic changes that undermine the stability of established regimes (Goldstone 1991; Skocpol 1979).

Whether recent theoretical schools are best described as "generations" is an open question (after all, the "structural approach" to revolution goes back many generations to the work of Marx and Engels). But Goldstone's essay captured, even as it contributed to, a clear shift in orientation among scholars of revolution. It was explicitly comparative; it looked beneath the surface of events for underlying causes of revolution; it was internationally rooted; and it went beyond the question of origins to examine revolutionary outcomes. Indeed, it was one particular kind of outcome that interested both Goldstone and Skocpol – the social revolution.

This third generation of revolutionary studies accomplished much, but also left much to accomplish. For a start, its structuralist cast left little room for actors to seek to fulfill their dreams, make alliances, learn from one another, and make mistakes. Reflecting the cultural turn of the past two decades, a "fourth generation" of scholarship grants more attention to the role of human agency and cultural construction in the emergence of revolution.[1]

The attention we have given to such factors as the attribution of threat and opportunity, social appropriation, and identity shift in earlier chapters should make our sympathy to that turn obvious. But this fourth generation shared some of the same problems as the third. By narrowing attention to great social revolutions, both of them elided the factors that distinguish social revolutions from other successful revolutions, and failed to examine the transformative mechanisms that produce revolutionary outcomes out of revolutionary situations. As Goldstone points out in a more recent article, successful revolutions are not a genre apart, but share characteristics with social movements, rebellions, failed revolutions, and cycles of protest (1998).

[1] Among those stressing the need for such attention are Foran (1993), Goodwin (1994), Keddie (1995), Selbin (1993), Sewell (1985) and Wasserstrom (1995).

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This truncated conception of the central subject matter in revolutionary studies had two negative effects. First, it limited the number of systematic investigations of how revolutionary situations turn into revolutionary outcomes. Second, it conflated revolutionary origins with trajectories. A full theoretical accounting of revolutions requires answers to three progressive questions:

1. under what conditions and through what processes do viable contenders to state power emerge?
2. under what conditions and through what processes do those contenders succeed in displacing the incumbent regime?
3. under what conditions and through what processes does the ongoing struggle for control of a new state result in a social revolution?

Only the first of these questions can be examined through an analysis of revolutionary origins. To answer it, furthermore, would require a representative sample of revolutionary situations – not merely those that resulted in success. Questions 2 and 3 can only be examined by systematic attention to trajectories – that is, to what happens *after* a revolutionary situation has appeared. Moreover, they require very different samples of episodes: the first a sample of revolutionary situations (only some of which succeed) and the third by a sample of revolutionary outcomes (only some of which result in social revolutions). This chapter ignores the first question to focus on the trajectories of a successful and a failed revolution and turns its attention centrally to the processes that shape the fate of revolutionary contenders.

In pursuing this agenda, we are not without help. The few systematic comparative studies that address the question of revolutionary outcomes within a population of revolutionary situations tell a similar story: Timothy Wickham-Crowley's *Guerillas and Revolution in Latin America* (1992) and Charles Tilly's *European Revolutions, 1492–1992* (1993) both show that few successful cases result from a large sample of revolutionary situations. Wickham-Crowley's eleven revolutionary Latin American cases yielded only two revolutionary outcomes; Tilly's 709 revolutionary outcomes in European history produced no more than a score of successful ones. (Were we to turn to Question 3, we would find an even tinier proportion of transforming social revolutions.) Something must be happening – not in the origins or structural conditions but in the trajectories of contention – to produce so few successes out of so many revolutionary situations.

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When we turn to these trajectories, neither the structuralists' emphasis on origins nor the culturalists' focus on agency take us very far, for neither deals with the crucial interactions within contentious politics that result in new alignments, new identities, and the collapse of oppressive regimes. By now it will cause no surprise that we think what happens within a revolutionary trajectory can better be understood as the result of the intersection of a number of causal mechanisms. We do not offer a systematic account of all such mechanisms and their interaction in a sample of revolutionary situations. Instead, we use a paired comparison of the Nicaraguan revolution of 1979 and the Chinese student rebellion of 1989 to zero in on one process in particular: the defection of significant elements from a dominant ruling coalition. We define this process of regime defection as "a sustained process by which significant elements of a previously stable ruling coalition align with the action programs of revolutionary or other opposition groups."

We are particularly interested in regime defections that link regime allies with broadly based opposition groups. These groups, though not these alone, seem to be most involved in successful revolutions. As we will see, such a coalition emerged in Nicaragua over a decade of revolutionary politics, but was absent in China, despite a tradition in the Chinese party state of regularly using popular contention to achieve its policy goals. We will not trace every element in the protracted struggle between the regime of Anastasio Somoza Debayle and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (from here on, FSNL) or in the defeat of the Chinese student insurgency of 1989. Instead, we limit ourselves to underscoring how some key mechanisms of regime defection worked, or failed to work, emphasizing the role of contingent events within each episode and describing the revolutionary turn of the one and the revolutionary reversal of the other. Our aim is to highlight the process that produced such contrasting outcomes.

The Trajectory of Revolution in Nicaragua

The 1979 overthrow of the Somoza regime brought to an end nearly five decades of brutal, corrupt rule by the Somoza family. It also ushered in a period of significant democratization, as the Sandinistas sought – ultimately unsuccessfully – to share power with elements of the moderate anti–Somoza opposition with whom they had forged a fragile revolutionary coalition. But if the Sandinistas' hold on power was short-lived, the

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democratic reforms they instituted were not. For all its various woes (including the devastation of Hurricane Mitch) Nicaragua has become a very different and far more democratic society today than it was under the Somozas. If the 1979 regime transfer does not qualify as a true Social or Great Revolution, it nonetheless must be counted as a significant revolutionary outcome. Our task in this section is to search the history of the revolution for the dynamic processes and mechanisms that help account for how a fairly typical revolutionary situation in the context of late twentieth century Latin America developed into a successful and significant transfer of state power.

First we must establish when Nicaragua entered a revolutionary situation. We define a revolutionary situation as one involving three elements (Tilly 1993: 10):

- appearance of contenders, or coalitions of contenders, advancing exclusive competing claims to control of the state, or some segment of it
- commitment to those claims by a significant segment of the citizenry
- incapacity or unwillingness of rulers to suppress the alternative coalition and/or commitment to its claims

Though the application of this definition obviously requires further specifications (e.g., what constitutes a "significant segment of the citizenry"?), it seems clear that by 1970 the FSLN had mobilized enough popular support and shown itself to be sufficiently resilient to repressive campaigns by the National Guard to satisfy all three criteria (Black 1981; Booth 1982; Christian 1986; Farhi 1990; Parsa 1999; Vilas 1986; Wickham-Crowley 1992). Thus Nicaragua can be characterized as having lived through a revolutionary situation for the entire decade of the 1970s. But as Wickham-Crowley's comparative work makes clear, Nicaragua was hardly alone among countries in Latin America in this regard. By his accounting, Latin America produced ten other revolutionary situations in the post World War II era alone. But in only one other of these ten cases – Cuba – did the process of revolutionary contention yield a successful transfer of state power. Like Cuba, Nicaragua is the exception rather than the rule.

How do we account for this exception? The process of regime defection figures prominently, not only in most of the empirical accounts of that revolution (see Black 1981; Booth 1982; Christian 1986; Foran 1990; Parsa 1995; Selbin 1993), but in more general comparative analyses

differentiating trajectories of successful from those of unsuccessful revolutions (Dix 1984; Midlarsky and Roberts 1985; Russell 1974; Wickham-Crowley 1989, 1992). As a result, by 1979 Somoza found himself confronting a broad opposition movement composed not only of elements of the traditional left – students, labor unions, peasants, and the vanguard FSLN – but also of the country's Catholic hierarchy, the mainstream press, and much of the business elite. Among the key institutional actors who typically figure in revolutionary dramas, only the military remained substantially loyal to *somocismo*.

