

Krzysztof Brzezczyński, *A Victorious Revolution and a Lost Modernization. An Attempt to Paraphrase Theda Skocpol's Theory of Social Revolution in the Conceptual Apparatus of non-Marxian Historical Materialism.*

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Non-Marxian Historical Materialism: Reconstructions and Comparisons

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BRILL

A Victorious Revolution and a Lost Modernization. An Attempt to Paraphrase Theda Skocpol's Theory of Social Revolution in the Conceptual Apparatus of non-Marxian Historical Materialism

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Abstract. The aim of this paper is to paraphrase Theda Skocpol's theory of social revolutions with the use of the conceptual apparatus of non-Marxian historical materialism. In the successive sections of this paper, the concepts of modernization, the nature of state power, an agrarian bureaucracy, and the mechanism of a victorious revolution are paraphrased. This paraphrase makes it possible to distinguish two kinds of agrarian bureaucracies, each resulting in social revolutions with different outcomes. A victorious revolution led to successful modernization in the case of an economic agrarian bureaucracy, but not in the case of a political agrarian bureaucracy.

Keywords: Leszek Nowak, modernization, non-Marxian historical materialism, social revolution, comparative historical sociology, Theda Skocpol

1. Foreword

This article constitutes an attempt to paraphrase Theda Skocpol's theory, presented in *States and Social Revolutions* (1979), in the conceptual apparatus of non-Marxian historical materialism (n-Mhm), a historiosophical theory formed by Leszek Nowak. The first work within the framework of Nowak's theory, *U podstaw teorii procesu historycznego* (*The Foundations of the Theory of the Historical Process*), was also published in 1979, but it was only available as a samizdat edition at the time¹ [end of page 161].

Both theories, to varying degrees, concern the modernization of societies. In order to characterize the two theoretical frameworks, I propose the following classification of theories

¹ The work on this article was possible thanks to a grant from the Kosciuszko Foundation which allowed me to stay at the University of Illinois in Chicago in 2000. I would like to thank Professor Krzysztof Łastowski for his remarks concerning the previous version of this article.

of modernization, based on two questions-criteria. The first criterion is the manner – revolutionary or evolutionary– in which a society can be modernized. The second criterion is the type of factors which stimulate the modernization of a society – they can be internal or external with respect to the society which undergoes modernization. When we combine the two criteria, we obtain four types of theories of modernization:

- evolutionary-endogenous, according to which modernization is an internal social process which leads to gradual transformations of the social structure and the economic structure;
- evolutionary-exogenous, according to which the external conditions of a political (for example, international rivalry) or economic kind (for example, international trade and exchange) lead to a gradual transformation of the social and economic structures of traditional societies;
- revolutionary-endogenous, according to which the internal contradictions of traditionalist societies lead to a revolution which allows them to modernize themselves;
- revolutionary-exogenous, according to which external conditions cause a revolutionary crisis and, in the end, a modernization of the given society.

Walt Rostow's theory, which presupposes a five-stage process of modernization stimulated by internal factors (at the first stage, the main factors are: the development of science, agriculture, and industry), is an example of the evolutionistic-endogenous type. One example of the evolutionistic-exogenous type is the theory of a global economic system created by Immanuel Wallerstein (e.g. Wallerstein 1974; 1976). The incorporation of the economies of particular societies into the global capitalist system took place gradually (through the development of trade), under the influence of core countries: England (later Great Britain) and the Dutch Republic in the 16th and 17th centuries. Marxism is a representative of the revolutionistic-endogenous type – it presupposes that the internal contradictions of feudal societies will lead to a revolution which, if victorious, guarantees the modernization of the given society. Theda Skocpol's theory can be classified as revolutionistic-exogenous. In her view, the worsening situation of traditionalist countries in the international arena, the symptoms of which are defeats wars and the loss of spheres of influence to the benefit of capitalist countries, forces the elites which govern those traditionalist societies to implement reforms which result **[end of page 162]** in their revolutionary transformation (modernization).² It seems that non-Marxian historical

² For a more systematic comparison of Marx's and Skocpol's visions of politics and concepts of revolution, see Brzechczyn 2009, and for a description of the influence of a revolution on democratization in comparative

materialism is an evolutionistic-endogenous approach – the transformation of feudal ownership relations into capitalist ones takes place through social evolution (Nowak 1991a), under the influence of unsuccessful protests of the oppressed classes.

Let us take a closer look at the paraphrase procedure. A paraphrase procedure consists in translating problem Q , formed in theoretical language T , into the language of the paraphrasing-theory, T^* , which is considered to be better than T in some respects (more precise/abstract). If all the assumptions of question Q are recreated in the language of the paraphrasing theory and are solved by its means, we can refer to it as a reconstruction of that problem. Sometimes, the theory into which problem Q is translated is too meager. In such a case, only some of the assumptions of problem Q are reconstructed, and the translation becomes a partial reconstruction, that is, a paraphrase. A paraphrase, then, consists in forming, in the language of theory T^* , an analog of Q^* , which has certain assumptions in common with Q (Nowakowa 1991, 81–83).³

Therefore, the paraphrased problem gains a different theoretical rank within the framework of the new theoretical system. The result of a paraphrase can be positive or negative, depending on whether the theses of the paraphrased theory turn out to be, respectively, true or false in the language of the paraphrasing theory (Łastowski, Nowak 1979, pp. 3–4; Nowak 1998, pp. 77–79).⁴

This article consists of two main parts. In the first part, I intuitively reconstruct Skocpol's theory of revolution – I present her theoretical assumptions and conceptualization of: modernization processes, the nature of state power, societies of agrarian bureaucracy, and the mechanism of a victorious revolution. In the second part, I paraphrase her theory within the conceptual framework of non-Marxian historical materialism, in four steps. I paraphrase: **[end of page 163]** the process of modernization, the status of political power, the structure of an agrarian bureaucratic society, and the mechanism of a revolution itself.

historical sociology, see Brzechczyn 2010b.

³ Incidentally, in the heuristic inspired by the idealizational theory of science, a number of interpretive procedures are distinguished, for example, historical interpretation, adaptive interpretation, idealizing reconstruction, intuitive reconstruction, or paraphrase, the interrelationships of which are not entirely clear, or at least they have not been the subject of systematic research. On methodology of Nowak and Poznań School, see: Borbone 2016; 2021; Coniglione 2010.

⁴ Various theories have been paraphrased within the framework of the idealizational theory of science, by such scholars as Nowakowa (1992) and Egiert (2000). Nowak (2000) paraphrased Gombrowicz's social concepts within the framework of the non-evangelical model of the human being.

1. The Theory of Social Revolutions. An Attempt at a Presentation

1.1. Theoretical Assumptions

Skocpol's theory of social revolutions is based on the following methodological directives:

In the first place, an adequate understanding of social revolutions requires that the analyst take a nonvoluntarist, structuralist perspective on their causes and processes. [...]. In the second place, social revolutions cannot be explained without systematic reference to *international* structures and world-historical developments [...]. In the third place, in order to explain the causes and outcomes social revolutions, it is essential to conceive of states as administrative and coercive organizations – organizations that are potentially autonomous from (though, of course conditioned by) socio-economic interests and structures.

SKOCPOL 1979, p. 14

In her conception, the author combines certain ideas of Marx – his class analysis of the economic structure of society – with theories of political conflict. She writes:

The Marxist conception of class relations as rooted in the control of productive property and the appropriation of the economic surpluses from direct producers by nonproducers is, in my view, an indispensable theoretical tool for identifying one sort of basic contradiction in society.

