

Forced Government Change: A Comparative Study of the Historical and Social Forces
Involved in the 1953 Iranian and 2002 Venezuelan Coups D'état

By

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B.A., Simon Fraser University, 2007

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ART

In the
Program of Latin American Studies
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Fall 2011

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Abstract

Two geopolitically important and petroleum-rich countries are Iran and Venezuela. The modern history of these two countries has been greatly influenced by the fact that both countries lie on top of large petroleum reserves. Each country experienced political coups d'état that were directly linked to their petroleum policies and economic dependence on their petroleum reserves. The coup in Iran occurred on the 19th of August, 1953, leading to the removal of Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh from office. The Venezuelan coup occurred on the 12th of April 2002, but failed to permanently remove Hugo Chavez from office. Organized resistance played an essential role in the results of these two coups. Using Gramscian concepts the resistance to the Iranian coup d'état of 1953 and the Venezuelan coup attempt of 2002 were analyzed. In the national-popular forces in Iran 1953 failed to keep Mossadegh in office in Iran, while the Venezuelan popular-democratic movement helped Hugo Chavez to remain in office in 2002. Four main variables emerge that explain the differing outcomes of the coups in terms of the resistance. The first is the relative efficacy of international versus domestic forces in determining the outcomes of coups d'état. The second and third variables are the class composition and strategy of the popular forces. The fourth variable relates to the technological context in which the two coups occurred. By studying the interaction of these variables, conclusions can be made regarding how best to combat coup attempts.

Keywords: Venezuela; Iran; Coup d'état; Gramsci; Hegemony; Historical Bloc

Acknowledgements

I offer my gratitude to the Latin American Studies faculty at Simon Fraser University for all of their help and support in the development of my research. I owe particular thanks to Dr. Gerardo Otero, for his constant support and guidance during my journey as an undergraduate and graduate student

I thank Dr. Yildiz Atasoy for all of her help in all of my studies, along with the constant questioning of my research topic, forcing me to dig deeper. Thanks to Dr. Amir Mirfakhraie and Dr. Alexander Dawson for their involvement with my thesis committee. Thanks to Mazdak Salehi, Siamak Salehi, Eva Lindinger and Alan Wise from the University of Winnipeg for editing my thesis.

Special thanks are owed to my family for all of their sacrifice, support and help throughout my studies.

Dedication

To my family (Mahrokh, Mazdak, Siamak, Nazak, Eva, Madar Zahra & my Mother)

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Theme, Relevance of Topic, & Research Questions

Modern industrial production has created a demand for vast supplies of natural resources, accompanied by steep competition and conflict between and within societies over their control. Petroleum (oil and gas) is one such energy source that has had a great impact on modern societies. Petroleum has become a defining resource for all levels of the economy, politics, and society. Its influence is easily observed by the multitude of political conflicts and struggles waged over petroleum reserves during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The society, political institutions, and the economy of petroleum-rich countries have been predominantly shaped by the struggle over control of petroleum resources and revenues. As Iseri (2007) explains:

Control of oil is not merely a matter of supply, but a question of who provides it at what price, with an affordable price and easy access becoming the sine qua non for the functioning of international economics. In this way, oil as a commodity closely connected to systems of production, credit and finance has become entangled with national and personal security issues (Iseri, 2007: 4-5).

Two geopolitically important and petroleum-rich countries are Iran and Venezuela. The modern history of these two countries has been greatly influenced by the fact that both countries lie on top of large petroleum reserves. Each country experienced political coups d'état that were directly linked to their petroleum policies and economic dependence on their petroleum reserves. The coup in Iran occurred on the 19th of August, 1953, leading to the removal of Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh from office. The Venezuelan coup occurred on the 12th of April 2002, but failed to permanently remove Hugo Chavez from office, as he was returned the status of president three days after the coup. The aim of this thesis is to broadly explore the efficacy of international versus domestic forces in determining the outcomes of coups d'état. A strong emphasis is placed on determining the role that organized resistance plays and how it shapes the result of a coup. The outcome of a coup will be defined in this thesis in a binary manner. A successful coup is classified as the removal of a government from office through coercive means, while in a failed coup the ruling government is able to maintain power in spite of coercive efforts by the opposition forces.

In the Iranian coup the domestic opposition to Mossadegh's nationalist government consisted predominantly of monarchist/royalist groups (the most prominent a group headed by the Rashidian brothers and General Fazlollah Zahedi); right-wing Iranian political parties such as the Democratic Party lead by Ahmad Qavām and the Aryan Party lead by General Hassan Arfah, along with prominent clergymen such as Ayatollah Kashani; 80% of newspapers and editors in Tehran; and street gang leaders, the most prominent being Shaban "*Beemokh*" (translated to brainless) Jafari (Abrahamian 1982). These domestic forces were then brought together by the organization and support of international forces, specifically the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the British Directorate of Military Intelligence, Section 6 (MI-6). The majority of the support for the Iranian coup amongst the population was drawn from the upper middle to upper (aristocratic) class, and politically right-wing members of society (Moaddel 1989). The national-popular forces in Iran organized under the name National front. The National Front was an umbrella organization formed from a broad spectrum of middle-class parties and associations (Siavoshi 1994). The most important groups within this coalition were the Iran Party, the Toilers Party, the National Party, and the Tehran Association of Bazaar Trade and Craft Guilds.

The Venezuelan domestic opposition to the Chavez government was lead by former Venezuelan trade union organization leader Pedro Carmona and former union and political leader Carlos Ortega. Ortega was initially the head of *Fedepetrol* (oil workers union) and had then been elected head of the *Confederación de Trabajadores de Venezuela* union federation (CTV – largest trade union in Venezuela) in 2001 (Wilpert 2003). Carmona and Ortega obtained the support of the private media stations in Venezuela, specifically Venevisión, owned by Gustavo Cisneros as well as generals in the military (such as Vice Admiral Héctor Ramírez & Brigadier General Néstor González). Carmona and Ortega were also provided with financial support from the Washington-based National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and moral support from leading members the U.S. government including Colin Powell (Jones 2008). The popular-democratic forces in Venezuela consisted of two major organizations; The Movement for the Fifth Republic Party, and Bolivarian Circles (grassroots organization). The political

party garnered most of its support from the Bolivarian circles, which were organized segments of the urban working class of Venezuela.