We want to identify the key mechanisms implicated in that process. Three mechanisms seem especially significant. They are *infringement of elite interests*, *suddenly imposed grievances*, and *decertification*. We regard these mechanisms as neither the single key to events in Nicaragua nor, more boldly, as a Rosetta Stone for decoding all revolutionary outcomes. We claim only that they played an important role in encouraging the critical process of regime defection. Other consequential mechanisms were operating as well, some of which we will mention in passing. We see our task as pushing the explanatory agenda back a step from "regime defection" to ask: "What different mixes of mechanisms shape it and with what subsequent effects?"

Mechanisms in Revolutionary Contention

If the FSLN established a viable revolutionary presence in Nicaragua in 1970, it did so without benefit of significant elite allies. Though they had expanded far beyond their humble beginnings in the early 1960s, the Sandinistas were still little more than the vanguard of a small collection of Nicaragua's most disadvantaged social groups. Moreover, as the 1970s dawned, the remote north central region of the country remained the movement's only real stronghold. More important, the FSLN attracted only a limited following among students, radical labor, and the urban poor. But by 1977 the Sandinistas would be the undisputed revolutionary wedge of a broad opposition coalition that included representatives of most of the country's elite institutions. How had this happened in a scant five to six years, when the bulk of Latin American guerilla movements failed?

Existing literature on Nicaragua suggests that the lion's share of responsibility for the wholesale defection of elite elements to the cause of the revolution resulted from the routine practices and actions of Somoza and his agents. Thus, our interpretation of the unfolding of the episode over

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the crucial decade of the 1970s resonates with the two generalizations offered by Jeff Goodwin in his stock-taking article on studies of revolutions. Writes Goodwin:

> First, most of these studies demonstrate how repressive or disruptive state practices, including putatively well-intentioned ones, may have the unintended consequence of both concentrating or fusing disparate popular grievances and focusing these on the state itself . . . Second, all of the studies examined above suggest that one type of authoritarian regime is especially vulnerable not only to the formation of strong revolutionary movements, but also to actual overthrow by such movements, namely, autonomous, corrupt, and repressive personalist dictatorships. . . . By alienating elites and middle strata as well as popular classes [he concludes] these dictatorships have become the target of broad, multiclass protest movements. [1994: 757–58]

And so it was in Nicaragua. Two of the three mechanisms described below center on the effects of Somoza's actions in driving Nicaragua's elite and middle strata into an uneasy revolutionary partnership with the Sandinistas.

Infringement of Elite Interests

Virtually all enduring regimes are rooted in relatively broad coalitions of elite actors, the alliance sustained by mutual recognition and support for each other's interests. This appears to have been true even of the Somoza regime, at least up to a certain point. Writes Black:

> From its earliest days, Somoza power had rested on the family's ability to achieve dominance within the ruling class and then reach mutually beneficial agreements – political pacts on one hand, commercial alliances on the other – with the remaining bourgeois sectors. Accepting these rules, the bourgeoisie grouped itself into BANIC and BANAMERICA [two broad commercial networks], and flourished. With their consolidation, their need for Somoza grew. Agribusiness, commerce and industry were allotted, with each group enjoying certain preserves, and the crude monopolistic control they exercised over the mass of the Nicaraguan people produced an increasingly violent class conflict which a unified bourgeoisie relied upon Somoza to suppress. [1981: 62–63]

Save for Costa Rica, in its basic contours the Nicaraguan political economy differed little from those of the other Central American countries, most of which experienced but survived revolutionary movements akin to Nicaragua's (Paige 1997, Yashar 1997). The clear implication: Gross class disparities and economic exploitation may help to trigger revolutionary situations but are clearly not sufficient in themselves to produce revolutionary

outcomes. For that to happen, the material/political interests of segments of the dominant regime coalition must be seriously compromised.

By all accounts, the decisive break came in the aftermath of the massive earthquake that leveled the capital city, Managua, on December 23, 1972 (Black 1981; Booth 1982; Christian 1986). Somoza himself described the earthquake as a "revolution of possibilities." He certainly knew what he was talking about. He exploited these possibilities with naked greed, cornering the various markets created by the rebuilding of Managua and aggressively denying to all but a few trusted cronies any share of the action. In the end, the Somoza clan exercised monopolistic control over demolition, real estate speculation, road work, and the construction of new homes and commercial buildings, the latter selling at four or five times their original value. Somoza's personal avarice and unwillingness to share the windfall created by the crisis precipitated another of even greater consequence. Black writes:

> Overnight, patterns of economic control and Somoza's relationship with the bourgeoisie were transformed. . . . The aftermath of the earthquake also introduced a new phrase into the vocabulary of the bourgeois opposition: *competencia desleal*, unfair or disloyal competition. The rules of the game, and with it the fragile consensus which held the dictatorial state together, had been broken. [1981: 59–61]

The first serious cracks in the ruling alliance appeared almost immediately following the quake, but were clearly visible by early 1973. By then the two main organizations representing elite business interests had assumed strong policy positions in opposition to the Somoza regime. The two organizations, the Superior Council of Private Initiative (Consejo Superior de la Iniciative Privada, or COSIP, later COSEP) and the Nicaraguan Development Institute (Instituto Nicaraguense de Desarrollo, or INDE), further distanced themselves from Somoza in 1974 through their cosponsorship of a convention of Nicaragua's economic elite that demanded an end to government corruption and issued a call for reforms to aid the "great dispossessed majorities." In the same year, a third major organization, UDEL, appeared and soon established itself as an even stronger opposition force than either COSIP or INDE. Cobbled together from various political and trade union groups, UDEL's stridency was attributable both to its independence from elite economic interests and the visibility and charisma of its founder and nominal leader, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, the editor of *La Prensa* and one of the very few public figures who commanded a degree of national visibility and respect.

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But despite the clear rift that had developed between the regime and key elements of the traditional ruling class, none of these organizations were prepared to call for revolution. Certainly none of them viewed the FSLN as an ally. But three more years of notorious outrages at the hands of the regime, including Somoza's imposition of a uniquely savage brand of martial law in December 1974, pushed the regime's elite opponents ever leftward. By 1977, the third year of Somoza's "state of siege," the rift between the regime and its former elite allies had become a chasm. With the imposition of new business taxes and the removal of a host of tax exemptions in the same year, the chasm grew wider still. As Booth writes,

> Most major business interests still preferred a "national unity" reform that would get rid of the Somozas but keep the basic political structure intact – including the National Guard and the PLN. . . . One key group of Nicaraguan capitalists . . . helped to broaden the revolutionary coalition and established business . . . links with the FSLN. Among them were industrialist Emilio Baltodano Pallais, lawyer businessman Dr. Joaquín Chamorro, supermarket magnate Felipe Mántica, and international banker Arturo Cruz Porras. Their contacts with and mid-1977 endorsement of the FSLN allegedly led the guerrillas' leadership to propose them along with eight others for cabinet posts in a revolutionary government. This "Group of Twelve," exposed in 1977, fled Nicaragua for safety. From exile, they began to lobby against international aid for Somoza and to organize the anti–Somoza coalition within Nicaragua. [1982: 102]

The defection of The Twelve escalated the polarization of Nicaragua's traditional ruling class. The murder of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro on January 10, 1978, marked the point of no return for many in the bourgeoisie. Having eschewed direct action to this point, COSIP, INDE, and a host of other private sector organizations took an active role in a succession of nationwide strikes and business shutdowns designed both to protest Chamorra's assassination and to force Somoza from office. Over the final sixteen months of his regime the full weight and diversity of Nicaragua's elite defections was felt by Somoza. Indeed, with most of his former elite allies arrayed against him, it was only through repression that he survived in office as long as he did.

Suddenly Imposed Grievances

In an influential 1983 article, Edward Walsh and Rex Warland introduced to social movement research the concept of "suddenly imposed grievances." The specific event to which they applied the concept was the accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant. But they felt that the

accident was but a single instance of something more general: singular events that dramatize and heighten the political salience of particular issues (in their case the perils of nuclear energy). Other examples mentioned by the authors shared the "act of God" quality of the Three Mile Island accident. The events did *not* result from purposive human activity. But it seems reasonable to broaden the concept to include purposive actions that mobilize opposition through the same mix of alarm and outrage noted by Walsh and Warland in connection with Three Mile Island.

