

# Is social revolution a passing phenomenon?

## Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the causes of social revolutions. I hypothesize that the three most important factors that explain the onset of social revolution are economic development, regime type, and state ineffectiveness. These variables and revolution, in turn, seem to be mediated by legitimacy. I then discuss the importance of domestic and external factors that trigger social revolutions. Lastly, I provide parsimonious and general models of social revolution, political instability, and political development. There seem to be two implications of these models: first, legitimacy seems to be a crucial variable for prevention of revolution. Second, revolution seems to be a passing phenomenon, which would cease to exist once modernizing or developing countries establish industrial economies and democratic regimes.

**Keywords:** revolutions, democracy, economic, political, social, gross domestic product per capita, probability density function, cumulative density function

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## Introduction

Popular uprisings are as old as history. In classical Greece, “revolutions” were considered a normal way of assuming power by differing regimes. They occurred whenever democratic, oligarchic, and monarchic regimes alternated in assuming power, and such alternation of political power often came through violence.<sup>1-3</sup> Yet not all political thinkers of the time believed that “revolutions” were a permanent aspect of politics. Aristotle, for instance, argued that the most stable political system was neither a democracy, oligarchy, nor a monarchy but a combination of the three. Aristotle’s stable political system would have a large middle class. The middle class would be a hybrid class, which would take advantage of the wisdom and wealth of the oligarchy and monarchy but also would consist of the greatest number of people as was the case in a democracy.<sup>4</sup> In other words, when property and power are widely distributed among individuals of a given society, there will be no good reason to ignite revolution. Indeed, modern democratic societies, which have a large middle class, seem to be politically stable, and this evidence suggests that Aristotle’s theory has stood the test of time. Social scientists have long debated the factors responsible for revolution. Yet there seem to be no clear agreement. Some stress the importance of economic factors.<sup>5,6</sup> Others emphasize political reasons.<sup>6-8</sup> Still others rely on social determinants.<sup>6,9,10</sup> Furthermore, interstate politics and distribution of power are assumed to play some role.<sup>8,11,12</sup> In this study, I define social revolution as a popular uprising that transforms an existing socioeconomic and political order. Taking a synthetic approach, I argue that economic, political, social, and external factors are responsible for the onset of social revolutions. More specifically, I hypothesize that a below mid-level economic development, non-democratic regime, and state ineffectiveness are the three most important variables that affect the probability of the onset of revolutions.

## Causes of revolutions

**Economic development:** Economic development is believed to stand for the wealth, education, urbanization, and industrialization of a given country.<sup>13</sup> Because of the intimate connection among these variables, many scholars tend to rely on the gross domestic product per capita (GDP/C) to capture the four attributes of economic development. In

this study, I will also use economic development and socioeconomic development interchangeably. Economic development changes traditional societies to a modern way of life. This has been particularly true since the advent of the Industrial Revolution, which started in Great Britain in the 18th century. With modern way of life, people tend to become more educated and are more aware of their political, social, and economic conditions. This means that the values that have sustained traditional societies for hundreds of years would start to change. New and more secular values would emerge among the people. These may include ideological orientations.<sup>14,15</sup> Ideologies, a consequence of educational and economic advancement,<sup>16</sup> seem to give greater conviction to revolutionaries. People would start to question the legitimacy of traditional regimes and their bureaucracies.<sup>6</sup> As more people get educated and become wealthy, they tend to demand the achievement of political rights, such as the right to vote and run for office. They also tend to demand the presence of civil liberties, such as equality before the law, freedom of speech, and organizational rights.<sup>13,5</sup> If such popular demands are not addressed, discontent will likely surface in the minds of many people. Such discontent may not come into the open for a long time but could be suddenly triggered by some other factors at any given moment. In sum, as Tocqueville<sup>17</sup> argued, revolutions could come during economic progress.