The main research question explored by this thesis is why the popular-democratic forces in Venezuela were able to resist the coup perpetrators, while the national-popular forces in Iran failed. To answer this question the Iranian and Venezuelan coups need to be examined in detail, and analytical and theoretical literature on coups was consulted. This literature is abundant, and comes in two types: material that examines coups in general (Ibrahim 2009; O’Kane 1983), and sources that focus on one or two coups (Renique 2010; Siverson & Starr 2010; Malul and Shoham 2006; Hossain 2000; Callihan & Danopoulos 1993; Wells 1974) and then extrapolate the general causes and factors behind coups. While these sources helped to establish an understanding of the current coup theories, given their top-down approach, they failed in providing much insight into the resistance to coups. This thesis is also interested in the organization and strategies of popular forces, and the effect that they have on coup attempts. Therefore, current coup theory was used as a guide to the creation of an alternative theory to explain the outcomes of the Iranian and Venezuelan coups. The alternative coup theory combines current coup theory with Gramscian concepts so that the bottom-up resistance to the coups in Iran and Venezuela could be studied more adequately. These concepts provided the best theoretical tools to accurately answer the research questions, to determine why the outcomes were different, and how future coups could be resisted.

In general, as will be seen throughout the thesis, the main opposition to both Mossadegh and Chavez was based on disagreements regarding how to organize the domestic economy and society, with the petroleum economy being the flashpoint for disagreement. Both Iran's and Venezuela's economies were highly dependent on the exportation of petroleum: this is the primary commonality between the two coups and is the constant variable. Therefore, to explain the coups and why there was a different outcome in each, the analysis will branch off from the constant variable of a petroleum economy and its importance to petroleum-importing countries (such as the U.S., and Britain) and members of the domestic economy who profited from the oil-exportation. Factors that varied between the Iranian and Venezuelan cases must be examined to understand why the two outcomes differed. This thesis will accordingly examine the

importance of the domestic correlation of social forces and how they aligned with international forces, gauging the relative strengths of each. The crucial domestic variable that will be examined is the role of bottom-up resistance to the coup and how it was organized around available resources, institutions, and advanced technology.

Theoretically, aspects of Marx's premise regarding how materials, tools, and technology affect history will be employed to understand the role that technological advancement might have played in the differing outcomes of the coups. Gramscian concepts will be drawn upon to gauge the strengths of the coup perpetrators and the resistance to them. Through this analysis of how the coups occurred and what the main variables involved in producing differing outcomes were, a means to resist coups by popular forces will be better illuminated.

The main Gramscian concepts that will be employed to analyse the two coups and the relative strengths of the opposition and resistance to each coup are *hegemony* and the *historical bloc*, which will be discussed in Chapter two. Hegemony is defined as moral and intellectual leadership of the ruling class, or the universalizing of its ideals and interests as beneficial to all (Gramsci, 1988: 204). Hegemony is manifested in society when one social class/group moves past its narrow economic interests and unites other groups under its leadership. When this leadership is seen as being legitimate by other groups/classes in the alliance a historic bloc is created. The success of a historic bloc is dependent on its ability to endure for a historical period. The formation of a historic bloc is long and time consuming, as a social group must exercise leadership prior to and after winning governmental control, and can only become dominant when it exercises power and leads for a historical period (Gramsci, 1988: 249). The influence, role, and shape of the domestic resistance to each coup attempt will be better understood through the use of these Gramscian concepts.

Methodological Framework

Taking into account the amount of time available to complete this research and the difficulty in obtaining some of the primary sources for the topic at hand, the optimal methodology to obtain the relevant information is a secondary-source survey. As much information as possible regarding the issues at hand was obtained and synthesised to

answer the main question of why there were differing outcomes in the two coups. The sources were mostly historical and qualitative in nature; however some quantitative data was obtained as well.

Once the required data were gathered, they were compared and contrasted against the current coup theory. As mentioned, however, coup theory literature is inadequate for explaining the resistance to coup attempts. Therefore, Gramscian theory was used in conjunction with the coup theory literature to create an alternative coup theory that could be used to analyse the data, specifically the resistance to the coups in Iran and Venezuela.

On the whole, the literature used comes from a wide variety of sources written in both Farsi and English. The literature can broadly be grouped into four general categories: i) general analytical/theoretical literature on coups; ii) theoretical literature (Gramsci/Marx); iii) general background analysis of petroleum economies; iv) relevant Iranian history and Venezuelan history. The Iranian and Venezuelan literature can be further subdivided into literature that examines the recent history of Iran and Venezuela leading up to the coups, literature that focuses on the immediate events of the coups, and the literature that analyses the historical fallout of the coups.

The main literature used for the theoretical section, to be discussed in detail in the literature-review chapter below, was Gramsci (1988) and Marx (1999), supplemented by Sklair & Miller (2010), Wright (2003, 2009), Carroll (2006) Otero (2004), Burawoy (2001), Lukacs (1999), and Laclau & Mouffe (1985). These sources helped define and operationalize the main concepts used throughout the thesis to explain the differences between the coups.

To understand the role that petroleum economics had on Iranian and Venezuelan societies and the relative stability of the respective regimes, two main sources were used: Smith (2007) and Painter (1986). Both of these sources examined the general question of regime stability in petroleum-rich states, with Smith (2007) focusing on domestic variables, specifically the roles of state actors and organized opposition in using oil revenues. Painter (1986) on the other hand examined the destabilizing effects of international forces, specifically looking at the influence and links between US foreign policy, economic security, and national security throughout the Cold War era on resource-rich states.

Specific historical data on the two coup events was acquired so that the general theories and histories of coups could be applied particularly to the Iranian and Venezuelan coups. There are several works on the relevant history of Iran (Malek 2005; Kinzer 2003; Daniel 2001; Siavoshi 1994), all of which offer very precise summaries of the key actors and the events leading up to the petroleum nationalization movement and the subsequent coup on Mossadegh. The benefit of these sources is that they allow for the conceptualization of the relevant history of Iran from several different angles. The literature provides extensive historical data to show how the British gained control of the Iranian petroleum industry and how this created resentment and a backlash toward the British as well as Iranian elites, culminating in the creation of the nationalization movement headed by Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh and the National Front Party.

Literature about the Iranian coup is abundant; especially after details regarding the coup became available to the public following the leak of a CIA internal report about the coup (Sadighi 2009; Amooei 2008; Azimi 2004; Kinzer 2003; Heiss 1997; Moaddel 1989; Diba 1986; Mossadegh 1981). These sources were used to reconstruct the coup and allow for an investigation of the international forces involved. They were too cursory of a view on the domestic forces, however, and additional literature was needed to examine the full influence of the internal forces at play (including Byrne 2004; Chaqueri 2001; Daniel 2001; Siavoshi 1994; Moaddel 1989; Abrahamian 1982). These sources looked at a broader range of the variables and factors involved and allowed for a better understanding of why and how Mossadegh's power was eroded. The religious divisions, left-wing politics, and urban/rural schisms are better understood through this literature, and thus provide micro-level details about the coup, the domestic variables involved, and the organization of the resistance to the coup.

