

Chapter 2

Ideology and Dictatorship

We have looked at how the Russian Revolution occurred. Explanations centered around (1) the breakdown of a society (mass unrest) (2) stressed by fundamental technological change (industrialization) with (3) events triggered by a major action (war), pursued (4) under incompetent leadership (Nicholas II), and (5) as society was spinning out of control (soldier mutinies) opportunists seized power (Lenin). Thus, unstable societal conditions (society dimension) can provide opportunities for individuals (individual dimension) to act incompetently or competently in gaining and holding power. Societal dynamics does involve particular (historical) individuals who change the general patterns (sociology) of a society – *individual and society*. Such historical individuals are opportunistic, seizing power over a society during times of instability.

But what happens after such opportunistic individuals seize power? How do they then alter a society? This is the issue into which we next look – examining Lenin’s exercise of power in Russia after the revolution. After 1917, Russia became the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (U.S.S.R.), governed as a soviet dictatorship, first by Lenin and then by Stalin. Over the next generations, Russian society was changed completely and old Russian culture obliterated.

This is what makes the idea of a modern dictatorship so important in social thought – the immense power that modern technology enables a dictator to wield.

And this is what makes ideological dictators so different from traditional dictators in history – this leveraging power of technology under ideology.

We review Lenin’s role in the Russian Revolution in three sections: Lenin seizes power, Lenin wields power, and Lenin consolidates power. What we see are examples of two historical/sociological principles.

Social structures dominate a historical epoch in the beginnings of a societal change.

Individuals can dominate a historical epoch after seizing power during societal change.

Historical Event: Lenin Seizes Power

Lenin was born Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (1870–1924) in Simbirsk, beside the Volga River.¹ His father was a Russian official in education. He died in 1886 when Lenin was 16 years old. The next year, his older brother, Alexander, was arrested and hanged for participation in a plot to bomb Tsar Alexander III. Lenin enrolled in Kazan University but was soon expelled for political activity. Later, he enrolled in the University of Saint Petersburg, graduating in 1892 with a law degree.

Lenin practiced law until December 1895, when he was arrested for political activities. He was exiled to Siberia. There, he married and also published his first book on Marxism, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*. When his exile was over in 1900, he left Russia and traveled in Europe. By this time, he was a dedicated professional revolutionary. He lectured, wrote, and cofounded a newspaper, *Iskra* (Spark). He began using the alias of Lenin. In 1902, Lenin published a second book, *What is to Be Done?* Therein, he advocated that a revolution should be led by professional revolutionaries, rather than depend upon a worker uprising.

The 1905 revolt came about from a sequence of events that began in 1903. Then, liberal movements in Russia were advocating the change from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy. In November 1904, the Duma (council) of Moscow City passed a resolution, demanding a national elected legislature and constitution for Russia. Other city Dumas followed. That same month, Tsar Nicholas II responded by appointing a liberal Minister of the Interior and issued a manifesto promising some reforms, but not a national Duma (legislature). In December 1904, workers' strikes began in a factory in Saint Petersburg and spread to other factories.

In January of 1905, a dramatic incident occurred when an orthodox priest led a large procession of workers to the Winter Palace to deliver a petition to the Tsar. Troops guarding the Winter Palace opened fire, killing over 100 people. Outrage over the killings produced a series of further strikes throughout Russia. Nicholas II dismissed his liberal Minister of the Interior and appointed a government commission to enquire into the causes of discontent among the workers. The Tsar appointed Pyotr Stolypin as the new Interior Minister. But in February, the Tsar's uncle, Grand Duke Aleksandrovich, was assassinated.

Later in October 1905, Nicholas II did sign a manifesto to create a national Duma. But he personally felt ashamed of signing. He thought it a betrayal of his family's dynasty. Russian liberals prepared for national elections. (Also in that same month, a workers council was formed in St Petersburg, the Petrograd Soviet; and a decade later, this soviet (committee of workers) was to play a key role in the 1917 revolution.)

Russian revolutionaries denounced the elections and called for an armed uprising to abolish the monarchy. An uprising did occur in November 1905 in Sevastopol by railroad workers. The striking workers seized the railroad across Russia, the

Trans-Siberian Railway. Army troops were sent to restore order. Other strikes occurred in December in Moscow. On December 7, other troops were sent into Moscow to end the strikes. Fierce fighting began, and over a thousand people were killed. The government arrested agitators, with thousands arrested and executed or imprisoned.

In March 1906, the first elections to the Duma were held. But in April, the Tsar issued laws, confirming the Tsar as an absolute monarch, with complete control of government. The Duma was to have its members as half-elective and half-appointed. Legislation had to be approved by the Duma, the Council, and the Tsar to become law. The Tsar could bypass the Duma to make law in exceptional conditions.

Representatives demanded more power than this for the national Duma. In July 1906, Nicholas II dissolved the first Duma. An assassination attempt was made upon Nicholas' Interior Minister Pyotr Arkadyevich Stolypin. More agitators were arrested and hanged.