Such actions figured prominently in Nicaragua. They must be counted as another important mechanism facilitating the regime defections so crucial to the revolutionary outcome there. As was true with the infringement of elite interests, it was Somoza and his agents who were responsible (or were believed to be responsible) for the series of "celebrated" atrocities that served to dramatize and render more salient the oppressiveness and arbitrary nature of his rule.

None of these suddenly imposed grievances was more consequential than assassination of *La Prensa* editor, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, which galvanized elite and popular opposition to the regime. The popular response to the slaying was immediate. Within hours of the murder, some 50,000 mourners/demonstrators appeared outside Chamorro's home. Two days later, during the funeral procession, angry mobs totaling 30,000 burned Plasmafersis and other Somoza-owned businesses. More important, as Paige writes,

> Chamorro's assassination was a critical turning point for the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie. He had been at the center of a dense network of Conservative Granada families and was a national symbol of opposition to Somoza. His death indicated to many members of the bourgeoisie that no one was safe. [1997: 38]

The organized expression of this broader, more militant elite opposition was the general business strike launched on January 24, 1978. Even the Conservative party, an official partner in the Somoza-led government, signaled its opposition to the regime of which it was a part by urging its members to boycott the regular municipal elections held in February of the same year.

The context, circumstances, and eventual impact of this event are similar to those that characterized the assassination discussed in Chapter 4 – the 1983 murder of Benigno Aquino in the Philippines. In the Nicaraguan case, the evidence suggests that the assassination was ordered by the owners of the firm, Plasmafersis, in retaliation for a *La Prensa* exposé

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concerning the company's export of scarce blood plasma. One of the firm's owners, Anastasio Somoza Portocarrero, was Somoza's son and likely heir to the family political dynasty. The immediate effect of the two slayings on the mobilization of popular and elite opposition to the respective regimes suggests a relatively robust causal link between a form of suddenly imposed grievance and the process of regime defection.

But for all the climactic significance of the Chamorro slaying and its aftermath, the event was not the only instance of suddenly imposed grievances during the unfolding revolutionary process. Here we note another similarity and a difference between events in the Philippines and Nicaragua. The similarity was that in both cases, the process of crossclass coalition formation was punctuated and, in large part, fueled by a succession of ill-conceived regime actions. The difference was that in the Philippines, the series of outrages began with the assassination, whereas in Nicaragua the slaying came near the end of this punctuated process. In particular, several earlier catalyzing actions were significant reference points in the rising revolutionary tide among Nicaragua's traditional elites.

The most important of these actions was Somoza's suppression of political and press freedoms during the thirty-three-month State of Siege waged by the regime. To understand the importance of Somoza's actions, it is worth remembering that a majority of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie had probably supported martial law when it was first declared in late December of 1974. For that declaration was issued in the midst of an event that shook the Nicaraguan elite to its core, even as it galvanized popular support for the FSLN. The event was the successful Sandinista raid on December 27, 1974, on a holiday party thrown by Somoza's Minister of Agriculture, José María Castillo.

That raid netted the Sandinista commandos an impressive collection of hostages drawn from the upper reaches of the regime, foreign diplomatic circles, the Somoza family, and Nicaraguan society in general. It also afforded them a national and international forum for their views, and in the end, a stunning revolutionary triumph when Somoza acceded to all of their demands, including wage increases for a broad array of workers (including his own National Guard), the release of several key political prisoners, a ransom of $2 million dollars, and safe passage to Cuba. The cheering crowds that greeted the FSLN commandos as they were transported to the airport underscored the depths of the humiliation visited upon Somoza by the raid.

For many in the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie, the raid did not so much humiliate as frighten them. Until then the insurgency in the North had been a distant concern. While opposition to Somoza's excesses had grown within their ranks, the elite still backed the regime in its war against the Sandinistas. But if fear of the FSLN prompted many affluent Nicaraguans initially to support the declaration of martial law, Somoza's blatant use of the siege to wage war – not only against peasant rebels in the North, but against moderate opposition leaders as well – quickly radicalized a good many of their followers. The dictator's intentions became clear with his arbitrary jailing of several UDEL leaders, punitive restrictions on national labor unions, and imposition of complete press censorship. In the end, the raid and resultant martial law declaration "aggravated the political crisis of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie. It delineated more clearly than ever before those sectors . . . who would ultimately stick by the dictatorship and those other bourgeois groups whose opposition would grow more outspoken" (Black 1981: 88). Instead of using the fears generated by the raid to stem the tide of elite defections, Somoza's undifferentiated reaction to it pushed elite opponents into an ever stronger, if wary, embrace of the FSLN.

Decertification

To this point we have stressed the role of Somoza and his agents in unwittingly encouraging the elite defections we think were key to the revolutionary outcome in Nicaragua. But lest we seem to argue that state actions alone shape revolutionary trajectories, let us examine a mechanism placing a very different group of actors – what we will call certifying agents – at the center of action. C*ertification* we defined in Chapter 5 as validation of actors, their performances, and their claims by external authorities. By *decertification*, we mean the withdrawal of such validation by key certifying agents. Without the support of prominent elite groups, not even the most ruthless dictatorship will long survive.

Regimes are embedded in a secondary structure of validation as well; one that links them to the international system of nation states via their relations with other regimes and transnational bodies. As we saw in Chapter 4's Yellow Revolution, withdrawal of support by significant other states commonly exerts both direct and indirect effects on the regime's stability. Direct effects range from withdrawal of vital financial or military support to imposition of severe economic sanctions to granting of aid to insurgents to direct military intervention by foreign states. Indirect effects

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center on the impact that withdrawal of foreign support has on key domestic actors. Decertification often emboldens insurgents to escalate their operations against the regime, or prompts once-supportive elite groups to abandon a regime they now view as irreparably damaged. Both kinds of effects were clearly visible in the Nicaraguan case.

Five countries' actions, over time, destabilized and effectively decertified the Somoza regime. The five are: Costa Rica, Venezuela, Panama, Mexico, and especially the United States. For its part, the United States was an unwilling ally of the Sandinistas. That is, while consistently opposed to the FSLN, the United States, under President Carter, did take several actions that clearly abetted the revolutionary process. Among these actions, the one that drew the most attention was the sharp reduction in U.S. aid to Somoza following Carter's accession to office in 1977. Reflecting the President's efforts to link foreign aid to human rights practices, U.S. economic assistance to Nicaragua was cut by 75 percent between 1974–1976 and 1977–1978 (Atkins 1977; Congressional Research Service 1979). Military aid fell by 43 percent over the same period.

These cuts had both direct and indirect effects on the stability of the regime. The direct effect of the U.S. human rights policy "was to reduce National Guard resources and to diminish the regime's military capability" (Booth 1982: 129). The indirect effects were perhaps even more important. The sharp cut in economic aid simultaneously reduced state subsidies to various key sectors while triggering a significant exodus of foreign investors from the Nicaraguan economy. The net effect of these developments was to exacerbate a mechanism – the infringement of elite interests – discussed earlier.

The growing rift between the United States and Somoza emboldened the Sandinistas. To quote Booth (1982: 129): "The rebels, meanwhile, feared less that they might have to confront the United States in combat, and became bolder as the dictatorship's political edifice crumbled." But just as the insurgents were growing more active, a second U.S. action further weakened the regime's hand in dealing with them. Under pressure from Carter, Somoza agreed, in September of 1977, to lift the thirty-three-month State of Siege he had implemented during the raid on the Castillo house. From a strictly strategic point of view, the move was clearly a mistake. While corrosive of domestic political support, the Siege had, in fact, effectively limited rebel activity. With the repressive lid off, the Sandinistas were freer to mobilize at precisely the moment the U.S./Somoza rift encouraged them to do so. In October and November of 1977 the

insurgents launched their largest and most sustained actions to date. Much the same scenario was repeated nine months later when, in June of 1978, Somoza acceded to U.S. pressure and invited the leaders of the moderate opposition – the Twelve – who had fled the country the previous year to return to the country. Again hoping to curry favor with the Carter administration, Somoza's action only backfired. No increase in U.S. aid was forthcoming and the return of los Doce touched off a tumultuous airport rally and wave of generalized unrest.