Moreover, economic development tends to bring much more urban and industrialized ways of life. As people migrate from rural areas to towns and cities, they may find themselves without jobs or without sufficient incomes.<sup>11</sup> Workers, a product of industrial life, may also feel exploited or not getting paid fairly by capital owners. Thus, as Marx argued, economic misery could make workers revolutionaries. Unless the government steps in to deal with economic issues, many people could find themselves unhappy and resentful<sup>5,6</sup> and could join others if and when a revolution is triggered. Moreover, peasants who have been exploited by the landed interest or government bureaucracy could take advantage of revolutionary situations to rise up and demand for land ownership, a fair share of the crops they harvest, or a lower rate of taxation.<sup>6,8,18-21</sup> Even some in the landed interest may find their privilege, status, and property encroached by the ever expanding capital-based economy.<sup>8,18</sup> When that happens, they may hold some resentment against the state. People also could resent if the

economy is mismanaged by the government and the overall quality of life in a society is declining or not improving as expected. For instance, Chirot<sup>22</sup> has contended, “There is no question that the most visible, though certainly not the only reason for the collapse of East European communism has been economic.” However, it should be noted that it is a below mid-level of economic development that tends to increase the chances for revolution. As it will become clear later on, once countries reach mid-level of development, they transition to democratic rule, and democracy is least liable to revolution.

In sum, a variety of reasons including the absence of social equality, lack of political rights and opportunities, and economic hardships could create discontent among many groups of people in a given society. In other words, economic development seems to affect different groups of people differently.<sup>5</sup> Those who would be affected by economic development and be supportive and participants of revolutions are likely to be the middle and working classes as well as the peasantry. The upper class is less likely to involve itself in a radical revolutionary environment. If we have, however, to pick one single class of citizens whose grievances would be most important for the onset of revolution, it would be the middle class. Intellectuals, professionals, artisans, and small business owners belong to the middle class. Until the landlord class ceased to exist in economically developed countries, the bourgeois also belonged to the middle class. While the peasantry and the workers may be mainly interested in economic issues, the middle class is likely to demand major political reforms and transformations. In addition, the demands of the workers and the peasantry have often been sidestepped or given little attention by the state. Moreover, it is a historical fact that neither the peasantry nor the working class is known to have waged a successful revolution without the vital support and leadership of the middle class.<sup>16</sup> In contrast, Brinton<sup>23</sup> and Huntington<sup>6</sup> considered the intellectuals, who belong to the middle class, as playing a leading role in opposing autocratic state in countries like prerevolutionary France. Brinton<sup>23</sup> also argued, “The people who got the lion’s share of it [France’s wealth] seem to have been merchants, bankers, businessmen, lawyers, peasants who ran their own farms as businesses the middle class. It was precisely these prosperous people who in the 1780’s were loudest against the government, most reluctant to save it by paying taxes or lending it money.” Of course, most, if not all, of the leaders of revolutions also belong to the middle class. For instance, the Bolshevik, Chinese, and Cuban revolutions were led by middle-class individuals like Lenin (a lawyer), Mao Zedong (an assistant librarian), and Castro (a lawyer). Robespierre, one of the well-known French revolutionary leaders, was also a lawyer. It is, thus, when its legitimacy is challenged by the middle class that the state completely or nearly completely loses its appeal and the fabric of its social support is shattered, increasing the chances for the onset of revolution.

**Regime type:** Although regime type itself may, in large part, be a function of economic development, it seems to have some independent impact on the onset of revolution. A case in point is that established democracies have not so far experienced revolutions.<sup>6</sup> Democracies, once consolidated, tend to have a political culture that promotes negotiations, give-and-take compromises, redistributive mechanisms, and institutions that deal with group demands; they also tend to be legitimate.<sup>20,24,25</sup> Social revolutions have rather occurred in traditional autocracies like in France, Russia, and Ethiopia and in modern authoritarian regimes, such as Kuomintang’s China and Batista’s Cuba.

**State ineffectiveness:** The fact that not all autocratic and authoritarian regimes have faced revolution suggests that it is not regime type per se that would lead to the onset of revolution. Autocratic or authoritarian states that are quite ineffective may have a higher chance of facing revolutions. The state is often defined as the political institutions that govern a given society. According to Nordlinger,<sup>26</sup> the state can also be defined as the political leaders who govern a given society. To Nordlinger,<sup>26</sup> it is individual leaders who act and govern, not institutions. This study will employ Nordlinger’s conception of the state.

