# The Power of Counterrevolution: Elitist Origins of Political Order in Postcolonial Asia and Africa[1]

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Counterrevolutions have received far less scholarly attention than revolutions, despite their comparable importance in shaping the modern political world. This article defines counterrevolutions as collective and reactive efforts to defend the status quo and its varied range of dominant elites against a credible threat to overturn them from below. Unlike analysts who see the origins of political order lying in mass-mobilizing revolutionary parties, the authors illuminate the distinctive order-producing attributes of elite-protecting counterrevolutionary parties. A comparative-historical analysis of five former British colonies in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa elaborates the causal mechanisms through which counterrevolutions can produce exceedingly durable, although not invincible, political orders.

## FROM REVOLUTIONS TO COUNTERREVOLUTIONS

Revolutions are undeniably exciting, even intoxicating, events. This is true whether one defines them strictly, as requiring revolutionary violence and

victory, as in Sewell's (1996, p. 851) definition of revolutions as "radical transformations in political systems imposed by violent uprisings of the people" (think France, 1789), or broadly, following Goldstone (2003, p. 54), as any "effort to transform the political institutions and the justifications for political authority in a society, accompanied by . . . mass mobilization" (think Tunisia, 2011). Scholars may disagree at a definitional level as to whether revolutions can be peaceful as well as violent and unsuccessful as well as successful. Yet nobody can gainsay the perennial centrality of revolutions to comparative-historical research on divergent trajectories to the modern nation-state. The Marxian tagline that launches Skocpol's (1979, p. 3) seminal work—"Revolutions are the locomotive of history"—continues to motivate much macrosociological research on politics, both contemporary and historical.

The same cannot be said of counterrevolutions. As is usually the case in social science literatures, the problem is not one of total silence but of dramatic imbalance. In tracing the epochal effects of revolutions on constituent features of "political modernity," the most cited masterworks in the comparative-historical tradition have not entirely ignored counterrevolutions, but they have given them short shrift empirically and scant treatment theoretically. For instance, Tilly's (1964) classic study of the failed counterrevolutionary backlash in the French region of Vendee in 1793–96 is considered classic because of its quality and originality, not because it spawned any research agenda on counterrevolutionary mobilization rivaling the reams of research Tilly inspired (and himself conducted) on revolutionary mobilization.[2] It is also telling that, in his magnum opus on dictatorship and democracy, Moore (1966) focused his attentions on communist revolution (China), bourgeois revolution (France, Great Britain, and the United States), revolution from above (Japan), and even nonrevolution (India) but did not devote an empirical chapter to his most decidedly counterrevolutionary case: fascist Germany. More generally, theorists of counterrevolution have overwhelmingly focused their attentions on the (admittedly critical) cases of interwar Europe, making "counterrevolution" and "fascism" practically synonymous in comparative social science.

[2] Compare *The Vendée*'s (Tilly 1964) influence on later work to that of Tilly (1978), most notably.

This Eurocentrism is ironic and inappropriate in the extreme. In Europe, counterrevolution has left faint institutional traces because it was ultimately defeated, destroyed, and discredited: from 20th-century cases like Hitler and Mussolini, to 19th-century cases like Napoleon Bonaparte, to 18th-century cases like the Vendée. But in the postcolonial world far more than in Europe, revolutionary political forces have been crushed or coercively contained by counterrevolution rather than incorporated and accommodated in inclusive, democratic projects. Counterrevolution is thus studied in the region where it is a curious oddity, a thing of the past, and a phenomenon that produced few institutional legacies—and not in the regions where it has long been a political way of life.

This article represents an initial effort to help correct these long-standing empirical and theoretical imbalances. Our central analytical ambition is agenda correcting and, potentially, agenda setting. In what follows, we offer a definition of counterrevolutions that distinguishes them from revolutions "from below" and "from above." We argue that counterrevolutions in the postcolonial world have been distinctively and exceedingly productive of durable political order through a set of causal mechanisms that are identifiably different from those theorized to lead from revolutions to political order. While the set of causal mechanisms we posit is novel, the institution we see underpinning political order should be readily familiar: the ruling political party.[3] Whereas European counterrevolution found its ultimate expression in fascist parties, and postcolonial revolutions have been primarily motored by Leninist parties, postcolonial counterrevolution has been most durably grounded in elitist parties.[4]

These arguments are elaborated through a comparative-historical analysis of five former British colonies in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa during the pivotal global era of decolonization, roughly between the end of World War II and the end of the Cold War (ca. 1945–90): (1) Botswana and Malaysia, where durable dominant parties exhibited counterrevolutionary origins; (2) Singapore and South Africa, where dominant parties became far more durable after undergoing what we call "counterrevolutionary conversions"; and (3) Kenya, where dominant elites failed to build a durable dominant party grounded in a counterrevolutionary

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[3] For a recent attempt to reemphasize political parties in historical sociology, see de Leon, Desai, and Tugal (2015).

[4] On fascist parties, see Luebbert (1991), Mann (2004), and Riley (2010). Also see Kalyvas (1996) on Europe's Christian Democratic parties and Ziblatt's (in press) work on Europe's conservative parties that, by the definition we offer below, should perhaps in some cases be considered counterrevolutionary parties as well. Huntington (1968) remains the locus classicus in contemporary social science on Leninist parties, while Vu (2010) offers a pathbreaking recent contribution. Recent scholarship on elitist parties beyond Europe includes Loxton (2014) on Latin America, Riedl (2014) on Africa, and Thachil (2014) on India.

coalition despite confronting violent mass mobilization. This theory-generating exercise shows how counterrevolutions can produce political orders of exceeding and distinctive durability. Yet as the eventual triumph of the antiapartheid struggle in South Africa shows, counterrevolutionary political orders are not invincible—a point of urgent relevance as progressive forces across the postcolonial world confront elites seeking to contain their demands for political and social liberation.

## THE CONCEPT OF COUNTERREVOLUTION

Counterrevolutions are collective and reactive efforts to defend the status quo and its varied range of dominant elites against a credible threat to overturn them from below. Our definition is expansive but intentionally so. As with revolutions, one could adopt a broad or strict definition of counterrevolutions. Working from a strict Sewellian conception, a counterrevolution could only be witnessed after mobilized forces capture formal government power "from below" and get toppled in turn by some alliance of elites whom they originally displaced—for example, Napoleon Bonaparte's France (and Haiti), Franco's Spain, Pinochet's Chile, and al-Sisi's Egypt. Under a more capacious, Goldstonian definition, counterrevolutions would include all instances of countermobilization against revolutionary attempts, even if ultimately unsuccessful or nonviolent, to overturn the political power structure: not just the incumbents themselves but the regime through which multiple types of elites access power, prestige, and wealth. By this broader definition, Louis Napoleon's Second Empire (1848–71) would count as counterrevolutionary as surely as his uncle's First Empire (1804–14), even though it arose to prevent rather than overturn a revolution from below.

We find it useful to conceptualize counterrevolution in wider rather than narrower terms because we seek a concept that can travel across time and space, even though we fully expect that counterrevolutions will play out in informatively different ways in different world regions and eras. For scholars who prefer a strict, Sewellian definition of revolutions as necessarily entailing a major transformation of social and discursive structures, what we term counterrevolution might be more comfortably called "countermobilization." While such a conceptual adjustment would not undermine our key claims, we fear that it would short-circuit a sorely needed attempt to bring counterrevolutions more firmly into macrosociological theories of politics.

Moreover, our definition of counterrevolution does not assume that any particular social group mobilizes to do the work of counterrevolution or that counterrevolution does the bidding of the same stylized and decontextualized class across space and time (e.g., the capitalist class, from a

Marxist perspective). It merely requires that those who countermobilize share a desire to preserve and renew the existing social and political order, complete with its full and diverse array of elites, in the face of a credible threat to overturn it. Counterrevolutions are by definition elitist but not necessarily elite-led and perhaps never elite-only affairs. Tilly's classic work on the Vendée is an important reminder that nonelites may mobilize to resist political change because nonelites are as capable of prizing the status quo as those who appear to dominate them.

Thus, we neither assume nor assert that mass attachment to an elitist status quo is irrational or "falsely conscious."[5] Counterrevolutions have generated solid cross-class support where they have produced economic growth, distributed public goods, bridled radical mobilization, and built institutional foundations for political order: broadly popular accomplishments all. The upshot of a successful counterrevolution may be the survival of preexisting elites, but this does not mean the preexisting system emerges utterly unscathed or unreformed. A successful counterrevolution forces elites to, quite literally, "counter revolution" with reactive institution-building efforts, beginning but not ending with the construction of stronger coercive institutions to repress mass opposition.[6] Counterrevolution is paradoxically reactionary and forward-looking at the same time. Rather than simply standing pat in defense of the status quo, counterrevolutionary elites must "step up their game" to defeat and sideline their opponents.[7]

Perhaps the most useful way of crystallizing our definition of counterrevolution is by distinguishing the concept from revolutions both from "below" and "above." As depicted by Trimberger (1978), revolutions from above bear important similarities but are meaningfully distinct from counterrevolutions. Specifically, revolutions from above are not necessarily preceded by mass revolutionary pressures and indeed occur in the absence of meaningful mass politics, are not accompanied by significant violence, and are marked by the demotion or even destruction of preexisting socioeconomic elites. With the partial exception of significant violence, which often but not always accompanies counterrevolutions, none of Trimberger's defining features of revolutions from above are true of counterrevolutions as we define them. Most fundamentally, revolutions from above are elite defeating, while counterrevolutions are elite protecting.[8] Perhaps the most

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[5] Since we do not consider Gramscian ideological hegemony one of these parties' defining features, we find the term "dominant parties" more appropriate than "hegemonic parties."

[6] See Slater (2010) and Greitens (in press) on the growing cohesion and capacity of state coercive organizations in response to leftist mobilization in counterrevolutionary Cold War Asia.

[7] We thank Stathis Kalyvas for this apt turn of phrase.

[8] Specifically, revolutions from above typically entail the triumph of modernizing bureaucratic and military elites over traditional socioeconomic and colonial elites, whereas

striking similarity between counterrevolutions and revolutions from above is their curious combination of high world-historical importance and low social-scientific impact: neither concept has produced a robust literature to rival the literature on revolutions from below.

Since counterrevolutions only arise in the face of revolutionary pressure, their characteristics most starkly contrast with those of the revolutions they arise to defeat. If revolutions are proactive in that they involve mobilization to overturn an existing political order, counterrevolutions are reactive in countering such revolutionary mobilization.[9] Sequence is of the essence: revolutionaries are readily identifiable as "first movers" (or "first mobilizers"), while counterrevolutionaries are "second movers" (or "second mobilizers"). This brings forth a second crucial contrast: revolutions are associated with an endeavor for fundamental political change, while counterrevolutions are motivated by collective desires to preserve the status quo. Since any revolutionary notion of political change requires overturning elites, revolutions tend to be ideologically egalitarian, whereas counterrevolutions tend to be ideologically elitist.

All of this suggests that one could approach counterrevolution through a wide range of recurrent historical phenomena. For instance, one could theorize counterrevolutions through the lens of militarized repression, motivated by tragic cases such as the mass killings of suspected communists in Indonesia in the 1960s or right-wing violence against leftist rebels in El Salvador and Guatemala in the 1980s. One might also focus on counterrevolutionary cases of royal retrenchment, such as pro-monarchical reactions to mass uprisings in Europe after 1848 or the Persian Gulf since 2011. In this essay, we inquire into the origins of counterrevolutionary political orders in the postcolonial world. We seek to detail how counterrevolution comes about and to explain why counterrevolutions can produce distinctively durable political orders. We do so through a contextualized comparison of five postcolonial cases in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa during the decolonizing upheavals between the end of World War II and the end of the Cold War. In so doing, we aim to do more than rebalance the social-scientific analysis of counterrevolutions from Europe toward the postcolonial world. We trace the historical origins of a political institution that has never been systematically theorized, despite its exceptional capacity to cement a highly durable political order: the counterrevolutionary dominant party.