SKOCPOL 1979, p. 13

As regards theoreticians of political conflict, Skocpol believes that they make it possible to answer the following question:

...when and how do dominant classes have the capacity for collective political actions? For answering such question, the political-conflict argument that collective action is based upon group organization and access to resources, often including coercive resources, is especially fruitful.

SKOCPOL 1979, p. 13-14 [end of page 164]

She asserts that revolutions are very rare historical events, because they are:

[...] rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures; and they are accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below. Social revolutions are set apart from other sort of conflicts and transformative processes above all by the combination of two coincidences: the coincidence of societal structural change with class upheaval; and the coincidence of political with social transformation

SKOCPOL 1979, p. 4.

Additionally, the author distinguishes rebellions, that is, social movements limited to the economic sphere, and political revolutions which entail the transformation of only the political aspect of social life. In short, Skocpol defines a revolution as a transformation of both the economic and the political sphere of life.

1.1. *Modernization*

In Skocpol's theory, modernization is understood as a supranational process of economic development, characterized by industrialization and by popularization of wage labor and of processes of exchange by means of market mechanisms. Those changes, in turn, lead to changes in other spheres of social life, especially in political and legal institutions, and they contribute to the creation of a modern, bureaucratic (within the meaning given to that word by Max Weber) state. In the first phase, in the 18th century, England modernized itself. In the 19th century, modernization reached other European countries and some non-European societies (Japan). It led to the creation of the international economic market which included capitalist countries as well as those which, for various reasons, remained outside of the scope of such modernizing processes.

Modernization was taking place in a particular international context: that of an international system of competing countries. Europe was specific in that no imperial state controlled the whole area of Europe and its overseas territories. According to Skocpol, the international rivalry of countries stimulated the colonial expansion of Spain in Latin America. Later, the competition between England and France led to the construction of the first colonial empire by the former country. England owed its advantageous position in the international rivalry to its earlier start on the path of capitalist development. Finally, in the 19th century, the competition among the European countries led to the conquest of the whole world. Once more, European countries owed their advantageous position over the rest of the world to their having been the first to undergo modernization. The mechanism of international competition

[end of page 165] overlapped with the modernization processes although it was independent from them:

[...] nation states are, more fundamentally, organizations geared to maintain control of home territories and populations and to undertake actual or potential military competition with other states in the international system. The international state system, as a transnational structure of military competition, was not originally created by capitalism. Throughout modern world history, it represents an analytically autonomous level of transnational reality – *interdependent* in its structure and dynamic with world capitalism, but not reducible to it. The militarily relevant strengths and international advantages (or disadvantages) of states are not entirely explicable in terms of their domestic economies or international economic positions. Such factors as state administrative efficiency, political capacities for mass mobilization, and international geographical position are also relevant.

SKOCPOL 1979, p. 22

1.2. *The Nature of State Power*

According to Skocpol, the process of modernization takes place in an international system – which is autonomous with respect to that process – of countries which compete with one another. Therefore, it is worth taking a look at the state as the basic unit of that international system. Its autonomy is based on the fact that “the state, in short, is fundamentally Janus-faced, with an intrinsically dual anchorage in the class-divided socioeconomic structures and an international system of states” (Skocpol 1979, p. 32). Skocpol views the state as potentially autonomous from the dominant class in a society.

State organizations inevitably compete to some extent with the dominant class(es) in appropriating resources from the economy and society. And the objectives to which the resources, once appropriated, are devoted may very well be at variance with the existing dominant class interest. Resources may be used to strengthen the bulk and autonomy of the state itself – something necessarily threatening to the dominant class unless the greater state power is indispensably needed and actually used to support the dominant-class interest. But the use of state power to support the dominant-class interest is not inevitable. Indeed, the attempts of state rulers merely to perform the state’s “own” functions may create conflicts of interests with the dominant class. The state normally performs two basic sets of tasks. It maintains order and it competes with other actual or potential, states (Skocpol 1979, p. 30)

[end of page 166].

Skocpol agrees with the Marxian approach which assumes that state organizations “usually do function to preserve existing economic and class structures, for that is normally the smoothest way to enforce order” (Skocpol 1979, p. 30). However, in crisis conditions, a state, motivated by its own interest, can also have a policy regarding the oppressed classes.

Although both the state and the dominant class(es) share a broad interest in keeping the subordinate classes in place in society and at work in the existing economy, the state’s own fundamental interest in maintaining sheer physical order and political peace may lead it - especially in periods of crisis - to enforce concessions to subordinate-class demands. These concessions may be at the expense of the interests of the dominant class, but not contrary to the state’s own interests in controlling the population and collecting taxes and military recruits (Skocpol 1979, p. 30).

1.3. *Agrarian Bureaucratic Societies*

One element of the international system are traditionalist states in which revolutions take place. Skocpol analyses revolutions in three countries: France, Russia, and China. In my presentation of Skocpol’s conceptualization and in my paraphrase of that theory in the language of non-Marxian historical materialism, I will omit the Chinese case and limit the discussion to the societies which belong to the European line of development. The author notes:

[...] comparative historical analysis works best when applied to a set of a few cases that share certain basic features. Cases need to be carefully selected and the criteria for grouping them together made explicit.

SKOCPOL 1979, p. 40.

The three states mentioned above were chosen by Skocpol for three reasons: first, none of them was subject to the colonial rule of more developed (that is, capitalist) states in its history; second, in each of these three states, the outbreak of revolution was preceded by a longer or shorter period of international crisis and internal political conflict – In France, in 1787–1789, in China, in 1911, and in Russia, in 1917; third, the selected societies represent the same type of a social system, that is, agrarian bureaucracy. The author describes the system of agrarian bureaucracy as follows:

An agrarian bureaucracy is an agricultural society in which social control rests on a division of labor and a coordination of effort between a semi-bureaucratic state and a landed upper class. The landed upper class typically retains, as an adjunct to its landed property, considerable (though [end of page 167] varying in different cases) undifferentiated local and regional authority over the peasant majority of the population. The partially bureaucratic central state extracts taxes and labor from peasants either in directly through landlord intermediaries or else directly, but with (at least minimal) reliance upon cooperation from individuals of the landed upper class. In turn, the landed upper class relies upon the backing of a coercive state to extract rents and/or dues from the peasantry. At the political center, autocrat, bureaucracy, and army monopolize decisions, yet (in varying degrees and modes) accommodate the regional and local power of the landed upper class and (again, to varying degrees) recruit individual members of this class into leading positions in the state.

SKOCPOL 1976, pp. 178–179

Following that initial characterization, we can reconstruct the social relations among the social entities: the authorities, the landed class, the merchant-bourgeois classes, and the peasantry. In that type of society, there were social tensions between the higher classes (bourgeoisie, landed gentry, the state) and the peasantry. There was social peace between the merchants-bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and the state together with the landed class, on the other hand. In that model of a society, the key relationships were those between the state power and the landed class. In conditions of social stabilization, there was social peace between those social entities; in conditions of a political crisis, it changed into a conflict.