Given that the state in this study refers to the political leaders who govern countries, political leadership may be used as a variable in place of state effectiveness or lack thereof. The fact that revolutions and major violence do not occur in democratic regimes suggests that democratic states are more effective in dealing with and managing societal concerns and well-being. Given the foregoing, state ineffectiveness refers to the weakness of the state in satisfying the needs and desires of the people.<sup>27</sup> State ineffectiveness may occur when an autocratic or authoritarian state mismanages an economy or fails to come up with appropriate and efficient socioeconomic and political policies and reforms that would benefit the majority of the people. How the state handles the foregoing issues would matter whether it is vulnerable to revolution or not. States that are ineffective and vulnerable to revolution are those that consistently reject societal demands for political reform and economic welfare and resort to violence to quell dissent. The fact that Great Britain was able to avoid violent revolution during its early modernization era while France did not in 1789 suggests that the leaders of the former (although had equal or greater coercive power to crush dissent) were more effective and pragmatic than the latter. British leaders seemed to have resorted into making gradual sociopolitical reforms.

**Legitimacy:** Economic development, regime type, and state ineffectiveness could also have intermediate variables that connect them with the onset of revolution. Intermediate variables help us understand how the main determinants affect the onset of revolution. A major intermediate variable in our case seems to be legitimacy.<sup>10</sup> For instance, economic development could lead to discontented citizenry. Some of these citizens, particularly the middle class, could be affluent and educated and may push for achieving political rights and civil liberties. Workers and the peasantry could be those who are in a state of economic hardship and hopelessness and may demand for changes in their economic conditions. Discontent may, in turn, lead to loss of legitimacy in the political system or regime. Similarly, state ineffectiveness may cause loss of legitimacy. This would be particularly true if the regime is also autocratic or authoritarian. That is, the people may think that it is not simply the state (or the leadership) but the political system that is responsible for the ills of society. Loss of legitimacy in the state may, specifically, occur in two ways: first, the state may not be responsive to the demands and needs of the people for an extended period of time. An example of this is Czarist Russia, leading to the 1917 revolution. Second, the state may resort to violent repression whenever it encounters popular dissent and demands. An example of this is Shah’s Iran, leading to the 1979 revolution. A combination of the two factors (unresponsive tendency and repressiveness of the state) could, of course, occur. An example of this was Czarist Russia, leading to the 1905 Russian Revolution. Loss of legitimacy, in turn, may increase the probability for the onset of revolution.<sup>10,22</sup> In sum, the interactive effect of state ineffectiveness

and autocratic or authoritarian regime as well as the socioeconomic impact of the economic development process seem to lead to loss of legitimacy, which could increase the odds for the onset of revolutions.

**Triggering factors:** It is my contention that the main conditions and the intermediate variable—economic development, regime type, state ineffectiveness, and legitimacy—would need one or two triggering factors to produce the onset of revolution. The triggering factors tend to ignite a long resentment that seems to have been boiling in the heads of the people. Examples of triggering factors include war defeat, fiscal crisis, and risings prices. These are variables that tend to occur suddenly and unexpectedly. In temporal sequence, the triggering factors tend to come after the main variables have long surfaced. If the main variables responsible for the onset of revolution are not present, the presence of a triggering factor would fail to ignite revolutionary uprising because the legitimacy of the political system and the state would make people tolerate the temporary crisis. In other words, triggering factors are not sufficient conditions for producing revolutionary uprisings. In sum, revolutionary situations seem to occur when massive and rapid social, economic, and political factors shape the people’s sociopolitical value systems and affect their economic welfare. But for a revolutionary uprising to start, an ignition may have to be provided by a triggering factor. However, it should be noted that because revolution is a rare phenomenon, a combination and severity of the main variables as well as one or two triggering factors may have to be present to increase the likelihood of its occurrence.<sup>28,12</sup>