Literature regarding the background history of Venezuela and its petroleum economy is also readily available (Tinker-Salas 2009; Buxton 2001; Coronil 2000). These sources provide many details about the history of the Venezuelan petroleum economy. They discuss how Hugo Chavez was able to win the presidency on the backs of both a reformed Venezuelan political system and the prolonged economic crises of the 1980s (mainly caused by the introduction of neoliberal policies) that pushed people to look for alternatives to the political status quo.

Literature on the coup itself and the crises that came before it, such as the *Caracazo* riots of 1989, the military coup attempt in 1992, the impeachment of President Perez in 1993, and the breakdown of the two-party system in 1993, are also prevalent (Ellner & Salas 2005; Wilpert 2003; Maya-Lopez 2002; Buxton 2001). This literature provides a detailed analysis of these crises and the context that gave rise to them. They examine the economic problems caused by the introduction of neoliberalism and the attempts to privatize the state petroleum company (PDVSA), and how these policies led to increased poverty and a decrease in the standard of living. There is literature that links the negative effects of these policies to the popular backlash against incumbent politicians in Venezuela (Vanden 2003; Gott 2000), and how this allowed Chavez to win the office of the presidency of Venezuela behind an anti-neoliberal campaign.

Specific details regarding the Venezuelan coup attempt can be found in the following sources: Jones 2008; Byerly 2006; Ellner 2005 & 2004; Bak 2001; Hawkins 2003; Vanden 2003; and the documentary film *The Revolution Will not be Televised* 2002. These sources allow for a reconstruction and examination of the coup attempt on Chavez, highlighting the coup perpetrators, and how they were resisted by Chavez's popular-democratic supporters.

Thesis Outline

This study will explain the events and actors involved in the Iranian coup of 1953 and the Venezuelan coup of 2002. At the onset a theoretical literature review is provided in Chapter 2, relating current coup theories to Gramscian and Marxist concepts. This is done to provide an alternative coup theory that focuses on the resistance to coups. Next a historical literature review is offered in Chapter 3. This has the purpose of presenting the empirical background on Iran and Venezuela, along with describing the historical context to the coups. Chapter 4 then uses the data from the historical literature review and the alternative coup theory developed in the theoretical literature review to systematically develop an argument as to the reasons why opposition to the coup in Iran failed while resistance to the coup in Venezuela succeeded. Understanding these different outcomes provides possible strategies for how coups against popular forces can be resisted.

Chapter 5 concludes the thesis, where the main variables are compared and contrasted and research questions for further study are outlined.

Chapter 2 – Theoretical Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review has a double intent. The first is to synthesize the analytical literature on coup theories with general theoretical concepts from Marx and Gramsci. By combining these theories, an alternative method of analysing the Iranian and Venezuelan coups will be developed. Chapter 3 will then summarize the sources that detail the background histories of Iran and Venezuela as they pertain to their respective coups. The background histories and the influence on the respective coups will be presented through the alternative method of coup theory, as formulated in the present Chapter.

Theoretical Literature Review

Current coup theory as outlined by Ibrahim (2009) and O’Kane (1983) consists of several (non-mutually exclusive) hypotheses about why, when, where, and how coups occur. These hypotheses have been arrived at in the literature in one of two manners: inductive and deductive. The first and most prominent way is by analyzing a small number of coups, and then extrapolating broad theories on coups in general (Siverson & Starr 2010; Ibrahim 2009; Barracca 2007; Hossain 2000; Collihan & Danopoulos 1993). The second approach is to theoretically examine all coups in general, taking into account broader variables (i.e. global economic interactions), and then using several historical examples to illustrate how the particular theory fits into reality (Renique 2010; Malul & Shoham 2006; O’Kane 1983; Wells 1974).

Ibrahim (2009) and O’Kane (1983) do the best job of describing the range of coup theory. O’Kane provides the reader with four theories that have historically been posited as the reason for why coups occur. O’Kane seeks to test the validity of these theories by applying them to concrete examples. The first theory presented is based on *modernization theory*, as it identifies coup perpetrators (specifically militaries) as agents of modernization. To test the validity of this hypothesis, O’Kane focuses on African and Asian states, as scholars he surveyed have tried to explain the many coups in this region

using the modernization theory. The theory states that militaries in both continents gained prominence following World War II. During World War II militaries in Africa and Asia were exposed to the technical expertise and organizational skills of western Armies. This exposure stimulated coups in Africa/Asia as the militaries tried to replicate western modernism by incorporating policies aimed at promoting technical/scientific skills at the expense of cultural/traditional skills. O’Kane uses a statistical analysis to find the correlation between ‘modernization’ and coups. He concludes that while the military is ever present in the majority of the coups, there is no data to present the military as being a modernizing force. In addition, a problem with this theory is that it equates modernization with westernization, as its only empirical underpinning is the exposure that African and Asian armies had with Western militaries.

The second theory O’Kane presents draws upon *social and political conflict theory*, and treats coups as a reaction to social cleavages extenuated by economic factors. This theory proposes that coups tend to occur in countries that have low levels of socio-economic development, coupled with ethnic cleavages aggravated by colonialism. O’Kane again presents a detailed quantitative analysis to test the correlation between the variables¹. In O’Kane’s examination of the social-cleavage theory, the result was that socio-economic factors played a key role in whether or not the coup occurred, but that it was not specifically tied to colonialism.

The third theory offered utilizes the *dependency theory*² to determine the causes of the coups. This theory is similar to the social and political conflict theory, but is more contemporary, as it purports that coups are a consequence of economic dependence and modern forms of colonialism, created by a global economic system. To substantiate the dependency theory, O’Kane discusses the role foreign entities (i.e. CIA, French Army) have played in orchestrating coups that benefit the economic well being of their country. O’Kane believes that dependency theory is the best explanation for why coups occurred, as it does not restrict coups to only states that have faced historical colonialism.

¹ O’Kane conducts this similar quantitative analysis for all of his coup theories/hypothesis.

² Worldview that wealthy (economically core) countries exploit poor (economically peripheral) countries to remain wealthy.

The final theory presents coups from the point of view of the conspirators, and explains the occurrence and outcomes of the coup as a result of a correctly calculated strategy. For the strategy to be successful, O’Kane states that the conspirators need to take into account political, economic, and geographical variables (i.e. regional interests) and form a strategy that works within this context. While O’Kane’s analysis found this theory to be accurate in some instances in describing the events of a coup, the third theory, which utilizes dependency theory best captures what occurred in Iran and Venezuela, and going forward this will be incorporated into the analysis of the two coups.