The Marcos regime depended mainly upon American support, but Nicaragua was embedded in a more complex regional structure, albeit one dominated by the United States. Among the other countries facilitating the revolutionary process, perhaps none contributed more to the decertification of the regime than Costa Rica. Motivated by a long and acrimonious history of conflict with its neighbor to the North, Costa Rica aided the revolution in a number of ways. No contribution was more important than the freedom given to the FSLN by three successive presidents to operate freely in the country's remote northern region bordering Nicaragua. There the rebels were free to operate training bases and launch strikes into Nicaragua.

Costa Rica also allowed arms shipments bound for the Sandinistas into the country from Panama, even discreetly allowing Ministry of Public Security personnel to transport the shipments directly to the rebels (Booth 1982: 131). Besides harboring FSLN guerrillas, Costa Rica also served as the home in exile for los Doce, where the group engaged freely in anti–Somoza propaganda and international fund-raising efforts. These tacit decertification efforts became official on October 23, 1978, when Costa Rica became the first country to sever diplomatic ties with the Somoza regime.

Less important, though still significant roles were played by several other countries in the effective decertification of the Somoza government. As noted above, Panama – perhaps the strangest of Sandinista bedfellows – directly assisted the insurgents by serving as the entry point and main transportation artery for arms purchased by the FSLN from Cuba and elsewhere. Under Omar Torrijos, the Panamanian government also granted asylum to the Sandinista commando team that, in an embarrassing setback for Somoza, captured the Nicaraguan National Palace in August of 1978. Torrijos also lent weapons and the promise of military assistance to Costa Rica in an effort to dissuade Nicaragua from taking military action against that country in retaliation for sheltering the FSLN.

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Venezuela and Mexico were among the region's most active and vocal opponents of the Somoza regime. For its part, Venezuela acted even earlier than Mexico, issuing its first public call for OAS (Organization of American States) sanctions against Somoza in February of 1978. Eventually, in May of 1979, Venezuela persuaded all its Andean Pact neighbors to follow its lead and sever diplomatic ties with the Somoza regime. Late in 1978, Mexico joined Venezuela in using the OAS as a forum for denouncing Somoza and calling for investigations into alleged human rights abuses. Mexico also pressed the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other financial institutions to suspend credit to Nicaragua. This range of actions by its neighbors left the Somoza regime increasingly cut off from the international sources of political, financial, and military aid so crucial to the long-term viability of small and dependent states. Just as important, the erosion of external support encouraged all of the internal dynamics our analytic narrative has highlighted.

The trajectory of the Nicaraguan revolution was exhausted neither by the general process of regime defection nor by the three mechanisms whose role in that process we have highlighted. Although we regard the occurrence of significant ruling elite defections as a powerful predictor of regime collapse, the mechanisms we have identified are neither the only ones relevant to the case nor necessarily present in all successful revolutionary outcomes. But it is difficult to imagine such outcomes in the absence of significant regime defections of the sort we have found in Nicaragua. We illustrate this claim by reference to a dramatic case of failed revolution.

Contentious Politics in China 1973–1989

It would be hard to imagine a revolutionary situation coming to any more abrupt or public a failure than the 1989 Chinese student movement. In the full glare of international media attention, the climactic crackdown of June 3–4 effectively resolved any questions concerning the capacity of the Communist hardliners to govern – even as it provoked worldwide condemnation of their behavior. For all the publicity attendant upon the events of 1989, however, surprisingly little in the way of systematic scholarly analysis of the origins and dynamics of the movement has been produced to date (but see, Black and Munro 1993; Calhoun 1994; Wasserstrom 1991; Zhao 1997, 1998, 2000). Moreover, most academic work on this episode has focused exclusively on the events of spring 1989

and ultimately the decision of Chinese leaders to repress the demonstrators. Our approach differs in two main ways:

- we begin by examining the links between elite factional conflict and mass mobilization – to allow us to investigate the role played by coalitional politics between these levels
- we place the 1989 events in the context of the broader history of factional conflict that followed the "restoration" of Deng Xiaoping in 1973 and the series of popular movements that preceded the 1989 student movement; this ongoing conflict gave the movements life

Let us begin with a brief historical account of this broader period and then turn our attention to the events of 1989 proper. We focus on the interaction of elite and mass contention.

Elite and Popular Contention in China

Throughout this volume we have stressed the inextricable link between elite and popular contention. This relationship is reciprocal in nature. Not only do most instances of popular contention grow out of temporally prior episodes of elite conflict; the latter have the capacity to influence these episodes and significantly reshape the broader systems of institutionalized power in which they occur.

While the linkage between elite and popular contention is a ubiquitous feature of social life, its strength varies from polity to polity. Earlier we sought to differentiate regimes along two dimensions: state capacity and protected consultation. All things equal, we expect the relationship between elite and popular contention to be stronger in high-capacity than in low-capacity states, and greater in less than in more democratic states. Combining these dimensions yields an especially stark prediction: *Elite and popular contention will couple most tightly in high-capacity, nondemocratic regimes.* The history of "mass struggle" and factional conflict within party-state circles in China since 1949 would certainly seem to support this prediction. Indeed, within the category of high capacity, nondemocratic states, it is hard to identify a state that exemplifies the principle better than the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The link between elite and popular contention in the PRC is reinforced by two particular features of Chinese political and social life. The first concerns the interdependence of party-state relations. Even forty years after the Communist ascension to power, there was no Chinese state apart from

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the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Whoever controlled the Party effectively controlled the state. The second feature is the extraordinary degree of penetration of the party-state apparatus into most realms of Chinese society. To implement and insure conformity with their vision of a true revolutionary society, Mao and other Communist Party elites set about building a highly elaborated system of party-state control, organized hierarchically within all major segments of Chinese society (Oi 1991; Walder 1986; Walder, Li, and Treiman forthcoming). Historically, this system has served to constrain autonomous grassroots political activity, while affording Party elites at all levels an extraordinary vehicle for mobilizing popular support for all manner of state initiatives.

These two features of Chinese politics have, in turn, shaped the character of popular contention in the PRC. Quite simply, for Chinese leaders popular contention – or "mass struggle" in the Chinese lexicon – has long served as a conventional means of waging factional war against their enemies within the Party. The reasons for this are twofold. First, the extent of Party penetration into the everyday lives of ordinary citizens grants elite factions the control necessary to mobilize mass action. This accounts for the "how" of popular contention, but not the "why." *Why* would Party elites risk mobilizing the masses in the first place? Ironically, how the CCP exercises its monopoly on power constrains strategic action by Party elite. Lacking any independent political institutions (e.g., free elections, an autonomous judiciary, or independent trade unions), the Party actually has few vehicles available for resolving internal factional conflicts. The extraordinary control that Party elites enjoy over most sectors of Chinese society makes orchestrated mass struggle a logical response to the problem.

Does this mean that every instance of popular mobilization is orchestrated purposively from above? Reading the work of many Sinologists, one could be forgiven for coming to this conclusion. But in fact, the answer has to be negative. The strength and efficiency of the party-state system is variable by region, thus allowing more grassroots autonomy and greater potential for popular unrest in some areas (e.g., rural more so than urban) than in others. But even where the system is strongest and most elaborated, there is a potential for spontaneous popular mobilization. If there were not, we would be hard pressed to explain the lengths to which the party-state had to go in 1989 to restore order. Nevertheless, a baseline model of popular contention in the PRC should probably proceed on the assumption that most instances of mass action

begin life as orchestrated extensions of factional struggles among party-state elites. Certainly the major instances of popular contention one sees in the years following Deng Xiaoping's remarkable resurrection at the CCP's Tenth Congress in September 1973 would seem to conform to this model.

