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**Do theories of revolution capture contemporary revolutions in Africa: South Africa and Zimbabwe**.

Revolutions in Africa have are vastly different in terms of timing, mobilization, ideologies, and post-revolutionary institutions. Yet they all reflect a striking similarity - every revolution has resulted in a nation-state that fails to provide socio-economic equality and justice. The revolutions that are considered successful have adopted political institutions that promise equity and facilitate national and global capitalism.

Theories of revolutions constitute an expansive and complex genre; over time theorists have grappled with the multiple dimensions of revolutions developing both general and specific theories. I side with those who contend that a generalizable theory of revolution is not possible for individual cases in Africa, and certainly not for all cases in Africa. While this is not a novel statement to make, it is interesting to unravel various historical and contemporary themes that substantiate this statement.

There are many factors that make states in Africa un-generalizable. First: Most states in Africa were created during colonization, a system that varied markedly from region to region, dependent in part on the policies and economic demands made by the metropole, the character and ambitions of colonial administrators, and the composition, livelihoods, and coherence of local peoples and ethnic groups. In other words, while generalizations have been made about the policies of metropolitan states, exactly how they were operationalized on the ground was very specific to local conditions and administrators. Furthermore, many states were settler colonial regimes - white settlers appropriated land and resources as part of the colonial enterprise creating new relations of power between themselves and the black majority. Settler colonialism has its own distinctive set of systemic apparatuses that integrate colonial states into a global economy, but that also embedded racism into national institutions.

Second, ever since African state borders were created under the Berlin Conference of 1884/5 the state has been largely absent from African people in that consolidation of sovereignty has always been incomplete. While the colonial state was highly intrusive it was nevertheless absent in terms of providing a sense of belonging, nationalism, patriotism, and sovereignty. People experienced the state as alien and oppressive. The ways in which power worked and was reproduced was one-sided - the character of the state was determined by the ethnic or religious group it favored, the degree to which coercion was employed to reinforce its rule over the masses who were disinclined to recognize its power, and extent to which the state relied on policing and surveillance to maintain itself. In the absence of states at the local level where people lived and survived, family and friends, clans and tribes, villagers and neighbors, continued to nurture and reproduce networks that operated and thrived parallel to the state. These dynamics continued under post-colonial systems, revolutionary transitions, and post-revolutionary regimes. The way in which Africans experience state power is distinctive, notwithstanding the ability of states to intrude and intervene into all aspects of life, state power is experienced as one among many other competing and equally powerful institutions.

Third, from conception African states were integrated into a global economy. As producers of raw materials, providers of cheap labor, suppliers of land and natural resources, and contributors to the prestige and strength of empires, African states were constructed as part of the global economy. They were in a relationship of dependence on the metropole - a relationship that was strengthened through neocolonialism, post-colonialism and neoliberalism. Under these conditions it can be said that African states were never sovereign, their borders were always porous open to transnational networks and foreign intrusion.

Forth and finally, no African revolution has involved radical social transformation. While theorists have recognized this, some calling them political rather than social revolutions, the outcomes of political transformations are not generalizable because the pre-revolutionary conditions have been so locally specific. The ideologies of revolutionary leaders, the character and strength of social movements, and the reach and dominance of transnational and global networks, have all contributed towards specificity.

Given the specificity of revolutionary experiences in Africa, this paper will focus on theories as they relate to revolutions mainly in the Southern African states of South Africa and Zimbabwe. Both were settler colonial systems. The main propositions made are threefold. First, that theory of revolution and social movements cannot seamlessly be used to understand the underlying dynamics, outcomes, and current situation in each. One of the reasons is that a focus on states (in both a structural and or agency perspective) downplays the reality that states in these countries were never able to fully retain hegemonic control over the population. The colonial, settler colonial, post colonial/independent, and post-independent states were never experienced as all-encompassing institutions, but rather as present and absent. By focusing on states as the marker of revolutionary transitions, many theories are unable to comprehend why the majority has not experienced revolutionary change in terms of social and economic terms. Secondly, settler colonialism is a distinctive type of system that constructs institutions that deeply influence political, social and economic relations. It can be argued that the unequal relationship of power between white minority settlers in South Africa and Zimbabwe never changed much after the revolution. The majorities continue to experience the post-revolutionary state as present and absent, unequal and economically alienating. If this is not fully recognized it is difficult to explain the reasons for widespread resistance and mobilization after the revolution brought in black majority governments. Third, the paper questions whether it is possible to have radical social and economic revolutionary transformation in Africa. With the long relationship of colonial, neocolonial and neoliberal global economic ties with the West, this paper suggests that radical social and economic transformation associated with the concept of a successful revolution is not possible.

The paper begins with an overview of theories of revolutions and social movements. It then proceeds to a brief outline of the colonial and settler colonial histories of South Africa and Zimbabwe. The role of social movements in resistance will then be highlighted showing why settler states offer distinctive challenges to generalized theories. The last section deals with globalization and its impact on revolutions in both these countries.

*Theories of revolution and Africa: An overview and how they relate to Africa*

In her ground-breaking book *States and Social Revolutions*, Theda Skocpol argued that “social revolutions are set apart from other sorts 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 and social transformation…”⁠1 The structural transformation of states, influenced by both national class struggles and inter-state relations, determined the kind of post-revolutionary system that evolved. She proposed that the analysis of social revolutions required a structural analysis “with special attention devoted to international contexts and to developments at home and abroad that affect the breakdown of the state organizations of old regimes and the buildup of new, revolutionary state organizations.”⁠2 Furthermore, states were treated as autonomous organizations “located at the interface of class structures and international situations.”⁠3 This perspective became the basis of a strong current in theoretical discourses about revolutions.