Using the 1999 Pakistani coup as a basis, Ibrahim (2009) examined four broad explanations as to why a coup might occur in a given state. The first explanation is an erosion of the civilian government’s legitimacy, leading to protest and unrest amongst the populous. The second reason is internal military politics; the third reason is global and international effects; and the fourth is desperation, or as Ibrahim puts it “push-comes-to-shove” grievances. However, Ibrahim concludes that the root of the 1999 coup in Pakistan was economic factors, especially global economic factors. This is similar to the second theory presented by O’Kane (social and political conflict theory). Pakistan’s growth rates of GDP, export values and defence spending were found to be significantly lower in years immediately preceding coups than they were in all other years. In addition, as Pakistan’s economy is highly intertwined with the global capitalist economy, Ibrahim concludes that a coup cannot merely be the effect of internal fissures and interests, and that the wider socioeconomic and political context must be examined. For the purposes of this thesis, as well be seen in the background history literature (Chapter 3), while economic factors were key ingredients to the Iranian and Venezuelan coups, it was not a matter of failing economies in Iran and Venezuela, but rather that the coup perpetrators were opposed to any changes to the status quo of economic organization. Therefore, the internal context of Venezuelan and Iranian society, and how they interacted with global economic\political organizations (IMF, World Bank, OPEC, UN, The Hague) needs to be incorporated into any theory that can adequately describe the two coups under examination, and explain why there were differing outcomes. The need to link internal variables to international variables is why coup theories presented by Siverson & Starr

2010; Malul and Shoham 2006; Hossain 2000; Collihan & Danopoulos 1993; Wells 1974 are not as useful for this thesis. Each of these studies focus primarily on internal variables, predominately looking at cultural variables. For example Malul and Shoham (2006) believe that a country's cultural attitude, specifically views on gender and individualism, are predictive of coups. They claim that states with 'macho' cultures such as Latin American states experience more coups, or that states which suppress 'the individual' lead to lower standard of living, and will eventually trigger a coup. The article's flaw is its failure to explore the roots of these cultural issues. Cultural issues are too narrowly ascribed to domestic and individualistic influences without any consideration to the effects that organizations, international forces, and the economy have in shaping culture. Wells (1974) runs into a similar problem, as in this study the author looks to show that in 35 African states micro-level variables (i.e. psychological qualities of the coup participants) play the major role in when, where, and how a coup occurs. These explanations are similar to the modernization theory for coups, and are again too individualistic of an explanation for coups, and would not adequately explain what occurred in Iran or Venezuela, where organizations/institutions played a large role in how the coups occurred.

Collihan & Danopoulos (1993) is another source that places primacy on culture, specifically the role that religious schism played in the failed 1990 coup in Trinidad. Collihan and Danopoulos cite intra-Muslim jealousies as a reason why the Robinson government came under attack from the Musilmeen (small sect of Muslims isolated from the island's 'traditional' Muslim population). The authors however do acknowledge that coups do not occur in a vacuum, and that political instability can be linked with economic underdevelopment caused by organizational economic factors, such as export dependency. The article provides evidence that the colonial history of Trinidad contributed to its economic underdevelopment, but does not go further to discuss the modern factors. Free trade agreements, such as the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), have been used as a modern tool for imperialism and colonization. The coup perpetrators in Trinidad, unlike in Iran and Venezuela, did not have international backing. Rather it was a small group that felt the Trinidadian government's

policies were unjust socially, economically, and religiously. In the end the coup was a failure as the coup organizers did not have the resources or international support to succeed. What is missing from the Collihan & Danopoulos (1993) article is a thorough discussion of how the process of globalization has tied the economies of smaller countries to fluctuations of the global economy. This is the main cause of economic underdevelopment, and governments that promise to introduce neoliberal policies will get international support, as opposed to states that do not.

This is why in studying the Venezuelan and Iranian coups, both the external and internal variables need to be studied as they relate to and interact with each other. Siverson and Starr's (2010) article examines this relationship in detail, and while it still places primacy on the internal factors, the article presents the best arguments that any restructuring of internal alliances needs to be studied within the global context. The international influence of transnational corporations and the economic superpowers cannot be ignored. The very existence of a global capitalist economy indicates the interrelations of all states in this system.

Coups therefore cannot be explained only through an examination of the internal politics and dynamics of the military, regime, or culture. Internal factors do not occur in isolation, but rather within a global economic setting that affects issues of national defence, institutional, organizational, governmental, and corporate interests. In the later chapters of this thesis, it is demonstrated that broader geopolitical and economic factors, specifically Cold War politics in the Iranian case and the spread of neoliberalism in the Venezuelan case, played roles in the way each coup developed. Renique (2010) uses an approach that seeks to intertwine the internal and external variables in his analysis of coups in Latin America. He places the primary focus of his study on how neoliberal proliferation throughout the region has precipitated coups, with Peru and Chile being the only examples of coups to implement neoliberal policies, while the other coups in the region linked to neoliberalism have been in resistance to neoliberal policies. At the onset of his study, Renique demonstrates how there was a transition from the use of Cold War politics to neoliberal reform. The example he employs is the 1973 Chilean coup, which is strongly thought to have been a result of Cold War politics. The government of

Salvador Allende was ousted by Augusto Pinochet with the help of U.S. government officials. Allende, according to Renique, was the first elected Marxist president in Latin America, and his ouster in favour of Pinochet's ultra economic-liberalism was a victory for the global ruling elites. Pinochet's Chile was then hailed as a neoliberal 'success' story by the global bourgeoisie, and the Chilean economic model was replicated throughout Latin America, with varying degrees of success. The article goes on to outline other coups in Latin America that have been conducted primarily due to the interference of external variables, and describes how this has led to organized movements against neoliberalism and allowed leaders who opposed neoliberal policies and the global elite to remain in office. The example of Chavez withstanding the 2002 coup is brought up to illustrate this point.

Barracca (2007), in a similar vein to Renique, looks to answer the question of why coups occur and what makes them succeed through a comparative analysis that heavily incorporates international variables. Barracca compares the failed military coups in Ecuador (2000) and Venezuela (2002) with the successful 1999 military putsch in Pakistan in order to identify the variables that contributed to the coup outcomes. Key factors that were examined included the domestic feelings towards military rule and the international support for the coup perpetrators. This article provides an example of how to compare coups, as well as supplies specific data about the Venezuelan coup. Barracca concludes that the Venezuelan Punto Fijo agreement of 1958, which made the military subordinate to the civilian leadership to a much greater extent than in Ecuador or Pakistan, was a key reason for why the coup against Chavez failed. Neither the Venezuelan populous, nor major sections of the military wanted to have the civilian government subverted by the military. The second major reason given by Barracca is that the international support for the Venezuelan coup was not as strong as other coups. Despite funding of the opposition parties by the NED Chavez's support was strong enough to hold the office.