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counterrevolutions entail mutual protection among these three elite types (which we discuss at more length below). Many thanks to Julia Strauss for helping us refine this argument and distinction.

[9] To say that revolutions are proactive is neither to claim that they are spontaneous nor to deny that they often represent a desperate and ideologically fragmented response to state repression or collapse.

DURABLE DOMINANT PARTIES AND POLITICAL ORDER

To investigate the origins of counterrevolutionary political orders, our outcome of interest is what we term *durable dominant parties*. Social scientists commonly portray the dominant party as a source of political stability—or sclerosis—in postcolonial democracies and dictatorships alike (Huntington 1968; Geddes 1999; Slater 2003, 2010; Smith 2005; Brownlee 2007; Levitsky and Way 2010). This received wisdom is based on the impressive endurance of party-dominated regimes ranging from China to Cuba, from Mexico to Malaysia, from the Soviet Union to Singapore, from Tanzania to Taiwan, and from Venezuela to Vietnam. In democratic as well as "electoral authoritarian" regimes, dominant parties have at times gained lasting strangleholds over national politics in postcolonial settings as diverse as India, Botswana, Mozambique, Paraguay, Senegal, Cambodia, El Salvador, and South Africa. Whether one welcomes their stabilizing agendas or decries their stifling (sometimes suffocating) effects on popular inclusion, dominant parties have dramatic implications for sociopolitical life.

Counterrevolutionary political orders need not be party-dominated orders. In some regions and eras, counterrevolutions have manifested through military rather than party leadership. We suspect that military leadership of a counterrevolution will be especially likely if mass mobilizers have already seized power and must be forcibly displaced (e.g., Egypt under the Muslim Brotherhood). Military leadership is also more likely in regions where antecedent military politicization makes armed men more prominent than party apparatchiks in the political arena (e.g., most of Latin America and parts of Asia such as Indonesia and South Korea in the 1960s and 1970s). Monarchies can also serve as a powerful institutional headquarters for counterrevolution, as in so much of the post–Arab Spring Middle East. Because military and monarchical regimes have radically different ruling institutions from the ones we analyze here, they are almost certainly reproduced through causal mechanisms different from the ones we theorize below for dominant parties. For purposes of this article, we treat party formation and party dominance as overdetermined and exogenous. This is because dominant parties were ubiquitous features of the postcolonial world when independence was first gained in the aftermath of World War II: a product of international diffusion as much as domestic developments.[10]

Our dependent variable is *durable party dominance*. We do not aim to explain the origins of parties or their dominant positions. Rather, we wish

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[10] In the postcolonial world, all that was typically required for a single party to gain dominance was to be the "first mover" in decolonization politics (Zolberg 1966). Hence, the emergence and existence of dominant parties in our empirical population is no real puzzle, unlike the divergent durability of those dominant parties.

to explain the durability of parties' dominant position once they have attained it. This implies two separate concepts—dominance and durability—that must be explained and brought together into a composite outcome variable. Parties are *dominant* when they face no imminent threat of replacement from any collective challenger, including the military. Party dominance is typically indicated by various expressions of institutional control: for example, a party monopoly over political appointments and promotions, a military that is subservient to the party leadership's dictates, and tight command over the electoral arena (if one is even permitted to emerge).

Party dominance is thus a static concept and can be captured in a historical snapshot. Whether a dominant party is *durable* can only be assessed over time. It depends on more than just duration of incumbency, however. Durability is more precisely conceived as "the vector of duration (temporal length) and stability (constant outcome)" (Grzymala-Busse 2011, p. 1279). Duration of incumbency is only a partial measure of a dominant party's durability, since it tells us nothing about the stability of the party's dominance and dominion over time. This usefully reframes and refines our key question. Among the large set of parties that initially established a stranglehold on political power (i.e., dominance) in the postcolonial world, why did only some secure political stability as well as their own incumbency over a long period of time (i.e., durability)?

## FOUNDING STRUGGLES AND THE ORIGINS OF POLITICAL ORDER

For nearly half a century, social scientists have primarily looked to parties' *founding struggles* to explain the origins of their durability. For Huntington (1968), stable dominant-party systems—from Congress-dominated India to Communist-dominated China—derived from the historical origins of the dominant parties themselves: "Strong one-party systems are always the product of nationalist or revolutionary movements from below which had to fight for power" (p. 418). The raw intensity of the founding struggle determines a victorious party's eventual durability. "The more intense and prolonged the struggle for power and the deeper its ideological commitment, the greater the political stability of the one-party system which is subsequently created," Huntington argued. "One-party systems that emerge out of revolutions, consequently, are more stable than those produced by nationalist movements, and those produced by prolonged nationalist movements are more stable than those produced by movements whose struggles were brief" (p. 418).

Huntington's notion that intense founding struggles beget durable dominant parties through the causal mechanism of organized mass political participation has been enormously influential. Indeed, it has remained the preeminent explanation for party dominance as well as the starting point

for the best work on the subject for decades. For example, Smith (2005, p. 430) stresses the severity of founding power struggles in forcing rulers to build powerful party organizations as a way of overcoming "a strong and well-organized opposition." Similarly, Levitsky and Way (2012, pp. 869, 870; emphasis in original) argue that "the norms, identities, and social ties forged during periods of *sustained, violent, and ideologically-driven conflict* serve as a critical source of cohesion—and durability—in party-based authoritarian regimes."

Our analysis here builds on this "founding struggle" paradigm. But it aims to shift our attentions from the intensity of founding struggles to their distinctive types.[11] It also transcends path dependency by considering how a dominant party's durability may increase in response to subsequent contentious struggles beyond the founding one, in what we call a "counterrevolutionary conversion."

We divide dominant ruling parties into five types, depending on the conditions of political struggle attending the party's rise to power. *Nonmobilizing* dominant parties gain power without organizing a mass base or expressing consistent demands for rapid independence. *Nationalist* dominant parties mobilize a cross-class coalition in pressing for a rapid colonial withdrawal but refrain from major contentious actions as well as forceful displacement of colonial collaborators. *Nationalist-revolutionary* dominant parties use contentious mobilization to expedite colonial withdrawal and usher new indigenous elites into power to thoroughly displace old collaborationist elites. *Social-revolutionary* dominant parties seize power by decimating the social, political, and economic position of former ruling elites and introducing radically different systems for economic gain and political access. Finally, *counterrevolutionary* dominant parties collaborate with departing colonial powers to defeat leftist parties threatening not only colonial elites but the system through which indigenous elites accessed power and privilege.

From a Huntingtonian perspective, centered on mass mobilization and Leninist-style organization, the first four types of dominant parties should exhibit increasing durability as follows: (1) nonmobilizing, (2) nationalist, (3) nationalist revolutionary, and (4) social revolutionary. We take no issue with this canonical claim here. Rather, we highlight the point that Huntington and his legatees have said nothing specific about the fifth type: counterrevolutionary parties. It is our claim that, among these many kinds of founding struggles, counterrevolutions provide parties with distinctive sources of durability that other types of dominant parties tend to lack and

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[11] On the importance of assessing types and not only intensity of conflicts at the onset of new political orders, see Slater (2010).

that have yet to be systematically explored. To be sure, Smith (2005) and Levitsky and Way (2010) include counterrevolutionary parties in their analyses of dominant parties. Yet such parties' durability is depicted as arising from the sheer intensity of founding struggles, not their counterrevolutionary character. These authors thus agree that counterrevolutionary parties can be comparably durable to revolutionary parties. But they do not elaborate how and why they may be distinctively durable.[12] We argue that counterrevolutionary and revolutionary regimes exhibit similar levels but differing logics of durability.

Our argument is not that counterrevolutionary parties are uniquely durable. Revolutionary parties might at times exhibit similar or even greater durability through mechanisms of their own that have been theorized elsewhere.[13] It is that counterrevolutionary parties are distinctively durable and indeed exceedingly so. By "exceedingly," we mean that counterrevolutionary parties tend to have sources of durability that exceed those of the first three types of parties listed above (i.e., nonmobilizing, nationalist, and nationalist revolutionary). Whether they systematically exceed social-revolutionary parties can only be determined by deeper and broader empirical research. But such research must follow rather than precede the kind of detailed conceptual analysis of counterrevolution we begin to offer here.

## THE DRAMATIS PERSONAE OF COUNTERREVOLUTION

Dominant parties cannot stabilize their own dominant position, much less national politics, unless they stabilize relations among a nation's diverse elites. To be durable, a dominant party must not only absorb a broad range of political and socioeconomic elites in a formal manner, and on a national scale, into the party fold. It must integrate those elites via a coalitional logic that transcends factional considerations on a lasting basis. With a cohesive elite coalition in place and in power, prospects for political stability are excellent. Whereas theorists of revolutionary founding struggles see the institutionalization of mass politics as the primary source of political stability in the postcolonial world, we pinpoint the order-producing effects of *elite collective action*.[14] Our central thesis is that dominant parties borne of counterrevolution are likely to be exceedingly durable because counter-

[12] Similarly, Vu (2010) stresses the parallels rather than the differences between revolutionary and counterrevolutionary state building in China and South Korea.

[13] A recent statement of this position is Levitsky and Way (2012). Also see Slater (2009, pp. 234–39), in which nationalist revolutions can bolster regime durability by denying symbolic power to democratic oppositionists, as in Vietnam.

[14] Our focus on the causal importance and counterrevolutionary origins of elite collective action builds on Slater (2010).

revolutions provide an initial basis for establishing, as well as robust mechanisms for maintaining, collective action across an especially wide range of elites.

But what types of elites act collectively in such stabilizing coalitions? This will vary tremendously across time and space. Indeed, it will even vary across the five Asian and African cases we put under the microscope below. For theory-building purposes, however, we consider the effects of counterrevolutions and revolutions on the elite actors who proved central in most of the postcolonial world during the critical period of decolonization that followed World War II: (1) *colonial elites*, particularly the local agents of European empire; (2) *modernist elites*, or the relatively educated and urban segments of the indigenous population; and (3) *traditionalist elites*, or those indigenes whose elite status and hereditary command over rural social hierarchies was typically enabled by alliances with the colonial power.[15] Counterrevolutions provided an especially solid basis for lasting collective action among these colonial, modernist, and traditionalist elites. In the absence of a revolutionary threat from below, there was only a weak impetus for these three very different types of elites to coalesce.

## THE CAUSAL MECHANISMS OF COUNTERREVOLUTION

This section elaborates our theory of counterrevolutionary party building by detailing its distinctive causal mechanisms. To introduce these mechanisms in concrete form, we compare the effects of counterrevolutions with those of revolutions on elite collective action and governing institutions. We do so not to dispute the finding that revolutions may also produce durable political orders. Rather, we compare counterrevolutions to revolutions to highlight their impressive unifying and institutionalizing effects. The first three of these causal mechanisms are primarily relevant for political coalitions: (1) thoroughgoing threats, (2) class cohesion, and (3) adversarial persistence. The other three mechanisms strengthen counterrevolutionary institutions: (4) administrative continuity, (5) bourgeois taxation, and (6) capitalist growth.