In the 1905 revolt, Lenin had returned to Russia in November. The Russian Social Democrat Labor Party (RSDLP) met and elected Lenin to its Presidium. But there was a split in the RSDLP. Those opposed to Lenin's idea of the party as composed of professional revolutionaries left the meeting and later called the Menshevik (minority). Those remaining in the meeting elected Lenin and then were called the Bolsheviks (majority) of the RSDLP. Lenin then was the leader of the Russian Bolsheviks – espousing a professional revolutionary approach toward a communist revolution.

But in December, Stolypin crushed the revolt. Lenin fled Russia. Lenin continued in exile when World War I began in 1914. Russia entered the war on the side of France, England, and Italy. Germany and the Austrian–Hungarian Empire were their opponents.

The socialist parties in Europe split on whether or not to support their own respective nations in the war. A Second International meeting of Social Democrats was held. The German Social Democrats voted to support Germany. Lenin opposed the war and the support of any nation in the war. Lenin moved to neutral Switzerland to wait out the war.

In February of 1917, when the Tsar Nicholas II abdicated the Russian throne, Lenin was still in Switzerland. He wanted to return to Russia and talked with the German Government. The Germans agreed to transit Lenin back to Russia in a “sealed train,” intending to use Lenin to stir chaos in Russia. From Germany, Lenin went to Sweden, then to Finland, and finally arrived in Petrograd in July 1917. But then, soviet workers and soldiers clashed with the Kerensky Government troops, and Lenin fled back to Finland. Only after General Konilov's failed coup in August did Lenin return to Petrograd. Lenin helped lead the Petrograd Soviet's seizure of government in their putsch of October 1917. In this putsch, the Bolshevik Party overthrew the Provisional Russian Government under Kerensky. Thus, power in Russia had gone from Tsar Nicholas to Prime Minister Kerensky to Commissar Lenin.

Individual and Political Process

The action of the seizure of government by a group under the leadership of particular individuals occurs within a prior social context. We have just seen how Lenin got into the opportunistic position of being capable of leading a government coup, summarized in Fig. 2.1.

ACTION – The 1905 Revolt climaxed in a Demonstration at the Winter Palace, in which troops fired upon demonstrators. This revolt provided a precedent for the subsequent revolt in 1917.

INDIVIDUAL – Lenin became a leader of the Bolshevik wing of the Russian communist party. Nicholas II felt forced to propose reforms but was committed to the principle of absolute monarchy. Stolypin, as his minister, used brutal repression to put down reformist movements.

GROUP – The Russian Social Democratic Labor Party was a communist party in Russia. It split into Mensheviks and Bolsheviks. Bolsheviks under Lenin's leadership would restrict party membership only to professional revolutionaries. Also the first of the Soviets was organized in Petrograd, which a decade later played a central role in the 1917 Revolution.

REASON – Lenin's reputation among revolutionaries began with his publication of his book, *What is to be Done?* The Government of Russia was under the principle of an absolute monarchy. Russian liberals wanted a constitutional monarchy. Russian radicals wanted a communist revolution.

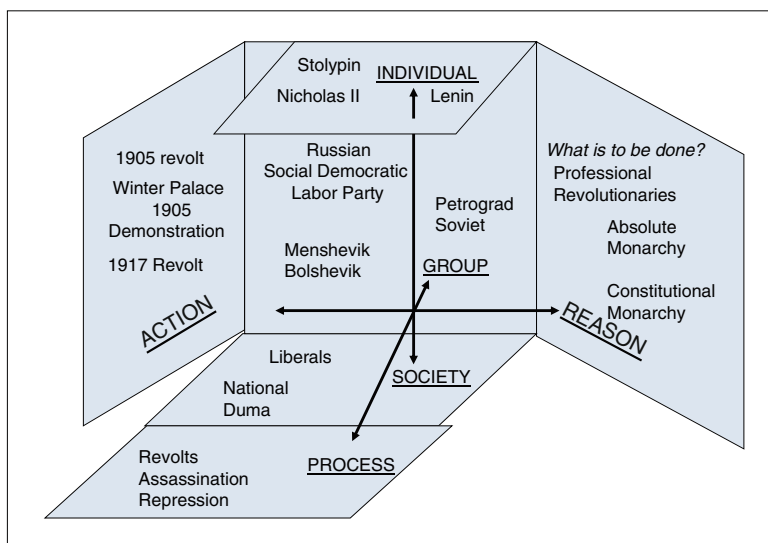


Fig. 2.1 Lenin's seizure of power

SOCIETY – Nicholas II held elections and established a national Duma for representative government in Russia; but then he dissolved it.

PROCESS – Revolts occurred in Russia (1) when a major portion of a society (peasants, workers, and intellectuals) were alienated from the ideology of the ruling government (absolute monarchy) and (2) government incompetence fostered poor economic and social conditions. Radicals used assassinations of government officials to prompt the government into harsh, repressive measures – which increased citizen alienation from the government.