Arguing for state-centered approaches Jeff Goodwin divides the field into four themes: state-autonomy, state-capacity, political-opportunity, and state-constructionist.⁠4 State-autonomy approaches emphasize the autonomy of state officials from the rest of civil society including business and foreign interest groups.⁠5 Underlining the fiscal resources, military capabilities, material assets, and organizational competencies, state-capacity approaches focus on the ability of the state to react to the demands made by civil society and foreign states.⁠6 The political-opportunity approaches highlight “how the responsiveness or permeability of states or “politics” influence” the ability of social movements to act collectively or effect official policies.⁠7 Here importance is given to the ability of social movements to mobilize support internally, work with allies both locally and internationally, and to position themselves to best take advantage of political opportunities that become available. Lastly there is what Jeff Goodwin calls the state constructivist approach, where the focus is on how states construct, influence, and impact the identities and characteristics of civil society.⁠8 State-centered approaches see social revolutions as a modern phenomenon because they begin when the state was consolidated. Given the centrality of the state, it makes sense that the purpose of most revolutions is to seize state power.⁠9 Furthermore, as exemplified by Skocpol, when states experience crises or breakdowns due to domestic and/or international pressures, revolutionaries are able to use these political opportunities to their advantage. Adding to statist perspectives Zgymunt Bauman makes a distinction between political revolutions, those that simply remove oppressive regimes from power making way for the advancement of capitalism, and systemic revolutions that require that the old system is dismantled and a new one is constructed.10

It is through the statist lenses that organization and activism is analyzed. For examples, Goodwin says that revolutionary movements are able to attract broad support “only when the state sponsors or protects economic and social conditions that are viewed as grievous.”⁠12 Such movements may also be more likely to mobilize among those who are marginalized by the state and excluded from accessing state resources. On the other hand, violence and oppression of mobilized groups increases support. States may lack the capacity to police and monitor oppositional activity and corrupt rulers may alienate and divide counter-revolutionary elites.⁠13

State-centered approaches provide a compelling analytical framework for social revolutions, but they have been critiqued and debated. Some see such approaches as treating states are coherent cohesive units, which is not always the case.⁠14 Furthermore, social movements in some countries are not able to react to political opportunities, states are far removed from people living on the margins of society – the unemployed, poor, rural dwellers - who are they are unlikely to be mobilized when the state suffers a crisis.⁠15 Statist approaches tend to undermine agency and the cultural aspect of social action, and states and civil society are not mutually exclusive but are connected.⁠16 Statist approaches also tend to neglect social networks that thrive in civil society and which form the basis of many social movements.⁠17 The role of mobilization techniques to appeal to potential participants in any social movement or revolution also tends to be under-analyzed.⁠18 Above all the limitations of statist approaches have been illustrated in many studies of actual social revolutions.⁠19

Contending perspectives emphasize agency. Here John Dunn insistence that revolutions are the product of and constituted by human action, is important.⁠20 Revolutionaries have a significant impact on the outcomes of revolutions. Similarly Eric Selbin insists that “ideas and actors, not structures … are the primary forces in revolutionary processes. Revolutions are human creations…”⁠21 These views oppose the structuralist/statists who propose, as Skocpol does, that “Revolutions are not made, they come.”⁠22 Besides drawing attention to the role of revolutionary leaders theorists have also argued that gender is an integral part of revolutionary mobilization, ideologies and outcomes.⁠23 In her interpretation of the Iranian and Nicaraguan revolutions Farideh Farhi shows that “cultural practices, orientations, meaning systems, and social outlooks” influence revolutions.⁠24 John Foran forcefully advocates for a focus on culture, which he says “must be rigorously linked to social structure and imaginatively synthesized with political economy and international contexts.”⁠25

Countering the social science portrayals of humans as “rational and instrumental” and devoid of emotions, several authors have tried to put the role of emotions back into our understanding of social movements and revolutions.⁠26 In their introduction of *Passionate Politics*, Goodwin et al propose that emotions play a significant role in social movements, people engage in political action not purely because they make rational cost-benefits analysis, but also because of other emotions.⁠27 For example Elizabeth Wood shows that Salvadorian peasants participated in opposing the regime in the mid-1970s despite the high risk of violent repercussions, mainly because they wanted “dignity and defiance through the act of rebelling,” a kind of pride in agency.⁠28 The focus on agency, culture, ideas and emotions, are pertinent to discourses relating to social movements. Here there is a blurring between social movements and revolutionary organizations.

The discourses on revolutions are not neatly divided between those who focus on structure and those who focus on agency. What they elevate is the pivotal role of the state, the prominence of structures of power, and the ways in which these frame and circumscribe revolutionary organization and activism. However, viewing revolutions from either perspective or from a combination of both doesn’t capture the consequences of regime overthrow in Southern Africa.

These revolutions included political changes ranging from Marxist-Leninist influenced states to democratic systems. These were not social revolutions in that political transitions were not parallel by social and economic transformation for the majority. Here the distinction that Bauman makes between political and systemic revolutions are pertinent; perhaps it can be said that there is yet to be a systemic revolution in this region. Most theories of revolution have focused on causes, be they structural and/or agency related, and the reasons for people joining revolutionary action (mobilization, leadership, emotions and so on). For cases in this study what is equally important and largely missing from the genre, is a consideration of what revolutions and revolutionary transformation mean for the people. How do they experience and make sense of revolutionary change? How does the state produce and reproduce its new power? How do civilians relate to the new state; how do they react to and engage with state power? How compelling is a perspective that focuses on states to reference revolutionary transformation when civil society remains divorced from and distant from these centers of power? How do people police themselves within these states that have over time largely ignored or continue to exploit and undermine their survival as citizens? It can be argued that settler colonial systems exacerbate the distance between civil society and the state and this relationship does not change radically under subsequent regimes. Hence any theory of revolution that focuses intense attention on the state will find it difficult to explain the kinds of revolutionary outcomes that persisted to the current moment. We now turn to theories of social movements as a way to augment theories of revolution.

*Social Movements*

While there is no definitive theorist or moment that lays claim to the term social movement Charles Tilly suggests that the concept can be traced to a particular way of pursuing public politics that started in the late eighteenth century, which combined three elements: “campaigns of collective claims on target authorities,” a wide range of “claim-making performances,” and “public representation of the cause’s worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment.”⁠29 These themes are prevalent in most theories about social movements. Of relevance to this study is the work of theorists who focus on New Social Movements (NSMs)– movements that developed from the mid-1960s during the postindustrial period that mobilized around rights based rather than class-based grievances. Theorists like Manuel Castells, Alain Touraine, Alberto Melucci, and Jurgen Habermas were reacting to the inadequacies of Marxist theorists to offer explanations for the kinds of social movements that were proliferating. Shifting attention away from class conflicts to political, social and cultural conflicts in postindustrial systems, NSMs focused on collective action that addressed new relations of domination.⁠30 Critical of these views, Steven Buechler asserts that “the term new social movements inherently overstates the differences and obscures the commonalities between past and present movements.”⁠31 Other deliberations revolved around the progressive and or reactive nature of NSMs,⁠32 whether these movements were political or cultural,⁠33 and what the class bases of NSMs were.⁠34 The focus on NSMs nevertheless effectively moved attention towards issues that were pertinent to activism in an era where class was diminishing as a defining identity for social action.