### Thoroughgoing Threats

Both revolutions and counterrevolutions arise in opposition to threatening rivals. Since threats are a primary source of collective action (Evrigenis 2008; Slater 2010; LeBas 2011), this Manichaean, us-versus-them quality

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[15] Even within our small sample of five cases, these elites vary in their salience and centrality. Botswana, Kenya, and Malaysia fit the tripartite typology most cleanly, although modernist elites were more numerous in the latter two cases than in relatively rusticated Botswana.

gives both revolutionary and counterrevolutionary coalitions an advantage over coalitions arising in "ordinary times." In times of decolonization, revolutionary movements generally tried to expel one type of elite (colonial), eradicate a second (traditionalist), and forge alliances with a third (modernist), all toward the common goal of overthrowing a widely hated "old guard." Unfortunately for anticolonial revolutionaries, modernist elites would nearly always be split into factions supporting violent revolution, peaceful negotiation, and outright collaboration, while colonial and traditionalist elites would not take their impending demise lightly. It was not impossible for revolutionaries to build a new ruling coalition linking modernist elites with the masses, and essentially to construct a new elite in place of the old. But the odds against it were enormous, and the process of building an elite by crushing an elite almost inevitably left factional residues that would divide revolutionary elites both during and after the revolution.

By contrast, counterrevolutionary elites are unified by a threat that emanates from outside their elite stratum and that threatens all relevant elite types (e.g., colonial, modernist, and traditionalist) in similar and simultaneous fashion. This similarity and simultaneity leads us to dub these thoroughgoing threats. Counterrevolutions do not need to split elites to defeat the threats that face them, like revolutions typically do. To the contrary, they must unify elites to prevail. And for elites, whether modernist, traditionalist, or colonial, there is no greater threat than mass mobilization from below. Such mobilization, particularly during the decolonization era, targeted all three groups at once as revolutionaries and radical nationalists sought to establish wholly new bases for a postcolonial order. The possibility of losing their privileges provided a powerful rationale to open new dialogues among colonial, traditionalist, and modernist elites. In the absence of thoroughgoing threats, these sociologically distinctive elites had little cause for close collaboration. Unlike revolutions, counterrevolutions need not make any difficult shift from the destabilizing politics of attacking elites to the stabilizing politics of elite collective action.

Class Cohesion

Revolutionary coalitions confront an Orwellian conundrum. They gain power using the language of egalitarianism but cannot wield power in egalitarian style. After revolution, some "comrades" inevitably become "more equal than others." This problem presents itself immediately in nationalist revolutions, which typically rise to power through cross-class "united fronts." Modernist elites immediately assume a more privileged political and economic position than the mass constituencies that helped bring them to power. Intense ideological and interest-driven differences

over redistribution and other economic policies thus tend to be an instant headache for victorious nationalist-revolutionary parties. In full-blown social revolutions, by contrast, there is generally not friction between upper and lower economic classes, since the upper class is decimated. Yet over time, a privileged stratum invariably emerges from within the revolutionary vanguard. This presents an ongoing tension for revolutionary regimes and can chronically threaten the ideological hold they command over their followers.

Counterrevolutions suffer less of this tension because they produce little if any class friction. As unapologetically elitist organizations, counterrevolutionary parties do not tear themselves apart debating economic policies. Some downward redistributive policies are typically introduced (e.g., public housing, universal primary education, and sometimes land reform), but only within bounds that elites consider manageable. The uninterrupted ascendancy of modernist and traditionalist elites after the departure of colonial elites does not become a source of ideological contradiction because counterrevolutionary elites share an ideological commitment to maintaining stability above all else. Counterrevolutionary leaders are not faced with the Orwellian ideological conundrum of how to present themselves to their populations once they have become ruling elites. Counterrevolutionary parties sustain mass support through predictable provision of public goods, especially stability itself. As long as a counterrevolutionary party can provide orderly politics, its core ideological commitment is satisfied.

## Adversarial Persistence

Anticolonial revolutions seek not to marginalize their primary rivals but to expel them. This fills postrevolutionary parties with an especially fierce and unifying source of struggle. Yet the outright expulsion of colonial masters (often followed by the departure and exile of their traditionalist and modernist allies) ironically deprives revolutionary parties of their major source of cohesion. With their indigenous rivals vanquished, revolutionary leaders typically try to sustain campaigns against foreign intervention and neocolonialism. Although it was not impossible to keep the flame of anticolonial fervor alive as colonialism faded into memory, this presented an intrinsic challenge that the outright expulsion of key rivals had made unavoidable.

By contrast, elitist counterrevolutions continued to confront the rivals who had initially unified them—their mass populaces—after the counterrevolution prevailed. The leftist parties that initially inspired countermobilization might have disappeared, but the social forces from which such threatening mobilization emanated would present a daily reminder of why the counterrevolution was ostensibly necessary. This persistent everyday

interaction can provide a distinctively strong and lasting rationale for continued collective action in self-defense.

The three mechanisms just discussed all relate to the coalitional mechanisms through which counterrevolutions cement political order. We now turn to the three counterrevolutionary mechanisms that manifest themselves through institutions.

### Administrative Continuity

One of the ironies of social revolutions is that they can wind up building stronger states than the ones they destroy (Skocpol 1979). This is not generally true, however, of the nationalist revolutions that more typically toppled colonialism. Even when revolutions ultimately produce stronger states for the administrative purposes of new ruling parties, the disruptions that accompany a tumultuous colonial exit present an enormous political challenge for postcolonial rulers. Punishing "collaborators" can even mean the dismissal of every trained and experienced member of the civil service. Coping with a dramatic administrative overhaul thus represents another "cross to bear" for revolutionary parties as they strive to forge postcolonial stability.

Counterrevolutions produce little or no challenge of this sort. Close ties between local and colonial elites facilitate continuity in state administration, making the state apparatus immediately available for the party's use in its existing functional form. In cases in which colonial officials are able to work closely with the initial postcolonial rulers, the colonial state's institutions are more likely to be preserved as a valuable resource for their new masters. In some counterrevolutionary cases, colonial officials continued to serve side by side with indigenous bureaucrats after the colonial colors had been lowered for the final time. To the extent that it facilitates political stability, administrative continuity provides a distinctive advantage to counterrevolutionary regimes that is generally unavailable to their revolutionary counterparts.[16]

### Bourgeois Taxation

While social revolutions destroy any indigenous bourgeoisie, nationalist revolutions typically expropriate them. This may be a major source of regime

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[16] Vu (2010, p. 14) puts the contrast vividly: "A newly formed state in which a socialist party rises to power and inherits an imperial bureaucracy and army is an example of ideological incongruence: the radical ideology embraced by state leaders contradicts the conservative character of their apparatus. In contrast, a state in which a conservative government inherits a colonial bureaucracy and army poses no threat to, and may even augment, its ideological congruence."

strength in the short run, but in the long run, hostile relations between government and business amount to killing (or starving) the goose that lays the golden eggs. Without a functioning business class producing predictable profits that states can reliably tax for funding public goods, a major ingredient in the crafting of political stability is absent.[17] To the extent that revolutions debilitate both the bourgeoisie and the state apparatus necessary to tax it, they create lasting challenges in the quest for political order.

Counterrevolutionary parties have no such compunction about fostering the rise of a profitable business class. As trusted allies of wealthy elites, dominant party leaders can deploy the state apparatus to impose meaningful (if never expropriating) direct taxation to ensure that the counterrevolution remains reliably well financed.[18] Wealthy elites, having been threatened by the insurgency from below, can refuse to comply only with great difficulty, especially in the face of a cohesive counterrevolutionary state dead set on restoring the public fisc through significant bourgeois taxation. As we see below, counterrevolutionary parties were able to build some of the strongest tax states in the developing world, allowing them to sustain popular spending policies and patronage practices even in hard economic times.

Capitalist Growth

In the context of the Cold War that accompanied the global politics of decolonization, revolutionary and counterrevolutionary parties typically fell into opposite geopolitical camps. Revolutionary parties tended to remain non-aligned or to align with the Soviet Union. Counterrevolutionary parties typically sustained close alliances not only with their former colonial overlords but with the world's economic hegemon, the United States. From the perspective of the 1950s, 1960s, or even the 1970s, it was difficult to say which alliance pattern would be most conducive to economic growth. But by the 1980s, it had become clear that developing-world economies pursuing integration into the American-led world economy were generally achieving higher rates of growth—if often at terrible social costs—than their socialist rivals. Leninism and nationalist "united fronts" could solve the problem of political organization, but they rarely proved up to the challenge of economic sustainability.

Capitalist expansion was no guarantee of postcolonial political stability. Yet it helped finance the counterrevolution in ways that socialist-leaning

[17] This taxation can take a wide range of forms beyond classic direct income or corporate taxes, such as provident funds and other forms of forced savings.

[18] On the importance of counterrevolutionary coalitions (as this essay defines them) in making such taxation of wealthy elite allies more politically tractable, see Lieberman (2003), Slater (2010), and Flores-Macias (2014).

revolutions struggled in the Cold War context to match. It provided the material resources necessary to assuage diverse postcolonial elites, facilitating elite collective action across the modernist-traditionalist divide, which gradually became more of an urban-rural divide in postcolonial settings. Economic policies still required trade-offs. But capitalist-led growth—and, critically, the counterrevolutionary party-state's capacity to access a healthy share of the profits thereby generated—provided a steady source of funds to deliver side payments to groups that were less advantaged by economic policies. While revolutionary parties generally agonized over whether to make a "deal with the devil" by opening themselves to capitalist investment (see contemporary Cuba), counterrevolutionary parties typically found lucrative ties to the world's richest economies to be perfectly compatible with the preservation of their own positions and the system that had anointed them.

To the extent that these six mechanisms foster predictable, stable governance, they have profound consequences for counterrevolutionary dominant parties' endurance in the face of challenges to their survival. When civilian governance is stable and predictable, military actors become less likely to make a bid for power through a coup d'état (Slater, Smith, and Nair 2014).[19] To the extent that dominant parties provide relatively steady economic growth and channel valued public goods (if by no means radical redistributive policies) to ordinary citizens, they can generate ongoing mass electoral support without inviting the mass participation widely perceived as the key to durable party dominance. Counterrevolutionary parties thus possess distinctive advantages for avoiding both of the proximate causal mechanisms through which dominant ruling parties lose power: military takeover and electoral defeat.

## BEYOND PATH DEPENDENCE: COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY CONVERSIONS

Thus far we have described the distinctive mechanisms enabling the durability of dominant parties that are born counterrevolutionary. But can dominant parties also become counterrevolutionary? We transcend a purely path-dependent approach by arguing that parties can undergo a particular type of institutional conversion—a "counterrevolutionary conversion"—if confronted by a massive groundswell of domestic unrest or challenged by a

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[19] Although even durable dominant parties must continue the hard work of managing military affairs (see Wilkinson 2015), counterrevolutionary coalitions and institutions give them a critical advantage in doing so. Indeed, the same thoroughgoing threats that can bring colonial, modernist, and traditionalist elites into the same coalitional fold can have similar effects on military elites (Slater 2010).

diffusing international wave of revolutionary protest, even long after the party itself gained power.[20]

Party institutions—like all institutions—are not purely static but dynamic in a way that path-dependent models struggle to capture. This dynamism is generally of a coalitional character. Yesterday's party of radical insurgents often becomes today's party of elite power brokers. Our point is not simply that parties are natural victims to Michels's ([1911] 1962) "iron law of oligarchy." It is that newly emergent threats from below can heighten elite collective action after (as well as during) a party's initial rise to power. As Sewell (1996) tells us, contentious outbreaks are among the most likely events to transform political structures. When contentious mobilization takes the form of an event, new possibilities for political action emerge on both sides.[21] For would-be revolutionaries, new repertoires of violence and new organizational structures become available. For leaders of dominant parties, contentious crises create possibilities for new alliances and enable institutional innovations.

