Paths to Political Change

Revolution

- Massive changes that completely overhauls both the society and the political system
- Change that is so drastic that the society and political system undergo both a completely different political ideology and political ethos
- “Day and Night” type change
- The type of political system, governing institutions and leaders that rule after a revolution are also massively different from the ones before a revolution

Processes of Revolution – HOW revolutions happen

(1) The elites within society and the regime become disenchanted with the regime and begin to demand changes

(2) The regime initiates some superficial, “token” changes as a way to pacify the opposition
- This only increases the desire of the opposition to demand more changes

(3) The fall of the regime is preceded by a major crisis – war, attempted coup attempt, economic crisis, etc. This crisis help reveal the weakness and the vulnerability of the regime

(4) Once fighting is underway and the regime falls, the opposition movement becomes divided and is splintered between an extremist faction and a moderate faction

(5) Usually, the moderate faction takes power first; However, this moderate faction becomes no more than a mirror image of the old regime

(6) Then, the extremist faction takes control and rules with great brutality
- This is when the great and massive change takes place within the society
- This Totalitarian brutality is done as a way to impose and permeate the revolutionary ideology into the masses and socialize the masses with the revolutionary ideology

(7) After a number of years, a new generation of more moderate leaders take over
This new generation rules with less brutality, while still governing with the revolutionary ideology as the basis for the political system and the political culture

Causes of a Revolution – WHY They happen

(1) There will exist a combination of elites and the top and mass popular movements at the bottom that will cooperate and coordinate their efforts to form a successful revolutionary movement

- Elites: (A) Economic elites needed to finance the revolutionary movement
- (B) Military elites needed to plan, organize and provide arms
- © Intellectuals needed to provide ideological motivation and rational

- Mass Groups: Students, urban labor, rural peasants all needed to provide mass man power and popular legitimacy

(2) “J Curve” of Rising Expectations

- When promises and expectations of prosperity and regimes performance exceed the disappointing realities and outcomes of actual regime performance, then instability is likely

(3) Weberian Theory

- When a regime lacks a strong bureaucracy that provides protection and insulation to the regime, then instability is likely
- Bureaucracies, with standard operating procedures, fixed routines & continuity and bureaucratic elites that are loyal to the regime will prevent and resist any change against the regime
- Thus, regimes that are not protected by strong, established and resistant bureaucratic institutions will be more likely to be overthrown
Liberal Democracy
1. Refers to the advanced democracies that truly are democracies.
2. These are political systems based on open, competitive processes of governing.
3. “Liberal” refers to the govt. voluntarily limiting its power and, thus, liberating the popular masses from govt. tyranny.
4. The govt. keeps itself from becoming too big and powerful; govt. imposes a “wall of separation” between itself and the masses.

Necessary Criteria for Liberal Democracy

(1) Universal Suffrage
4. Voting rights accessible to virtually all in the voting population.
5. Regardless of gender, race, creed, color, age, etc.

(2) Free and Fair Elections
6. Must involve two or more legitimate opposition parties and/or candidates for elected office.
7. Elections must be open and competitive between the parties and candidates.
8. Elections must be relatively free of fraud, and other irregularities.

(3) Institutional Balance of Power
9. There must be equality between the legislature and the chief executive/executive branch.
10. The legislature must be independent from the chief executive/executive cabinet govt.
11. The legislature must have the institutional and political power to oppose the chief executive and its policies.

(4) Civil Liberties
12. A written, guaranteed set of freedoms and liberties that prevents the govt. from being tyrannical against the people.
13. Through this way, the govt. limits its own power and sovereignty.
14. These liberties protect freedom of speech, religion, press, right of privacy, right of due process, etc.
15. Also, there must be respect for civil rights with regard to race, creed, religion, age, gender, etc.