Another set of theorists emphasized resource mobilization and strategy-orientation focusing on the reasons for collective action. This involved an emphasis on ‘entrepreneurs’ who mobilized resources and organized grievances around certain issues, which came to be considered interest groups.⁠35 Collective action could be traced directly to grievances and social cleavages, but required activists to marshal resources, to become aware of and to seize opportunities and then to frame their demands so that others could join around identifying common targets. But in this interest-group perspective the subjective feelings of camaraderie and solidarity were ignored as success was evaluated on the basis of whether policy objectives were achieved.

To address the question of why people joined social movements, Sidney Tarrow proposed that they did so in response to political opportunity structures. Tarrow explained it as follows: “Movements are produced when political opportunities broaden, when they demonstrate the existence of allies and when they reveal the vulnerability of opponents. By mounting collective actions, organizers become focal points that transform external opportunities, conventions and resources into movements.”⁠36 Those writing within this perspective focused on the historical cycles of social movements and conflicts that occurred at different and similar times in the same region.⁠37 Criticism of these perspectives revolved around the marginalization of identity, gender, cultural specificity, the social construction of political opportunity structures itself, and the fact that it was so broadly defined that it served to include just about anything pertaining to social movements but lacked particular explanatory power.⁠38 This paradigm came to occupy a dominant position in the field of social movements.

Various aspects were expanded and re-articulated. Political opportunities came to include moves towards reform, shifts in the ruling alignment, the opening up of different avenues of power, exposure to new possible allies due to divisions among the ruling elite and so on. To show how a social movement formed or spread⁠39, Charles Tilly introduced the concept of a “repertoire of contention.” He proposed that they grew out of three kinds of factors: a populations daily routines and internal organization, prevailing rights and justice, the populations accumulated experience and collective action and how they learned from history and contention. It specifically refers to the existence of shared meaning prior to mobilization, the reasons for individuals making the choice to participate, and it offers a range of symbols, rituals, world views, that can be accessed.⁠40 If social movements are not interest groups and sustained organized action is necessary, how do they make use of political opportunities to develop strong collective action? The role of social networks⁠41 and community structures and history were highlighted,⁠42 as were investigations as to why individuals join social movements.⁠43 Cultural framing was isolated as relevant, enabling more sustainable, long lasting collective action.⁠44 Framing is defined as “an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the ‘world out there’ by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, sequences of actions within one’s present or past environment.”⁠45

One of the main criticisms of the political opportunity approach was its structural bias. Goodwin and Jasper proposed a social constructionist approach to understand emotions, personal perceptions, and the meanings that actors attribute to collective action.⁠46 Viewing emotions as culturally and socially constructed, they argued for the reintegration of sensations like anger and indignation, fear and disgust, and joy and love into political analyses.⁠47 They contended that the political opportunity structure model is too rigid and undermines particular contexts.⁠48 Addressing these criticisms McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly proposed a more “relational” perspective in which “interpersonal networks” are central to mobilization.⁠49 They attempted to emphasize agency and changing structures with respect to mobilization, framing, and repertoires of contention. The model was complex and attempted to encapsulate a changing dynamic that was both situation specific and but also fit within broad thematic trends. Critics highlighted the vaguely defined distinction made between processes and mechanisms and a general weakness in terms of explicating how these two concepts function.⁠50 McAdams et al were also criticized for holding onto classical categories (which they themselves helped formulate), albeit adjusted and re-formulated in novel ways.

How relevant are theories, especially those focused on social movements in western democracies, for the global south. The results are mixed. Elderman observes that they are less appealing “because it was difficult especially under authoritarian regimes, to imagine political opportunity as a significant explanatory category,” and in those instances where they were used, theoretical frameworks were understated.⁠51 Some of the early adopters of these frameworks were analysts in or studying social movements in Latin American. Latin American intellectuals favored the European new social movement perspectives. The uprising of Zapatista in Chiapas [1994 – 2003] reinvigorated studies on social movements in the region and in particular the role of social media and transnational networking in contributing towards the robustness of this movement.⁠52 In this region in general it seemed that instead of an emphasis on political opportunities that are relevant in Europe and other western democracies, recognizing economic inequalities seems more appropriate.⁠53 This provides a more useful way of getting to grips with issues pertaining to indigenous groups and other subjects of collective action that fall outside the purview of politics but lie at the center of economic policy and (in)action.⁠54

In Africa and the Middle East theorists stressed the idea that in most instances classical social movement theories were not applicable to states where authoritarian rule made few, if any, political opportunities available. Moreover social movements that did form did so within a context of scarce resources and they had to rely on informal networks, community ties, and “innovative repertoires to mobilize.”⁠55 Perceptions of threats or the subjective feeling of being under attack can and do give rise to collective action – political opportunities are not clearly visible or in fact available at all in most of these countries.

The way in which actors mobilize resources and the kinds of resources they access also differs in the developing world.⁠56 Some have argued for the need to focus on informal networks, social movement communities, and social and political histories and contemporary circumstances.⁠57 The flip side of this emphasis is an under-appreciation of the discontinuities and fragile consensus within such social movements. Moreover, the emphasis on visible social movements underplays attention on hidden forms of resistance that are rife and consistent in the global south.⁠58

Beinin and Vairel argue that under authoritarian states in much of North Africa and the Middle East, people do not mobilize to take advantage of political opportunities, but rather because they are reacting to threats when they “feel their sense of justice and morals, their basic rights, or the possibility of offering decent living conditions to their children, are being attacked.⁠59” While they draw from social movement theory, they emphasize the role of informal networks for everyday survival as well as for collective mobilization.⁠60 In their work on the Iranian revolution of 1979 several theorists added elements to social movement theory that addressed the special circumstances of social movements in the global south. Misagh Prasa again elevated the notion that a structural explanation for the revolution was viable – especially the role of the state in determining petroleum prices, the direct role it played in creating the conditions for revolt, and the important part played by mosques in mobilizing social movements.⁠61 Charles Kurzman drew attention to agency and perceptions of contention by using a social constructivist perspective. He showed that reforms did not offer new political opportunities, but it didn’t stop participation. Actors engaged in social mobilization despite adverse conditions – he called this an anti-explanation.⁠62 Finally Mansoor Moaddel emphasized the “broad episodic context” in which revolutionary discourses emerged and the specific character of revolutions as modes of mobilization.⁠63 Concepts employed for analyzing social movements in the global north do not translate seamlessly to analyses of social movements in the global south.