**Parsimonious and general models of revolution, political instability, and political development**

I have argued that the three most important factors in explaining the probability for the onset of revolution are economic development, regime type, and state ineffectiveness. These variables and revolution, in turn, seem to be mediated by legitimacy. Taking triggering factors into account, we can show the aforementioned relationships for the onset of revolutions as in Figure 1. But can we really explain social revolutions fully independent of the general phenomenon of political violence? Indeed, a major criticism of Skocpol’s theory of revolution is that it is not general enough to explain most or all of social revolutions. General theories of revolution could be formulated, however, if we consider that revolution is, as Johnson<sup>29,11</sup> has argued, an aspect or a subset of political violence. Political violence, besides revolution, includes strikes, demonstrations, military coups, and rebellions.<sup>11,6</sup> We also know that political violence and political instability are often used interchangeably. Thus, given that democracies tend to have less-violent activities like peaceful demonstrations and strikes, and assuming that more countries would become democratic in the future, I will use political instability in place of political violence in the discussion that follows. In other words, by using the political instability–political stability continuum, it would be more appropriate to say that democracies are more stable than to use political violence and say that democracies are less violent. But how can we measure political instability? (Figure 1).

The different aspects of political instability could be distinguished from one another by the intensity of the conflict that the people have with their government. One way of measuring political instability is by the number of people who participate in different conflicts. For example, about one thousand people could participate in a certain demonstration and about ten thousand in a given strike. How many people would support and participate in a social revolution? Hundreds of thousands? Millions? We can assume that all or nearly all of the

people will support a given social revolution. Note that not all of the people who support a social revolution need to participate in the uprising. Moreover, although the main conditions that we have hypothesized to influence revolution (economic development, regime type, and state ineffectiveness) may be used to explain political instability, let us further simplify the model in Figure 1 by assuming that the variable that matters the most for the onset of revolution in particular and for political instability in general is loss of legitimacy.<sup>22</sup> If so, we can measure legitimacy or lack thereof by the number of people supporting or opposing a given government. When the political system is highly stable, we can expect that all or nearly all the people would support their government. The converse would also be true. We now have only two variables to deal with, legitimacy and political instability, and I show this relationship as in Figure 2.

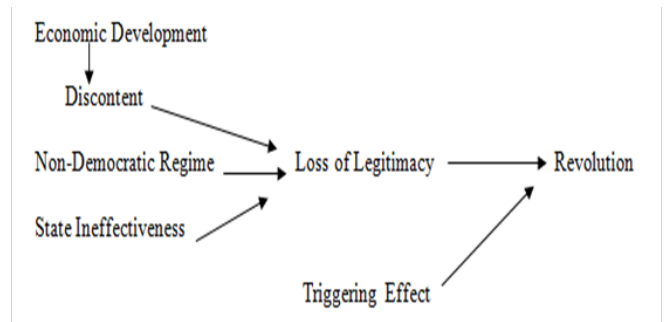


Figure 1 A Simplified Explanatory Model for the Onset of Revolution.

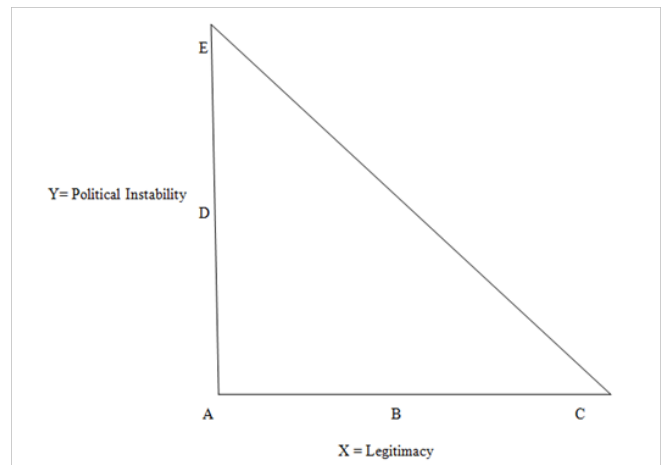


Figure 2 A Simplified Model of Political Instability.