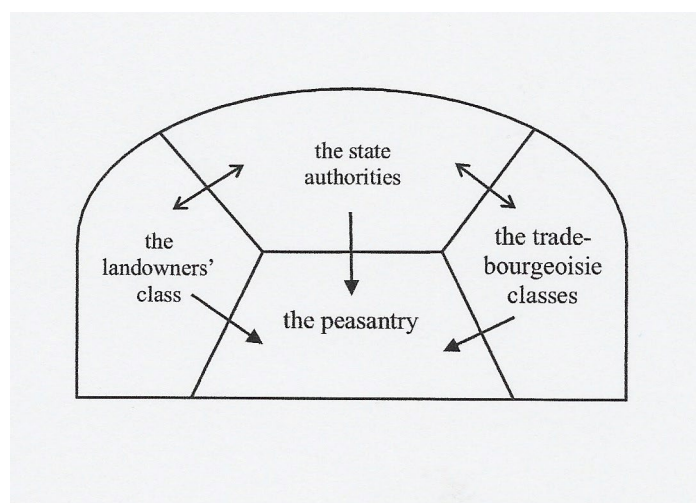


Fig. 1. The social structure of an agrarian bureaucracy. Abbreviations used: ↔ common

social interests; → conflict of social interests. **[end of page 168]**

In an agrarian bureaucracy society, the state was a proto-bureaucratic structure. That meant that administrative and military power functioned within the institutional framework of an absolute monarchy. In that kind of a state, offices were partially specialized and officers were subjected to hierarchical control which, however, did not extend to all their functions. The functions of holding of an office and managing one's assets became partially independent from each other. Still, the state did not become fully bureaucratic because power was not centralized to the degree characteristic of a nation state. The author notes:

It is worth emphasizing in particular that the imperial states of old-regime France, Russia [...] were not in a position to control directly, let alone basically reorganize, local agrarian socio-economic relationships. Rather, they were limited to variations or extensions of the functions they had, so to speak, been built up to perform: waging war abroad; supervising society at home to maintain some semblance of general order; and appropriating socioeconomic resources through military recruitment and through taxes on land, population or trade (but not on anything so difficult to assess and individual income)

SKOCPOL 1979, p. 48.

Market economy, trade, and industry developed in that type of a society, and capitalist relations of production appeared, which, however, did not dominate the economy. Consequently, the merchant and bourgeois classes were interrelated on many levels with the landed class and the proto-bureaucratic state with which they lived – in Skocpol's words – in a symbiosis.

I will now present the relationships between the landed gentry and the state. In that social system, the state and the landed class were partners – in the exploitation of peasantry – but also competitors. Skocpol describes it as follows:

The dominant classes could not defend against peasant rebellions on a local basis; they had all come to depend, albeit in varying degrees, upon the centralized monarchical states to back their class positions and prerogatives.

SKOCPOL 1979, p. 49

Nevertheless, the author notes that:

[...] the imperial states and the landed classes [...] were also competitors in controlling the manpower of the peasantry and in appropriating surpluses from the agrarian-commercial economies. Monarchs were interested in appropriating increased resources from society and channeling them efficiently into military aggrandizement or state-sponsored and centrally controlled economic development. Thus, the economic interests [end of page 169] of the landed upper classes were in part obstacles to be overcome; for the landed classes were primarily interested either in preventing increased state appropriation or in using state offices to siphon off revenues in ways that would reinforce the domestic socio-economic status quo.

SKOCPOL 1979, p. 49

One characteristic of agrarian bureaucracy societies was that representatives of the owners held lower offices in the power apparatus. The author explains this as follows:

... in preindustrial states, monarchs found it difficult to channel sufficient resources through the 'center' to pay simultaneously for wars, culture and court life on the one hand, and a fully bureaucratic officialdom on the other. Consequently, they often had to make do with 'officials' recruited from wealthy backgrounds, frequently, in practice, landlords. In addition, central state jurisdiction rarely touched local peasants or communities directly; governmental functions were often delegated to landlords in their 'private' capacities, or else to non-bureaucratic authoritative organizations run by local landlords.

SKOCPOL 1976, p. 184

What is more, the dominant classes had become accustomed to having opportunities for private fortune-building through state service. And, indeed, such appropriation of surpluses indirectly through state office-holding had become very important in old regime France, Russia, and China alike.

SKOCPOL 1979, p. 49

On the other hand, that state of things had the following consequences.

But to the extent the dominant-class members gained a capacity for self-conscious collective organization within the higher levels of the existing imperial state structures they might be in a position to *obstruct* monarchical undertakings that recounter to their economic interests. Such obstruction could culminate in deliberative challenges to autocratic political authority – and at the same time, it could have quite unintended effect of destroying the administrative and military integrity of the imperial state itself. SKOCPOL 1979, p. 49 [end of page 170]

That caused constant conflicts between the state elite, which strove for greater centralization of power, and the owners' classes, which wanted to maintain the *status quo* with its guarantee of privileges:

The fundamental politically relevant tensions in all three Old Regimes were *not* between commercial-industrial upper classes and/or very dependent upon the imperial states. Instead, they were centered in the relationships of producing classes to the dominant classes and states, and in relationships of the landed dominant classes to the autocratic-imperial states. As in all agrarian states, the potential for peasant (and urban – popular) revolts was endemic.

SKOCPOL 1979, p. 48

Peasants are primarily agricultural cultivators who must, because of political and cultural marginality and relative socio-economic immobility, bear the burden of varying combinations of taxes, rents, corvée, usurious interest rates, and discriminatory prices. Peasants always have grounds to rebellion against landlords, state agents, and merchants who exploit them. What is at issue is not so much the objective potential for revolts on grounds of justifiable grievances. It is rather the degree to which grievances that are always at least implicitly present can be collectively perceived and acted upon. SKOCPOL 1979, p. 115

The social situation of the peasantry was a potential ground for an outbreak of peasants' dissatisfaction. Peasants' ability to rebel depended on three factors:

- (1) the degrees and kinds of solidarity of peasant communities;
- (2) the degree of peasant autonomy from the direct, day-to-day supervision and control by landlords and their

agents; and (3) the relaxation of state coercive sanctions against peasant revolts. SKOCPOL 1979, p. 115

As we can see, a revolution can break out if there is a certain level of organization of peasant communities. The first two conditions depend on the structure of agricultural ownership – when it obstructs the organization of peasant communities, it prevents the outbreak of a revolt. That may be the case on great estates where the owners supervise the peasants directly, or when the class of owners controls the administrative and executive power at the local level. The third condition, which is crucial for an outbreak of revolution, is determined by the relationship between the state and the landed gentry. When the **[end of page 171]** international situation of the state is stable, the authorities and the landed gentry are partners in the exploitation of the peasantry. A crisis only begins when:

[...] old regime states became unable to meet the challenges of evolving international situation. Monarchical authorities were subjected to new threats or to intensified competition from more economically developed powers abroad. And they were constrained or checked in their responses by the institutionalized relationship of the autocratic state organization to the landed upper classes and the agrarian economies. Caught in cross-pressures between domestic class structures and international exigencies, the autocracies and their centralized administrations and armies broke apart, opening the way for socio-revolutionary transformations spearheaded by revolts from below.

SKOCPOL 1979, p. 47

1.4. *The Mechanism of a Victorious Revolution*

I will now present the mechanism of a social revolution. Skocpol discusses an international system consisting of capitalist societies and agrarian bureaucracies. In international rivalry, agrarian bureaucracy systems encounter challenges they cannot rise up to. In order to compete successfully with states which have embarked on the road of modernization, agrarian bureaucracy societies must construct an effective tax system, move more resources toward military development, and build an economy capable of fulfilling national objectives (Skocpol 1976, 180). However, because of the landowners' resistance, central power has limited ability to carry out internal, peaceful reforms. In particular, it cannot rationalize the tax system. Because of the political structure of agrarian bureaucracies, the authorities also have restricted

access to financial and human resources, which are controlled by the landed classes. Moreover, the government has a limited ability to mobilize the society because such an action would be against the interests of the landed class, which acts as both the state and an employer as regards the peasantry.