How does the social movement literature help us understand the kind of mobilization that leads to revolutions in Africa? First, a focus on social movements exposes a wide range of forces operating in civil society; it opens up the possibility of recognizing multiple agendas that together offer more in terms of understanding why people join revolutionary organizations. Second, it draws attention to how activists exploit political opportunities by mobilizing resources, framing their agendas and activism in a particular way, they rely on a repertoires of contention and various other techniques to garner support. Third, it highlights the way in which activists appeal to both a domestic and international audiences. Forth, the main theoretical discourses expose the reality that there are significant differences the way in which social movements mobilize in the global north and south. In sum, the social movement literature allows us to focus on the movements themselves – to deconstruct how they mobilize for revolutions; while recognizing the power of the state, they also move attention towards organizers and their followers.

The causes and character of some African revolutions can be explained using theories from the comprehensive genre of revolutions. However, this paper suggests that their explanatory power is limited by the extensive focus on states; while states hold extensive power African people have coped with the various oppressive states they lived under by turning to other ways of survival. These states have always been intrusive and absent, oppressive but incapable of invading all aspects of society. Hence even though structural and agency perspectives offer compelling explanations, they don’t explain why no revolution in Africa has included social and economic transformation and why people view post-revolutionary states as equally oppressive and alienating.

*The intrusive-absent state*

The colonial, apartheid, autocratic, military and other oppressive states share some characteristics, the most useful of this study is their present-absent quality.⁠64 These are states that are intrusive seeking to use overt and covert violence to control civil society and maintain power. Ethnic, communal and other differences are often employed to exaggerate divisions and undermine united resistance. At the same time these states are largely absent with respect to the provision of adequate social welfare like health, education, care for the aged, and other benefits. Furthermore, there is no impartial judicial system, a fair police force, adequate protection, and national identity. In the space left by the absent state people come to rely extensively on neighbors, family, friends, colleagues, co-workers, gangs, tribal organizations, warlords, and comrades. These are the institutions they turn to for childcare, elderly care, folk medicines, backstreet abortions, midwives, spirit healers, and witchdoctors. They assist them with loans, food and security when needed. Religious and ethnic networks are strengthened under such conditions. Furthermore, it has also increased their dependence on aid from international organizations, non-government organizations, and other voluntary groups.

The colonial administration, a historical reality for most African states, had all the features of a present-absent state. Its presence was clearly visible in conquest and acquisition of land, its bureaucratic networks, the laws and judicial systems that were implemented, the political institutions that were created, the social and cultural normative racist frameworks that were imposed, and the underlying structure based on coercion, discipline, punishment, and oppression mechanisms. With an “authoritarian management style,”⁠65 colonialism was “as much a matter of the politics of perception and experience as it has been an exercise in formal governance.”⁠66 As Anderson shows, the census, maps, and museums “profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its domination - the nature of the human beings it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry.”⁠67 The development of “native” reserves, administrative structures of “native” affairs, the codification of customary laws, and the imposition of taxes that forced people into the labor force, constituted the framework of the colonial administration. While disrupting the lifestyles of Africans by breaking the basis of subsistence economies and introducing new forms of production and produce that integrated them into a global system, colonial administrators also created structures to keep Africans “tribal” and to ensure that they didn’t intrude in white privileged places. Africans were actively prevented from becoming European. Ethnic and communal identities became one of the few ways in which Africans articulated with the state, but it also provided a source of social and economic support. People relied more heavily on kinfolk and neighbors to survive and to provide all the necessities of life that the state failed to supply.

Settler colonialism has its own specific ramifications for revolutions. Settlers are “made by conquest, not just by immigration,”⁠68 hence settlers are distinctive in that “settlers are founders (in italics) of political orders and carry their sovereignty with them.”⁠69 They settle in land appropriated by imperial nations and then proceed to create and establish an independent and sovereign homeland for themselves. Note that this is a sovereignty that is not associated with a state, but assumes that the settler community has the capacity and authority to make laws and to control the local economy. They settled, established roots, and moved to claim citizenship and statehood. They identified with the land, their practices were determined by their relationship to indigenous peoples, and they were different from colonial representatives who were temporary residents and who received their instructions from the metropole. Their collective identity was defined by “permanent residency and sovereign entitlement.”⁠70 Denton saw “something distinctive about settler societies, marking them off from metropolitan societies on the one hand, and the rest of the ‘third world’ on the other.”⁠71 Wolfe shows that an important difference between colonialism and settler colonialism was that for the latter, indigenous peoples were dispensable: “The primary object of settler-colonization is the land itself rather than the surplus value to be derived from mixing native labour with it. Through, in practice, Indigenous labour was indispensable to Europeans, settler-colonization is at base a winner-take-all project whose dominant feature is not exploitation but replacement…invasion is a structure not an event.”⁠72 Others argued for the transnational and global character of settler colonialism⁠73, its particular positioning in terms of Empire, global capitalist networks, and race, are different to colonialism and require a separate theoretical frame of analysis. Veracini proposes that settler colonialism is “characterized by a settler capacity to control the population economy as a marker of a substantive type of sovereignty,” and this “situation is associated with a particular state of mind and a specific narrative form.”⁠74 Unlike colonial administrators or those representing the metropole in the colonies, settlers dislike imperial interference and prefer to demarcate their territorial integrity by managing the local economy themselves. Different to the colonial phenomenon with its “construction of inferior otherness”⁠75 settler colonials seek to establish themselves as normative. They are righteous; when they claim land they refer to it as “high use” and assimilation policies towards indigenous groups are designated as ‘uplifting.’

While colonials attempt to dominate indigenous peoples in order to exploit them, settlers aim to dominate them for the purpose of moving them off the land - in South Africa and Rhodesia (under settler colonialism) indigenous peoples became foreigners and African. In both countries settler colonialism created structures that were to persist through the various regimes because while the relationship between settlers and the black majorities were renegotiated, dynamics of power remained the same. As Mamdani explains:

The first time in the history of African decolonization, a settler minority has relinquished exclusive political power without an outright political defeat. I am not arguing that this minority has given up its interests, only that it has consented to exploring ways of defending these interests other than a monopoly over political power and the rights of citizenship….⁠76

This paper takes the view that settler colonialism is distinctive from colonialism even though both systems obviously intersect — South Africa and Zimbabwe experienced both colonialism and settler colonialism. In both instances settler communities sought to construct a judicial and economic system conducive to settlement and white prosperity, the black majority were made landless and dependent on wage labor. They were expected to fend for themselves, the states that were eventually created concretized structures for intrusion (through taxation, labor demands, labor bureaus, reservations, and Bantustans) and absence (low or no welfare services, underfunded education and health facilities, poor security, no judicial service, institution of customary laws). The British relied on indirect rule (via chiefs and headmen) whereby the political identities of race “unified its beneficiaries as citizens” and ethnicity that “fragmented its victims as subjects.”⁠77 White citizens had rights and protections through Western laws, while Black subjects were ruled indirectly through their “traditional” authorities and customary laws, but also directly through Western law where appropriate. Seller colonialism complicated this situation by adding a layer of white minority communities who claimed sovereignty of these lands as their homes. The next section will provide a brief background of settler colonialism and revolutions in South Africa and Zimbabwe with an eye to explain why theories of revolution do not adequately capture their character and outcomes.