Combining these insights on contentious transformations of structures in general and on coalitional conversions of political parties more specifically, we argue that dominant parties can become counterrevolutionary in reaction to changes in the contentious context. If rising revolutionary mobilization threatens an initially revolutionary or nationalist dominant party, it can undergo an institutional conversion and take advantage of the distinctive causal mechanisms that make counterrevolutionary parties so durable. Therefore, tracing the origins of dominant party durability requires careful attention to the era when durability begins, not just to the era when the party begins.[22]

## CONTEXTUALIZED COMPARISONS IN POSTCOLONIAL ASIA AND AFRICA

We elaborate these arguments through a comparative-historical analysis of five cases in postcolonial Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, organized into three empirical sections. The first two sections serve as contextualized

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[20] Mahoney and Thelen (2010, pp. 17–18) portray "institutional conversion" as a scenario in which an institution comes to serve "new goals, functions, or purposes." Consistent with our coalitional logic, they argue: "In some cases, conversion results from the incorporation of new supporters or the assumption of power by a new political coalition that, rather than dismantle old institutions, uses them in new ways" (pp. 17–18).

[21] By "event," we follow Sewell (1996, p. 844) in meaning "a ramified sequence of occurrences that is immediately recognizable by contemporaries, and that results in a durable transformation of structures."

[22] Recent research centering on cases as disparate as Argentina's Peronists (Levitsky 2003) and China's communists (Tsai 2006) suggests that parties might remain robust despite—or even because of—radical shifts in their coalitional foundations.

comparisons, each pairing two similarly durable party outcomes from these two dissimilar world regions. This strategy admittedly cannot control for all imaginable rival explanations in quasi-experimental fashion. Nor can it serve as a definitive test of our hypotheses, since we generated them in part through empirical analyses of these cases. Yet the case studies should illuminate how analogous causal processes and mechanisms produced intriguingly comparable effects despite wide variation in geographical and historical context.[23]

The scope of our empirical inquiry is necessarily narrower than its potential theoretical implications. In this agenda-setting and theory-building exercise, we consider it prudent to generate and illustrate our theory through a sample of cases selected from a vast but defensibly comparable population of cases: former British colonies in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Beyond defining our broader population by world region and imperial descent, we also restrict it temporally to the pivotal global era of decolonization and the Cold War (ca. 1945–90). In this sense, while colonialism, decolonization, and Cold War dynamics are not causal variables in our account, they are the most vital elements in the world-historical context. As such, international and temporal contexts establish the boundary conditions for our contextualized comparisons.

As our cases will show, the international context into which these dominant parties emerged profoundly affected domestic politics and the possibilities for certain coalitional alignments and institutional arrangements. First, colonial elites were at the center of the action in ways that would fade after decolonization. Second, departing colonial elites typically insisted on elections to decide new leadership, prompting the development of political parties in ways that other eras lacked. Additionally, the Cold War made social revolution an especially salient threat, on the one hand, but also allowed conservative postcolonial elites in Asia and Africa to draw on unusually energetic and committed American and European geopolitical support, on the other.

Therefore, while there may have been counterrevolutionary regimes during different world-historical moments—for example, the French-backed imposition of a royal restoration to overturn Mexico's short-lived republic, Franco's quasi-fascist regime after the end of the Spanish Civil War, or the

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[23] This mechanism-centered approach thus specifies the conditions under which we expect counterrevolutions to serve as enduring sources of political stability. Our arguments are not true by definition. They are only true to the extent that (1) counterrevolutions empirically produce the mechanisms detailed and that (2) these mechanisms empirically foster lasting political stability. If further tests show either that (1) counterrevolutions do not distinctively produce these causal mechanisms or that (2) these causal mechanisms do not generate political stability, our hypotheses will confront disconfirming evidence—but of informatively different kinds.

post–Arab Spring military-dominated regime in Egypt—we do not assume that the mechanisms we identify here will all operate in these other historical circumstances. It could very well be that decolonizing before the Cold War might lead to different mechanisms for preventing revolution, just as we surmise that counterrevolutionary politics both before and after the Cold War quite likely operates through different leading institutions (especially militaries and monarchies, instead of dominant parties). Nevertheless, the six mechanisms we identify in these cases capture a large swath of the potential counterrevolutionary dynamics across the globe given the waves of decolonization that swept through Africa and Asia.

In our first contextualized comparison, we examine two durably dominant parties—Malaysia's United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and Botswana's Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)—that have their origins in counterrevolutionary mobilization during the decolonization era. These cases illustrate the logic of counterrevolutionary elite collective action most clearly and show, especially through the BDP case, that threatening mobilization "from below" need not be particularly violent to spur a counterrevolutionary coalition. We show how these two "second mover" parties went on to dominate and stabilize politics in their respective countries through elite collective action and the generation of mass electoral support through the broad provision of public goods, rather than highly participatory mass mobilization or Leninist organization.

Our second case pairing—Singapore's People's Action Party (PAP) and South Africa's National Party (NP)—illustrates the logic and process of counterrevolutionary conversion. We show how two nationalist parties underwent decisive coalitional transformations against a backdrop of ongoing and, from the perspectives of a wide range of elites, directly threatening revolutionary mobilization. These counterrevolutionary conversions solidified elite support and promoted increased stability through the same causal mechanisms that have long been seen in Malaysia and Botswana.

On their own, these two contextualized comparisons might give the mistaken impression that mobilization from below produces durable elitist orders automatically. However, the construction of counterrevolutionary coalitions and institutions is determined not structurally but politically.[24] Like revolutions, counterrevolutions will fail to take shape whenever the necessary political coalitions fail to materialize, regardless of structural pressures. This is exemplified in our third empirical section, an examination of Kenya's Kenya African National Union (KANU). Colonial, modernist, and traditionalist elites had a structural opportunity to craft a coun-

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[24] In other words, the construction of a coalition cannot be assumed from the existence of thoroughgoing threats alone, but neither is it entirely contingent. Coalitions are built by political actions, not by permissive conditions.

terrevolutionary coalition in response to the thoroughgoing threat of the Mau Mau Rebellion at virtually the same historical moment when such a coalition was emerging in response to communist rebellion in British Malaya. But the fateful decision by British elites to suppress rather than cooperate with Kenya's leading modernist elites foiled elite collective action, positioning the KANU-led postcolonial government on a trajectory of unstable rather than durable dominance.

These contextualized comparisons allow us to capture the critical historical sequences and unfolding causal mechanisms that ultimately shaped dominant party durability. Like in most of the best recent macrosociological research on colonialism, we reduce unit heterogeneity in our sample by focusing our attention on polities that emerged out of a common colonial power: the United Kingdom.[25] Our point is not that British interests and actions were wholly determining of outcomes in, or that these interests and actions were necessarily similar across, our five African and Asian cases. As should become clear in our case studies below, strategic contexts and interactions varied greatly across cases and across time, not just between the Cold War decolonization cases we study and cases from other times but even within our small sample of Asian and African cases themselves. It is the essence of contextualized comparison to be attentive to these often subtle differences in local contexts, even as all five of our cases traversed similar moments in world-historical time.

Our contextual strategy allows us to assess one of our key analytical categories—revolutionary mobilization—at close range. What is important in our theory is not the raw (quantifiable) level of conflict that occurs but the widely held elite perception that those engaging in contentious mobilization pose a credible threat to their elite status. The meaning of a credible threat will be different in varying contexts—both in terms of local politics and in terms of geopolitical and historical circumstance. Therefore, understanding the meaning of mobilization in its specific context is crucial to understanding the possibility of a counterrevolutionary coalition being organized in response. This counsels the empirical appraisal of a manageable number of carefully chosen historical cases, as we undertake in the remainder of the essay.

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[25] Important recent macrosociological works on the varieties of colonialism internal to single empires include Go (2008), Steinmetz (2008), and Lange (2009*b*). Mahoney (2010) compares former British with former Spanish colonies, but his theory hinges on the distinctiveness of these two great powers' predominant modes of imperial rule. An important implication of this shared British heritage is that all four of our cases adopted Westminster-style "first-past-the-post" electoral rules. This doubtlessly facilitated the rise of dominant parties by amplifying the seat advantages of electoral winners. However, while electoral rules may help explain why so many former British colonies produced dominant parties, they cannot explain why so many other former British colonies did not.

COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY ORIGINS

The dominant parties that have shaped national politics for the past half century in Malaysia and Botswana had counterrevolutionary, not revolutionary, origins.[26] In both countries, the first major party to emerge during the late colonial era was a radical leftist party committed not only to terminating British rule but to toppling indigenous hereditary rulers and displacing more moderate, modernist elites as the presumptive leaders of the nationalist struggle. Yet these revolutionary parties would never become dominant parties. Instead, counterrevolutionary parties emerged in both cases to prevent these radical "first movers" from seizing and fundamentally reorganizing political power. It was these "second movers" who would dominate and stabilize Malaysia and Botswana's polities for decades to follow.

Malaysia

The first mover in Malayan party development was not a conservative party representing the "indigenous" Malay community but a communist party mobilizing the most radical elements in the "immigrant" Chinese population.[27] Before World War II, the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) faced constant repression by British colonial authorities. But with Japan's invasion and occupation of Malaya, the British were forced into a shift in strategy; they "turned to the illegal and detested MCP for assistance in providing labor for essential services and volunteers for guerrilla squads and local defense corps" (Stenson 1974, p. 132).

The sudden Japanese withdrawal in August 1945 left the MCP as the only organized political force in Malaya, as British authorities needed nearly three weeks to reestablish their presence. Armed Chinese communists exacted revenge on the Malay population for their general attitude of accommodation toward Japan's occupying forces. While this period of MCP domination and quasi statelessness was brief, its effects were anything but. "Their short administration left an indelible impression on the minds of most people of how frightening communist rule might be" (Cheah 1983, p. 295). By threatening Malay political elites, Chinese economic elites, and British colonial elites in equal measure, the MCP constituted the kind of thoroughgoing threat that presents a structural opportunity for heightened elite unity.

In large measure to weaken popular Chinese resistance, British authorities pressured the Malay sultans, Malaya's consummate traditionalist

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[26] Or, for those preferring a strict rather than expansive definition of revolutionary action, these parties had their roots in conservative countermobilization.

[27] The name "Malaysia" was adopted in 1963.

elites, to accept a new constitution in late 1945. The Malayan Union plan had two key elements: "The Malay rulers were to be stripped of even the symbolic and ceremonial political powers they had hitherto enjoyed and reduced to the status of priest-kings with some control over religious affairs," writes Muzaffar (1979). "The recently-domiciled non-Malay communities were to be granted citizenship on very liberal terms" (pp. 53–54).