Lenin gained recognition as an intellectual leader through his writings. He joined a political party which valued his ideas. He advocated a tactic for professional revolutionaries, which split the party. He led the Bolshevik wing of the party. This placed him in a leadership role, when in 1917 the breakdown of the Russian Government occurred with the Tsar's abdication.

Individuals influence societal events through the publication of ideas and leadership in opportunistic political parties.

Divisive Society and Civil Society

Let us pause in Lenin's story to review two then prominent ideas about society: (1) society as a divisive society (Marxism) or (2) society as a civil society (Democracy).

We saw that the Marxist theory of society is one of a divisive society – internally and perpetually divided between labor and capital. Labor is the productive force, and Capital is the control of productive force. The historical dialectic of Marx's materialism is a continuous war between capitalists and labor, in which one side or the other wins. In war, there is no restraint upon power. The idea of a political compromise for an economic balance between capitalists and labor is not in Marxist thought.

This is important to understanding Lenin's policies. His social theory underlay his policy. Power in war has either a winner or a loser. There is no compromise, no sharing of power in a situation of war. Therefore, a society in internal war can only end in a dictatorship. In Lenin's thinking, this can only be either a capitalist oligarchy exploiting labor or a dictatorship of the proletariat, terrorizing capitalists.

But in contrast to this Marxist view of a divisive society, there was another way to view conflicts in society. This is as "civil society."² A civil society is one in which social conflict is resolved by compromise and not by terror and war. For a nontotalitarian society, this idea is essential. It is essential to the idea of democracy and to representative government. A government based upon representation of differing interests must resolve conflict peacefully and without terror.

For example, the political scientist, Bent Flyvbjerg, wrote: "... a strong civil society is a crucial condition of strong democracy. Empowering civil society is a central concern for the project of democracy ... But what is "civil society"? ... Most writers on civil society agree ... that civil society has an institutional core constituted

by voluntary associations outside the sphere of the state and the economy. The fundamental act of citizenship in a pluralist democracy is in forming (voluntary) associations ... the task of maintaining and redefining the boundaries between civil society and state are the two interdependent and simultaneous processes: the expansion of social equality and liberty, and the restructuring and democratizing of state institutions.” (Flyvbjerg 1988)

The idea of a civil society allows the voluntary association of citizens in a state to act freely and independently of state institutions. Freedom of the citizen to voluntarily associate enables the democratic goals of pursuit of social equality and liberty and limitation of arbitrary and undemocratic exercise of the power of the state. In an authoritarian government, all voluntary associations are controlled by the state, as well as control of state institutions. There is no freedom for citizens in an authoritarian state, only the obedience to dictates of the state.

Bent Flyvbjerg was born in Denmark in 1952. He is a geographer and urban planner. He has held professorial chairs at Aalborg University in Denmark and at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands. In 2009, he moved to Oxford University in England. His books include *Decision-Making on Mega-Projects*, *Managing Social Science Matter*, and *Rationality and Power*.



Bent Flyvbjerg

<http://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/faculty/Flyvbjerg+Bent>

But the idea of a “civil society” introduces methodological complications in political science research. This idea of a “civil compromise” (civil cooperation or civil collaboration) raises the problem about (1) the existence of power and (2) the distribution of power within society.

The idea of a “civil compromise” can have a normative implication: what ought to be a “civil compromise”?

This is the methodological problem of normative judgments versus empirical judgments in social science research – idealism or realism. Within contemporary political science in the last half of the twentieth century, this problem between the ideal or real (normative or empirical) became again the central methodological issue of not only political science, but all social science. What is real about the nature of society, and what is ideal?

The distinction between societal reality and societal ideal has been and continues to be the methodological center of all social theory.

Bent Flyvbjerg has also provided a nice analysis (within political science) of these two conflicting methodological approaches. Flyvbjerg focused upon the writings of two influential political scientists of the late twentieth century: Jurgen Habermas and Michael Foucault. Flyvbjerg saw their differences as that of methodology.

1. Habermas approached research in political systems as a study of *idealism* in political theory – *normative theory*.
2. Foucault approached research in political systems as a study of *realism* in political theory – *empirical theory*.

Jurgen Habermas described political activities by focusing upon and identifying the political *ideals* around which people gather, associate, and identify. Habermas called this “discourse ethics” of the politics. By the term “discourse,” Habermas indicated that social ideals are discussed openly in the politics as a justification of political action. By the term “ethics,” Habermas was indicating that the ideal of the discourse provided an ethical agreement around which a group associates.

Jurgen Habermas was born in Dusseldorf, Germany, in 1929. He studied at the University of Gottingen and the University of Bonn, obtaining his PhD in 1954. He did his habilitation in political science at the University of Marburg. In 1962, he obtained a professorial appointment at the University of Heidelberg. In 1981, he published *The Theory of Communicative Action*.



Jurgen Habermas (<http://en.wikipedia.org>, Habermas 2009)

But there is a reality about power in all political situations – the reality of how power is actually used, as opposed to how the power is justified. This, as Michel Foucault emphasized, is what should be described as an essential feature of social science methodology. Foucault argued that in any political situation (even focused around a “*discourse ethics*”) there was also another view to power – which is a “realism” about politics, the “*power analytics*” of the situation.