*South Africa and Zimbabwe*

The Dutch East Indian Company was established in the Cape in 1652. Primarily functioning to supply Dutch fleets with food, the company soon expanded to include “Free Burgers” - employees released from company contracts, and slaves from Africa and Asia. The British captured the port in 1795 and proceeded to consolidate the region that became of strategic importance after 1868 when diamonds and gold were discovered. Britain maintained control of the colony until 1910 when it relinquished authority to the national government of the Union of South Africa; segregationist policies were further institutionalized. The Afrikaner dominated Nationalist Party won elections (among the white settler electorate) in 1948 heralding the beginning of the apartheid regime that was to last for the next 45 years. Through persistent resistance and revolutionary mobilization by the black majority, a negotiated transition resulted in the African National Congress (ANC) taking office in 1994 instituting a democratic constitution. In 1789 the white population was about 20,000, increasing to about 43,000 by 1820. By 1911 there were 1,250,000 whites and about 5 million blacks. Currently there are about 5 million whites in a country of about 42 million people.

In 1888 the King of the Ndebele tribe sold the mineral rights in Zimbabwe to the British South Africa Company under Cecil Rhodes for one million dollars. With settlers moving north from South Africa, in 1891 the area was declared a British protectorate and by 1895 the region up to the Zambezi was named Rhodesia. On 12 September 1923 Rhodesia becomes a self-governing crown colony with a population of about 222,000 whites. Between 1953 and 1963 a Central African Federation was formed with Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe, Nyasaland (now Malawi), and Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) that dissolved in 1963. Resistance movements began to organize from the 1950s onwards; Ian Smith, leader of the Rhodesian Front, refused to discuss a new constitution that would eventually lead to black majority rule, declared Rhodesia’s independence (referred to as Unilateral Declaration of Independence or UDI) in 1965 leading to United Nations sanctions in 1968. A referendum was held in Rhodesia in 1969 regarding the adoption of a constitution that would solidify white political power and establish a republic; the white electorate overwhelmingly approved these measures, it was passed by Parliament and on March 2, 1970, Rhodesia was declared a republic. Intense revolutionary action led to talks held in London in 1979 and in elections the next year, Robert Mugabe’s Zimbabwean African National Union (ZANU) party won a decisive victory. The white population in Zimbabwe peaked in 1975 when they were about 296,000, dropping to 120,000 in 1999 and about 50,000 in 2002.

British colonial rule in South Africa was premised on racial segregation that was further operationalized along ethnic/tribal divisions. Land was appropriated and laws were instituted to maintain white hegemony and to oppress black, Indian, and “Coloured” civilians. By the time of the Union in 1910 migrant labor and *isibalo* (forced labor required by the state) “had become entrenched as the dominant mode of labor mobilization and exploitation in southern Africa.”⁠78 The 1910 constitution contained an eligibility clause which stated that a qualified voter was considered to be a “British subject, have five year’s residence, and be of European descent.” Prior to this only whites could vote in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, a small number of African, Indians and Colored were allowed to vote in Natal, and in the Cape any man could vote provided he was literate, earned either 50 pounds a year or occupied a house and land worth 75 pounds outside the African reserves. In 1909 85% of the registered voters in the Cape were white, 10% were Colored, and 5% were African.⁠79 The qualified franchise was eliminated for Africans in 1936 and for Coloreds in 1956. In 1910 Louis Botha became Prime Minister of South Africa with a population of 4 million Africans, 500,000 Coloreds, 150,000 Indians, and 1,275 Whites.⁠80 Under Union rule segregation laws became more pernicious, for example the Native Land Act of 1913 restricted African ownership to the ‘scheduled areas” representing 7.3% of the total land area of the country, in 1936 this was expanded to about 11.7% through the South African Native Trust.⁠81

Following segregation the Apartheid regime created 10 ethnic Bantustans and the Group Areas Act of 1950 made it illegal for people to live outside their designated areas; under the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act of 1970 blacks became citizens of these Bantustans and were considered Aliens in white South Africa. The Population Registration Act (1950) categorized South Africa by race and subsequently required black citizens to carry their pass books at all times. Apartheid laws applied to marriages, movement in white areas, ability to work in white areas, access to basic social services and all public places (beaches, parks, post-offices, hospitals, schools, bus-stops, public benches etc.). In Zimbabwe whites ruled with similar rules: the 1903 Immorality Suppression Ordinance made it illicit for sexual relations between black men and white women with a penalty of two years imprisonment for the offending white woman, the Land Tenure Act reserved 30% of agricultural land for white ownership, whites enjoyed employer protection against black competition, and there were segregated education, healthcare, and recreational facilities. Whites in both countries enjoyed a high standard of living and constituted a wealthy group by global standards.