Meeting the challenges of international competition requires an effective economy capable of financing the costs of maintenance of an army, administration, and diplomatic service, so the state solves the crisis by modernizing the economic and political structure. The reforms weaken the relationships between the state structure and the class of owners. When the state no longer protects the interests of the aristocracy, the possibility of an outbreak of peasant rebellions arises, because **[end of page 172]**:

Agricultural regimes featuring large estate worked by serfs or laborers tend to be inimical to peasant rebellion - witness the East Elbian Junker regime - but the reason is not that serfs and landless laborers are economically poor, rather that they are subject to close and constant supervision and discipline by landlords or their agents.

SKOCPOL 1976, p. 193.

Finally, the fourth factor was the influence of the radical political elites which formed on the margins of societies:

Although peasant insurrections played a decisive role in each of the great historical social revolutions, nevertheless an exclusive focus on peasants - or on the peasant situation in agrarian bureaucracies - cannot provide a complete explanation for the occurrences of social revolution

SKOCPOL 1976, p 201

Such a complete explanation can only be obtained by taking into account the influence of marginal political elites. Generally speaking, members of those social groups came from the intelligentsia. They had knowledge and skills which qualified them for service in the state apparatus, but they did not have traditional sources of prestige (such as noble birth) which would give them the right to independently wield power. That is why it was natural for the elites of the opposition to demand equality, the abolition of status-group privileges, and the introduction of political democracy. French marginal political elites originated chiefly from the third status group. The main leaders of national assemblies of the French Revolution

belonged to a professional group called notables – they were lawyers and lower-rank officials. They were marginal in that they held lower offices in the administrative structure of the pre-revolutionary order or came from provincial towns. The marginality of members of political elites of the opposition in Russia was determined by their social origins or belonging to radical political groups. Bolsheviks were often the graduates of universities which prepared them for a career in the state. However, during their studies, they joined radical political movements, and they became professional revolutionaries instead of state officials.

The participation of marginal political elites in the revolution helped translate the practical postulates of mass peasant revolts into the language of political postulates which transformed the structure of the state and society; it also built the internal communication between the naturally dispersed and decentralized peasant communities. Moreover, those political elites which opposed the old order – Jacobins and communists – had at their disposal a **[end of page 173]** universal ideology which encouraged the cooperation of people from various social environments and facilitated the political mobilization of the masses. That ideology was also a world view which justified using unlimited (that is, immoral) means to realize limited aims (that is, moral aims, in the light of a given ideology). As noted by Skocpol, although revolutionary ideology was a necessary component of social revolutions, their course and results cannot be explained by referring to the content of the ideology – instead, one should look at its functions.

To sum up Skocpol's theory, we could say that for a victorious social revolution to take place, the four analyzed factors must be at play: external modernizing pressure, a political crisis caused by the weakening of the relations between the authorities and the owners, peasant revolts, and the influence of marginal political elites. External modernizing pressure worsens the international position of agrarian bureaucratic states. State elites try to meet the challenges of the international situation by carrying out reforms which weaken the relationship between the political power and the class of owners. That, in turn, causes an internal political crisis which is aggravated by peasant rebellions made possible precisely by the reduction of the scope of the authorities' political control over the peasantry. When the political elites of the opposition form an alliance with grassroots peasant revolts, the actions of the peasantry can be coordinated on a national scale, and a separate vision of the social order can be expressed. Consequently, the state authorities are overthrown, and a new state order is built.

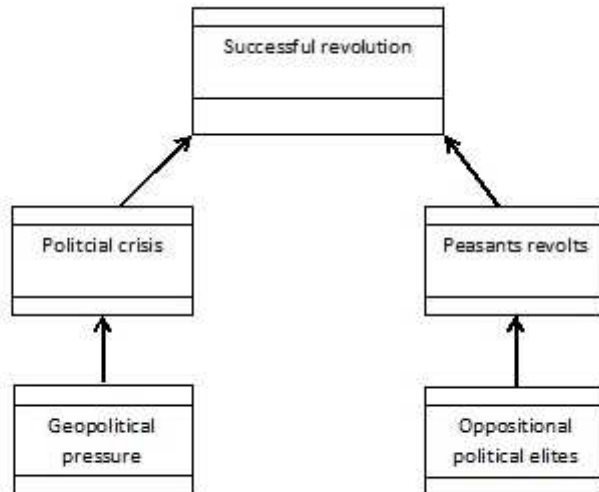


Figure no. 2. A model of social revolution [end of page 174]

In Skocpol's model, the distinguished factors appear to be operating in a somewhat automatic, mechanistic fashion. I believe this results from the author's focus on the macrostructural dimensions of revolutions and the consequent omission of the subjective aspect of the historical process. Were that aspect taken into account, it would be possible to enquire about the circumstances in which political elites decide to carry out internal reforms. Modernizing pressure can lead to internal reforms, but state elites can oppose this in different ways: by importing military technology from more developed states, by isolating the society from other states so as to avoid the pressure, or by making better use of the existing resources. State elites will choose a particular action based on their value system, ideology, and knowledge – all factors which are omitted, on principle, in the presented analysis⁵.

For Skocpol, a revolution only ends when the revolutionary elites have created an alternative political order. In her view, the significant features of that order are discernible in all three analyzed cases. Peasant revolutionary movements changed the agrarian structure of the states in which they took place.

Centralized and completely bureaucratized nation states replaced autocratic and proto-bureaucratic monarchies. In particular societies, the pre-revolutionary class of great owners lost its privileged position to the benefit of lower classes and of the hitherto marginal political

⁵ Michael Burawoy (1989, p. 772), Elizabeth Nichols (1986), and Michael Taylor (1988) voice similar reservations about Skocpol's model. According to Taylor, who analyzes peasant revolts, an important disadvantage of Skocpol's conception is that it lacks microfoundations, that is, assumptions about the rationality of the peasantry and peasant communities. Such assumptions would make it possible to recreate the system of peasants' preferences, vision of the world, and knowledge about social conditions of action. Only then, according to Taylor, can a revolution be fully explained.

elites which seized power in post-revolutionary states. Most importantly, the great class of owners lost any possibility of politically controlling the peasants.

The new elites defeated counterrevolutions and fended off external interference. Consequently, the new state organizations were more centralized and rationalized than the pre-revolutionary systems. Hence, as noted by Skocpol, “they were more potent within society and more powerful and autonomous over and against competitors within the international system of states” (Skocpol 1979, pp. 161–162). Let us consider those processes as exemplified by two states: France and Russia.

The French monarchy was transformed into a centralized and fully bureaucratized state. The greatest changes were introduced in the army: a completely professional officer corps was created, and the army was nationalized. The total number of soldiers in Napoleon’s army from 1804 to 1813 has been estimated to have been about 2.4 million (Skocpol 1979, p. 198). [end of page 175] Another indicator of the centralization of a state could be the growth of bureaucracy – in France, it grew from 50 to 250 thousand people during the revolution, including an increase from 420 officials of central offices in 1788 to 5 thousand in 1796 (Skocpol 1979, p. 199). Also, the scope of the power of the bureaucracy over civil society was broadened. The state began to control higher and middle level education, subjugated the Catholic church by paying priests regular wages, improved the tax apparatus, and established a central bank which issued the national currency (Skocpol 1979, p. 202).

Similar changes were made in Russia, where professional, hierarchized bureaucracy was formed, which nationalized the economy and took control over all areas of social life. Unlike in France, the state administration in Russia was subject to the communist party and secret police⁶. Skocpol explains the differences between the results of revolutions in France and Russia as follows.