Against the backdrop of mass mobilization among the armed forces of Chinese communism, these proposals hit the Malay population like political dynamite. Only a vigorous, concerted Malay response could force the British to rescind their plan once it had received official consent. Yet the Malay population lacked mass organizations of any kind, and Malay aristocratic and administrative elites remained splintered along provincial lines. No political organization in Malaya could begin to rival either the grassroots presence or national scope of the MCP. What emerged was the counterrevolutionary organization that would become Malaysia's dominant party:

> The Malays, already deeply insecure because of their economic position and the communist challenge, felt betrayed by the British, who were seen as the vital protectors of Malay society. . . . Numerous Malay associations rapidly transcended their particularistic local village and state identities and coalesced against the Malayan Union scheme. The oppositionist movement, which culminated in the United Malays National Organization (or UMNO), was led by the elite stratum of Malay administrators. Using their links with district level Malay authorities right down to the Malay headman, the elites succeeded in mobilizing most of the Malay population and, in doing so, laid the basis for UMNO as a mass political party. (Jesudason 1996, pp. 42–43)

The birth of UMNO did not primarily entail the kind of nationalist mass mobilization that Huntington stresses and that the above account might imply, however. Rather, UMNO's rise is best interpreted as an upsurge of ethnic elitist countermobilization. UMNO was primarily an instrument for anti-MCP rather than anti-British ends. The irony is that "a strong, pro-British party sprang on to the political scene to oppose a British proposal" (p. 43). Once the British began negotiating to rescind the hated Malayan Union plan, the Malay masses retreated to the shadows, and an alliance of traditionalist Malay aristocrats and modernist Malay administrators assumed full control of their ethnic cause. This initially raised the specter that Malayan politics might be defined entirely by collective action within communal groups, while failing to generate elite collective action across communal boundaries. How were these communal divisions overcome, and how was UMNO able to construct a strong elite-led party coalition that crossed ethnic lines?

The answer is that Malay and Chinese elites alike found common counterrevolutionary cause throughout the mid-late 1940s, as the revolutionary

MCP turned its energies to labor organization and militancy. After the assassination of three British planters in the state of Perak in 1948, the British declared a colony-wide state of emergency and banned the MCP and the major militant labor unions outright. The leading Chinese elite-based party, the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA), formed in 1949 in direct response to the thoroughgoing threat posed by the MCP (Heng 1988, p. 54). As one of the MCA's cofounders Tan Cheng Lock expressed the party's raison d'être: "I am perfectly positive that without some such Chinese organization as the MCA as a counter to the MCP, the danger of communism establishing its rule over Malaya will be increased ten-fold" (p. 130). Even leading Malays echoed British colonialists in urging Chinese elites to create a new conservative political party: a move that only makes sense in light of the shared perception of an existential and thoroughgoing MCP threat among Chinese, Malay, and British elites qua elites.

British attempts to midwife a cross-communal coalition could not have succeeded unless Malay and Chinese elites found such collective action to be in their own interests. Shared perceptions of thoroughgoing threats from below provide the most compelling explanation for both the internal strength of Malaysia's ruling parties and the robustness of the coalition adjoining them. Certainly the two leading figures, UMNO's Onn bin Jaafar and the MCA's Tan Cheng Lock, were not brought into partnership by any sense of natural affinity. "They had come to realize that there was an urgent need for co-operation between the Malays and non-Malays in order to ward off racial conflicts in Malaya," argues Ishak bin Tadin (1960). "It was also imperative that racial harmony should exist in Malaya so that the various races could form a united front against the Communist insurrection" (p. 72). This racial harmony would be forged on the elitist terms of UMNO, MCA, and British leaders, not the egalitarian terms proposed by the Marxist MCP.

Class cohesion among elites thus trumped divisions across ethnicities as Malaya approached independence. Electoral successes then compounded the incentives for UMNO and MCA leaders to sustain their elitist coalition. Having teamed up to sweep a series of municipal elections in 1952, the two parties joined hands with the Malayan Indian Congress in creating the Alliance in August 1953. This party coalition would win 51 of 52 seats on the Legislative Council in the national elections of July 1955, paving the way for Britain's peaceful handover of power to their resolutely pro-British allies in August 1957. The Alliance's smashing electoral victory was a testament to its constituent parties' success in recruiting the elite figures who could deliver large banks of votes, not only across Malaya's major ethnic groups but throughout the colony's federal states.

Malaya's path to independence would thus prove to be a curiously felicitous combination of war and peace, with both contributing to post-

colonial state building in important ways. First, the revolutionary and violent mobilization waged by the MCP during the late 1940s and early 1950s prompted massive new investments in state coercive and fiscal capacity (Slater 2010, pp. 79–90). This produced an extraordinarily powerful late colonial Leviathan, capable of restoring stability through the effective management of the MCP's urban labor movement as well as the decisive defeat of its rural insurgency. It was against this newly peaceful backdrop that a gradual, negotiated, and consensual transition from British to Malayan rule could unfold by the late 1950s. This ensured that the colonial state apparatus, once built up through violence, would be inherited without interruption in its existing functional form by postcolonial UMNO rulers.

In the half century plus since, the UMNO-led ruling coalition has produced high levels of economic growth and dramatically reduced extreme poverty through the provision of broad-based public goods. These have been funded by one of the strongest and more progressive tax apparatuses in the developing world (Slater 2010; Kuhonta 2011). Even as the government has recurrently used state repression against its political opponents, outright military intervention against civilian rule has remained a nonissue. This is because the UMNO-led party-state's generally impressive economic performance and preservation of communal stability has helped the ruling coalition pile up decades of electoral landslides. Indeed, it was the perceived renewal of a Chinese working-class threat to Malay political supremacy under conservative, pro-capitalist conditions that led the Alliance to expand and strengthen its grip on power in the wake of ethnic riots in May 1969. The Alliance was recast as the National Front (Barisan Nasional, or BN), a more authoritarian but also more redistributive ruling arrangement. Ethnic affirmative action for "indigenous" Malays was stepped up significantly under the New Economic Policy (starting in 1971), cementing mass Malay electoral support for UMNO. Yet redistribution has consistently been funded by capitalist growth that gave elite Chinese businessmen a huge stake in the BN system as well. Although the elitist MCA's support among the mass Chinese population has weakened over time, it remained substantial enough to help the BN retain its two-thirds parliamentary majority for over 35 years.

The UMNO-led BN's impressive track record of electoral and economic performance has very much been a tale of what we call adversarial persistence. Although the Chinese-led MCP was annihilated as an organized political force by the 1950s, Malay privileges have remained under challenge from other mass Chinese and multiracial opposition parties. By the same token, Chinese voters recurrently huddle under the BN's protective umbrella when fears of Malay violence against Chinese citizens reemerge, as they did during political and economic crises in the late 1980s and late 1990s. The

1495

importance of adversarial persistence as a causal mechanism has been underscored by its relative fraying since 2008, when a bona fide multiethnic opposition coalition emerged and denied the BN its two-thirds parliamentary majority for the first time. Deeper opposition gains in the 2013 general elections suggest a further lapsing of the UMNO-led counterrevolutionary model. In a post–Cold War world, Malaysia's endemic communal tensions are no longer overlaid with clear class implications. This makes it harder to sustain a cohesive counterrevolutionary elite and pushes Malaysia closer to the kind of ethnic conflict that destabilizes polities rather than stabilizing them.

## Botswana

Much like Malaysia, Botswana underwent a dramatic transformation during decolonization from British indirect rule to a form of dominant party rule that has endured to the present day. In both cases, the emergence of a durable dominant party was facilitated by the mobilization of a radical leftist party that has long since become politically irrelevant. Although not confronted by revolutionary violence like Malaysia's UMNO, Botswana's long-ruling BDP similarly originated as a countermobilizing "second mover" rather than the kind of mass-mobilizing "first mover" that dominated post-colonial politics in most of Africa (Zolberg 1966).

Botswana's ethnic chiefs were the preeminent indigenous political force from the inception of indirect rule under the Bechuanaland Protectorate (as the territory was then called) in 1885 until the late 1940s (Gillett 1973, p. 180). The British saw no need to disturb this arrangement, so long as the chiefs could preserve political order, and Bechuanaland's anticipated absorption into South Africa mitigated any need to build national institutions. However, in 1948 both of these conditions changed dramatically. The election of the pro-apartheid NP in South Africa made Bechuanaland's incorporation into the racist republic unthinkable for the Protectorate's colonial officials (Fawcus 2000, p. 43). A simultaneous succession crisis in a pivotal chieftaincy led colonial officials to rethink their reliance on indirect rule and begin, for the first time, to build serious state institutions and transition Bechuanaland to independence (Parson 1984, p. 29; Picard 1987, pp. 130–31; Vaughan 2003, p. 60; Leith 2005, pp. 25–26).

During this process, the traditionalist chiefs found themselves in a vulnerable position. The colonial administration enacted legislation curtailing chiefly power, threatening to "eradicate the indirect rule system on which their power had been institutionalized for over a half century" (Vaughn 2003, p. 60; see also Gillett 1973, pp. 181–82). These shifts were perceived favorably by Bechuanaland's British-educated "new men" (Lange 2009*b*, p. 155), a collection of modernist economic elites who chafed under chiefly hegemony. Among the best educated people in the territory, these com-

mercially oriented, modernist elites presented a particular challenge to the chiefs because they championed a form of republican democracy "that contradicted the patrimony of the Tswana *merafe* [chieftaincy] in most respects, and in which the *dikgosi* [chiefs] could envisage no positions of political importance" (Gulbrandsen 2012, p. 82).

So what would bring these antagonistic elites together into a political alliance? The emergence of leftist forces in a foreboding international context would prove to be the kind of thoroughgoing threat necessary to bring about just such a counterrevolutionary alliance. Bechuanaland had long been a labor supplier to South Africa's mines, and workers were therefore sympathetic to the transfer of power to indigenous people (Gulbrandsen 2012, p. 95). In the wake of South Africa's 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, a stream of antiapartheid activists poured back into Bechuanaland and embedded themselves among poor, young, urban workers in towns along the rail line, diffusing a combined message of political liberation and economic redistribution. To foster these goals, they created Bechuanaland's first substantial political party: the Bechuanaland People's Party (BPP). Drawing on South Africa's liberation politics, the BPP agitated for radical political reforms, expelling white settlers, and abolishing chiefly institutions (Sillery 1974, p. 156; Fawcus 2000, p. 90). They stood against "traditionalism," calling it "a narrow, exclusive, totalitarian outlook" that promoted "communal chauvinism" and "stagnating conservatism" (Gulbrandsen 2012, p. 190). Thus, the emergence of the leftist BPP as the territory's first political party presented a new threat to the chiefs' remaining powers.

The threat of incorporation into South Africa had substantially faded by this juncture (Fawcus 2000, p. 43).[28] But given its proposals to overturn the existing social and political order, the BPP posed a novel threat to the territory's colonial administrators and their modernist elite allies, since a BPP electoral victory might antagonize the apartheid regime and disrupt a smooth transition to independence (Gulbrandsen 2012, p. 95). To head off this emerging threat, the modernist elites took action (Picard 1987, p. 137). Led by Seretse Khama, they announced the formation of the Bechuanaland Democratic Party (BDP) as a countervailing party in 1962.

In retrospect, the BPP never amounted to a strong leftist party or a particularly violent one (Parson 1984, p. 31; Picard 1987, p. 136)—an important indicator that threats of a particular type rather than magnitude spur elite collective action. Yet this eventual weakness was at least partly endogenous to the strength of the BDP that arose to defeat and stifle it, and the BPP's weakness was by no means obvious to those whose interests it

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[28] Hence, while this threat might help explain late colonial state building in Botswana (Lange 2009*a*, 2009*b*), it cannot explain postcolonial party formation.

threatened.[29] As the colonial resident commissioner at the time explained in his memoir:

> Early in 1962, when for both the People's Party and the Democratic Party there was everything to play for, each had strengths and weaknesses. *The People's Party had the advantage of being the first [party] off the mark*, having made considerable progress in capturing the main townships on the line of rail. . . . They were radical, forceful and articulate. They had material support of substantial parties in Ghana and Tanzania. Their leaders were experienced campaigners for the ANC and PAC in South Africa, who had thus learned about party organization the hard way. . . . In these circumstances *it was by no means clear that the Democratic Party would be able to arrest a snowballing movement of opinion towards the People's Party*. (Fawcus 2000, p. 90; emphasis added)

In the tense international environment of the early 1960s, when revolutionary nationalists were making headway across the continent, even a poorly organized leftist movement could appear like a credible threat to displace modernist and traditionalist elites after independence.