The Union government and Apartheid regime were created mainly by and for white settlers. They were designed to maintain white supremacy by constructing white spaces (physically and mentally) devoid of black people unless they were in the service of whites. Unlike colonialism that was considered impermanent and developed mainly to extract resources needed by the metropole, settler colonialists aimed to develop a sovereign nation that was to be a permanent homeland. In Zimbabwe the political maneuvering by Ian Smith clearly reflects the means by which settlers were prepared to maintain their hegemony, a position that was pivoted on oppressing and forcibly keeping the black majority away from the centers of economic and political power. In both countries these institutions were to have an abiding affect on post-revolutionary states. Of particular significance for this study was that settler rule was to some degree limited and incomplete. Many rural and other marginal areas were not penetrated, borders were somewhat fuzzy and porous, and formal structures were never large enough to police and control activities in all the geographical areas designated as part of the state. Even in settler colonies Hancock concludes, “South Africa was the only African territory south of the Sahara where the thinly held frontier of European settlement might be said to have evolved into a deeply-rooted European society.”⁠82 Migration and movement between states was common, the basis for labor for the mining industries for example was migrant labor. Herbst correctly argues that those who argue “for the strength of the colonial state ignore just how great the continuity with pre-colonial politics was, at least in regard to the major avenue open to Africans disaffected with those who ruled them.”⁠83 Further, the use of traditional authorities did not make for strong centralized rule in that “decentralized power did not create hegemony,” European rule was unsystematic and the use of chiefs and headmen became dysfunctional over time.⁠84 Alexandre states clearly how such rule left large areas ungovernable and weakened white rule:

…the diversity of local situations was great. In one region the customary hierarchy and the imported hierarchy could be reconciled tolerably well… In another the customary hierarchy persisted, sometimes underground and sometimes unofficially tolerated, side by side with the white man’s chieftaincies or pseudo-chieftaincies… Elsewhere the imported hierarchy planted on an anarchical population managed to take root… Elsewhere again it proved quite impossible to impost the system.⁠85

White settlers tried to avoid the costs of hegemony by relying on traditional authorities (in the Bantustans in South Africa) to deal with local affairs. As Herbst says: “The Europeans, whatever their formal theory of rule, were generally unsuccessful in changing the cost structures to allow for a more systematic expansion of authority not the rural areas.”⁠86 The ‘absent’ state makes it conducive for the strengthening of pre-colonial relations and novel iterations of it. Any theory of revolutions has to recognize the peculiarities of settler states - their presence and absence ensures that civilians experience the state differently to those of the West and other developed countries. People opt out and into the state on an everyday basis. Ashforth draws attention to this even in modern day Soweto where witchcraft “is both totally secret and utterly commonplace.”⁠87 As in South Africa where Christianity is the predominant religion, traditional healing and witchcraft is widely practiced in Zimbabwe.⁠88 In both countries social networks form around soccer clubs, boxing matches, gumboot dancing, lottery clubs (where individual members make a fixed contribution every month and each member receives the lump sum on a rotational basis), bulk buying clubs (members pool their money to buy food in bulk which is then equally distributed), sewing clubs, underground banking and loan services and so on. These operate largely outside the state - they take on ethnic, religious, gender and other characters.

*Resistance*

In South Africa resistance was mobilized by numerous organizations that were active from the early days of white settlement. Prominent organizations included the African National Congress (ANC), Black Consciousness (BC), the Pan African Congress (PAC), the United Democratic Front (UDF), the South African Communist Party (SACP), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), Inkatha, and many other local and national community organizations. In the lead-up to the democratic transition the UDF came to serve as an umbrella body to coordinate the various oppositional groups. The UDF was formed in 1983 in opposition to constitutional reforms designed to incorporate Indians and Coloreds into the ruling elite. This is the kind of structural change that statist approaches have highlighted. Unified action was successful in that there was a low voter turn-out, soon the agenda was broadened to overthrow the regime by undermining its ability to rule - townships were made ungovernable, consumer boycotts threatened the profitability of local and international businesses, trade union activity hampered production, and school boycotts brought the education system to a standstill. Corporate executives, business leaders, and influential Afrikaner intellectuals and politicians moved to engage the exiled ANC in negotiations. This resulted in the release of political prisoners, the unbanning of radical political organizations, and the establishment of a transition process that would establish the first democratic elections. Even though the kind of structural political transformations that Skocpol and others see as intrinsic to revolutions did not occur, for the vast majority in the country the transition and elections were experienced as nothing short of revolutionary.

The UDF (to a large extent, a front for the banned ANC) relied on media and individual door-to-door canvassing to publicize its platform. It had a number of high-profile public figures to lead mass demonstrations and to address public meetings and funerals. They were in close contact with international anti-Apartheid movements; the latter pushed their governments into adopting sanctions and to put pressure the South African regime. COSATU (the trade union umbrella body) became an affiliate of the UDF adding heft to the nationalist struggle. It was formed in 1985 and had 21 affiliates representing over 1.8 million workers. COSATU used traditional techniques to organize workers – shop stewards, labor representatives, shop-floor meetings, regional conferences, and so on. By joining the UDF it merged the workers class struggles with the nationalist struggle. This political strategy tipped the UDF and ANC-in-exile towards eventual victory. But it also had the negative effect of downplaying the class struggle, which affected the outcomes of the revolution. Instead of structural changes that met the needs of workers, the system was more conducive to the demands of big business and international capitalist investors, and enabled upward mobility and wealth accumulation for a minority of blacks.

Resistance also involved violent conflicts among resistance movements, for example over a 34 month period in the late 1980s over 1611 people were killed in Pietermartizburg.⁠89 Between 1990 and 1994 some 14,000 people lost their lives in conflicts throughout the country.⁠90 The South African Defense Force played a direct role in these conflicts and also supported Inkatha. Inkatha used and manipulated Zulu ethnicity to increase its membership, to ensure that Zulus (the largest ethnic group) were represented in the post-Apartheid state, and to undermine the ANC and organizations affiliated with it. Under apartheid Inkatha had carved out a space in the Zulu reserves providing local government and socio-cultural institutions. Inkatha was part of the administrative political structure of the KwaZulu Bantustan, but it also included traditional chiefs and headmen it its framework. Hence in order to buy or rent property, procure a permit or license, gain access to grazing land, gain permission to work in urban areas, marry, and many other everyday needs, people had to consult with and pay Inkatha officials. A powerful organization in Natal, they retaliated with violence when the UDF began to mobilize in the area; by the time of the 1994 transition the ANC had made many concessions to Inkatha and their leader, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi.