The April 5th Movement

Though remarkable in itself, Deng's return to prominence in 1973 hardly signaled an end to factional conflict within the Party. Instead the period 1973–1977 was marked by a tense war of nerves as Deng, Premier Zhou Enlai, and other Party pragmatists struggled at all levels to regain control of the party-state from the Maoist zealots – especially the so-called Gang of Four – who had gained ascendance during the Cultural Revolution. Until Mao's death in September 1976 the outcome of this intense factional struggle was very much in doubt. In fact, on the eve of Mao's death, it appeared as if the Gang of Four was perhaps more firmly in control than it had been earlier in the period. The control of the Gang of Four appeared to have been solidified in the internecine warfare set in motion by Zhou Enlai's death in January 1976. Though second only to Mao in the Party's pantheon of revolutionary heroes, Zhou's death occasioned none of the solemn mourning and funeral services normally reserved for high-ranking Party officials. The reason: As the very embodiment of pragmatic party politics, Zhou had long been anathema to the Gang of Four.

Elite and popular discontent with the shabby treatment accorded Zhou's death was crystallized on March 25, 1976, when the official Shanghai daily, *Wenhui Bao*, attacked Zhou as a "capitalist roader".[2] Aided by students, workers, and others angered by this attack, Deng's faction struck back. Students and workers in Nanjing took to the streets the day after the attack and sustained protest for nearly a week. Events unfolded a bit later in Beijing, facilitated by the portentous approach of Qing Ming, China's traditional festival honoring the dead. Though official pronouncements railed against the "superstitious affair" and barred workers from taking part in unauthorized mourning ceremonies, the first day of the festival, April 4, saw hundreds of thousands of demonstrators take to

[2] A rhetorical staple of antirightist campaigns, the term "capitalist roader," is used to impugn those who have strayed from the revolutionary path and are suspected of harboring bourgeois or capitalist tendencies.

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Tiananmen Square in an outpouring of grief and affection for Zhou and, as the day wore on, increasingly open opposition to the Gang of Four.

The episode escalated dramatically on April 5, 1976, following overnight removal by security forces of the wreaths and tributes the demonstrators had laid at the foot of the Monument to the People's Heroes the previous day. Angered by the action, a crowd of perhaps 10,000 to 15,000 people demanded the return of the wreaths and tributes, and then defied repeated orders to disperse, forcing the Public Security Bureau to clear the square through a series of pitched battles that stretched well into the evening. Official reaction to this first Tiananmen Incident was quick, reflecting in unmistakable terms the close connection between popular contention and the struggle for control of the Party and Chinese state. In a carefully worded statement issued on the night of April 5, Beijing's hardline mayor identified Deng Xiaoping as the "black hand" behind the protest.

Within days of the incident, Deng was once again stripped of all his official posts. However, this second banishment was to prove much shorter than the first. Mao himself died in September 1976 and Deng's pragmatic faction regained the upper hand. Barely a month after Mao's death, the Gang of Four was arrested and subsequently tried in connection with their actions during the Cultural Revolution. Still, reflecting the hierarchical nature of party-state control, Maoist hardliners remained in positions of power throughout the country. What followed in 1977–1978 was a concerted campaign by Deng's faction to root out the Maoists and to reassert broad ideological control over Chinese society. This latter aspect of the campaign involved a dramatic rewriting of recent political history in China.

In the summer of 1978, scores of political prisoners jailed by the Gang of Four were released. Some 200,000 people persecuted during the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957 were officially rehabilitated. Next the Party turned to rectifying the position of the protesters in the wake of Zhou Enlai's death. First the Nanjing protests received official praise. Then came the stunning climax of the campaign. On November 15, 1978, the Party resolved that the Tiananmen protests had been

> "a wholly revolutionary action of the masses" against the Gang of Four. For the first time since 1949 the Party had given its blessing to a spontaneous popular action free of official control. "Long live the people!" was the headline of the *People's Daily* editorial. . . . The April Fifth . . . [protesters], wrote the editors, had prevented China from "being turned into a fascist state manipulated by a handful of ambitious leaders." Yesterday's bad elements became today's heroes. [Black and Munro 1993: 40–41]

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The authors' claim that the April 5th Movement was "a spontaneous popular action free of official control" may well understate the involvement of Deng's faction in the 1976 demonstrations. Still, the reality of those protests was less significant to democratic elements in Chinese society than the state's reversal of official opinion. In seeming to embrace popular democratic action, Party pragmatists not only delivered a stinging rebuke to their Maoist enemies within the Party, but gave aid and comfort to those who hoped to see Deng's fiscal measures matched by limited political reforms. Ironically, the symbolic end of one conflict marked the beginning of another, this one pitting Party pragmatists against an embryonic democratic movement set in motion by Deng's reforms and his opportunistic embrace of popular protest.

In this struggle, Deng must be credited with a role similar to the one played by Mao in the Cultural Revolution. Deng facilitated the rise of the democratic movement, using it as a weapon in his struggle with hardline Maoist elements within the Party. But wary of real political reform, Deng was at best opportunistic in his response to the movement, encouraging it when it seemed useful to his broader modernizing agenda, but countenancing repression when the movement appeared to threaten the stability of Party rule in China.

The Democracy Wall Movement

This oscillating pattern of elite facilitation and repression is evident in regard to the major democratic moments preceding the 1989 events. The first of these was clearly set in motion by – if it was not an intentional extension of – the climactic anti–Maoist campaign of 1978. Quickly dubbed the Democracy Wall movement, the episode began in earnest just four days after the November 15 *People's Daily* editorial, when a wall poster appeared in the Xidan area of Beijing daring to criticize Mao himself for errors committed in his later years. The brazenness of the poster and the unusual restraint shown by the authorities in dealing with the criticism ushered in a extended period of public debate and dissent. Posters proliferated at Xidan. On November 27, 1978, demonstrators occupied Tiananmen Square for two days of wide-ranging debate and public speech making.

In early December, independent publications began to be offered for sale at Xidan. Though tame by western standards, the magazines and other publications were unprecedented in the People's Republic, creating new

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avenues for public expression and criticism of established policies. So why were the magazines allowed to survive? The apparent answer again highlights the close connection between elite and popular contention. If the ongoing struggle between Deng's reform faction and Maoist hardliners within the Party encouraged the movement in the first place, the movement in turn appears to have been used, at least initially, by Deng to aid and abet his reform agenda.

More specifically, the protests of late 1978 and early 1979 occurred in the context of two events key to Deng's program and long-term political survival. The first was the Party's Third Plenum in mid–December, 1978, at which Deng was able to solidify his hold on power, in part by drawing on the demonstration of popular support afforded him by the movement. Even more momentous was Deng's historic visit to the United States in January to February 1979, a visit taken to demonstrate his country's pragmatic opening to the West. The visit proved a triumph for Deng, in part because the restraint shown the Democracy Wall movement by the Party helped reassure a skeptical Congress and foreign policy establishment of China's willingness to grant limited political reforms.

With these two events behind him, Deng tacked leftward, both to rein in the movement and to undercut the criticism of Party hardliners. On March 16, 1979, he delivered a speech that reiterated the Party's commitment to Four Cardinal Principles – the socialist road, the people's democratic dictatorship, the leadership of the Communist Party, and Marxism–Leninism–Mao Zedong Thought – and effectively set limits on the kinds of discourse and criticism the Party was prepared to tolerate. Within a matter of days, authorities arrested two of the Movement's most radical leaders (Wei Jingsheng and Ren Wanding) for failing to heed the warnings implicit in Deng's speech. Over the spring, authorities kept a tight reign on the movement; by summer, "the Wall itself was closed down and an alternative venue provided in a park far from the city center where all posters had to be registered with the authorities and their contents approved in advance" (Black and Munro 1993: 52). The movement soldiered on into the fall but, saddled with these new constraints, it was never again a force of any significance.

The Gengshen Reform Period

Popular mobilization developed for a second time in late 1980 following Deng's announcement of his Gengshen reforms.

> The centerpiece of the Gengshen program [write Black and Munro] was the 1980 election campaign. Deng explained that the newly elected Congresses were part of "a system of mass supervision so that the masses and ordinary Party members can supervise cadres, especially the leading cadres." Like Mao, Deng saw "democracy" as a useful tool for mobilizing people in support of Party policies. [Black and Munro 1993: 58]

Once again, Beijing's fragile coalition of democratic forces responded to Deng's reform initiative. In its form, no less than its timing, this latest democratic "moment" revealed the by-now familiar stimulus/response relationship between Party and popular politics. Whereas the earlier two episodes had involved little more than public expressions of protest, the 1980 movement took the form of a popular electoral campaign. Veterans of the April 5th and Democracy Wall movements, as well as other prominent reform figures, participated enthusiastically in the one month campaign season that lasted from November 3 until early December. Although few of the progressive candidates were elected, there were many in the broader democratic movement who saw the elections as a watershed for Chinese politics.