Moreover, the BPP threatened both the modernist and traditionalist elites' economic interests. Although the modernist elites had some sympathy for the BPP's anticolonial messages, leaders like Seretse Khama "felt no solidarity with a party that was associated with socialism or even communism; in particular, the emerging class of entrepreneurs did not see how such a party could ever be conducive to their interests" (Gulbrandsen 2012, p. 96). As Khama remarked at the time, "the only way to fight the party is . . . to form ourselves into a body which would expose the falsehoods put out by the People's Party" (quoted in Gulbrandsen 2012, p. 96). Similarly expressing the anxieties that the BPP caused among the British-educated "new men," Masire (2006, p. ix), a BDP founder, wrote in his memoir: "In 1961 I attended a public meeting in Lobatse of the recently formed Bechuanaland People's Party. . . . At the end of the meeting, I thought, 'If these are the kinds of people who are going to lead our country we are in trouble.'" The prospect that the BPP would be elected after independence spurred those elites to take unprecedented joint action. "The effect of the People's Party," Masire wrote of this period, "was to demonstrate that if we did not stand up to do something, we would have a party of that kind [i.e., "hotheaded leftists"] leading the country. . . . In a way, I suppose, one could say that the BPP recruiting effort was successful; but they recruited me into the Democratic Party, not the People's Party" (p. 111).

Counterfactually speaking, absent the BPP's strong initial lead in political mobilization, there was no reason to expect English-educated "new

[29] The British administration cooperated with the chiefs to prevent the BPP from trying to organize in rural areas, thus limiting its popularity to towns along the rail line (Gulbrandsen 2012, p. 95).

men" to build a party organization that housed both themselves and their parochial rivals, the indigenous chiefs (see, e.g., Vaughan 2003, p. 65). Yet the emergence of a common adversary brought the otherwise antagonistic chiefs and economic elites together in a counterrevolutionary coalition in which shared class interests transcended the sociologically cavernous modernist-traditionalist divide. As Charlton (1993, p. 346) explains, the BPP's widespread support among urban workers "clearly turned the BDP leadership's attention to developing its own rural and tribal constituency base." This was accomplished through an alliance with the chiefs, most of whom "were pro-BDP in spite of heated disagreements over the role of chiefs in the post-colonial political dispensation. *The majority of chiefs were worried and frightened by the radical stand of the BPP on many political issues, especially the future of the institution of chieftainship*" (Tsie 1996, p. 602; emphasis added). Although the chiefs' power had been legislatively reduced, they still had influence over valuable rural electoral blocs, making them the best available ally for the BDP's leading "new men" as they sought to stymie the BPP's bid for power.

The alliance between the traditionalist chiefs and modernist elites produced immediate dividends, much like the oddball UMNO-MCA Alliance in Malaya. The BDP won an impressive victory in Botswana's first elections in 1966, taking 28 of 31 parliamentary seats, as the chiefs mobilized their followers to vote for the party (Picard 1987, p. 140). In the immediate aftermath of their victory, BDP elites continued the work of strengthening the state's institutions that had been started just a few years earlier by the region's colonial administrators, rather than dismantling them as may have happened had the BPP won victory.

BDP dominance thus arose in a context of thoroughgoing threats, class cohesion, and administrative continuity: three of the six causal mechanisms through which counterrevolutions produce distinctively durable political orders. However, to understand why elite collective action has been sustained under the common BDP umbrella even after the initial BPP threat was overcome, we need to consider the other causal mechanisms we detailed above. For starters, the BDP's elite alliance has been persistently confronted by a left-leaning adversary ever since the BPP collapsed, the Botswana National Front, which emerged from the ashes of the BPP's "radical intellectual wing linked to the trade unions" (Stevens and Speed 1977, p. 385). This inherited radicalism has been a consistent touchstone among BDP leaders looking to keep their factions united. For example, they have labeled the Botswana National Front "an insidious threat to democracy" that would bring anarchy to the country should it ever gain power (Picard quoted in Molomo [2000], p. 69). Botswana has thus witnessed the kind of adversarial persistence that we associate with counterrevolutions.

Of equal if not greater importance, the BDP-led counterrevolution has persisted because it has reliably reproduced the material conditions for its own success. Decades of rapid capitalist growth, which the BDP fostered through the maintenance and expansion of effective state institutions, has been a critical reason for the party's durability. Since the discovery of diamonds shortly after independence occurred in a context of stable, continuous state institutions, diamond wealth has provided predictable state revenue. This reliable revenue flow provides the BDP with ample funds to distribute to the citizenry, furthering the party's dominance. Botswana has become renowned for its institutionalized patterns of public distribution, as it has consistently "avoided the highly personalised patronage and distributional networks so common in many other African states" (Charlton 1993, p. 339; see also Young 2012, p. 71). Capitalist growth and subsequent rural spending have meant that "the chiefly elite has prospered during its decades of political ascendency" (Young 2012, p. 369), which has helped keep the original counterrevolutionary coalition intact for the past half century.

Yet Botswana's unusual record of stability has deeper political than economic foundations. Without the preexisting counterrevolutionary political compact forged between the chiefs and economic elites, the discovery of diamonds would not by itself have assured the party's durable dominance, as the disastrous mismanagement and chronic elite conflict experienced by many resource-rich countries illustrates (Lange 2009*b*).[30] Because of its competent management of the country's mineral resources, the BDP has been able to efficiently and effectively channel government resources to rural areas "*irrespective* of whether the region is a BDP or an opposition stronghold" (Charlton 1993, p. 339). The result is that the BDP has retained broad chiefly support while holding onto rural voting blocs, making it difficult for opposition parties to mount credible criticism of it (Sebudubu and Osei-Hwedie 2010, p. 88). This ongoing cooperation between Botswana's modernist and traditionalist elites has produced an imposing electoral machine that has maintained the BDP's dominant position since independence (Charlton 1993, pp. 341–42).

## COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY CONVERSIONS

Our analysis thus far has centered on the causal significance of coalitional origins in shaping dominant party durability. Yet coalitions are less path

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[30] Botswana's diamond wealth has only facilitated the maintenance of political stability; it cannot explain the origins of this stability, as diamonds were only discovered after independence.

dependent than institutions; coalitions may shift even as parties remain formally much the same. In this vein, we argue that renewed or continued mass mobilization can help cement a strengthened counterrevolutionary alliance among elites within a party whose origins were not counterrevolutionary—especially when the scale and drama of contentious outbreaks take on an "eventful" character in Sewell's sense. In both Singapore and South Africa, the counterrevolutionary origins of durable party dominance came after the origins of the dominant parties themselves.

Singapore

The PAP is the paradigmatic durable dominant party. Its grip on power has gone completely unchallenged, and its stabilizing effect on national politics has been legendary since Singapore gained full independence in 1965. Like Malaysia's UMNO and MCA and Botswana's BDP, Singapore's PAP is a counterrevolutionary dominant party, and this helps account for its remarkable durability. Yet unlike its Malaysian and Botswanan counterparts, the PAP did not originate as a counterrevolutionary party. Only after the party's decisive counterrevolutionary "conversion" in the early 1960s did it begin to exhibit the politically stabilizing effects of elite collective action that we associate with durable party dominance.

At its inception in 1954, as the British began laying the pathway for Singapore's negotiated transition to independence, the PAP housed an eclectic, cross-class coalition of nationalists. Its initial 1954 manifesto declared that the PAP's "most immediate and urgent task" was "to end colonialism as swiftly as possible" (Bellows 1970, p. 12): a more stridently nationalist tone than was struck by the counterrevolutionary UMNO or BDP at their founding moments. "The PAP was founded in 1954 by a group of middle-class lawyers, journalists, teachers, and seven prominent trade unionists" (Chan 1976, p. 9): a consummate nationalist united front. This understates the power of the PAP's radical mass base as the party assumed "first mover" status in Singapore's emergent party system, however. "It is possible to understand the phenomenal growth of the PAP only if one recognizes the superordinate position of the Communists in the PAP below the highest leadership positions for seven years after the party's founding," Bellows (1970) argues. "It was the Communists and their sympathizers who gave popular life to this constitutional party and made it the first mass party in Singapore" (p. 18).

Hard as it is to imagine now, Singapore was considered the epicenter of Southeast Asian communism in the decades immediately after World War II, as the city experienced the most significant and radical labor militancy in the region. It was also an ethnic and religious tinderbox, with a preponderant Chinese majority but a sizable Malay-Muslim minority prone

to an acute sense of relative political deprivation, considering Malays' constitutionally safeguarded ethnic privileges in next-door Malaya. While colonial Singapore differed from British Malaya in the terms of its ethnic bargain, the great similarity was chronic popular mobilization and recurrent violence over intertwining issues of class and communalism. Also as in neighboring Malaya, colonial Singapore witnessed a substantial buildup of coercive, taxation, and surveillance state institutions in direct response (Slater 2010).

Yet whereas Malaya's UMNO-led coalition was resolutely anticommunist by the late 1940s, it remained uncertain throughout the 1950s whether the PAP would tilt more toward the colonialists or communists. As a coalition broadly grouping moderate English-speaking elites with radical Chinese-speaking masses, the PAP was initially an extremely divisive organization lacking in class cohesion. By 1956, there emerged within the party a "growing pro-Communist conviction that the non-communists were assisting the government in its periodic security sweeps against pro-Communists" (Bellows 1970, p. 22). Communist elements tried to seize leadership of the party from the noncommunists in 1957, prompting the detention and deportation of the PAP's leading leftist figures. As the election ushering in Singaporean self-rule in 1959 approached, British officials began surreptitiously working with top PAP noncommunists to forge the basis for a more counterrevolutionary coalition. "For at least twelve months before the May 1959 elections, [British Governor William] Goode had maintained close contact with Lee Kuan Yew," Bellows notes. "Goode understood that his task was to hand over power to those who were not Communists or pro-Communists and could hold power with some degree of stability and permanence." Yet the limited popular support for English-speaking elites forced the likes of Goode and Lee to maintain the marriage of convenience for the 1959 elections. "The incompatible dichotomy, pro-Communist body and non-Communist head, was destined to maintain a precarious relationship a short while longer" (pp. 35, 138 nn. 14, 24).

The PAP's loose and divisive alliance captured 43 of 51 seats in the 1959 vote. "With its victory, the PAP emerged as the dominant political force on the Singapore stage" (Lau 2003, p. 9). Yet whereas Malaya's UMNO-led Alliance had romped to electoral victory while excluding communist forces, Singapore's PAP had only managed its original landslide victory by embracing them. The party's internal divisions undermined internal discipline, which remained "sporadic and tenuous" after the PAP first captured power (Bellows 1970, p. 27). The PAP finally split in 1961, with leftist forces bolting the party to form a new Socialist Front (Barisan Socialis, or BS), leaving the PAP with a scant majority of 26 out of 51 total seats.

It was at this moment that the PAP's leading noncommunists publicly converted into fervent anticommunists. As the BS stepped up its strike

activity to destabilize the PAP government, the necessary perception of thoroughgoing threat was in place to inspire the emergence of a broad counterrevolutionary coalition in response. After seven years of greater cooperation with communists than colonialists, Singapore's PAP leadership began in 1961 to work hand in hand with the colonialists to rout the communists.

Most important, this took the form of a counterrevolutionary alliance between PAP leaders and the English-speaking civil service. The PAP was fortunate to inherit the highly developed state apparatus that British authorities had constructed in response to endemic labor unrest in the late 1940s and 1950s (Slater 2010). With its societal linkages shattered by the BS defection, the PAP became a creature of the state. "It became a question of utilizing existing governmental machinery, which was more anti- than non-Communist and which continued to function effectively, to put across party views or attempting to rebuild a party organization with the few party members who remained loyal" (Bellows 1970, pp. 28–29).