Figure 2 shows that political instability (Y) is an inverse function of legitimacy (X). We can also show such a relationship mathematically as in Eq. 1:

$$Y = a - b X \dots\dots\dots(\text{Eq. 1})$$

Where

- a: The Y–intercept
- b: The slope

Using Figure 2 and Eq. 1, we can say that, at the origin, when there is virtually no legitimacy to the political system (X = 0), the onset of revolution is very plausible (or its probability of occurrence is close to 100%). At this point, we can also assume that a triggering effect that sparked the revolution has occurred. If X gets smaller than B (where the latter is assumed to be at the center of the X–axis), a

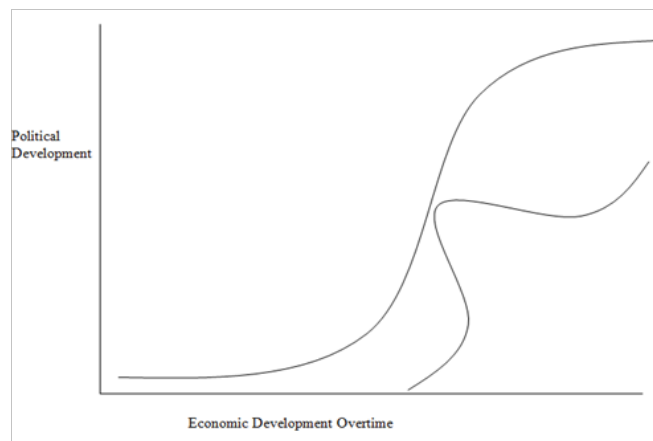


variety of political instabilities including revolution is a possibility. If  $X$  is greater than  $B$ , only minor to moderate levels of instability could occur. When there is extremely high level of legitimacy ( $Y = 0$ ), there will be virtually no political instability (and the probability for the onset of revolution is close to 0%).

If our integration of revolution to other aspects of political instability is correct, we can further ask more interesting questions. For instance, are political instability in general and revolutions in particular temporary or permanent aspects of political life? Huntington<sup>6</sup> argues that traditional societies and highly modern or developed countries are politically stable. The least stable societies, according to Huntington,<sup>6</sup> Eckstein,<sup>30</sup> Schwartz,<sup>31</sup> Hegre et al.,<sup>32</sup> Gates et al.,<sup>33</sup> are those in the middle, modernizing or developing countries. Relying on previous study, which conducted cross-national analysis, Huntington argues that political instability takes a form of a bell-curve. That is, political instability increases as countries modernize and then declines as they become highly modern or developed. The implication of Huntington's argument is that traditional societies are stable because the people have little or no reason to question the legitimacy of the monarchy. Developed countries are also stable because their economies and political rights and reforms could satisfy the needs and interests of most people. Only modernizing societies, which may not be willing or making political and economic reforms may suffer from major political instability, including revolution. In other words, political instability seems to be linked to the processes of economic and political developments. Ultimately, then, a full understanding of political instability in general and revolution in particular seems to require a clear understanding of the connection between, and the process of, economic and political developments.

Indeed, modernization philosophers and theorists, from Karl Marx to Lipset,<sup>13</sup> have argued that economics and politics are related. More specifically, economics is believed to influence politics.<sup>13</sup> Not only is economic development related to political development in general and to democratic development in particular, such a relationship is also dynamic.<sup>34</sup> Thus, capitalist economic development can be defined as a process of economic change from land-based to capital-based economic production. Similarly, political development can be defined as a process of political change from a traditional or autocratic rule to a democratic system. And the two processes tend to change together over time. What is also clear is that modern democratic regimes are relatively new. The oldest democracies on earth like the United States were established only a couple of centuries ago. Traditional monarchies, in contrast, have lasted for thousands of years. In between the two, we have even newer polities, economically developing and politically democratizing but less stable countries. But if more countries are to become democratic and developed, political stability is likely to be more prevalent around the world in the future. The question then is, what is the level of democracy that could assure the optimal level of political stability? Although many scholars have assumed that today's democratic regimes are stabilizing,<sup>35-37</sup> there have been some extensions of those arguments. For instance, Tiruneh<sup>34</sup> has argued that the political system does not merely stabilize once countries become highly democratic, but, due to continuous economic development, it may evolve indefinitely. That is, democracy is not just about having the right to vote; it is also about the continuous process of achieving an equal distribution of power. Assuming the distributions of income, rationality, and social equality are correlated with dispersion of political power, Tiruneh<sup>34</sup> argues that the larger the size of the middle class in a given society, the more democratic a regime will be. And assuming the presence and maintenance of