From this select literature on coup theory, there is no single approach that would answer the research questions proposed by this thesis. While they provide guidelines and certain aspects of each theory/analysis are useful, such as Renique's (2010) examination

of international politics, or O' Kane's (2009) assertion that dependency theory best describes the occurrence of coups, each of these theories are lacking for the purpose of the research questions. In addition, only Barracca (2007) looks in depth at one of the two coups that this thesis is studying. Barracca does provide valid reasons as to why the coup attempt in Venezuela failed but, like most coup analysis, it places primacy on the failures of the coup perpetrators. This thesis will look to show that while the coup perpetrators might have been somewhat weaker in Venezuela than in Iran, the main reason that the Venezuelan coup failed was that the resistance to the coup was much stronger and better organized in Venezuela than Iran, thereby providing Chavez with the organizational resources to combat the coup attempt and remain in office. An alternative coup theory that encompasses the resistance to the coup attempt is thus needed.

This thesis proposes that by incorporating Gramscian concepts into the already existing coup theory [specifically, the dependency theory explained by O' Kane, Ibrahim's theory on the effects of the global economy (tweaked to represent the relative strengths of hegemony) on coups, Renique's examination geopolitics on coups, and Barracca's study of the Venezuelan coup attempt], a better understanding of the Iranian and Venezuelan coups can be achieved, and thus a more accurate answer as to why resistance to the coup was successful in one instance and failed in the other. Without using Gramscian concepts, the role that the resistance played in each coup will be lost as the traditional literature on coups, as shown above, rarely examines the resistance. Coups themselves can be described as differing social groups vying for control of the state apparatus, and this occurs when there is a crisis in society that pushes people to take on extreme measures. Gramsci termed this an organic or hegemonic crisis:

An 'organic crisis' is a crisis of the whole system, in which contradictions in the economic structure have repercussions through the superstructures. One of its signs is when the traditional forms of political representation (parties or party leaders) are no longer recognized as adequate by the economic class or class fraction which they had previously served to represent. It is therefore a crisis of hegemony, since it occurs when a formerly hegemonic class is challenged from below and is no longer able to hold together a cohesive bloc of social alliances (Forgacs in Gramsci 1988, 427).

In both Iran and Venezuela organic or hegemonic crisis occurred prior to the coup attempts. Mossadegh and Chavez both lead coalitions³ that had gained power due to the prevailing hegemony being under crisis and providing representatives of the popular forces (Mossadegh and Chavez) to obtain control of the state apparatus. In Iran the Monarchy was falling and losing power. In Venezuela proponents of neo-liberalism and the Punto Fijo power sharing alliance of 1958 saw their power dwindle due to the failure of neoliberal policies and the economic crisis caused by them. Before going any further with this analysis, it is useful to provide some basic definitions of the Gramscian concepts being used.

The first prominent Gramscian concept that needs to be defined is *hegemony*, and with that a definition of *counter-hegemony* will also be elucidated. Hegemony can be defined as the ideal representation of the interests of the ruling-class as universal, with civil society acting as the major vehicle for bourgeois hegemony (Carroll 2006). In a capitalist social formation, the bourgeoisie is able to use segments of civil society, which are a part of the superstructure, to maintain control over society. With the superstructure defined as the organizations, institutions, political system, and culture which make up a society (Gramsci 1988). Bieler and Morton (2004) explain that the maintenance of social order can be achieved through either coercion, or the manufacturing of consent through the manipulation of ways of thinking to the exclusion of any alternatives. As Otero (2004) explains, hegemony is most needed by the bourgeoisie in societies where there are democratic political institutions, as the state cannot rely on merely using brute force to make people submissive - it needs the consent of the people. Consent is created through class alliances and cultural narratives, which legitimize certain ways of seeing the world while devaluing others. Through control over the production of mass culture, and control of organizations, a class obtains the ability to form alliances and dominion over other classes in return for guaranteeing them certain benefits. As Burawoy (2001) states, however, the cumulative nature of the universalization of ideas not only broadens the

³ The make-up of the coalitions will be described later when talking in depth about the background history of each coup.

scope of hegemony for each ruling-class, but also creates a larger and more distinct gap between it and other classes, until a point is reached where the interests of the ruling class ideals can no longer be passed off as universal. The paradox is that each ruling-class hegemony represents a broader range of interests than its predecessors, thus allowing for greater social mobility, political freedoms, and most importantly, access to old and new organizations. Increased access to the institutions that govern society, specifically the state apparatus (which both Mossadegh and Chavez obtained) can lead to an erosion of the privileges of the ruling class. This erosion will continue until a point is reached where the specific class interests of the ruling class become apparent and eventually are negated by counter-hegemony (Burawoy, 2001). For lower classes to create counter-hegemony that has the ability to sustain long-term change and become hegemonic, the process of *political class formation* is needed. Political class formation defined by Otero (2004) is the recognition of the struggle between one's own group and that of the dominant group. This recognition will then lead to the formal organization and coalescing of the groups, their demands, and the formation of the leadership to represent them to the dominant hegemony. As will be seen later in this thesis, this is the process that brought Mossadegh and Chavez to prominence.

Counter-hegemony can only arise in an antagonistic relation to the prevailing hegemony (Carroll 2006). Hegemony itself can be examined as a study of the structural relations of force and unity. The first relation of force and unity is closely linked to the structures of the society and how institutions are organized (Burawoy 2001). "The level of development of the material forces of production provides a basis for the emergence of the various social groupings, represents a function and has a specific position within production itself" (Gramsci, 1988: 204). This relation indicates fundamental configurations to society which cannot be changed easily/rapidly at a specific time in history (i.e. number of cities, urban population, number of firms, etc...) and poses the question of whether there are sufficient conditions in a society to create a transformation (Gramsci, 1988: 204). This point is very important when discussing the relative technological/communicative resources that Mossadegh and Chavez had access to. The second set of relations is that of the political forces. The relation of the political forces

refers to the degree of homogeneity, self-awareness, and organisation attained by various social classes (Burawoy 2001). What is essential is that people will need to move away from purely individual economic motives to create political unions (Gramsci, 1988: 204). This brings about not only a union of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity, situating all debate of social issues on a universal level and thus creating the hegemony of one class over a series of subordinate classes. The state apparatus is then presented to people as an institution favourable to all interests, when in fact it is only producing conditions that are ideal for one class (Gramsci, 1988: 205).