Michel Foucault (1926–1984) was born in Poitiers, France. He attended the Ecole Normale Supérieure. He earned a license in psychology and a degree in philosophy in 1952. From 1953 to 1954, he taught psychology at the Université Lille Nord de France, where he published his first book *Maladie mentale et personnalité*. From 1954 to 1960, he taught in different universities in Sweden, Poland, and Germany. In 1960, he completed his doctorate and obtained a position in philosophy in the University of Clermont-Ferrand. After the

French student rebellion in 1968, the French Government started a new university, Paris VIII. Foucault became head of its philosophy department. In 1970, he was elected to the Collège de France, as Professor of the History of Systems of Thought. His major works include *Madness and Civilization*, *The Birth of the Clinic*, *Death and The Labyrinth*, *The Order of Things*, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, *Discipline and Punish*, and *The History of Sexuality*.



Michel Foucault (<http://www.foucault>)

For example, one of the ideals of American democracy is equal opportunity and equal treatment under law – *Habermas' discourse ethics*. But of course, in reality, not every American has the same access to legal systems, education, safety, health, etc. People of more means have better opportunities in life, and wealthier folk can hire more expert lawyers than can poorer folk – *Foucaults' power analytics*.

Flyvbjerg argued that their two approaches captured the modern political science methodology duality (idealism or realism): “The works of Habermas and Foucault highlight an essential tension in modernity. This is the tension between consensus and conflict ... Habermas is the philosopher of *Moralitat* (morality) based on consensus. Foucault ... is the philosopher of *wirkliche Historie* (real history) told in terms of conflict and power.” (Flyvbjerg 1989)

The morality of modern democracy is a discursive consensus to a democratic process (which defines the rules of governance in a constitution and provides justification for the exercise of government power by elected officials). This is Habermas' point about political morality as based upon consensus. But how such consensus actually operates is through conflict – struggle by parties for election, funding of elections by special interests, formulation of laws and enforcement to benefit special interests rather than the general civil public. This is Foucault's point that the actual operation of any real democracy in a society is through conflict and the gaining and exercise of power.

Flyvbjerg's position is that both Habermas' and Foucault's perspectives on consensus and conflict in society are essential to the methodology of the social sciences.

The consensus about power in a group is constructed around an ideal expressed in a discourse-ethics of the group (idealism).

The reality of how power is really exercised in a group is expressed in the power-analytics of the group (realism).

Discourse-ethics is the justification of power; while power-analytics is the exercise of power.

Historical Event: Lenin Wields Power

Let us look at how *idealism* and *realism* operated in Lenin's governance. Lenin's Bolsheviks held a Marxist theory of society, in which society is divisive and all societies exist in perpetual war between labor and capitalism. We recall that Marx had called this "dialectic materialism." Marx believed that labor (the workers of a society, the "proletariat") should eventually rise up and overthrow capitalist domination of government in a "communist revolution." This was Marx's idealism (discourse ethics). But this was not historically realistic in Russia. Lenin envisioned the power-analytic solution to this fact as the overthrow of a government by professional communist revolutionaries.

The traditional Russian aristocracy also had held a divisive theory of society but as a feudal society. Feudal society was divided into military aristocracy (who ruled) and peasants (who were ruled). Civil society (unity) was only important among the aristocracy, who must all swear feudal allegiance to a king to avoid civil war. From the king's perspective, he/she should rule as an absolute monarch (the Tsar's discourse ethics). This feudal view was held by the Russian aristocracy.

But with the rising industrialization in Russia in the late 1800s, a new industrial middle class was growing (Marx's capitalists). This middle class held a "liberal" theory of society. All Russians (aristocrats, peasants, and merchants) should form a government as a voluntary association of individuals in a society, confirmed by a social contract (constitution). To rule a constitutional civil society, a representative form of government should be formed. Citizens of the civil society should elect representatives to legislate and administer laws (Liberal's discourse ethics). A monarch could be kept by a civil society, but only as a figurehead, a constitutional monarchy.

Once in power and because of his reasoning, Lenin became a dictator. Social theory of a Marxist divisive society (Marxist discourse ethics) justified Lenin's political instincts (power analytics) for absolute power to the Bolsheviks.

In any real case of "historical determinism" in a society (which is to say why history went the way it did) was such "determinism" (historical factors) due principally to societal forces or to the vision of a leader?

This is the interesting practical issue about the dimensional factors of Society and Individual.

The Bolsheviks had seized power from the Kerensky Government. Their organizational form (group) were soviets (workers' committee), organized by the communist movement in Russia. At the end of August, the Petrograd Soviet adopted Bolshevik resolutions about power. Also the Bolsheviks won a majority of representation in other soviets in Briansk, Samara, Saratov, Tsaritsyn, Minsk, Kiev, and Tashkent. These soviets were coordinated through an All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets.