From the 1950s Zimbabweans resisted white rule through a number of organizations the most prominent being the Zimbabwean African People’s Union (ZAPU) formed by Joshua Nkomo and the Zimbabwean African National Union (ZANU) formed by Ndabaningi Sithole and replaced by Robert Mugabe in the mid-1970s. The Smith government banned both organizations that then turned to the frontline states setting up exile camps in Zambia to engage in armed insurgency in Rhodesia. From the 1970s onwards both organizations engaged in guerrilla warfare having mobilized people in the rural areas and Tribal Trust Lands. The war between the liberation movements and the Rhodesian regime was violent, the latter had highly functioning security forces and by 1974 they had reasserted their dominance in the war. The Rhodesian forces were by now well versed in counter-guerilla strategies convinced that they could win through military means. The victory of FRELIMO (Mozambique Liberation Front) in Mozambique in 1975 shifted the balance of forces and the military wing of ZANU was able to make more headway. White Rhodesians reluctantly moved towards a political solution; this resulted in the Lancaster House Agreement of December 21, 1979 between the Patriotic Front (ZANU and ZAPU) and the Rhodesian government. In the February 1980 elections ZANU won a decisive victory and Robert Mugabe became the head of state. While Mugabe claimed that the new system was based on a Marxist-Leninist model, the state was more reformist and maintained a racialized economy even through some social services were expanded to include the majority. Under the Lancaster House Agreement 20% of seats were reserved for whites for at least 7 years and land ownership was left in the hands of whites, it could be bought on a ‘willing seller - willing buyers’ basis with the British providing money for the purchase of some farms. The most fertile and lucrative lands continued to be owned by whites, in the decade that followed 3% controlled two-thirds of the gross national income.⁠91 In the early 1990s Mugabe adopted an Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP); a move that was in part influenced by the democratic transition in South Africa and the end of the Cold-War.

Social movement theories emphasize political opportunity structures; this explains in part the surge in action in South Africa following the political reforms of 1983. The ideas associated with mobilization and the kinds of methods used are pertinent to the liberation struggles in both countries. The repertoire of contention that included boycotts, mass stay-aways, making townships ungovernable, mass demonstrations at funerals and so on, became the hall marks of resistance. What these theories fail to capture is that these repertoires are premised largely on resentment and deep suspicion of state structures, emotions that do not change radically in the post-revolutionary system. Given that the post-revolutionary systems have failed to produce strong states (in terms of relying more on consent rather than coercion, among other factors) this resentment can and still is tapped when opposition movements mobilize. Thus even though social movement theories apply to both these countries, it doesn’t help to understand the resilience of deep resentment in the state-civil society relationship; Africans do not trust the state and they still survive by resorting to local networks. The state is still experienced as present and absent and opposition is most often directed towards the states inability to address civilian needs. In Zimbabwe by 2005 3 million of the 14 million people had emigrated to South Africa, the numbers of illegal migrants is higher. In South Africa resistance in the form of local community groups fighting rent hikes, increasing costs of services, unhealthy working conditions and a multitude of other grievances, have been consistent.

*Globalization and current situation*

Analysts are beginning to recognize the peculiarities of many countries in the global south where democratic transitions and globalization has occurred simultaneously. The adoption of the neoliberal economic model and the consequent increased integration with the global economy are located alongside the policies pursued by nascent democratic states to address the economic and social inequities that prevailed under apartheid and other autocratic systems.⁠92 Globalization includes some of the following: financial deregularization, the breakdown of the Bretton Woods trade system (began in the 1970s) and with it the central financial role of the United States, the elevated function of the global market, a new wave in technological innovation spurred by the arms trade and international science, new forms of media and communication that act to simultaneously enhance and undermine states, increasing movement of people, goods, and money, and the rise in prominence of structural adjustment program (SAPs) instituted by international organizations like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.⁠93 Globalization increases disparities between the rich and poor, it challenges the nation-state, and it has elevated the role of corporations and international organizations. Definitions for revolutions must address these changes especially given that civil society now faces employers and power-holders who exist at a transnational level or reside in other states, and the domestic policies of states are constrained by the demands of SAPs and other international actors.

Jeffery Paige proposes that revolutionary transformations under these circumstances will be different: While it could include a world wide class struggle and the seizure of sovereign power at national or international levels, it could also be “a deepening of human rights, the increasing assertiveness of the formally suppressed gender, ethnic, age and class groups and the rise of the global South may bring the world to a kind of revolutionary transformation in consciousness, lived social experience and power relations seen previously only in particular national societies.”⁠94 Farideh Farhi adds that the adoption of/or belief in universal democratic values and the reality of increasing economic and social disparities is “fueling dynamics that create the potential for the appropriation of these key concepts and then turning them into calls for the radical reshaping of political power” in a longer and more gradual process of socioeconomic change.⁠95 For John Foran, under new conditions of globalization “creating democratic spaces for the free discussion of political, economic and cultural alternatives to globalization is a more subtle goal for revolutionaries than direct seizure of state power,” hence “linking the national liberation struggle to both local and global concerns might be the most effective… coalition-building project for deep social transformation.”⁠96 The role of global cultural symbols and messages, myths and narratives, about past revolutions and rebellions serve as a powerful frame of reference for future revolutions.⁠97

In the process towards a democratic transition in South Africa negotiated by the apartheid regime together with the resistance movements, the national economic lobby, international capitalist networks, and foreign governments, the state moved away from a redistributive system to one that was more conducive to international interests. Immediately after gaining power the government adopted the RDP or Reconstruction and Development Program, a set of policies that were “people-centered” and “people-driven.”⁠98 It proposed development but also recognized the need for a smaller state, it included a redistributive ideology that was more in line with the demands made by social movements during apartheid. But four years later it was dropped in favor of GEAR – Growth, Employment and Redistribution, a neoliberal economic model that imposed stricter government spending, tax cuts for the rich, tax incentives for foreign investors, the lifting of exchange controls, and the privatization of government holdings. This model was devised by the state with representatives from the Development Bank of Southern Africa, the World Bank, the Reserve Bank, and the Stellenbosch Bureau of Economic Research. The outcome was a set of strategies very much in line with the structural adjustment programs touted by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). As John Saul observes: “South Africa: running, however ineffectively, with the hares or, as one increasingly suspects to be the case, hunting however guardedly, with the hounds.”⁠99 The poor were first to experience the negative impacts of GEAR.