What is to be taken away from the social and political relations of hegemony is that the societal structures and institutions are organized in a manner that legitimizes specific worldviews, while delegitimizing others. Hegemony is perpetuated structurally by social and political organizations. While some conscious thought is given to certain micro levels of relations to promote hegemony (e.g. school board decisions regarding what goes into the textbooks), it is mainly maintained structurally and the people's ways of thinking are formulated by the structural position that they occupy in society. Therefore, it is the combination of the civil and political societies that work together to legitimize and perpetuate hegemony. Therefore, for counter-hegemony to arise and succeed, organizational changes are necessary. Counter-hegemony arises out of conflict over how society is organized and run. Usually a group of people sees injustice and inequity in a system and will work to change the hegemony that legitimizes the existing conditions. Long-lasting counter-hegemony is best achieved through grassroots organizations, which look to change society by using a linkage-up approach, and use a war of position to infiltrate societal institutions and establish reforms (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). A war of position being defined as a long-standing war over control of organizations and institutions that make up civil and political society; opposed to a war of manoeuvre – a quick and frontal attack on the state (Burawoy 2001). One of the most important institutions that the counter-hegemony needs to infiltrate is the education system, as it is one of the primary apparatus for the creation of discourse in society, and having control of such an apparatus allows for challenges to the status quo to be fought over a historical time-span. Both organic and traditional intellectuals are needed to

accomplish this change, and through this new education, new alliances can be formed in the hopes of creating a new hegemony and a new historical bloc. A traditional intellectual is defined as a person seen by themselves and the population at large as autonomous and independent of the dominant social group, given this stature due to historical continuity (Gramsci 1988). On the other hand an organic intellectual is defined as someone who grows organically with the dominant social group, and the organizations that make up society. They are produced by the educational system to perform a function for the dominant social group in society (Gramsci 1988). The reason that both traditional and organic intellectuals are needed is to penetrate hegemony and create the counter-hegemony with the entrenched organizations to reach as many people as possible.

In modern societies however, domestic, social and political organizations are not the only things that the counter-hegemonic movements have to combat. With the rapid globalization of the world it is also important to look at international forces as well. International relations intertwine with the domestic relations of the nation-states, creating new, unique and historically concrete combinations (Robinson, 2005). This is important as economically peripheral countries have different ideologies than economically core countries, along with the resources and power to disseminate their ideology in peripheral countries. Thus, core countries can interfere in the domestic relations of other states and impose their hegemony onto them. However, it should be noted that the role of the transnational forces depends on which hegemony is present in a country. If transnational forces are sympathetic to the current hegemony, they can strengthen and perpetuate it by aligning themselves with the groups who are benefiting from the hegemony, and by using media to universalize the ruling class ideas (Engel, 2006). In most cases, what has happened is that the transnational bourgeoisie helps the domestic bourgeoisie by providing it with the media power and finances (as will be seen, Iran and Venezuela are both examples of this). However, the domestic bourgeoisie needs to portray any alliance with the international forces as being beneficial for the entire country⁴, otherwise the premise of their hegemony (universal, beneficial to all) would prove to be false. Striking

⁴ Example would be in Venezuela were the domestic bourgeoisie tried to push through neoliberal reform under the premise that it would be beneficial for the vast majority of Venezuelans.

a balance, and trying to portray the international interference as beneficial is a delicate matter, and the cases of Iran and Venezuela will show how foreign interference can lead to two very different outcomes due to how the popular forces were able to organize themselves against hegemony. In addition, the dichotomy, of popular forces, which start as counter-hegemonic domestically, obtaining political status and becoming hegemonic within the domestic sphere, yet still remaining a counter-hegemonic force in the international realm due to the strength of the international hegemony, is best described by Gramsci's "Catastrophic of Equilibrium". This concept refers to how changes can take place in regarding to economic, social and cultural standpoints even though the political power has been shifted in society (Linera, 2007). This concept is useful to understand how despite both popular force organizations obtaining control of the political apparatus, along with a large portion of support amongst the domestic population, they were still perceived as subordinate to the power and influence of the international hegemony throughout the global population.

From the preceding discussion it becomes evident that hegemony is inherently a historic concept that develops in society over a long period of time. Thus, to create counter-hegemony, time is needed along with the education and the ability to fight a war of position, an intellectual war, which looks to organizationally reform a society's culture, values, and beliefs (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985).

From the research conducted on the Iranian and Venezuelan coups, this thesis hypothesizes that the national-popular groups in Iran failed to create long-standing changes in society and maintain power, due to lack of resources, in-fighting (competition from parallel counter-hegemonic organizations), and the absence of alliances and bonds that were more than just politically temporary/convenient. To survive the coup attempt Mossadegh needed a coalition that was strong enough to eventually become a new historical bloc, which is something that Chavez seemingly had the benefit of in Venezuela. However, as the historical bloc is a long-term historical phenomenon, it will be difficult to tell if this has occurred in Venezuela until significant time has passed.

Gramsci (1988) uses the term the *historical bloc* to refer to the ability of classes to form social bonds at the superstructural level. It is essentially a dialectical and dynamic

view of the base-superstructure model of how Marx sees the unity and interconnectedness of each part of society; the base being defined in opposition to the superstructure as the merely the forces and relations of production (Gramsci 1988). Gramsci portrays society as being made up of many groups and classes, and despite the interests, needs, and wants of these groups/classes being very different historically, societies remain relatively stable (Burawoy, 2001). Gramsci credits this to the formation of a historical bloc, which occurs when hegemony is exerted in society. Hegemony itself is exerted when a social group convinces other groups to unite under its leadership and form long-lasting alliances. The cohesion needed for long-lasting alliances are reinforced by economic, political and ideological means (Gramsci, 1988: 249).

Both Venezuela and Iran provide examples of a traditional historical bloc which was being threaten by a potential new historic bloc. In Venezuela the traditional historic bloc had its roots in The Punto Fijo Pact of 1958. This act was an accord between the major Venezuela political parties (Democratic Republican Union (URD), Social Christian (COPEI) and Democratic Action (Acción Democrática, AD), the Catholic Church, and the military, which looked to stabilize democracy by having all parties respect the results of elections, and include members of opposing parties in their government. The Act was seen as a successful power sharing alliance that provided stability for the political system, which was rare in Latin America. The historical result of the Act was that for almost half a century Venezuela was run by an entrenchment two-party system (Buxton, 2001). The Act had the desired effect for those who had drawn up the details of it, as it allowed the ruling parties to remain in power and control the Venezuelan economy and political system for a historical period. This was the domestic historical bloc that the Venezuelan counter-hegemony headed by Chavez needed to resist and succeeded, in order to form a new historical bloc.