The Bolshevik party was ready to organize a new government through control of the soviets, organized in the cities across Russia. This was the key to Lenin's putsch. After the Petrograd Soviet seized the government offices in the capital of Russia (now called St. Petersburg), the second meeting of the All-Russian Congress of

Soviets proclaimed a new government. The Congress elected Lenin as Chairman of its executive committee, the Council of the Peoples' Commissars.

The first issue facing Lenin's new Soviet Government was whether or not to continue the war with Germany and Austria. Lenin argued for the immediate cessation of the war and began negotiations with Germany for a treaty with no changes in territory. Germany rejected the treaty and renewed their advance, taking much of Russia's territory in the west. Then, in March of 1918, Lenin signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, losing much territory to Germany. The Socialist Revolutionaries in Lenin's Government opposed the treaty. Lenin outlawed the party and jailed its members.

This is an example of Lenin's power-analytics (arrest the political opposition) dominating the communists/socialists "discourse-ethics" (revolutionary solidarity).

The second issue was how the workers' committees, soviets, were to manage industries which the new government had nationalized. Lenin argued that a business could not be managed by a committee, and a single individual should be in charge. A commissar appointed by his committee would control each industrial organization. The principle in the soviet ideology had been the management of industry by soviets, and this ideology was used by the Bolsheviks to gain power. But Lenin abandoned this. Just as Lenin thought that a dictatorship of professional revolutionaries would act in the name of the people, so now Lenin proclaimed that commissars would manage in the name of the workers. The communist state as Lenin envisioned would be a dictatorial state, in which commissars controlled everything. Lenin would control the commissars. This was Lenin's power analytics for the control of government, of industry, and of agriculture.

In management, Lenin's power-analytics (dictatorial management) replaced the Bolsheviks' discourse-ethics (management by workers' committees).

The third issue of the new government was how to deal with political opposition. Already, one party allied with the Bolsheviks had opposed Lenin's treaty of Brest-Litovsk. In December 1917, Lenin established a state security agency, Cheka (Central Committee for Security), to repress political opposition. Next, Lenin ordered censorship of all publications, and the Cheka confiscated opposition literature and closed down newspapers critical of the government. The government-controlled newspapers of Pravda and Isvestia were given a monopoly on the news.

This again was Lenin's power-analytics – dictators rule by fiat and terror and control of communications.

In January 1918, assassins tried to shoot Lenin when he was driving back from giving a public speech. Lenin escaped injury, protected by a companion riding with him. Later in August, a member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, which Lenin had outlawed, approached Lenin (after another meeting) and shot him. Her name was Fanya Kaplan. She called out to Lenin, who turned to her. She fired three shots, of which two wounded him. One wound was not serious, a bullet lodged in his arm. The second bullet hit Lenin's jaw and neck. It would take Lenin a long time to recover from the second wound. But the attempt on Lenin's life would make him

more popular with the public. And the personality cult of Lenin as a hero began. Lenin expanded his Cheka to implement widespread official terror.

Individual and Government Structure

We see in this example how the rule of an individual can set up a governmental structure greatly altering society. Figure 2.2 lists the factors of the event of societal restructuring began by Lenin's new Bolshevik Government.

ACTION – The Bolshevik putsch established a new Russian Provisional Government. One of the first actions of the new government was to end Russia's participation in World War I by signing a humiliating peace treaty with Germany, ceding territory (Treaty of Brest-Litovsk). Lenin ruled by fiat and terror.

INDIVIDUAL – Lenin established his formal leadership of the Russian Provisional Government by being elected a chairman of executive committee of the Council of the Peoples' Commissars.

GROUP – The All-Russian Congress of Soviets established the new provisional government and elect Lenin as its leader. Lenin formed the position of industrial commissar to run government enterprises. Lenin also established a state security agency, Cheka, for the Bolsheviks to suppress political opposition.

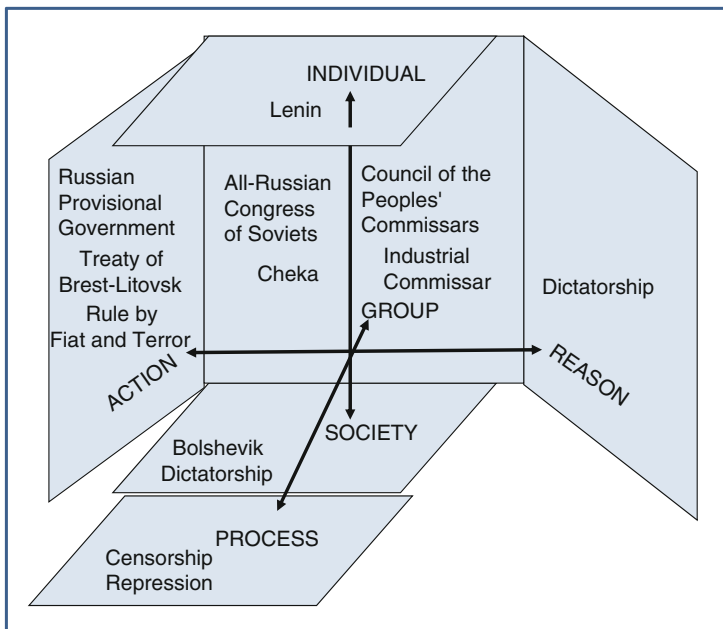


Fig.2.2 Lenin's rule

REASON – Lenin’s ideas for ruling Russia are by dictatorship.