The results of the French revolution, to begin with, contrasted to those in the Soviet Russia [...] in ways suggested by the usual labeling of the French outcomes as “bourgeois.” The Russian [...] revolution gave rise to party-led state organizations that

⁶ The differences between, on the one hand, France, and, on the other hand, Russia and China, as exemplified by the control of the internal movement of populations, are also noted by Torpey (1988). He claims that various forms of migration control in France and in Russia existed before the revolutions. At the beginning of the two revolutions, those forms of control were abolished, but they were later reintroduced because of, among other things, threats to the revolutionary authorities. However, that is where the differences between post-revolutionary France and Russia end. In France, after the Napoleonic Wars had ended in the middle of the 19th century, population control was almost completely abolished, while in Stalinist Russia it was tightened up to a considerable degree in comparison with the tsarist period. That was the state of things until Mikhail Gorbachev’s reforms.

asserted control over the entire national economies [...] and (in one way or another) mobilized the populace to propel further national economic development. In France, however, no such results occurred. Instead, the French Revolution culminated in a professional-bureaucratic state that coexisted symbiotically with, and indeed guaranteed the full emergence of, national markets and capitalist private property. SKOCPOL 1979, p.162

The author attributes the differences to the disparate courses of the peasant revolts, of the paces of the revolutionary crises, and of the international positions of the two countries. In France, peasant revolts did not disturb the ownership structure because the peasants were satisfied with the abolition **[end of page 176]** of feudal privileges. In Russia, however, there was a redistribution of land. Skocpol explains this by referring to the differences between the internal structures of the peasant classes in France and in Russia. The French peasant class was more layered than the Russian one. In France, there was a group of rich peasants who appreciated private ownership and did not demand that property be taken away from feudal lords, for fear that there might be a backlash against them. For that reason, after the feudal privileges had been abolished – which was in the interest of all peasants – the French peasantry was not capable of further cooperation. In Russia, there was a long tradition of (*Obshchina*). Village communities were more integrated because of various forms of communal farming, so their demands for division of feudal land could be effective, and the Bolsheviks readily granted their wishes in the first phase of the revolution.

Moreover, the revolutionary crises in France and Russia developed at different paces. In France, the process was slower, so Jacobins could make use of pre-revolutionary experience and resources for the construction of their army and administration. In Russia, it was more violent, so Bolsheviks had to build an army and an administration for the party virtually from scratch. Also, the international situation of the two countries was not the same. After the revolution, “France’s strong position on the Continent favored the channeling of revolutionary mobilization into militarily expansionist nationalism rather than further politically directed transformation at home” (Skocpol 1979, p. 234). Russia was exposed to attacks from abroad, which necessitated violent industrialization and a transformation of the society, effected primarily with the use of the omnipresent structures of the party-state.

2. Modernization through a Victorious Revolution. an Attempt at a Paraphrase with the Use of the Conceptual Framework of Non-Marxian Historical Materialism

2.1. A Paraphrase of Modernization

I will now paraphrase Theda Skocpol's conception in the language of non-Marxian historical materialism. A paraphrase of problem Q formulated in language T in the language of theory T^* consists in the search, in paraphrasing theory T^* , for analogs of theory T . If the language of theory T^* is too poor, it can be expanded. The ability to paraphrase, then, is a kind of a test for theory T^* , because that is how the scope of the application of T^* can be expanded. Therefore, we should look for analogs of the distinguished elements from Skocpol's theory in non-Marxian historical materialism. [end of page 177]

In n-Mhm, modernization follows the development of the capitalist formation⁷. In contrast to the previous slaveholding and feudal formations, in this system, power and property are separate (1), the level of the autonomy of the working class is the highest – wage-laborers replace earlier coercive forms of employment (2), and there is constant technological progress (3). The conflict of interest between the class of owners and class of the direct producers is solved by increasing the variable capital, which becomes possible thanks to the constant technical progress which takes place in that formation⁸.

In contrast to Skocpol's approach to modernization as a revolutionary and exogenous process, in n-Mhm modernization processes are presented as endogenous and evolutionary. Social modernization ends when the majority of the social product is produced within the framework of capitalist property relations, and they become popular under the influence of factors operating inside society, such as an appropriate power system between the class of owners and the class of direct producers.

Taking into account the international dimension, that is, not only capitalist states but also states with pre-capitalist economies, makes it possible to broaden that vision of social transformations in non-Marxian historical materialism. For that purpose, however, the nature of state power must be paraphrased within the conceptual framework of that theory.

⁷ The original version of this model of a capitalist society is presented in: Nowak 1981, 116–156 and 244–263, and the concretization of it, including the influence of political institutions and ideologies – in: Nowak 1989 and Nowak 1991a, pp. 105–146, pp. 221–240, pp. 314–330, and pp. 346–354.

⁸ In n-Mhm, the term modernization is used to mean, in accordance with the common understanding of that word, technical progress, and it is not a synonym of social progress. The criterion of social progress depends on the type of society. In societies of the economic type, it is growing liberation of labor, while in political societies – increasing citizens' autonomy.

2.2. The Status of State Power. An Attempt at a Paraphrase

Such definitions of the authorities as: “state organizations” or “organizations which have administrative power and the means of coercion at their disposal” [end of page 178] suggest that Skocpol characterizes state authorities at the institutional level (Skocpol 1979, p. 31). The state has a double nature, in that it upholds social order internally and competes with other states externally. However, Skocpol’s institutionalist perspective prevents her from consistently conceptualizing the phenomenon of the authorities’ internal aggressiveness. Let us take a closer look at her explanation:

As events of the eighteenth century unfolded, it became more and more apparent that the French monarchy could not fulfill its *raison d’être*. The victories in war necessary for the vindication of French honor on the international scene, not to mention the protection of seaborne commerce were beyond its grasp.

SKOCPOL 1979, p .60

Skocpol explains the growing ineffectiveness of pre-revolutionary France in international affairs through a reference to idealistic (“the honor of France”) and economic (“protection of seaborne commerce”) factors. In my opinion, the materialist theory of power in non-Marxian historical materialism makes it possible to conceptualize power without these inconsistencies. In n-Mhm, the authorities are a social community constituted by having at their disposal the material means of coercion. That social inequality generates an autonomous social conflict because the class of rulers wants to maximize the sphere of power regulation at the cost of the citizens’ class as well as at the cost of citizens from other societies. That is how we can explain the mechanism of external aggressiveness and the activity of the state (that is, the institutionalized ruling class) on the global arena. In n-Mhm, the specificity of the societies discussed by Skocpol can be explicated as follows: the nature of state power is solidaristic inside a society and antagonistic outside of it. The reason for this is not the metaphysical assertion that “the state, in short, is fundamentally Janus-faced, with an intrinsically dual anchorage in the class-divided socioeconomic structures and an international system of states”, but the fact that in agrarian bureaucratic societies, the increase of power regulation is blocked by the owners’ class, and the rulers’ class can only maximize the external spheres of power regulation. In order to gain a better understanding of that phenomenon, we should paraphrase the description of agrarian bureaucracy societies with the use of the conceptual apparatus of non-Marxian historical materialism.

2.3. Agrarian Bureaucratic Societies. An Attempt at a Paraphrase

An agrarian bureaucratic society is a social system with a class of rulers and a class of owners which is divided into two sub-classes: owners of the means of [end of page 179] production in the urban sector and owners of the means of production (land) in the agrarian sector of the economy. This type of a society is characterized by fusion between the authorities and the class of landowners – representatives of the landed class have positions in state administration which gives them political control over the peasantry.