This third thaw was to prove short-lived. Within a week of the election, the Party's Central Committee went behind closed doors and hammered out an official directive (with the innocuous title of Document No. 9) outlawing all illegal organizations and publications. Concerned that the election had once again loosed worrisome democratic elements (and mindful of the Solidarity crisis then gripping Party officials in Poland) Party hardliners pushed for and got Deng's backing for the measure. Deng then used the measure to orchestrate a severe crackdown against the tattered remnants of the Democracy Wall movement and progressive election campaigns.

Beijing, December 1986

The third and final democratic episode preceding Tiananmen took the form of a brief, but intense, flurry of protest activity in December of 1986. Though the immediate precipitant to the protest was a speech on December 4th to the students of Hefei by noted astrophysicist (and Party gadfly) Fang Lizhi, the episode coincided with another high-water mark in reform influence within the Party. Earlier that year, in anticipation of the Sixth Plenum, Party officials announced a New Hundred Flowers movement to

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open up China's scholarly establishment to all manner of outside influences. At the Plenum:

> Deng himself gave the keynote speeches, resuscitating the failed "Gengshen spirit" of 1980, and Hu Yaobang [Deng's longtime protégé and designated successor] orchestrated the attack [on the hardliners]. . . . But perhaps the most outspoken of Hu Yaobang's associates was the Party's new propaganda chief, Zhu Houze. . . . Zhu was the only senior cadre who dared to tackle the thorny issue of the degree to which China should risk what the leftists called "wholesale Westernization." He told his colleagues, "No one single country or people can monopolize all the best fruits of thought, culture, and technology." Thinly coded, this meant borrowing not only the money and scientific know-how of the West, but elements of its political system too. [Black and Munro 1993: 91]

It was in this context that the student protests of December 1986 were launched. If Fang's speech provided the spark, it certainly was not one he had intended. But the students seized on one line from his speech in which he had rhetorically reminded the students that: "Democracy is not a favor bestowed from above . . . [but] won through people's own efforts."

Once under way the protests spread rapidly. By mid–December twelve cities were affected, including the key industrial city of Shanghai. With workers in that city threatening to join in, Deng again took decisive action. Ever mindful of the delicate factional balance needed to sustain his economic reforms, Deng acted to preempt the spread of what had come, in Party circles, to be known as the Polish disease. Democratic movements rooted in serious linkages between workers and students (or other elements of bourgeois reform) were to be repressed at all costs. The costs in this case included the expulsion of Fang Lizhi from the Party, the selective prosecution of activist workers, and most dramatically, the forced retirements of the Party's two most prominent reformers, Hu Yaobang and Zho Houze.

Beijing, Spring 1989

We have accorded the events of 1976–1988 as much space as we have because the 1989 movement is only comprehensible when viewed in the light of both Deng's sporadic (if opportunistic) embrace of political reform over the previous twelve years, and of the democratic episodes that greeted Deng's moves. Indeed, in most respects, the 1989 movement is very much a piece with the four previous episodes. Recall that, in its origins, that

movement resembled nothing so much as the April 5th movement. The earlier movement was set in motion by the popular expression of grief and anger that accompanied the death of Zhou Enlai and the disrespect accorded his passing by the Gang of Four and their allies. It was the death of the discredited reformer, Hu Yaobang, on April 15, 1989, that set events in motion this time. Then, as before, the movement began with thousands of ordinary Beijing citizens entering Tiananmen Square on April 16 and 17 to lay wreaths and tributes to Hu Yaobang at the foot of the Monument to the People's Heroes.

But if the origins of Beijing Spring recall the April 5th movement, there were important differences. Most significantly, the earlier movement occurred in the context of a clear factional struggle between Maoist hardliners and Deng's more pragmatic faction. Despite efforts to read a similar factional struggle into the events of 1989, the evidence for such a conflict is weak at best. We will review this evidence below. For now, the important point is that whereas the events of March to April 1976 were almost certainly encouraged – if not orchestrated – by Deng and his allies, the available evidence does not support a similar role for Zhao Ziyang, the Party's most visible reformer, in 1989.

An important logistical difference was also evident in 1989. Those who had demonstrated in 1976 never occupied the Square. But this time, fearing that security forces would once again try to remove the tributes overnight, thousands of the mourners/protesters occupied the Square on the night of the 17th to prevent the reoccurrence. The battle for Tiananmen Square and, by extension, for the Party and Chinese state had been joined.

This chapter's analytical purpose precludes a detailed accounting of the events that took place over the next seven weeks. The broad outlines of the episode are reasonably well known and available elsewhere (Black and Munro 1993; Brook 1998; Calhoun 1994; Zhao 1997, 2000). In quick summary, the students occupied the Square more or less continuously from April 17 until the climactic events of June 3–4. This seven-week period was marked by a seemingly mixed set of signals from Party officials, leading to the widespread belief among observers and demonstrators alike that a major struggle for control of the party-state was in progress. Party officials acted with uncharacteristic restraint in the days leading up to, then during the official state funeral for Hu Yaobang. Not only were the students allowed to occupy the Square throughout this period, but were permitted to cross police lines on the day of the funeral to present a petition intended for Premier Li Peng.

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Three days later, however, all restraint vanished when official Chinese television (CCTV) broadcast a strongly worded editorial (intended for publication in the April 26 *People's Daily*) from Beijing's hardline Mayor, Chen Xitong. The editorial described the movement as a planned antigovernment, antisocialist conspiracy, threatening grave consequences to all those who continued to support the protests. The editorial only angered students all the more and helped to revive the flagging movement. April 27 saw the largest demonstration to date, as an estimated 150,000 students defied the government directive and marched past the Square (Brook 1998: 31).

Having failed to short circuit the movement through intimidation, Party officials moderated their tone over the next few weeks. Drawing the most attention during this period were the two conciliatory speeches delivered by Zhao Ziyang on May 3 and 4. The second of these, to an important meeting of the Asian Development Bank, praised the students for their basic loyalty and support of the system and simultaneously urged more openness in the official Chinese media. Building on the goodwill engendered by Zhao's speeches, it looked as if the movement was winding down, with most student participants satisfied to quit the Square and accept the government's offer to engage in an official "dialogue" scheduled for May 14. With Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev scheduled to arrive the very next day for the first Sino–Soviet summit in thirty years, the apparent agreement with the students would have been welcome news to party-state officials.

Those officials – and most movement adherents – had not counted on radicalization, the resolve of a relatively small number of student activists to sustain the occupation of the Square. They did so by launching a hunger strike two days before Gorbachev's scheduled arrival. Mindful of the embarrassment and disruption that such a campaign would occasion during Gorbachev's visit, Party officials tried through intermediaries to persuade the strikers to abandon their plan and quit the Square. But the restraint shown during these negotiations further reinforced the radicals' belief that reformers were exercising considerable influence within party-state circles.

Official restraint continued throughout Gorbachev's visit. But far from confirming a major factional split within the Party, the restraint seems to have been the result of a desire on the part of state officials to see the summit come off without incident. This interpretation accords well with the government's actions on the night of May 19–20. Just a day after

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Gorbachev's departure from Beijing, a Chinese military force of at least 100,000 attempted to retake the Square by force, only to be rebuffed by citizens acting spontaneously to protect the students (Brook 1998: 70). After a tense forty-five hours of military–citizen standoffs throughout Beijing, the troops were ordered back to base. When coupled with the surreal stalemate of the next two weeks, this action lent further credence to the factional struggle interpretation. Then came the climactic events of June 3–4. On that night, troops broke through the makeshift barricades and desperate legions of Beijing citizens, who for two weeks had blocked the major roads leading to Tiananmen, and retook the Square amidst much chaos and violence (see Brook 1998: ch. 5–6 for a detailed account of the events of fateful night). The quasi-revolutionary situation ended rapidly.