SOCIETY – Russian society is being changed by the actions of the Bolshevik dictatorship – which Lenin and his comrades are establishing as the new form of government.

PROCESS – The processes of censorship and repression by Cheka become state operating procedure in the new provisional government of Russia.

We see in this example that the ideas and actions of a single individual through establishing a new government can greatly change societal structures and processes by means of new government structures and processes.

Political Parties and Social Theory

Political parties divide rationally around different theories of society; and in Russia, these parties were Monarchists, Bolsheviks, and Liberals.

The Russian aristocracy believed in the rule of government by a king, monarchy. And the Russian Tsars believed in absolute monarchy.

Lenin’s Bolsheviks held a Marxist theory of society, in a perpetual war between labor and capitalism. In contrast, the Russian aristocracy held a feudal theory of society, in which seigniorial barons rule a peasant population in a territory. To control civil war among the barons, the barons would swear feudal allegiance to a king. The king would rule the society as an absolute ruler. This was Tsar Nicholas II’s theory of society and the conservative aristocracy which had supported him. Even when Nicholas II abdicated the throne, the conservative parties in Russia wanted him replaced by his brother to continue the Russian monarchy.

Russian liberals (middle merchant and professional classes) held a theory of society as a civil society – a voluntary association of individuals in a society for a government by social contract (constitution). To rule a constitutional civil society, a representative form of government should be formed. In such a government, citizens of the civil society elected representatives to legislate and administer laws. A monarch could be kept by a civil society, but only as a figurehead, a constitutional monarchy. Thus, the three sectors of Russian society that held these different societal models came to actual war over power in Russia.

In a society, political parties can divide according to the different theory each party holds as proper for a society – normative social theories.

Historical Event: Lenin Consolidates Power

Former Russian Army officers organized new armies (White Armies) to oppose the Lenin’s Bolshevik Government. The anti-Bolshevik groups included aristocrats, land owners, republicans, conservatives, merchants, middle-class citizens, and former

government civil servants – anyone who was not a worker, peasant, or communist revolutionary. Civil war had begun.

When the Bolsheviks had seized power, the first thing they did was to dissolve the Russian Army, replacing it with a Red Militia. But the Russian war with Germany continued. But now with no real Russian Army to oppose the German Army, the latter advanced into Russia. Lenin was forced to accept a humiliating treaty, ceding most of its eastern territory. Next, Lenin appointed Leon Trotsky to reorganize the militia of the Red Guard into a proper and effective army, Red Army. Trotsky conscripted peasant youth for the army and used military officers from the old Russian Army to lead them. Conscription was backed by force, and military officers would have their family held as hostages – all for loyalty to the new Red Army.

The White Armies were not unified in command. Initially, they were led by three former Russian military officers: General Yudenich, Admiral Kolchak, and General Denikin. Yet they never acted in accordance with basic military doctrine. They did not coordinate their strategy, forces, and action. The new Red Army had time to gain military experience and proceeded to defeat them separately. (Also in this mix was a Ukrainian nationalist movement, called a Green Army and an anarchist movement, called the Black Army, neither of which was on the Red or White Armies' sides.)

In 1918, battles between the Red Army and the White Armies began in the east, south, and western areas of the former Russian Empire. In the west, the Red Army invaded the Ukraine (which Germany had separated from Russia) and seized Kiev in January. But in the south, a White Army of Don Cossacks seized Rostov in February. Further south in Baku, a Red Army resisted an Ottoman Army. In the west, a Czech Legion fighting as a White Army seized Samara and Saratov. And in the east of Moscow, conservative governments were formed by the Bashkirs, Kyrgyz, and Tartar ethnic tribes. The former Rear-Admiral Kolchak organized these under a Siberian Regional Government.

Key battles were fought in 1918. The Bolshevik Government was in control of central Russia from Petrograd to Moscow and south to Tsaritsyn (Volgograd). Admiral Kolchak had an army in the west and controlled the Trans-Siberian railroad. In the south, White Armies had control of the Don and Ukraine regions. In the north, British and the US battalions invaded Archangel. In the west, the Japanese Army occupied Vladivostok. And in the east, battles between the Anarchist Black Army and the White Armies began for control of the Ukraine.

That summer in 1918, Trotsky sent a Red Army to the west to push along the Trans-Siberian railroad and defeated Kolchak's White Army. Great Britain and the USA withdrew their soldiers from Arkhangelsk and Murmansk in the north. By December, the Red Army controlled the north and west of Russia, and the White Army under Kolchak had dissolved.

In the south, Trotsky sent a Red Army, under Tukachevsky, to attack a White Army, calling itself the Caucas Army (under General Wrangel). After a battle with the superior numbers of the Red Army, General Wrangel retreated and left Tsaritsyn to the Bolsheviks.