In n-Mhm, there are two basic types of societies (Nowak 1991a, p. 177–181; for a full classification of societies, see: Brzechczyn 2004, p. 73–86; 2007, for further developments see: Ciesielski 2013; 2021). The first are class societies with separate classes of rulers, owners, and priests. The second are supraclass societies in which there is accumulation of social divisions so that one and the same social class can control, for example, the means of coercion and the means of production (a totalitarian society), the means of production and the means of propaganda (a fascist society), or the means of coercion, production, and propaganda (a socialist society).

However, it would not be correct to apply the term ‘supraclass system’ to the phenomenon of symbiosis as defined by Skocpol. Therefore, in order to paraphrase such inter-class relationships, we must broaden the conceptual framework of non-Marxian historical materialism. For that purpose, we have to apply the conceptual apparatus created in the theory of power to other areas of social life. In this theory, the original vision of the structure of political life was dichotomic, with a division only into rulers and citizens. In the expanded theory of power in non-Marxian historical materialism, that dichotomic image of the political sphere was replaced with a trichotomic one (Nowak 1991c, pp. 57–60). In that approach, there are two political classes: the class of rulers, that is, the class which has at its disposal [end of page 180] the means of coercion, and the class of citizens, that is, the rest of the society, people without such influence, and there is a social category of a servant within this class – servants are those citizens who trade their own freedom for the ability to enslave others. Let me present this division in a more systematic manner. Let us assume that there are three people: *A*, *B*, and *C*. Person *A* has a sphere of influence which encompasses a fragment of the field of activity of person *B*. It follows that person *B* is enslaved by *A*. It is also possible that there could be a situation in which *B* has a sphere of influence which encompasses person *C*. Person *C*, then, is enslaved by *B*. If person *B* has obtained his or her sphere of influence from *A* in return for becoming subjected to enslavement by *A*, then *A*, *B*, and *C* form a chain

of enslavement. The foundation of that chain is the exchange of one's freedom for the possibility of enslaving other people. The division into the class of rulers and the class of citizens does not overlap with the division into the ruling and the ruled. In the discussed approach, the criterion for being a ruler is purely materialistic: a ruler is the person who has at his or her disposal the means of coercion, while a citizen is a person devoid of those resources. The criterion of being a servant is relational: a servant is a person who participates in the structure of enslavement.

That trichotomic image of the political dimension of life can be generalized, and the social role of a servant can be distinguished in the two remaining spheres of social life: economy and culture. Generally speaking, we can say that a servant is a person who obtains the possibility of (political, spiritual, economic) domination over other people at the cost of facilitating (through subjugation) the realization of class interest by the person (a ruler, priest, owner) who has at his or her disposal a particular type of material social means. Let us consider the relationship between the economic and political spheres.

In the economic sphere, that person is a servant who agrees to being exploited by the owner in return for the possibility of (co)exploiting others. Therefore, economic servants will be all people without property rights who will manage the owner's economic property on his behalf⁹. Within the framework of the permissions received from the owner, servants can influence the direct producers' working conditions in an economic unit, for example, shape their profits (lower or raise bonuses), define production standards, or determine the working time. An institutional counterpart of the servant position will be, for instance, a director (or members of the management board) of an economic unit, foremen, or shift managers.¹⁰

When we take into account the categories of political and economic servants, we can distinguish two basic types of class symbiosis. In the first case, the ruler becomes an economic ruler. At the cost of being subjugated economically to the owner, he obtains the possibility of influencing decisions about the use of the means of production, and uses them to increase his political influence. In the latter scenario, the owner becomes a political servant—at the cost of becoming politically subjugated, he obtains political influence which he can use to further his own economic interest.

The classification of cases of class symbiosis will be enriched when we take into account various types of a class society and various forms of realization of class interest. We

⁹ At this point, I generalize the concept of an economic servant known from history, for example, a bailiff.

¹⁰ For a more detailed discussion of the institutional level of economy in non-Marxian historical materialism, see Niewiadomski 1989.

can distinguish two forms of realization of class interest: optimization and maximization. The class of rulers maximizes its interest [end of page 181] by increasing power regulation and, in that way, decreasing the scope of citizens' autonomy, which leads to growing resistance of the class of citizens. Power regulation is optimized by maintaining such a level of political rule (or such growth of power regulation) as does not lead to citizens' resistance and guarantees the class of citizens some autonomy.

The class of owners maximizes its interest by increasing owners' income and, in that way, decreasing the income of direct producers, which leads to growing resistance from the class of direct producers. The interest of the class of owners is optimized by maintaining such a level of income (or such growth of income) as does not lead to resistance from direct producers.

There are two types of class society with separate political and economic classes: a political one and an economic one (Brzechczyn 2004, pp. 73–86). In a class society of the political type, the class of rulers is the dominant class while in a class society of the economic type, the owners' class is dominant. The domination of class *A* over class *B* means that should there be a conflict of interest between the two classes, then, given a sufficiently long period of time, the interest of class *A* will be realized.

In a class society of the political type, an owner who is a political servant (i) optimizes only his own economic interest, at the cost of being politically subjugated, while an owner who is an economic servant (ii) can maximize his political rule at the cost of being economically subjugated.

In a class society of the economic type, an owner who is a political servant (iii) can maximize his economic interest at the cost of being politically subjugated, while an owner who is an economic servant (iv) can optimize his political rule.

In the conceptual apparatus of n-Mhm, we can distinguish two types of agrarian bureaucratic societies – political and economic – and four cases of [end of page 182] class symbiosis with various social ramifications. The class symbiosis case described by Skocpol belongs to type (iii): an owner becomes a political servant and gains the additional possibility of maximizing his own profits, while blocking the realization of the political interest of state authorities. That is possible in an agrarian bureaucratic society of the economic type, such as France.

From the broadened perspective of n-Mhm, we can see what Skocpol does not notice: that the same case of class symbiosis – distinguished by her – can lead to diverse social outcomes in two types of agrarian bureaucratic societies.

In an agrarian bureaucratic system of the economic type, owners (or, to be more precise, a segment of that group), at the cost of becoming subjugated to political rulers – for example, by becoming officers in the state apparatus – can exploit the direct producers in their employment more effectively. They are a special kind of servants because they also have at their disposal the means of production. The owners-political servants' loyalty to the state authorities extends to the degree to which it is a condition for realizing their social interest – maximizing the surplus product. That means following the state authorities' recommendations if it is beneficial to the realization of the class of owners' interest and resisting them if the opposite is the case. The level of political control is determined by the owners' interest, which severely limits the rulers' ability to strengthen their position in the agrarian society. The owners-servants block the mechanism of internal maximization of power regulation, so the need to recompense it by maximizing external power regulation arises. Skocpol believes that this is what happened in France.

In an agrarian bureaucratic society of the political type, where the state authorities are the dominant party, the situation is different. In such a case, the owners' loyalty to the state authorities only guarantees the optimization and not maximization of the interest of that class. In that kind of a social system, the stronger partner, that is, the state authorities, decides about the forms and degree to which the class of owners will exploit the direct producers. In such a society, the rulers have greater possibilities of strengthening their political rule than in the economic variant of an agrarian bureaucratic society – although not as great as they would be if average citizens, devoid of any material social means, were the servants.