The 1989 Chinese student movement displays significant linkage between elite and popular contention. Like the episodes summarized earlier, the mass mobilization that occurred during the spring of 1989 appears at first glance to have issued from elite contention. But it involves far more autonomy of the grassroots struggle than characterized earlier episodes. The movement did not stem from deep factional divisions within the Party. On the contrary, few signs of factional division emerged during the struggle. That fact helps account not only for the tragic resolution of the episode, but also for the relative political stability seen since 1989. Let us explore further the apparent contradiction between 1989's events and general characteristics of Chinese contention. We take up the connection between elite and mass action first.

Party Struggle and Mass Action

There are a number of important ways in which the 1989 movement might be seen as the product of prior elite contention. First and foremost, it developed within the broad "democratic community" nurtured by Deng's reform program and the series of popular mobilizations reviewed above. Though opposed to explicitly political reforms, Deng's modernizing vision required an expansion and liberalization of certain institutional spheres (e.g., education, state-sponsored research, and publishing). In turn, the loose networks that developed within and between these spheres facilitated the rise of an amorphous democratic community united by a desire to see China's economic reforms matched by a comparable expansion in political freedoms. Besides its functional origins in China's modernizing

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economy, the community's contentious capacity also owed much to Deng's opportunistic facilitation of the earlier democratic episodes. That is, by encouraging these prior democratic moments, Deng and his allies had fostered hope among the democrats as well as invaluable experience in the art of mass politics.

The immediate precipitant of the 1989 movement also reflects the close connection between mass and elite politics in the PRC. It was, after all, the death of the reputed reformer, Hu Yaobang, that first set the students in motion. By taking to the streets to honor Hu, the students were signaling their support for the kinds of political reforms he was thought to have favored. More important, they were also aligning themselves with Hu's presumptive political heirs, most notably Zhao Ziyang, and his principal aide Bao Tong.

In the time-honored tradition of Chinese Communist politics, for their part, Zhao, Bao and other reform minded Party officials probably did try to use the movement both to press for limited political reforms and to advance their standing within Party circles. Toward these ends, Zhao Ziyang seized the occasion of the high profile meeting of the Asian Development Bank in Beijing to deliver a keynote address in which he legitimized many of the student's concerns (e.g., official corruption), while pledging to "use democratic and legal avenues to resolve [the conflict]" (Black and Munro 1993: 167). The fact that the speech was delivered on the highly charged seventieth anniversary of the May 4 student movement only added drama and significance to Zhao's remarks.[3] In a related action several days earlier, Zhao had reversed an earlier Party directive, and authorized the editors of nine major newspapers to provide full and objective coverage of the student demonstrations, adding that the Party was sympathetic to many of the student aims. It is hard to read these actions as anything other than a set of strategic moves designed to embolden the students, galvanize broad public support for the movement, and make it more difficult for the hardliners to repress the demonstrations.

But why would Zhao play with fire in this way? Black and Munro (1993: 164) offer an explanation:

[3] On May 4, 1919, thousands of students gathered in Beijing to protest the terms of the Versailles Peace Conference and, more significantly, to call for a general societal embrace of the Western ideals of democracy and science. This unprecedented mobilization of Chinese students was subsequently appropriated by the Communists and, later, by "democratic forces," as a key event in the heritage of each.

When Zhao looked out at the crowds in the street, he saw a source of political leverage . . . a little, perhaps, as Deng Xiaoping had seen the crowds at the Democracy Wall in 1978. Zhao felt that his hand was strengthened by the coming anniversary of the May Fourth movement, which was certain to mark a new climax for the student movement. This year the date was important for another reason, too: Hundreds of international bankers would flock to the Great Hall of the People on that day to hear Zhao's keynote speech to the Asian Development Bank. He felt confident that the hard-liners would not risk a crackdown at such a time.

There is even suggestive evidence that Zhao's aide, Bao Tong, leaked word of the Party's plan to impose martial law and forcibly clear the square on May 20, thereby allowing ordinary Beijing residents time to erect barricades leading to Tiananmen Square. This advance word thwarted the Party's plan and prolonged the crisis for another two weeks. Whatever the truth of this incident, Party hard-liners certainly believed the charge and used it to imprison Bao Tong for three years for "leaking state secrets" to movement forces.

Finally, whatever the reality of the situation, in the course of the movement, observers and activists alike came to *believe* that a climactic battle was underway for control of the Party. The battle, it was believed, was being waged by reformers such as Zhao, against both Deng's pragmatists, and Maoist hard-liners still opposed to Deng's modernizing (read: capitalistic) reforms. It was in this shared and highly charged context that the movement unfolded. It was this popular view that shaped the interpretation of the mixed messages coming from the Party during the struggle, messages that in their inconsistency only reinforced the popular attribution of political opportunity to the episode.

In contrast to that view, we see little evidence of titanic factional struggle in the events of April to June. In his book, Dingxin Zhao (2000) makes a persuasive case against Party factionalism as the key to the movement. The centerpiece of Zhao's argument is a careful analysis of the backgrounds and actions of thirty-one key Party figures during the Tiananmen struggle. The thirty-one include all seventeen Politburo members at the time as well as fourteen "veterans" known in 1989 to still be highly influential in party-state circles. Zhao concludes from the data that there is little hard evidence to attribute strong reform views to anyone on the list other than Zhao Ziyang. But if not factional struggle, then how do we explain the fits and starts and mixed signals conveyed by the regime during the seven-week episode? Our answer is straightforward: Contingent events and the mechanisms they activated, not factional struggle, conspired to

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constrain party-state response to the movement at three critical points in the unfolding episode.

The first "fit" in the government's response to the crisis came between April 17 and 22 when funeral preparations and the actual ceremony prevented officials from aggressively repressing the movement. The first "start" in party-state response came in the immediate aftermath of the funeral with the April 25 broadcast of the aggressive *People's Daily* editorial. A return to a more accommodating line came during the two-week period defined by the meetings of the Asian Development Bank (May 4) and the Sino–Soviet summit (May 15–18). But the planning for the initial May 19 military crackdown was clearly already going on during Gorbachev's visit. The same applies to the climactic "invasion" of Beijing on June 3–4. As Brook (1998) argues in his authoritative book on the assault, the final lull in official response to the crisis was probably owed to nothing so much as the logistical requirements of the campaign.

Regime Defection in the Chinese Student Movement

To apply the concept of "regime defection" to China requires that we understand the distinctive way in which power is structured in the PRC. Here the contrast between China and Nicaragua is instructive. Nicaragua's ruling class had long been comprised of a fairly broad coalition of the nation's economic elite (Booth 1982; Paige 1997). Overlaid on this economic foundation were a set of nominal opposing political factions, embodied most notably in the Conservative and Liberal Nationalist (PLN) Parties. Within these overlapping spheres there had always been rivalries, tensions, and coherent divisions. Prior to the 1970s, however, these cleavages had never been so strong as to threaten the stability of the Somoza regime. But by the end of the earthquake episode and the murder of Chamorro, however, signs of elite defection were clear. By then, the regime had become more a liability than an asset to most of the ruling class. The result was the gradual defection of more and more elements of the regime's traditional ruling coalition, reluctant alignment with the Sandinistas and other opposition forces, and the eventual overthrow of Somoza.

As our analysis of factional strife in 1989 Beijing suggests, nothing resembling this pattern of defection from the regime was present there. This is not to say that the students were alone; broad segments of the Chinese population showed sympathy for the demonstrators. Among them

were small but significant groups of independent workers, a healthy representation of academics and affiliated professions, a significant, if unknown, proportion of Beijing's ordinary citizens, and, for a time, even representatives of the official Chinese media. What was crucially missing was any significant representation by the one segment of Chinese society that has, since 1949, controlled the state and, indeed, all aspects of Chinese life – the Chinese Communist Party. Though Zhao Ziyang, Bao Tong, and others within the Party clearly had sympathies with the students and tried, in various ways, to use the movement to advance their own agendas, none of the reformers can be said to have defected to the ranks of the insurgents.