In Iran the entrenched historical bloc was the traditional monarchical system/organization and the influence that had on the mindset of the Iranian population. The power that the Shah of Iran was provided had been passed on through the generations, and for the Iranian national-popular faction to transcend this power and become a new historical bloc it had to delegitimize the monarchy. This could only be

done if the counter-hegemonic coalition was large and cohesive enough to combat historically entrenched institutions, organizations, narratives, and mindsets forged by centuries of monarchical rule in Iran.

Looking at these two brief examples from Iran and Venezuela, the historical bloc can then be seen as the practical manifestation of the concept of hegemony, and according to Gramsci (1988), the creation of new historical bloc is the only means to obtain and maintain hegemonic domination in society. Essentially for any class or group to maintain power in a modern society, they must move beyond the narrow 'economic-corporate' interests of their class, exert intellectual and moral leadership, and make alliances with a variety of social forces over a long-period of time in order to allow the historical bloc to form (Gramsci, 1988: 249). By using the concept of the historical bloc to examine both the Iranian and Venezuelan societies at the time of the coups, it will be shown why there was a different outcome in the coup attempts. This difference will be explained by accounting for the organizational changes that were either permitted or resisted by a multitude of societal variables, including technology, economics, and organization.

In the era of globalization, the transnational bourgeoisie has routinely mobilized the global capitalist historical bloc (which includes organizations such as the IMF, WTO, and World Bank) against what it saw as a threat to its status in the society, squashing counter-hegemonies by creating new alliances (Sklair, 2000: 206). Therefore, to maintain an historical bloc, and for it to be successful, changes are constantly needed. Changes come in two forms: short-term and non-structural as well as structural and often long-lasting changes that generally result in the re-shaping of all elements of the historical bloc, such as institutions, alliances and ideology (Engel, 2006). The strength and the degree to which an historical bloc will succeed is highly dependent on the historic context in which it is formed and the strength of the counter-hegemony. In Iran and Venezuela, the strength of the entrenched historical bloc, and potential new historical bloc were different, and contributed to one resistance to the coup failing while another succeeded.

The reason that Marxist theory needs to be presented, specifically Marx's ideas about how history changes and the roles tools play in the process, is that this thesis plans

to show that the access to technological tools available to the Venezuelan popular-democratic forces made it easier to combat the coup attempt. The Iranian national-popular forces were fighting an uneven battle; the prevailing hegemony had control of the majority of the media, muffling the counter-hegemonic discourse, and splintering and weakening the alliances within the movement. Thus, this thesis will demonstrate that not only was the media a primary tool of the coup perpetrators in both coups, but that in Venezuela the opposition had a greater ability to counteract the perpetrators due to technological advances that made media more readily available to the general population.

In *The German Ideology*, Marx makes the claim that “the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas” (2001: 92). Therefore, it is imperative to be aware of the context in which these ideas were formed. A lack of context leads to the ideas of the ruling class being viewed as having an independent existence. This leads to ideas produced within a specific mode of production, which largely benefit the ruling class, being viewed as ‘natural’, inevitable, and universal. It is the dominant mode of production that regulates which ideas are present in a social formation and those who have control over the mode of production will be able to spread their specific knowledge throughout society. Marx claimed that if a practical knowledge development was performed by historians, it would allow them to see that “the class that has the means of material production at its disposal... [also] has control...over the means of mental production” (2001: 92). The knowledge that rules a society at any given time is merely an expression of the material relationships that are present within that society. Since the ruling class has reached consciousness, which the working class lacks, they are able to produce, articulate, and distribute their ideas throughout society. The ruling class has the organizational capability and access to the apparatuses of mental production to present its ideas as universal and beneficial to all in society, while in actuality, it is only to the benefit of the ruling class.

Marxist analysis should, however, distinguish between what is organic and what is conjunctural. Gramsci states that for analysis to be complete both conjunctural and organic components of historical analysis need to be accounted for.

“A common error in historico-political analysis consists in an ability to find the correct relation between what is organic and what is conjunctural. This leads to presenting causes as immediately operative which in fact only operate indirectly, or to asserting that the immediate causes are the only effective ones. In the first case there is an excess of 'economism', or doctrinaire pedantry; in the second, an excess of 'ideologism'. In the first case there is an overestimation of mechanical causes, in the second an exaggeration of the voluntarist and individual element. (The distinction between organic 'movements' and facts and 'conjunctural' or occasional ones must be applied to all types of situation; not only to those in which a regressive development or an acute crisis takes place, but also to those in which there is a progressive development or one towards prosperity, or in which the productive forces are stagnant.) The dialectical nexus between the two categories of movement, and therefore of research, is hard to establish precisely (Gramsci 1988: 100-101).

This means that care needs to be taken when incorporating the Marxists analysis on how society changes, as Marx applied his theory to large scale changes in the mode of production, not conjunctural events such as a coup. The point made about the influence of media in the two coups is more a matter of what media resources were organizationally available to the two popular force groups, and how this access shaped the effectiveness of using media to counteract the coup attempts.

In Iran and Venezuela, this thesis will show that it was the media that was the main apparatus for control used by the coup perpetrators, and that due to technological and political advancement, new tools and access were made available to people in Venezuela, allowing them to better combat the coup attempt. One examination/theory on the role of technology in societal change is Hiedegger's (1964) notion of technology, in which he states that one cannot be neutral to the influence of technology. Hiedegger believes that it is not a matter of causality when it comes to technology, but of *use* and *access*. It was not merely new technologies that caused the Venezuelan coup attempt to fail. Technology was simply a tool - it was how *technology was accessed* and *used* by the resistance forces, along with their conscious understanding that through this medium, rights and a political voice could be obtained. This concept is also illustrated by Sklair and Miller (2010) who discuss the importance of new technology in contemporary society:

“Again, the key here is the opportunities provided by the electronic revolution for relatively cheap and convenient transnational communication in terms of moving both people and information.” (Sklair & Miller, 2010: 9)

“However, as always, the emancipatory promise of generic globalization creates opportunities for those who wish to challenge the system from below. The transnational social spaces created by the anti-corporate social movements, brought into being by the information and communications potential of the World Wide Web and its accessories, provide a virtual reality that complements the day to day reality of standing up against corporate malpractice and those corporate practices that punish the underprivileged.”