Thus, we can see that the “class symbiosis”, defined by Skocpol, between the landed class and the class of rulers means that an owner is simultaneously a political servant in the power hierarchy. That is a special case in the whole spectrum of the varieties of class symbiosis which can be distinguished in the appropriately broadened conceptual apparatus of non-Marxian historical materialism (Brzechczyn 2004, pp. 95–100 and pp. 300–303). Within that framework, an agrarian bureaucratic society has its counterpart in a class **[end of page 183]** society of the economic or political type, in which the owners have the additional social role of political rulers. In agrarian bureaucratic societies of the economic type, the owners can trade their political independence for the possibility of increasing their political control over the direct producers employed in their enterprises and, in this way, maximize their profits more efficiently. In agrarian bureaucratic societies of the political type, when the owners submit themselves to the state power, they can only optimize the realization of their class interest because in the end it is the rulers that decide how the owners' interest is to be realized.

Skocpol did not notice the possibility that that type of inter-class relationships can occur in two types of class societies – political and economic ones – because of her Marxian inspirations and institutionalist perspective on power. Skocpol claims that economic classes in agrarian bureaucracy societies are *ex definitione* dominant classes, and the autonomy of the state from economic structures can only be potential. Such a postulate makes it difficult to conceptualize Russian society. Skocpol declares:

this Russian dominant class [emphasis mine – K. B.] appropriated surpluses, both directly from the peasantry and indirectly through remuneration services to for the state. But in sharp contrast to the French and Chinese dominant classes, the Russian landed nobility was economically weak and politically dependent vis-à-vis Imperial authorities.

SKOCPOL 1979, p. 85

At this point, we might wonder what kind of a dominant class would be economically weak and dependent on the state? The further (empirical) description of the Russian social structure subverts what Skocpol has (theoretically) declared. It turns out that:

- the status of the Russian nobility, as well as its property, passed on from generation to generation, was dependent on service to the tzar,
- the land of the hereditary nobility was confiscated by the state and given to the so-called service nobles – as a reward for its services to the state,
- in order to weaken the social influence of this social class, the lands given to the service nobility by tsars were not located in the same area,
- the service nobility was obligated to serve the state for many years; that obligation was abolished in the 18th century (Skocpol 1979, 85–90).

As admitted by Skocpol, as a result of the disturbed balance between rulers and owners: “ironically, though, as the serf-owning nobility continued to depend upon the Imperial state, the autocracy became less dependent upon the landed nobility” (Skocpol 1979, p. 87). What can only be “ironically” perceived in the [end of page 184] language of one theoretical concept, can be quite “seriously” paraphrased in the language of another social theory.

That possibility – of greater freedom of conceptual maneuvers – is offered by the theoretical perspectives of n-Mhm which makes it possible to explicate another type of agrarian bureaucratic society, in addition to the economic one: the political type. The two

types of class societies are represented by the pre-revolutionary societies of France and Russia. To paraphrase Skocpol's conception in the language of n-Mhm, in both societies – French and Russian – there existed a class symbiosis which led to the owners becoming the political servants. The difference between the two was that Russian society was a class society of the political type,¹¹ while French society was of the economic type. That difference had an impact on the course of the revolutions in the two states.

Let us now consider how n-Mhm can help explain the lower effectiveness of agrarian bureaucratic economies in comparison to capitalist economies. It seems that in capitalist economies, where political power is separated from ownership and the authorities give up regulation of the economy for the sake of ownership, the social conflict between the owners and the direct producers is solved by way of a compromise which is beneficial to both parties. In a purely economic state, an economic conflict can only be solved if the owners make concessions to the benefit of the direct producers. Such concessions can be in the form of a revision of ownership relations, that is, they involve increasing the direct producers' economic autonomy and, in that way, work efficiency or variable capital (which grows in proportion to technological progress).

In agrarian bureaucratic systems, symbiotic relationships between the state power and the owners have an influence on both politics and the economy. On the one hand, the pure class of rulers does not have direct political control over the citizens, that is, the direct producers (of the agrarian sector of the economy – the peasantry), but only indirect control, through the class of owners **[end of page 185]** who fulfill the social role of political servants. In this social system, the degree of the owners-political servants' loyalty to the state power depends on their maximization of the surplus product. Those orders of the state power which are in line with the interest of the class of owners-rulers are realized, while those which are incompatible with it are not. For that reason, the maximization of political control by the state power – in Skocpol's terms, social mobilization – is limited.

On the other hand, the fact that the owners can make use of state coercion has an impact on the functioning of the economy (Nowak 1991b, pp. 63–65). The owners-political

¹¹ It ought to be added that a stronger thesis is put forth within the framework of n-Mhm, namely, that in certain periods of its history, Russian society was a totalitarian society of the political type, with the accumulation of power and ownership – Nowak's analyses (1991b) prove that political power was combined with the disposal of the means of production in the 16th century, leading to the creation of a double class of rulers-owners. The rivalry between landowners (Russian: помещик), who combined property owning with political rule, and boyars, who were a class of single owners, was a crucial component of the whole modern social history of Russia. Because of that totalitarian anomaly, state feudalism transformed into state capitalism, and later into socialism – in which political rulers took control over the means of production and propaganda – without the free-market stage.

rulers backed by the political structure can solve a conflict with the direct producers not by way of social compromise but with the use of force. If they can permanently enslave the direct producers, it is even better, because this prevents a possible new outbreak of opposition. In that way, the political rulers become engaged in the economic conflict as every protest against exploitation turns into a protest against the social order. Because of the possibility of the declassification of the direct producers, the owners derive profits mainly by decreasing variable capital and not, for example, stimulating technological progress. Consequently, the economy becomes less efficient, which leads to technological stagnation.

Since the economy produces not only the means of production and consumption but also the means of coercion, its condition has an impact on the ability of the state power to increase external power regulation. If the army is technologically backward, the rulers find it more and more difficult to expand the external spheres of power regulation and to maintain control over already subjugated countries.

2.4. A Paraphrase of the Mechanism of Social Revolution

In Skocpol's approach, the modernizing pressure which catalyzes a social revolution does not exert that influence in all non-capitalist states but only in imperial states. Therefore, it would not be justified to apply the analysis to revolutions in colonial states, such as Vietnam, Mexico, or Algeria (Skocpol 1979, pp. 287–290). Since Skocpol does not characterize that category of states or other entities of the international system in greater detail, I will attempt to do this, within the framework of the theory I have adopted.¹² The following types of states can be distinguished:

(i) an imperial state which has internal spheres of power regulation in the form of provinces created as a result of having conquered other societies and removed the native class of rulers from there, as well as of **[end of page 186]** having conquered satellite states and subjugated them, while preserving their original authorities;

(ii) a sovereign state which does not have an external sphere of power regulation and does not constitute other societies' sphere of influence;

(iii) a satellite state which preserves its original class of rulers but depends on another society; it can be influenced by more than one state and can have its own spheres of influence (or provinces);

(iv) a provincial state – that is, a society which has been conquered by an empire – in which the original class of rulers has been replaced by the imperial one.

¹² I base my distinctions on Models IV and V of a political society: Nowak 1991c, 169–197.

The paraphrase of an empire state made in the conceptual framework of n-Mhm and the categories of states distinguished with the use of that theory are partially in agreement with and partially contrary to Skocpol's thesis. In the light of n-Mhm, modernizing pressure does have an impact on all states but to varying degrees. It has the greatest influence – Skocpol is right about this – on imperial states because the imperial class of rulers has the greatest external spheres of power and is the most susceptible to economic backwardness, which prevents it from competing with other states. Modernizing pressure has a smaller influence on the remaining categories of states: sovereign, satellite, and provincial ones. A backward economy makes it difficult for a sovereign state to retain its autonomy in decision making, for a satellite state – to decrease the degree of its dependence on other entities on the international arena, and for a conquered state – to win independence.