Significant defections from one other segment of Chinese society might well have altered the course of the episode. We refer to the Chinese military, which remained overwhelmingly loyal to the regime during the crisis, thereby short-circuiting one of the key mechanisms evident in revolutionary outcomes. Brook explains that

> Many Democracy Movement activists in May assumed that the professionalization of the PLA officer corps, combined with appeals to noble traditions of serving the people, would inhibit the Army from coming to Li Peng's defense. . . . The error in the Chinese assumption was to neglect the decisive power of the senior officer corps. The PLA is still run by men who owe their power and allegiance to Deng Xiaoping's faction within the Communist Party. Their allegiance is not abstract; most of them personally served in Deng's Second Field Army during the 1940s. [1998: 206]

Why elite-mass solidarity failed to emerge in China is a question that is beyond the scope of this chapter. What we can say is that none of the three mechanisms invoked in accounting for the success of the Nicaraguan revolution were triggered in the events of 1989, nor indeed, over the course of the thirteen-year series of democratic moments reviewed here. If we view the Party as affording the regime its crucial social-structural foundation, the relevant question with respect to the infringement of elite interests is whether Deng's economic (or other reform) policies in any discernible way undermined the power and privilege traditionally enjoyed by Party members. The clear answer is "no."

Similarly, in stark contrast to Somoza's capacity for suddenly imposing grievances on a broad and undifferentiated range of targets, Party authorities generally avoided the kind of arbitrary and crude forms of repression and self-aggrandizing policies that were Somoza's hallmark. The Tiananmen massacre could arguably be thought of as the one exception to this

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pattern. But even here, the regime clearly tried over a period of weeks to defuse the situation without recourse to force. When it finally did make use of force, the actual loss of life was relatively small, so far as we can tell (see Black and Munro 1993: ch. 15; Brook 1998: ch. 6) suggesting a degree of restraint consistently absent in Nicaragua. Finally, despite diffuse international support for the Chinese students and scathing condemnation of the June 3–4 government crackdown, no foreign government or major international body ever decertified the regime in any significant way.

Conclusions

What else can we learn from comparing these two cases of a successful and a failed revolution? No doubt plenty. But in closing we emphasize two main factors: the first relating to the role of contingency in the dynamics of contention; and the second to the analogies between revolutionary and other contentious processes.

Contingency and Context

Against the long-standing structural bias in the field of comparative revolutions, William Sewell (1985, 1996) has called for more attention to liminal events, citing the assault on the Bastille (and the subsequent battle over the meaning of the event) as exhibit A in his case for a more "eventful" analysis of political contention. In both Nicaragua and Beijing, as we have seen repeatedly, there were, first, contingent events, second, strategic leadership decisions that sometimes had unexpected effects, and third, an intersection of causal mechanisms that led to outcomes that could not have been predicted with either structural or cultural determinism.

With respect to contingent events, two in particular constituted crucial switch points that foreclosed some paths and opened others:

- the Managua earthquake and Somoza's kleptomaniacal response to it
- the death of Hu Yaobang and the near-simultaneity to it of Gorbachev's visit

Both of these events produced sudden and unpredictable decisions, high levels of uncertainty, and new combinations of threat and opportunity. In Nicaragua the earthquake produced unprecedented opportunities for

corruption and the exercise of monopoly power. In China, Hu Yaobang's death placed severe constraints on the regime's social control options. Both responses triggered mobilization – the first through threat and the second through opportunity. The quiet mobilization of the portion of the Nicaraguan business elite that was shut out from profiting from reconstruction contracts brought many into opposition to a regime that had succored their interests in the past, while the opportunity of Hu's funeral gave the Beijing students the chance to take advantage of the state's restraint.[4]

But contingent events are not only happenstance; they trigger mechanisms that shape the subsequent dynamics of contention. Somoza's crackdown aggrieved a portion of the populace that had provided important support for his regime, thus encouraging defection by growing numbers of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie; the Chinese Party elite's hesitation to use repression for many weeks was attributed as an opportunity by the students. Both developments triggered other mechanisms: The state of seige in Nicaragua hastened the Carter administration's decertification of Somoza; while by allowing the Tiananmen conflict to stretch out for five long weeks through the Sino–Soviet summit, the Chinese leaders created an appearance of divided sovereignty, encouraging ever widening circles of popular support, but also providing time for conflicts to develop among the students.

Finally, much of the contingency unfolding in our narratives results from the concatenation of different mechanisms. In the interest in demonstrating our mechanism-and-process-based approach, we have generally left the issue of mechanism-interaction to one side. (We return to it in Chapter 10.) But even brief reflection on our two cases shows how similar mechanisms can yield very different outcomes when they combine with other mechanisms. Consider radicalization, a mechanism that we have seen in many of our episodes. The exasperation of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie combined with regime decertification by Washington that allowed a powerful crossclass coalition to develop with the lower-class-based Sandinistas. But in China, in the absence of decertification, the radicalization of a portion of the Tiananmen demonstrators weakened the coalition and helped turn a revolutionary situation into a revolutionary failure. Like

[4] As Fang Lizhi pointedly noted:

> Hu Yaobang himself wasn't that important, and the regard heaped on him was excessive. But in China, leader's death serves as an excuse for people to assemble. The Party can't very well tell the people not to mourn a Party leader! Since a funeral is the only [culturally legitimate] situation when people can assemble, you take advantage of the opportunity. [quoted in Brook 1998: 21]

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American antislavery and Spanish democratization, both episodes contained strong mechanisms of radicalization; but in the presence of other mechanisms the one led to revolutionary success and the other to revolutionary disaster.

Culture and the Comparative Study of Revolutions

This takes us to the lessons of these two stories for the comparative study of revolution. Returning to the generations of revolutionary research we sketched at the outset, we see nothing resembling the rigid stage theory of the first generation of scholars in either episode. Nor is there much trace of the structural strain identified by the second generation. Neither does the structural determinism of the third school explain in any probabilistic sense the events we have studied. Our response to the fourth generation of culturally sensitive scholarship is more nuanced. On the one hand, our brief summary of key events in both cases underscored the central importance of cultural processes and human agency in the episodes we have studied. Where we part company with our more resolutely culturalist colleagues is in asserting that history, culture, and interpretive processes operate not like external shrouds but through the interactions of the major players in each drama.

Consider the case of Tiananmen. History, culture, and international political and economic factors combined to shape the strategic interpretations and actions available to Chinese authorities. Historically, the parallels between the April 5th movement and the events following Hu Yaobang's death could not have been lost on Deng, Li Peng, and his allies. The rituals and normative conventions governing the deaths of high Party officials acted as a second set of strategic constraints on the regime. But to these historical and cultural constraints must be added the strategic aims of those in power. These interests and the political and economic relationships implicated in their realization acted as a final influence on the interpretations and actions of movement adherents and opponents alike. It was not "Chinese culture" acting as a deus ex machina, but the impact of history, culture, and strategy on the interactions of the combatants that produced the outcomes we have studied.

History, culture, and strategic calculations came together in the substantive and symbolic stakes surrounding the Sino–Soviet summit. Substantively, China hoped to put the long period of conflict with the Soviets behind it and perhaps even to take advantage of the economic

opportunities and markets expected to open up in a liberalizing USSR. But the very process of liberalization, which promised these new markets and made the summit possible, posed dangers to the regime. Much as they disparaged the Soviets for going soft on dissidence, Party officials could ill afford to appear out of step with their long-time rival. Symbolically, the stakes were high as well. Having long criticized the Soviet Union for deviating from the "true socialist path," Party officials were loath to initiate a bloody crackdown in the full media glare assured by the summit. Nothing would call into question the regime's claim to be a "true" People's state more than a massive campaign of repression directed against the people.

Revolutions are not A Single Thing. A rounded account of contentious dynamics in the Beijing episode requires us to pay simultaneous attention to long-term structural shifts (e.g., economic liberalization, regime realignment), to the cultural framing of each player's interpretations of opportunity and risk, and to the short-term strategic interaction around contingent events. But structure, culture, and strategic calculation are not outside of the mechanisms of contention but the raw material for their action and interaction. In the next two chapters, we apply this perspective to two other broad historic processes – nationalism and democratization.

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