Also that summer in the east, a Cossack force, calling itself the Don Army attacked into Ukraine, forcing the Red Army out of Kiev. The Don Army then

moved toward Voronezh. But in October, Tukachevsky marched his Red Army northeast toward Voronezh and defeated the Don Army. Then, Tukachevsky turned on another White Army under General Denikin. The Red Army and a Black Army of Ukrainians defeated Denikin's White Army; and then Tukachevsky turned on the Black Army and attacked Kiev and recaptured it.

In the northeast in Estonia, another White Army under General Yudenich was formed and armed by the British. Yudenich then launched an attack toward Petrograd. To oppose Yudenich's advance to the outskirts of Petrograd, Trotsky armed all the available workers in Petrograd and transferred Red Army forces from Moscow. Yudenich's siege of Petrograd failed, and he retreated back into Estonia. Yudenich's army dissolved, and he went into exile.

By 1919, the Red Army's military successes in the west, north, south, and east had turned the civil war. And in the spring of 1920, remainders of the White Armies evacuated from Russia. Lenin's Bolshevik Government was effectively in control of Russia. The civil war lasted through 1922, as the Red Army continued to defeat resistance in the Ukraine and recaptured Vladivostok from the Japanese.

The civil war had killed millions of people and left agriculture and the economy in shambles. Leon Trotsky, who organized and led the Red Army, wrote about that time: "The first 3 years after the revolution were a period of overt and cruel civil war. Economic life was wholly subjected to the needs of the front. ... That was the period of so-called "military socialism" (1918–1921). ... Reality, however, came into increasing conflict with the program of "military communism." Production continually declined, not only because of the quenching of the stimulus of personal interest among the producers. The city demanded grain and raw materials from the rural districts, giving nothing in exchange ... And the muzhik (peasant) buried his stores in the ground. The government sent out armed workers' detachments for grain. The muzhik cut down his sowings." (Trotsky 1937, Chap. 2, p. 1)

Reality versus ideology –this was the reality of the personal interest of producers against the ideology of Lenin's dictatorship for the proletariat. And this was the kind of peasant opposition which angered Lenin, when he wrote his telegram in 1918: "You need to hang (hang without fail, so that the public sees) at least 100 notorious kulaks, the rich, the bloodsuckers." Lenin viewed the muzhik (peasant) as opposed to the communist revolution. Peasants traditionally have wanted their own land and the freedom to grow their products. They were not interested in Marx's capitalist–labor theory of the history of the world.

But the Russian economic problem was not just with agriculture, but also with industry: Industrial production of steel fell from 4.2 million tons to 0.183 million tons. ... The total harvested grain decreased from 801 million hundredweight to 503 million in 1922. That was a year of terrible hunger. ... The collapse of productive forces ... (Trotsky 1937, Chap. 2, p. 2).

But Lenin held power in the new government of the U.S.S.R.. The Red Army succeeded in the civil war because it had competent and unified leadership and a large conscript army of Russian peasants. The opposition had no effective unified leadership, and its generals were the same incompetent leaders who earlier had led the Russian Army to defeat by German Army.

Society and Force

All societies are composed of different groups of individuals and networks and institutions – each of which has different interests that are focused upon their own needs. When a government of a society breaks down, then the several groupings compete for power to form a new government. If there is no political consensus tying the groups into a nation, civil war can erupt. A civil war ends only when the army of one faction defeats the armies of other factions. Factors in the Russian Civil War are summarized in Fig. 2.3.

ACTION – The action of this societal event was the Civil War in Russia from 1918 to 1922.

INDIVIDUAL – The key individuals involved on the Bolshevik side were the War Minister Trotsky and Red General Tukachevsky. On the opposing side were the White Armies of General Yudenich, Admiral Kolchak, and General Denikin. Bolshevik military leadership proved superior to White Armies' military leadership.

GROUP – The organized groups of the civil war were the Bolshevik Government and its Red Army – opposed by several White Armies. The Red Army had numerical superiority in numbers of soldiers due to its conscription of Russian peasant youth.

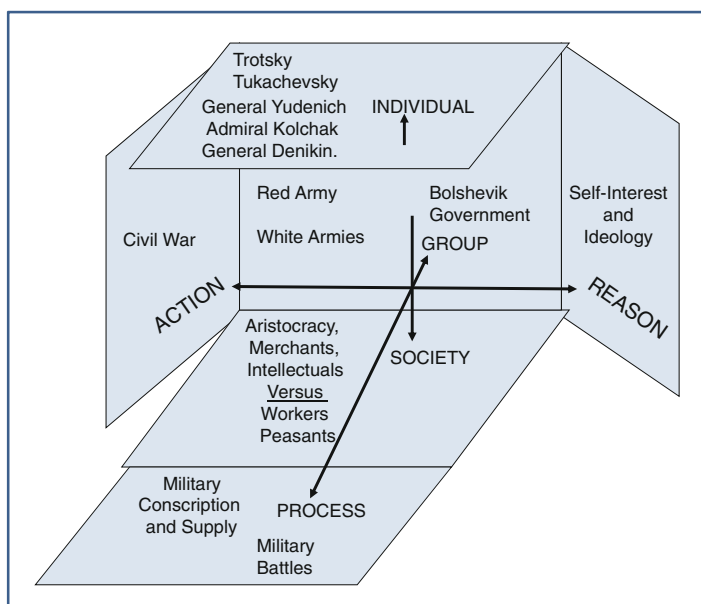


Fig.2.3 Russian civil war

REASON – The ideologies of the two forces were communism on the Red Army side and Monarchy on the White Armies side. Overriding these ideologies were the self-interests of the different classes.