The full force of the state was on display as the PAP prepared for the 1963 elections. Apart from stepping up public service provision to win votes, the party-state stepped up its coercion against the opposition, especially in the notorious Operation Cold Store in February 1963. This helped the PAP capture 37 out of 51 seats in the 1963 vote—a weaker performance than in 1959, when it still encompassed communist elements, but a marked improvement on its 26-seat share since the 1961 split. Yet what was most significant about the election was that it marked the inauguration of a truly counterrevolutionary dominant party in Singapore. "Compared to 1959, its victory in 1963 was much more decisive," Lau (2003, p. 51) recognizes. "Then the PAP had won with pro-communist support. In 1963, however, the party had fought the pro-communists openly and defeated them decisively" (p. 51). PAP leader Lee Kuan Yew made it abundantly clear in his campaign rhetoric that his was the party of counterrevolutionary stability, in direct opposition to the forces of revolutionary mass mobilization. "Vote for chaos and anarchy—vote for the Barisan Socialis" (p. 45) he warned.

As in Malaysia, a counterrevolutionary dominant party in Singapore was forged amid the thoroughgoing threat of communalized conflict from below. The PAP exhibited considerable class cohesion, as the socialist-inspired egalitarianism of the party in the 1950s gave way to an official paternalist elitism putatively grounded in Confucianism and conservative, communitarian "Asian values." Party dominance was institutionally hitched to the conservative but capable state apparatus that Singapore had inherited from the British. This authoritarian Leviathan has consistently been fully deployed to extract revenue, generate growth, reduce poverty, and provide public goods. A stellar record of economic performance has helped the PAP cruise to a decades-long succession of uneventful electoral

landslides, which has contributed to the chronic and complete sidelining of the military as a political actor in turn. Coercion and stifling social control there has certainly been, but it has been consistently backed by a combination of economic performance and stymied communal tensions, which remain an ever-present thoroughgoing threat in a polity and region marked by endemic Chinese-Malay tensions. This has made PAP hegemony a relatively acceptable (if often highly chafing) arrangement for most Singaporeans. In short, the PAP's counterrevolutionary conversion in the early 1960s spawned one of the postcolonial world's most durable dominant parties, which retains its hegemonic position to the present day.

## South Africa

Whereas Singapore's PAP entered its era of durable dominance with a sharp counterrevolutionary conversion, South Africa's NP is best thought of as a dominant party whose durability increased after a contention-driven expansion of its initially narrow coalition. Although it narrowly won power in 1948, it was only with the uprisings that followed the "transformative event" (Sewell 1996) of the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre that the NP started to gain significant votes from urban English and Afrikaner elites and to exhibit the crosscutting elite collective action we associate with durable dominant parties. The NP's dominance finally ended in the 1990s because its harsh oppression of South Africa's nonwhite majority after the equally transformative Soweto Uprising in 1976 only heightened revolutionary collective action, which ultimately became uncontrollable. With little prospect that coercion alone could restore the political order of South Africa's counterrevolutionary heyday, the country's elites split over how best to respond. The South African case thus offers the vital reminder that counterrevolutions produce durable, not invincible, political orders.

Unlike our other four postcolonial cases, South Africa gained independence well before the global decolonization era coinciding with the Cold War. The Union of South Africa was formed in 1910 out of two British colonies and two Afrikaner (former Dutch settler) republics, after the brutal South African (or Boer) War. By 1933 the United Party (UP), a fractious alliance of moderate and nationalist Afrikaners and upper-class Brits, emerged as the dominant party (Thompson 2000, p. 162). However, with the onset of World War II, the UP fractured as working-class Afrikaner nationalists who opposed South Africa's entry into the war formed the NP. A coalition led by the UP won the 1943 elections, with the NP emerging as the primary opposition. There was not yet a dominant-party system emerging but a two-party system.

The period immediately before and after World War II saw increased political activity by nonwhites, and, by 1945, over 100,000 African workers

were unionized, and a record number of labor strikes had been waged (Posel 1991, p. 38). As in Malaya and Singapore in this same period, ruling elites were confronted with a major upswing in radical mass contention. Thus when the 1948 elections came, much of the white electorate was demanding greater control over the movement of nonwhites to secure farm labor and dampen urban protests (p. 23).

Despite the NP's campaign promises to control the movement of non-white labor through the apartheid system, its strong advocacy for Afrikaner nationalism continued to alienate English speakers. It was only because of the winner-take-all electoral system favoring rural Afrikaner voters that the NP could prevail, having received only 41.5% of the popular vote to the UP's 53%. The NP's victory depended on the support of two groups that had not previously voted together: farmers upset over the exit of their labor to cities and unionized white workers who feared protests by black workers would undermine the white labor aristocracy (Beinart 2001, p. 138). To secure a more dominant position, the NP quickly gerrymandered voting districts and enfranchised whites from Southwest Africa (Ross 1999, p. 115).

While the NP became a dominant party during its first 10 years in power, it did not yet command a broad counterrevolutionary alliance. This was seen in its inability to win votes from a wide swath of economic elites. Like UMNO before its contention-driven alliance with Malaya's Chinese minority MCA party, South Africa's NP rested on a coalition that was more ethnic (Afrikaner) than elitist. The party's increase in (particularly English-speaking) elite support came in conjunction with the antiapartheid uprisings and increasing fear of communism that followed the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, in which police killed 69 people peacefully protesting the country's pass laws.

This was a transformative event for South Africa, sharpening divisions over apartheid and shifting how people on all sides of the conflict viewed the NP. As Beinart (2001, p. 166) describes it, "Sharpeville sent a shudder through white and black communities alike. As the former responded with self-justification, the latter were galvanized into further action." As anti-apartheid forces launched a campaign of underground guerilla warfare, the government declared a state of emergency and clamped down hard on opposition groups (p. 229).

Despite condemnation from abroad, Sharpeville brought good fortune for the NP domestically. For the first time, large segments of the English-speaking population saw it as the only party capable of preserving order. The NP had long enjoyed working-class Afrikaner support, but in the 1966 election "it also began to win substantial support from English-speaking whites, who were attracted by the government's determination to maintain control in the face of increasing black unrest and foreign criticism" (Thompson 2000, pp. 187–88). The post-Sharpeville protest wave thus represented a

1505

thoroughgoing threat that brought English- and Afrikaans-speaking whites together for the first time. The NP won increasingly large margins in parliament and a majority of the total vote in every election after Sharpeville (De Villiers 1971, pp. 422–23; Brotz 1977, p. 22). By 1975, public opinion polls recorded 60.4% support from whites for the NP (Brotz 1977, p. 41).

The period of relative political stability helped usher in a decade and a half of impressive economic growth and spurred the expansion and development of the state apparatus (Thompson 2000, pp. 188–89; Lieberman 2003, p. 114). The elitist alliance forged during this period became increasingly willing to be taxed to pay for the counterrevolution and the political stability it provided such that, by the end of the 1960s, South Africa had one of the most efficient tax states in the developing world (Lieberman 2003). The ever-present threat of renewed mobilization was a key driver of white willingness to be taxed. Suggestive of this motivation, new tax receipts were largely deployed for counterrevolutionary coercion. Although the "Nationalist government inherited a substantial coercive apparatus" from its colonial and Union predecessors, after Sharpeville it "expanded the apparatus prodigiously" (Thompson 2000, p. 198), using it to effectively control the opposition until the mid-1970s (Ross 1999, p. 135; Thompson 2000, p. 228; Beinart 2001, p. 232).

Political stability permitted the NP to craft a cross-class coalition on elitist, conservative, and resolutely pro-capitalist terms, much like the coalitions we have explored in Botswana, Malaysia, and Singapore. Apartheid broadly improved the fortunes of white industrial workers, bureaucrats, and farmers who, respectively, benefited from wage subsidies, job security, and cheap black labor that lifted the vast majority of whites out of poverty. As a result, "before the late 1970s no powerful economic interest was fundamentally opposed to apartheid" (Thompson 2000, p. 206).

However, the stability enabled by this counterrevolutionary coalition began to come undone with the 1976 Soweto Uprising. Like Sharpeville, the Soweto Uprising would become a transformative event for South Africa, except this time it brought the beginning of the end of the NP's dominance. As at Sharpeville, government security forces opened fire on a peaceful protest, this time killing several hundred marchers. Unlike at Sharpeville, mass arrests failed to quiet the growing rebellion that followed. The government started to lose its grip on the townships. "It was a boast of many white South Africans in the post-Sharpeville era that, however much might be thought wrong with South African society, it was at least a country in which law and order prevailed," Davenport and Saunders (2000) argue. "But unrest which developed during the middle months of 1976 disturbed this complacent assumption" (p. 449).

The counterrevolutionary coalition began to fragment over how to respond. As class cohesion declined, one of the key causal mechanisms ex-

plaining the persistence of counterrevolutionary durability weakened. Although white business interests had accommodated if not openly supported apartheid before the Soweto Uprising (Thompson 2000, pp. 206–7), in its wake they began to waver as a serious recession gripped the country amid the growing unrest. The Afrikaner business elite that now controlled the party argued in favor of reforming apartheid to save it. But such proposals met resistance from Afrikaner laborers who feared the end of their wage protections and from farmers worried about rising labor costs (Davenport and Saunders 2000, pp. 474–78). As disorder increased through the mid-1980s, laborers and farmers pulled away from the NP and drifted into ultra-right-wing parties. The NP won only 52% of the vote in 1987, while the right-wing Conservative Party took 26%, signaling a fracturing in white politics (Thompson 2000, p. 237). By 1989, the NP pulled in less than 50% of the vote (Welsh 2009, p. 347).

The counterrevolution's coalitional fragmentation indicated that it was entering its death throes. Insurrection was raging, the economy was in a deep recession, and the white population was rapidly emigrating. It was not only that the nationalist-revolutionary mobilization of a long-repressed majority community simply proved too powerful for any counterrevolutionary coalition to defeat; it was also the deepening fragmentation of South Africa's counterrevolutionary elite over how to respond to the African National Congress (ANC)-led challenge that finally swept apartheid into history's dustbin (Welsh 2009, p. 242).

The apparent demographic inevitability of apartheid's collapse was also spurred on by a changing international context in which communism across the world was collapsing. With the liberation forces' main source of international support gone and the apartheid state's claims to be a bulwark against communism sounding nonsensical, by 1990 the stage was set for the two sides to negotiate a path toward democracy (Thompson 2000, p. 243; Welsh 2009, p. 348). Although the negotiations ultimately resulted in a broadly peaceful and justifiably celebrated transition to democracy, NP leaders only acquiesced to majority rule once they had locked in constitutional guarantees that private property rights would be protected, therefore limiting the effects of the ANC's rise to power.[31] Despite these limitations, an impressively unified revolution triumphed over an increasingly fragmented counterrevolution, and the NP was replaced by the ANC as South Africa's new dominant party.

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[31] Indeed, even as negotiations began, many ANC leaders were deeply opposed to a rights-based constitution because they saw it as locking in white economic privileges and forestalling broad-based economic redistribution. See Dubow (2012), pp. 113–26.

COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY FAILURE
AT THE ORIGINS STAGE

Kenya

If South Africa shows that counterrevolutionary coalitions are not invincible, Kenya shows that they are also not inevitable. Indeed, few African countries had a route to national independence marked more by violent mass mobilization than Kenya. Yet this would not yield a counterrevolutionary ruling coalition despite the fact that Kenya had the elements necessary for such a pact to be formed: a cast of modernizing African elites, a comprador class of traditionalist elites (chiefs), and colonial elites with little desire to turn power over to what they viewed as radicals violently mobilizing against colonial power from below. The dynamics were broadly similar, in other words, to Malaysia before independence. Yet a set of poorly calculated decisions by the Kenyan colonial state ruptured any possibility of a counterrevolutionary pact forming as in its Southeast Asian counterpart. In this sense, the Kenya case illustrates that counterrevolutionary pact formation is always determined politically, not structurally.

The British response to the Mau Mau Revolt looked militarily similar to how it countered the Malayan Emergency. But it failed politically to foster a similar counterrevolutionary coalition. The result was that the state handed over power to a modernist-led African nationalist party—KANU—which had weak underlying coalitional dynamics, housing such rivalrous groups that effective governance became impossible. Kenya's KANU exemplifies the type of dominant nationalist party whose reign may have been long on duration but never produced anything resembling the kind of stable governance we witnessed in Malaysia and Botswana.[32]

KANU's predecessor, the Kenya African Union (KAU), emerged in 1944 as the leading voice for nationalist politics under the leadership of ethnic Kikuyu moderates like Jomo Kenyatta, who had been a leading nationalist figure since the 1920s. However, by 1950, these moderates were being pushed from the center of nationalist politics as "[a] new generation of radicals in Nairobi . . . were growing restive under what they saw as the weak older leadership" (Clough 1998, p. 29). The 1952 assassination of Kungu Waruhiu—a senior chief and prominent supporter of the British— launched the Mau Mau rebellion and marked the ascendancy of the radical factions (Miller and Yeager 1994, p. 25).

Colonial administrators responded to the assassination by declaring a state of emergency, much as they had in Malaya four years earlier. On little evidence, colonial administrators arrested and imprisoned Kenyatta and

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[32] See Levitsky and Way (2010) for a similar depiction of KANU as less stabilizing than UMNO.

the KAU leadership, believing that they were behind the attacks, before outlawing the KAU entirely (Miller and Yeager 1994, pp. 59–60). Kenyatta himself was imprisoned for nearly nine years. The irony was that those arrested tended to be the more moderate elements of the nationalist movement—akin to Botswana's "new men" and Malaya's modernist administrators. However, whereas the British were able to work with moderate nationalists in Botswana and Malaya, the effect of arresting Kenyatta and his allies was to turn over Kikuyu leadership almost wholly to radicals (Elkins 2005, p. 61). This strategic mistake on the part of colonial administrators would effectively prevent them from forming a Malaysia or Botswana-style counterrevolutionary pact later on. The Kenyan case thus underscores the vital point that radical mass mobilization only presents the opportunity for—and not the inevitability of—counterrevolutionary collective action in response.

It also highlights the potentially divisive consequences of not crafting such a coalition. After a brutal counterinsurgency campaign modeled on the British response to insurrection in Malaya (Anderson 2005; Elkins 2005), colonial administrators suppressed Mau Mau in 1956 and slowly eased restrictions on African political activity to set the stage for independence. Upon their release from prison in 1960, Kenyatta and his fellow detainees joined KANU, which had been formed by similarly moderate Kikuyu trade unionists and Luo ethnic leaders to advance Kenyan independence. Kenyatta was elected as KANU's chair in 1961, and the party rapidly drew in militant former Mau Mau fighters, the majority of whom were ethnically Kikuyu. The British, wary of the nationalist KANU, threw their support behind the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU)—a conservative party led by Daniel Arap Moi that represented Kenya's minority ethnic groups (Edgerton 1989, p. 213). In the 1963 elections, KANU easily won by combining the enormous popularity of Kenyatta, whose legend had only grown while in colonial prison, with the electoral support of the country's two biggest ethnic groups.

Despite the easy victory, KANU was internally fractured between moderate nationalists who supported Kenyatta and radical former Mau Mau fighters (Clough 1998, pp. 221–23). Unlike Malaysia's UMNO, Botswana's BDP, and Singapore's PAP, KANU worked with radical leftists to combat colonialists rather than the reverse. Yet there was nothing to bind KANU's factions together apart from a shared desire to see the British depart. This limited commonality produced a fractious cross-class alliance. The lack of thoroughgoing threats after independence provided no political basis for the divisions to be overcome or for the alliance to be maintained (Branch 2009, p. 178). Thus, the years after independence were characterized by conflicts between "loyalists and ex-Mau Mau in Central Kenya, the emergence of serious ethnic divisions in the country as a whole, and the struggle for con-

trol of the independent government between conservative-moderate forces around President Kenyatta and a faction of 'radicals' particularly associated with Bildad Kaggia, ex-member of the Mau Mau Central Committee" (Clough 1998, p. 215).

Thus, Kenya's struggle for independence ultimately produced a divisive cross-class and cross-ethnic ruling party that never effectively organized elite collective action. As Widner (1992, p. 31) describes it, under Kenyatta, KANU "was a weak party in which several semi-corporate groups competed for influence." Instead of being able to build on the relatively robust institutional apparatus of the British colonial state, this fractious coalition forced KANU's leaders to undermine it. For example, after the overwhelming KANU electoral victory, KADU dissolved in 1964 and was absorbed into KANU by Kenyatta to counter his radical factional rivals (Clough 1998, p. 226). However, to keep his fractious cross-ethnic alliance together, Kenyatta was forced to dispense largesse including official positions, government loans, and land access to supporters—an instructive contrast to the BDP's practice of channeling government resources to districts irrespective of whether they are controlled by the party (p. 233; Widner 1992, pp. 41–43). Unlike in the counterrevolutionary cases, instead of funding the state apparatus through tax payments, Kenya's bourgeois elites fed off of it.

Kenyatta's patronage extended widely, but was funneled through Moi, whose support from minorities through his former KADU leadership made him a powerful ally. As a result, Kenyatta named Moi his vice president in 1967, a position he would retain until Kenyatta died in 1978, after which Moi assumed the presidency. Moi's regime was more authoritarian than Kenyatta's, and party members became increasingly dependent on the office of the president (Widner 1992, pp. 41–43). However, given Moi's ethnic Kalenjin background, his takeover of KANU alienated a core group of Kikuyu economic elites. Because of these increasingly divisive coalitional dynamics, the party had to rely even more on dispensing largesse to keep its coalition together, undermining economic growth and hollowing out the tax basis in the process.

This combination of a fractious coalition, a cratering economy, and weakening state performance ultimately led to the party's downfall as patronage was an impermanent mechanism through which to appease supporters. In 1982, for example, disgruntled air force officers staged an ultimately unsuccessful coup, suggesting that the party's dominance was waning, given KANU's inability to make the military subservient to its dictates.[33]

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[33] The 1982 coup was not Kenya's first. Unsuccessful coup plots had also been hatched in 1965 and 1971 (Branch 2011, pp. 154–59).

Ultimately, however, the party was brought down not by disgruntled officers but by popular mobilization and electoral polls. The economic damage from politicized economic management and elite instability left the Moi regime vulnerable to an upswing in street protests and reformist pressure from international donors. As a result, he was forced to allow multiparty elections in 1992. Although KANU retained power, it faced a sizable parliamentary opposition for the first time since the 1960s, inhibiting Moi's ability to dispense patronage to hold together KANU's divisive coalition (Orvis 2006, pp. 104–5). These new constraints resulted in KANU's removal from power in 2002 during Kenya's third multiparty election.

In sum, the Kenya case shows the politically contingent nature of counterrevolutionary coalition formation. It also suggests some of the potential consequences the lack of such a coalition might have in the long term. KANU's position as the sole institutional expression of Kenya's long nationalist struggle against British rule helped it assume a dominant position in the postcolony. Yet its divisive coalitional dynamics forced it to undermine the state's institutions through the distribution of patronage, thus preventing it from attaining stability.

## CONCLUSION

This article's primary goal has been to carve out a position for counterrevolutions that begins to rival the prominent place of revolutions in the macrohistorical social sciences. Conceptually, this counseled offering a broad and encompassing definition of counterrevolutions as collective and reactive efforts to defend the status quo and its varied range of dominant elites against a credible threat to overturn them from below. Theoretically, we proposed and outlined a causal logic and set of causal mechanisms through which counterrevolutions can produce distinctively durable political orders. Empirically, we offered a contextualized comparative-historical analysis that traced the counterrevolutionary origins of durable dominant political parties in four postcolonial African and Asian countries and detailed the failure of a counterrevolutionary coalition and party to take shape despite violent bottom-up mobilization in a fifth postcolonial case. Transcending the purely path-dependent approach that characterizes the regnant "founding struggle" paradigm in this literature, we explored the distinction between durable dominant parties that have rested on counterrevolutionary coalitions since their inception (i.e., Malaysia's UMNO and Botswana's BDP) and those that underwent a "counterrevolutionary conversion" well after the parties themselves had been founded (i.e., Singapore's PAP and South Africa's NP). And transcending a structural-determinist approach, we highlighted the noninevitability of cohesive counterrevolutionary responses to revolutionary action through a case in which colonial and modernist elites failed to

coalesce despite facing a thoroughgoing threat from below (i.e., Kenya's KANU).

As an exercise in leveling the imbalance between counterrevolutions and revolutions in macrosociological research, this only constitutes a modest beginning. Yet we hope that our fellow social scientists will locate additional settings where the concept of counterrevolution proves useful for comparative empirical analysis and raise new questions about the validity and value of counterrevolutions as a category of analysis.

What new directions might such a literature take? One direction would be to question and refine the concept of counterrevolution itself. Such an effort would be perfectly in line with the massive conceptual literature that characterizes scholarship on revolutions. What constitutes a revolution, as we suggested in the introduction, has been a major source of disagreement among scholars, albeit an intellectually fertile one. We see no reason that a similarly disputatious conceptual literature would not be as productive in the study of counterrevolutions.

We would also welcome a literature exploring the varieties of counterrevolutionary politics. In this article, we explored counterrevolutionary parties in the postcolonial world. Yet, as we have mentioned above, such parties are not the only institutional foundation for counterrevolutionary political orders. Military juntas, monarchical regimes, and fascist parties are three institutional varieties of counterrevolutionary arrangements that readily deserve exploration. We suspect each of these counterrevolutionary subtypes might have different pathways to their emergence, alternative sources of order, and diverse mechanisms of reproduction from the postcolonial parties we discuss here.

Counterrevolution could also be treated as an independent variable for outcomes other than regime durability and political order. For example, the effects counterrevolution has on inequality or the distribution of social services are natural areas for consideration, just as they are in the study of revolutionary political orders.

A final fruitful path for research would be to systematically explore the conditions under which counterrevolutionary orders break down. Such an inquiry is important not only because of the potential implications for social justice but also because of the intellectual consequences. After all, Skocpol has shown that regime breakdown is one of the most important factors spurring social revolutionary triumph. Thus, connecting the two research agendas via patterns of regime breakdown has potentially enormous consequences—a task made all the more urgent by the current waves of revolutionary foment and counterrevolutionary response rocking the Middle East. In this regard, striving to understand the means by which breakdown in counterrevolutionary orders might lead to more equitable futures has potentially enormous political consequences.

Any future work on counterrevolutions beyond our own focus of post-colonial Asia and Africa during the Cold War era would almost certainly amend, refine, or outright challenge the definitions and arguments offered here. The literature on revolutions has long been one of the most disputatious in the social sciences. We see no reason to think that a similarly robust literature on counterrevolutions would prove any less contentious. If such a literature eventually emerges, one of the main claims of this essay would thus be verified: the birth of a literature on counterrevolution is patently and painfully overdue.

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