continuous capitalist-economic development, the increase in the size of the middle class, and thus the level of democracy, will likely be open-ended. Such an infinite process of political development can, according to Tiruneh,<sup>34</sup> be depicted by an S-shaped probit curve as in Figure 3. The bottom and top, flatter, sections of the probit curve represent autocratic and highly democratic countries, respectively. The middle part of the curve represents democratizing societies. In Figure 3, economic development is on the X-axis, and it is assumed to be the main determinant of political development.



**Figure 3** Hypothetical Probit Curve of Political Development and Normal Curve of Political Instability and Political Reforms.

In addition, we can rely on the bell curve shown in Figure 3 to describe the rates of political change and political instability. First, the bell curve could represent the slow dynamics of politics in both highly autocratic and democratic countries (left and right sides of the curve, respectively) as well as the rapid political change in democratizing societies (middle part of the curve). In other words, this trend refers to how fast or slow political reforms have occurred. These political reforms may include policies pertaining to labor rights and benefits, the achievement of political rights, civil liberties, and a more equal distribution of political power among citizens of a given country over time. Second, the bell curve could describe the rate of change in political instability. As Huntington<sup>6</sup> and others have argued, political instability would be low in traditional and highly developed societies but would be high in developing countries. When we deal with variables and concepts that apply over a long period of time, we are likely to face terminological problems. For instance, current modern nation-states are not often the same size, geographically speaking, as their predecessors. Examples of this are China, Ethiopia, and Great Britain. Political violence has often been used to establish modern nation-states. Moreover, civil wars have often been waged to pacify rebellious regions. We must thus make sure that conflicts involving nation-state building and civil wars (which only affect central governments and rebellious regions) are not included in our study of social revolutions.

Given that traditional, developing, and developed countries tend, for the most part, to go together with autocratic, democratizing, and democratic societies, respectively, we may argue that political reforms and political instability are two aspects of the political development process. According to Huntington,<sup>6</sup> "The history of reform in the United States—from the Jeffersonians down through abolitionists, populists, the labor movement, and the civil rights movements—is studded with instances of violence and other forms of disorder which helped to trigger changes in governmental policy." Indeed, "In most

societies, civic peace is impossible without some reform, and reform is impossible without some violence".<sup>6</sup> Although political instability may not often lead to a corresponding political reform, the latter may be considered as one of the means that the former have been historically achieved.<sup>38</sup> And it is likely those two-bell curves (with different means and stand deviations) rather than one represent the rates of political reforms and political instability, respectively. In other words, we should imagine two bell curves, rather than just one shown in Figure 3, lying on the right of the probit curve. Interestingly, the two continuous mathematical functions that we use to describe the hypothesized dynamics of political development (probit curve) and political reforms and political instability (the normal curve) are related: the probit curve is actually the integral of the normal curve. Conversely, the normal curve is the inverse or the derivative of the probit curve.