The difficulties in achieving extraordinary growth in their spheres of power regulation make the state authorities decide to modernize the economy, that is, eliminate the relations between state power and ownership. The withdrawal of the state authorities from regulation of the economy brings about a social crisis in the relationship between the rulers and the owners and opens the way for peasant revolts. Thanks to the participation of political elites from the intelligentsia, spontaneous peasant revolts created their own institutional structures and ideological self-awareness and transformed into full revolutions¹³. According to Skocpol's paraphrased theory, only such revolutions can be victorious **[end of page 187]**.

In the paraphrase within the framework of n-Mhm, though, it turns out that, contrary to Skocpol's thesis, not every victorious revolution leads to successful modernization. A victorious revolution results in successful modernization in class societies of the economic type. At this moment, I would like to recall that in the light of n-Mhm, the result of successful modernization is the separation of power and ownership (1), a high level of autonomy of the working class (2), and constant technological progress. In societies in which the state authorities are a dominant class, a victorious revolution does not lead to a severance of the relationship between state power and ownership but to the accumulation of the means of coercion and production in the hands of one social class. One example of this phenomenon can be the different outcomes of the revolutions in France and in Russia. Skocpol explains these differences by referring to the factors which she considers to be secondary: different

¹³ In Tomczak's (1989) view, social movements have three components: material, institutional, and awareness-related. Simple revolutions only disturb the material relations of class subordination. If revolutionary actions are channeled into institutions which are independent from the ruling class, then a social movement will have an institutional component. If a revolutionary movement gains its own social self-awareness, it will have an ideological component. Complete revolutions, unlike simple ones, contain the three components of social life: material, institutional, and ideological.

stratification of the Russian versus the French peasantry, different courses of political crises in the two countries, and the international positions of France and Russia. However, the paraphrase within the framework of n-Mhm leads to a different answer, namely, that the different outcomes of the revolutions can be ascribed to the types of those class societies. In the light of that paraphrase, France was an agrarian bureaucratic society of the economic type, and Russia – of the political type. That is why in France the state authorities originating from the revolution did not disturb the ownership structures of the state as it maximized the external spheres of power regulation during the Napoleonic era. Because of that, class symbiosis – so characteristic of the pre-revolutionary era – disappeared there, and a high level of citizens' autonomy was maintained. In Russia, the revolution did not disturb the domination of the state authorities over the owners, so the political loop created by the Bolshevik revolution was a triple social loop: the authorities also seized the means of production and indoctrination. In the longer term, the subordination of the economy to the political authorities explains the failure of the modernization of that state during the Stalinist era and the later economic stagnation during the Brezhnev period. There is an additional argument for the presented thesis: Gorbachov's *perestroika* in the second half of the 1980s, would not have been necessary, had Russia successfully modernized. Gorbachev's reforms can be interpreted as another manifestation of the top-down modernization processes taking place as a result of the lost arms race in the 1980s, which ended in the disintegration of the empire (Brzechczyn 2003; 2006; 2007a; 2010a) and the fall of the system of triple rule. **[end of page 188]**

3. Summary

With the use of the appropriately broadened conceptual apparatus of non-Marxian historical materialism, the following paraphrases were made:

- of modernization processes,
- of agrarian bureaucratic societies,
- of imperial states and the remaining entities in the international system, and
- of outcomes of victorious revolutions.

The process of modernization can be understood as the widespreading of the capitalist method of production and as the disappearance of class symbiosis. Pre-capitalist societies are social systems in which symbiotic relationships between the state authorities and the owners

are dominant. However, in the light of the paraphrase made above, we can distinguish not one but two types of agrarian bureaucratic societies: the economic type, in which the class of owners dominates the society, and the political type, in which the class of rulers is dominant.

The inter-state system consists of capitalist (class) societies and traditionalist states (with symbiotic relationships among classes) of the economic and political type. Contrary to Skocpol's statements, the pressure of modernization, exerted by the capitalist societies, is felt – to varying degrees – in all states. Pre-capitalist imperial states which need a modern economy as they compete with other states for influence are the most susceptible to that pressure. With an inefficient economy, it is not easy for the state authorities to increase (or maintain) their external sphere of power regulation, so they have to introduce reforms which weaken the bond between politics and the economy. When the state authorities cease to control economic life, the class of direct producers in the agrarian sector of economy resists and, in alliance with the marginal political elites, overthrows the existing social order.

However, a victorious revolution does not always initiate a successful modernization, which is another limitation of Skocpol's theory, which is evident in that paraphrase. The outcome of such a revolution depends on the type of the agrarian bureaucratic society. In France, an agrarian bureaucracy of the economic type, post-revolutionary changes caused class symbiosis to disappear, and the state embarked on the path toward capitalism. In Russia, an agrarian bureaucracy of the political type, the post-revolutionary transformation weakened the symbiotic relationships between the state authorities and ownership, but it led to an accumulation of control over the means of coercion, production, [end of page 189] and indoctrination. Consequently, the politically controlled modernization ended in failure (the forced industrialization in the 1930s can be seen as its – limited – substitute).

The paraphrase, then, provides some good results, which confirm certain of Skocpol's claims paraphrased in the language of n-Mhm, and produces some negative outcomes, which are contrary to several theses of the paraphrased concept. Obviously, the results of the paraphrase can only be accepted if the conceptual framework used for paraphrasing is accepted. For that reason, they will not be binding for a person who does not see n-Mhm as useful for the purpose of this paraphrase.

In the paraphrase, Skocpol's theses, made in historical-empirical language, are reformulated in the theoretical language of n-Mhm. That allows a reconsideration of the methodological issue of the scope of Skocpol's theory – the question whether it is limited, as originally intended by the author, to the three cases she distinguishes: China, Russia, and France, or whether it can be used for explaining revolutions in other societies – and, if the

answer is yes, on what conditions. Skocpol's position on that matter is not clear because she initially restricted the scope of the application of her conception to three states: France, Russia, and China, and later she attempted to use a modified version of her theory to explain revolutions in Iran¹⁴ and in third world countries (Skocpol 1982b). Skocpol's theory was also modified by Walter Goldfrank, who tried to explain the outbreak of the Mexican revolution¹⁵. Having paraphrased Skocpol's theory in the language of n-Mhm, we can say that her theory finds its fullest application in those class societies with class symbiosis which have the position of an empire. It can only be applied partially, with varying degrees of approximation, to other societies of that type, which have the status of an independent, satellite or conquered state on the international arena. **[end of page 190]**.

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¹⁴ Skocpol (1982a) broadened the scope of the explanatory factors by adding cultural and ideological ones (compare with, for example, Nichols 1986, p. 183), and she replaced external modernizing pressure with conducive international conditions. In her approach, Iran does not fit in with the definition of an agrarian bureaucratic society, either – she sees it as a rentier state which earns most of its income by selling oil. See: Eqbal Ahmad's (1982), W. L. Goldfrank's (1982), and Nikki R. Keddie's (1982) comments and the presentation of the discussions on Iran in: Jarosław Chodak (2012, pp. 153–154). For a discussion of the methodological status of Skocpol's theory and its relationships with other concepts created within the framework of comparative historical sociology, see Brzechczyn 2007b.

¹⁵ Goldfrank (1979, p. 148) replaced the factor of external modernizing pressure from Skocpol's model with the factor of tolerant or permissive world context. That is not merely a stylistic procedure, because in my reconstruction, Skocpol's external modernizing pressure is a factor which indirectly influences a social revolution, while Goldfrank's tolerant or permissive world context is a factor with direct impact on the course of a revolution.

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