SOCIETY – The different classes in Russian society whose self-interests clashed were – (1) workers and peasants versus (2) aristocracy and merchants and intellectuals.

PROCESS – One process involved in the civil war was the military logistic process of recruiting soldiers and obtaining military equipment and supplies. The second process was the fighting of military battles.

The factions in a society are bound together in a government either by ideology or repression or ultimately by military force.

Reality and Social Theory

Sometimes, normative social theory and empirical social reality do not match. Marx's social theory is a case in point. It predicted a future that never occurred. Yet for over a century, it was believed by many to be a valid scientific theory. Instead, the reality of Marx's social theory lay in ideology rather than science.

Marx's theory of dialectic materialism predicted an inevitable class war in industrialized societies between capitalist class and working class. Marx and Engels argued that extreme exploitation of labor by capitalists would historically result in a revolution by the workers to establish a communist state (state ownership of the means of production). This theory became the ideology of the communist movement in Europe. Marx and Engle's theory was elaborated for England and Europe. And it never occurred there. Neither England nor France nor Germany underwent a communist revolution. England adopted some reforms under its democratic form of representational government – which prevented extreme exploitation of labor by capital – and so prevented revolution. France also adopted some reforms. Germany, instead, was devastated by its defeat in World War I and never had a real chance at reform. Under conditions of social chaos, the German Government was seized by Hitler as a fascist dictatorship.

But historically, in the beginning of the twentieth century, the only society seized by communists was Russia. Yet at the time, Russia did not fit Marx's theory. It was not well-industrialized and was still predominantly agricultural with 90% of the population in the countryside. So for the Russian communist movement in 1900, this was a major problem with applying Marx's theory to Russia. Russia was not yet industrialized – only beginning to industrialize. How to apply this theory to a societal condition it was not constructed to address? Instead, Lenin changed theory. Lenin addressed this social reality by assuming that there would be no proletariat uprising in Russia. There need not be Marx–Engels revolution by the proletariat (working class) to institute communism; and instead, there could be a communist revolution by a professional revolutionary group (Bolsheviks) – in the name of the proletariat – a dictatorship of the proletariat.

Individuals seeking power in a society always claim to be acting in the name of society – for the good of society.

This is how reason in society espoused as social theory and can become ideology – when such theory is put forth as the justification of individuals/groups for the gaining and exercising of political power.

Ideology is the application of social theory for the justification of power – power-analytics justified by discourse-ethics.

The use of social theory as ideology does not mean that the social theory is valid or invalid. Validity of social theory should be established scientifically – grounded empirically and universalized normatively. And how to establish societal theory scientifically (and not ideologically) is our theme. This is the point which we are pursuing. In all these tales of history, there were also experiments in societies – a natural history of society.

This is the challenge for the social sciences– to clearly distinguish between ideology and valid social theory.

Summary

Even only from the empirical events of the early Russian Revolution, we can begin to make some generalizations (hypotheses) about societal change:

1. Social structures dominate a historical epoch in the beginnings of a societal change.
2. Individuals can dominate a historical epoch after seizing power during societal change.
3. The action of the seizure of government by a group under the leadership of particular individuals occurs within a prior social context.
4. Individuals influence societal events through the publication of ideas and leadership in opportunistic political parties.
5. The rule of a powerful individual can set up a governmental structure which can greatly alter society.
6. A society is composed of different groups of individuals, networks, and institutions – each of which has different interests that are focused upon its own needs.
7. When the government of a society breaks down, then the several groupings compete for power to form a new government.
8. The factions in a society are bound together in a government either by ideology, repression, or military force.
9. The factions in a society form different political parties, which divide according to the different model each party holds proper for a society.
10. If there is no shared societal model to bind groups into a nation, a civil war can

erupt. The civil war ends when the army of one faction defeats the armies of the other factions.

11. In any real case of the so-called “historical determinism” in society, the factors which really explain the changes in society are usually both societal factors and factors of individual leadership.
12. Discourse ethics in a societal group provides the reasoning for justification of the holding and exercise of power.
13. Power analytics in a societal group describes the actual practice of the use of power.

Notes

¹There are many biographies of Lenin, including Read (2005), Clark (1989), and Gorin (1983).

²The term “civil society” is frequently used in the social science discipline of political science; an example is Edwards, 2004.



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