(5) Independent Judiciary
16. There must be an court system independent of the pressure from public opinion and politicians.
17. The courts must be immune from political and public pressure.
18. The courts must be able to enforce the law and civil liberties.
Parliamentary Democracy (System)

1. There exists a **fusion of powers** between the legislative branch (parliament) and executive branch (PM and Cabinet Govt.).
2. PM and cabinet ministers are also concurrent sitting, voting MP's elected from their own particular parliamentary districts.
3. PM can remain PM as long as the following conditions are in place: (A) The PM’s party remains party with the most seats in Parliament and (B) That party continues to support the PM as party leader.
4. PM can “dissolve” parliament and call for early elections.
5. In some cases, PM needs support and consent from other actors (cabinet, parliament itself, Head of State, etc.).
6. Parliament, in turn, can also vote “No Confidence” against the PM; early elections are then held.
7. The logic is that because the PM and cabinet govt. come directly from the Parliament, this **fusion of powers** implies **collective responsibility**: the PM, Cabinet of Ministers and Parliament are all responsible for governing success or governing failure.
8. There also exists the Question and Answer session; this is a frequently held practice where the PM answers all questions posed to he/she by MP's in the (usually) “lower” house of parliament.
9. PM must answer every question; any MP from any political party can ask any question to the PM.
10. All questions and answers are recorded and published in publicly available transcripts. This increases voter awareness and accountability.

**Types of Parliamentary Systems – Two Party vs. Multi-Party**

(1) Two-Party Parliamentary Systems

11. More likely to create **politically strong** PM's – in terms of PM's getting cooperation and support for their policy goals from Parliament.
12. **Decreased likelihood of “No Confidence” Votes**
13. More likely to create **longer and increased** cabinet duration and “lifespan” for PM and cabinet govt.
14. This is because parliamentary majorities will support the PM on desired legislation the majority of the time.
15. In a two-party system, the “winning” party with the most seats will actually hold an **outright numerical majority** of seats.
16. Also, there tends to be a greater level of **party discipline and party cohesion** in most parliamentary democracies.
17. Thus, all parties with seats in Parliament, including the majority party of the PM, will be **united** on a policy or legislation most of the time.
18. Therefore, when the PM wants Parliament to vote on legislation a certain way and, hence, make policy, the majority party will almost always be united and vote the way of the PM.
19. Again, because the PM’s party is actually the numerical majority party, this means that the PM will get his/her way on policy and legislation almost every time.

(2) Multi-Party Parliamentary Systems

20. Tends to create politically **weaker** PM's with regard to often resistance from Parliament on
policy and legislation
21 Greater likelihood for increase in “No Confidence Votes”
22 Less frequent cabinet life span and durability
23 With a multiple # of parties holding seats in parliament, it becomes almost impossible that one single party is going to receive by itself an outright numerical majority of seats
24 Yet, in many parliamentary systems, a PM and cabinet govt. must be formed from a majority; only a governing majority in the parliament can create and approve a governing majority in the executive cabinet
25 This majority requirement is either by law or at least by political necessity
26 So – How does a party with only a plurality of seats account for a parliamentary majority so that a cabinet govt. can be formed?
27 COALITION GOVT’S (aka, COALITION CABINETS): These are alliances, or partnerships, formed between parliamentary parties in an effort to create the needed and required governing majority
28 Parties will make agreements and arrangements to combine their seat totals; this combination, or merging, of seat totals within parliament will enable that much needed governing majority in parliament to be formed
29 Thus, a PM and coalition cabinet govt. will be formed, reflecting the parliamentary make-up
30 Common types of coalition cabinets: (A) Ideological-based coalitions: These coalitions consist of a more limited number of parties
31 these parties are also limited to one part of the political spectrum (i.e., center-left/leftist coalitions or center-right/right-wing coalitions, etc.)
32 One of the two large parties (senior partner) and a limited number of small parties (junior partners) usually make-up the coalition partnership
33 Ideological compatibility with regard to party platform and programs, willingness and flexibility of prospective coalition partners to compromise and adopt to other parties’ policy programs, as well as size of parliamentary seat shares are factors in negotiating the coalition cabinet
34 (B) Broad-based coalitions: These are coalitions that include a lot of parties that make up different parts of the political spectrum; one large party and several small parties from, again, all over the political spectrum
35 Even though parties combine seats and form these alliances, these are still ultimately different parties with different platforms and policy goals
36 Disagreements occur; if disagreement occurs on some salient, “high-profile” issues, then the coalition can fall apart and collapse when a party, or several parties, bolt from the coalition
37 When this happens, those parties in parliament who were part of the coalition are no longer obliged to vote along with and support the PM and the cabinet govt. on legislation
38 Thus, the PM has only a minority in parliament to support his/her policies
39 This means more resistance and opposition against the PM from Parliament on policy goals important to PM
40 This leads to the tendency of Parliament to vote “no confidence: against the PM
41 This scenario is more likely to occur with Type B coalition cabinets