The housing crisis among blacks is a good case in point. The vast majority had inadequate housing, poor services, and weak infrastructure. Loans and mortgages were not easily accessible and there were few government subsidies. RDP had proposed two non-market mechanisms: a national housing bank, and mechanisms that ensure state expenditures on housing take the form of ‘non-speculative’ subsidies.⁠100 Instead the new policies were market-centered in favor of banks, private service providers, and private construction companies. Hence increasing unemployment led to a growth in urban shantytowns and many of those who had houses and utilities were unable to pay for new and more expensive water and electrical services. As Bond explains: “In a neoliberal, post-apartheid South Africa … the mass shantytowns and squatter towns and squatter villages, the hostels, the decaying inner-city areas, the nooks and crannies where the homeless congregate - are growing, not shrinking.”⁠101 Saul, quoting Roy, provides a realistic summary of post-apartheid South Africa:

While 60 percent of the population remains landless, almost all agricultural land is owned by 60,000 white farmers. Post-apartheid, the income of 40 percent of the poorest black families has diminished by about 20 percent. Two million have been evicted from their homes. Six hundred die of AIDs every day. Forty percent of the population is unemployed and that number is rising sharply. The corporatization of basic services has meant that millions have been disconnected from water and electricity.⁠102

In exchange for some concessions, including black economic empowerment (BEE) and affirmative action, the post-apartheid state agreed to institute economic policies that favored national and international capital. The result has been “globalization triggered by color” whereby black (mainly African) entrepreneurs are given concessionary loans, skilled black personnel have become upwardly mobile as the corporate sector scramble to meet targets set for blacks in managerial and staffing positions, and black managers and workers have been prioritized in the public sector.⁠103 Class disparities have increased: 45-55 percent of all people live in poverty, 10 percent of African children are malnourished, 25 percent of children are stunted due to poor nutrition, while the size of the African component with the richest income rose from 9 percent in 1991 to 22 percent in 1996.⁠104 The unemployment rate was officially at 25 percent in 2011, but in KwaZulu-Natal it was higher at 37.6 percent.⁠105 Unemployment in the country increased from 9.2 percent in 1980 to 25 percent in 2011⁠106 with the highest rate reached in 2003 (29 percent).⁠107

Civil society in South Africa remains strong. The election of Jacob Zuma first as president of the ANC in 2007, then as president of the country in 2009, clearly reveals the voice of a restive civil society. Even though Zuma was embroiled in trials over charges of corruption and rape, as the under-dog and anti-intellectual (he joined the ANC when he was 17 years old and is not from the educated elite. He represents the polar opposite of Thabo Mbeke in these respects), he was elected to high office.⁠108 Non-Government Organizations have also proliferated and have used creative methods of resistance and advocacy, but relied on their historical repertoire of contention. As Robins argues: “Rights-based approaches have not necessarily translated into forms of depoliticisation and individualization … and neither has ‘rights talk’ been rendered completely incompatible with group-based claims to ‘ethnic’ belonging and indigenous identity.”⁠109 Civic organizations, trade unions and others have slowly begun to mobilize organizing around specific issues and still finding ways to oppose a government they helped bring to power. More recently student, community, and labor movements have increased their protests seriously destabilizing the political and economic scene. President Zuma has become the focal point of protests around general government corruption, stark wealth disparities, and the conspicuous consumption of the black elite.

In Zimbabwe the move towards neoliberalism in the 1990s led to increasing poverty, increasing unemployment, the suspension of pension payments, and the defrauding of the war veterans compensation fund. In 1995 the IMF and World Bank suspended disbursement of structural adjustment credits and in time the economy spiraled out of control. Mugabe became more dictatorial pushing the country towards economic bankruptcy, including actively engaging in the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. At the heart of the Zimbabwean situation lies the question of land, at independence some 4000 white commercial farmers owned about one third of all agricultural land - without land redistribution or a higher taxation base, the majority black population remained alienated from the economy.⁠110 In 2000 the state sponsored land invasions of white farms began, it is estimated that 18 billion US dollars of land was confiscated.⁠111 The Mugabe regime simultaneously became more repressive attacking informal settlements, detaining political opposition leaders, clamping down on journalists, and brutally suppressing any political mobilization considered threatening. The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) under the leadership of the Secretary General of the Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions, Morgan Tsvangari, has been relentless attacked even though his party won 41 parliamentary seats in the 2005 elections. By 2004 partial payments were being made to the IMF and World Bank and there are increasingly close relations with China and Iran. South Africa has been a close ally and some have argued that when Mugabe is gone “South African companies, both state and private, will be firmly in control of the economy.”⁠112

The neoliberal global economic network has another ally in the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) that was launched in 2001, it was later adopted by the African Union as their official policy. NEPAD is based on a contract that Developed countries will help Africa with fairer trade and better market access, they will also provide more aid and investments. In return Africa will govern themselves in a better manner and become more investor friendly. As Carmody says: “ NEPAD is premised on deeper and unmediated integration into the global market system and driven by the leader of some of the principle recipients of foreign direct investment in Africa.”⁠113 Both South Africa and Zimbabwe are tied to these contracts.

*Conclusion*

The general proposition made in this paper is that theories of revolution and social movements cannot be generalizable to fit all cases, especially those in Africa. The specific cases of South Africa and Zimbabwe were used to illustrate the peculiarities of settler colonialism, which was replicated in other parts of Africa like Mozambique, Algeria, and Egypt, and the challenges they pose to general theories. Of particular importance is the character of the state in these situations - they are present and absent in that while they aim to clear their domain of indigenous peoples (in white towns and cities/Kasbah’s) and to create a political economy suited to their needs, they are unable to penetrate all parts of society. Relying on traditional rulers and customary laws, these states cannot claim to have hegemonic sovereign control over the entire region. In their absence people rely on family, friends, neighbors and co-workers to assist them with help, aid, health care, and other services. The state is experienced as alien and distant, an institution that is ever present, but also absent enabling people to opt out every now and then. Both revolutions involved state change, as most theories propose, but they did not involve economic and social changes that markedly changed the conditions and situations of the majority. These outcomes cannot be predicted or understood if the specific conditions of settler states and histories are not considered. Finally, theories have to consider the situation where revolution and globalization operate in tandem - the kinds of outcomes are determined, in part, on relations between the post-revolutionary systems and global corporate networks. Whatever the differences in the post-revolutionary situation, as in South Africa (democratic) and Zimbabwe (autocratic), their relationships with global economic networks are similar. The effects on the majority are also similar — a large group that is unemployable in the new economies, production for and by transnational corporate interests, growing economic disparities between the rich and poor, and impoverishment of the masses.



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2 Ibid, p. 5.

3 Ibid, p. 33

4 Jeff Goodwin, “State-centered approaches to social revolutions: strengths and limitations of a theoretical tradition,” in Theorizing Revolutions, ed. by John Foran, (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).

5 Max Weber was one of the early proponents of this perspective. See Peter Evans, Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), Michael Mann, The Sources of Social Power, Volume two: The Rise of Classes and Nation-States, 1760-1914, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

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7 Jeff Goodwin, “State-centered approaches,” p. 13. Examples of analysts using this perspective are Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1978), Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement. Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

8 See for example Theda Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies and Analysis in Current Research,” in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, *Bringing the State Back In*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), Peter Katzenstein, ed. *The Culture of National Security*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

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20 John Dunn, *Political Obligation in its Historical Context. Essays in Political Theory*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

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