The probability density function (PDF) of the normal curve with mean  $\mu$  and variance  $\sigma^2$  is given by:

$$f(x; \mu, \sigma) = \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} \exp\left(-\frac{(x-\mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}\right)$$

$$\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}$$

The probit model that emerges from the cumulative density function (CDF) of the normal curve is given by:  $x$

$$f(x; \mu, \sigma) = \int_{-\infty}^x \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} \exp\left(-\frac{(u-\mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}\right) du$$

$$\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}$$

Moreover, we should imagine that the trend of economic development, similar to that of political development, takes the form of an S-shape or probit curve. In other words, the two trends would, to a large extent, change together in tandem. Consequently, when political changes lag economic ones, popular instability may follow.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, both Olson,<sup>5</sup> Huntington<sup>6</sup> & Eckstein<sup>30</sup> have argued that an economic change not matched by a similar level of political change is responsible for revolution. In contrast, in countries where a match between economic and political changes occurs, political stability will likely exist. It should also be noted that, unlike Davies's<sup>9</sup> claim, it is not just a boom in economic growth followed by a steep decline that will necessarily lead to revolution. It is a rather a mismatch between economic and political changes that could facilitate the occurrence of revolution. Specifically, it is when political changes lag behind economic changes, not the other way around, that the odds for revolution will likely increase. Indeed, it is an empirical fact that no revolution has ever occurred in relatively poorer democratic countries. However, not all countries will avoid major uprisings and revolutions. Much, if not all, of the higher intensities of political instability like rebellion and revolution, when they do occur, will likely manifest themselves at or before the middle section of the probit curve or the left side of the normal curve. Consequently, a smooth, S-shaped, path of political development is never attained. Thus, the S-shape probit curve shown in Figure 3 is more of an ideal. In practice, the trends of political development in some countries would be affected by dips and valleys, which result from minor violence and major uprisings, respectively. Once a democratic rule is established in a given country, however, the process of political development will likely be smoother. In other words, democracies will likely avoid major instability because they would be more responsive to the needs, demands, and interests of their citizens. Such an argument is

consistent with scholarly contention that revolution is less likely to occur in democratic regimes.<sup>6,20,24,25,38,39</sup> According to Huntington,<sup>40</sup> a rule of thumb for expecting when countries transition to democracy is the achievement of a middle-level of economic development. And a middle level of economic development will likely occur at or around the center of the probit curve. After this point, political instability will likely decline because countries would establish an industrial economy and a democratic rule. In other words, economically affluent and politically content citizens are likely to provide legitimacy to the democratic political system. Once countries achieve a middle-level of economic development and a democratic rule, only political instability of less-intensity types, such as peaceful demonstrations and strikes, will likely follow.<sup>38</sup> Even less-intensity instability would continue to decrease over time once countries pass the middle of the probit curve and become increasingly more democratic and highly developed. Note also that although economic development may be the most important variable in influencing political development, the two processes are likely to be managed by the state. In other words, the state (which basically and dynamically refers to the political leadership of governments of a given country over time) is assumed in this study to oversee and arbitrate the synchronization of the two processes. If we, then, assume that all countries will become developed and democratic sooner or later, we can infer from the foregoing analysis that social revolution may be a passing phenomenon; it seems to occur only due to massive and rapid changes that socioeconomic development has wrought to modernizing societies and states.

## Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the causes of social revolutions. As Arendt,<sup>2</sup> Huntington,<sup>6</sup> Tilly,<sup>7,41</sup> Skocpol,<sup>8</sup> and others have argued, politics in general and the state in particular may play some role in explaining social revolutions. Effective and visionary leaders of states do seem to avoid revolutions by making necessary reforms. Revolution seems to occur only in the states that are ineffective, undemocratic, repressive, and lose their legitimacy. However, as Arendt<sup>2</sup> argues, "Even where the loss of authority is quite manifest, revolutions can break out and succeed only if there exists a sufficient number of men who are prepared for its collapse and willing to assume power." To be sure, even the states that had found themselves in the middle of popular wrath seemed to have been surprised and overwhelmed by the watershed of change that the Industrial Revolution has wrought onto them. Without the Industrial Revolution and its aftermath, states, even those ineffective ones, might not have feared and faced enlightened publics who had risen up during revolutions. The implication of the foregoing analyses is that revolution seems to be a passing phenomenon: it would cease to exist once autocratic and authoritarian countries establish highly developed economies and democratic regimes.

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## Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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