(Sklair & Miller, 2010: 10)

The question then becomes how this new technology was used in Iran and Venezuela, and what role it played in resisting the coup attempts. To determine this, an alternative coup theory that incorporates Gramscian concepts into dependency theory and global economic theories for coups will be used. Mayo (qtd. in Suoranta, 2008) links Gramscian concepts to the new technology in an interview. He does this by first defining civil society as a “complex set of ideological institutions that prop up the State and that serve to cement, as well as provide the spaces to renegotiate, existing relations of hegemony” (2). He then links social justice oriented education to the use of new technology, stating that one of the primary goals of social justice is to “bridge the digital divide for a critical counter-hegemonic use of information technology” (3). All media (internet, movies, books, etc...) are central to the workings of hegemony, however as hegemony is never complete, there is space for a counter-hegemony to take advantage of the media to help foster a new way of societal organization. This type of examination of the counter-hegemony, and the methods used to build counter-hegemony in an antagonistic relationship to the economic hegemony, along with the concept of the historical bloc, will provide more answers as to the results of the coups and not merely their cause. In addition, dependency theory puts too much emphasis on the role of international forces. In both Iran and Venezuela, international forces (specifically the US government) had high interest in having access to petroleum reserves, however their capability to obtain those reserves, and their efforts to do so, were much different in both

situations. This highlights the importance of the domestic variables in the coups, and calls for a better understanding to the resistance to the coups.

To operationalize the Gramscian concepts, and their application to Iran and Venezuela, hegemony will be taken as the hegemony of the ruling class, under the support of the transnational forces. The opposition to popular forces, as described earlier, consisted mostly of international organizations/governments with vested economic interest in Iran and Venezuela, aligned with prominent members of the business classes, and sections of the military. The challengers to this hegemony in both cases came in the form of nationalist political parties, the Movement for the Fifth Republic in Venezuela, and the National Front in Iran. Both of these parties garnered support due to their stances on the issues of equity, and the promise to bring about social programs to help the disadvantaged. The Movement for the Fifth Republic is a socialist party which has general support amongst the poor of Venezuela, and specific support from the grassroots organization called Bolivarian Circles. The National Front was an umbrella organization, which had broad support, with Mossadegh garnering most of his support from the middle class. Thus, there was a significant class component to the two coups. Class is not merely an abstract notion that situates people based on some common attributes, such as income or social status. The reason for this is that categories like income and social status are conceptions that have existence prior to and independent of the people that make up the class (Donaldson, 2008). For the concepts of the historical bloc and hegemony to be applicable, there needs to be some concrete connections between the classes and the groups that serve as motives for human behaviour. Thus, class is conceptualized in this thesis through a dialectical materialist prism, rejecting the simple gradational definitions of class. By anchoring class in the social relations that link people to economic organizations, and affect the material interests of these actors, class relations can become the basis for solidarities and conflict in society (Wright, 2003). Defining class in this manner means that the concept of class encompasses the notion of class consciousness and allows for the analysis of the class motives. With the achievement of class consciousness having four primary; (I) class identity; the definition/recognition of oneself as a member of a class, (II) class opposition; perception that there is a struggle

between one's class and another class, (III) class totality; realization that the previous two elements define one social situation and the whole of society in which one lives, and (IV) an alternative society; a conception of a desired alternative which will be realized when class conflict is resolved (Lukacs, 1999).

To flesh out the definition of class, the notion of culture needs to be taken into account. Culture introduces new relations between people, which would not be present if class consisted solely of the relations of people to the mode of production and labour. The notion of culture moves the analysis towards one that appreciates that cultural relation can be formed in opposition to economic interests (Robinson & Harris, 2000). Therefore, with the introduction of culture, what is left are class relations based on the mode of production, that criss-cross with class lines based on culture, values and beliefs. Culture has an effect on how people internalize their class position in society, and how class is then manifested in society (Wright, 2009). In the case of the two coups, culture is present when discussing the domestic factors, such as how the support for the incumbent governments is shaped. Specifically in the Iranian case, where ethnic, religious, ideological, and 'tribal' divisions played a large role in whom, and to what extent people supported politicians. This thesis will only provide cursory examinations of culture, for more elaborate details Moghadam 1989, and Moaddel 2003 are useful.

In Iran, as explained by Moaddel (1989), class played a prominent role in the lead-up to the coup as well as the end result of the coup. Moaddel describes the nationalist movement of Iran forming due to economic difficulties caused after World War II. Ethnic minorities, peasants, and workers (lower classes of Iran) all wanted the state to be reconfigured to provide them with greater benefits.

In Azarbayejan and Kurdistan, ethnic minorities demanded regional, cultural, and political autonomy from the central government. In the rural areas, the peasant-landlord struggle was also intensified, and many peasant associations were formed. Consequently, peasants were able to win concessions from landowners. Similarly, the workers' movement gained considerable strength, and in 1944 the United Central Council of the Unified Trades Unions of Iranian Workers was formed. By 1945 it claimed a membership of 200,000 workers, and by 1956 a membership of 400,000 with 186 affiliates (Moaddel 1989: 7).

Landowners, royalists, and the business elite (Iranian dominant class), who would go on to form the strongest opposition to Mossadegh, were frightened by the organization of the lower classes. This also threatened foreign interests such as the British and US governments, who then conspired to quash these protests and uprisings through the use of force. In 1949 the monarchy was as strong as it had been before World War II. Mossadegh's National Front party was thus the last vestige of resistance to the Iranian dominant class, and foreign governments. The National Front, however, was an umbrella organization, with its tendencies ranging from national socialism to constitutional monarchism to socially conservative radicalism. In terms of class, the National Front was composed of an uneasy balance between the lower classes who had aligned with the National Front after their own organizations were disbanded; bazaar merchants and other members of the petty bourgeoisie who viewed nationalist protective economic policies as being beneficial to them; and finally the emerging middle class composed of professionals, and secular-intellectuals (Abrahamian 1982). This diverse class component to the National Front is one of the main reasons why the coalition failed to create a strong counter-hegemony. As Halliday (2005: 106) states, "divided, ineffective, pro-Mosadeq coalition" (sic) was a key reason why the coup against Mossadegh succeeded. The National Front's members were not able to move beyond narrow interests of their own class, as Gramsci would state. This inability prevented them from exerting intellectual and moral leadership, and making alliances with a variety of social forces over a long-period of time in order to allow the new historical bloc to form (1988: 249). Through the use of Gramscian concepts, the historical literature review that follows will better explain and examine why the Venezuelan popular-democratic faction was able to prosper while the Iranian national-popular faction fell apart.

Chapter 3 – Historical Background Literature Review

The coup literature and Marxist theory all indicate that economic factors play a major role in how a coup occurs. The commonality between the Iranian and Venezuelan coups is the presence of the petroleum economy, which puts them in a similar geopolitical position vis-à-vis the world powers. There is a disagreement in the literature about how a large petroleum economy affects countries' regime stability. Schubert (2006) believes it has a negative impact, and shows studies that indicate petroleum dependence leads to political corruption. This corruption is caused by the dependence of the overall economy being tied to the machinations of the petroleum sector, and thus giving the organizers of the petroleum sector unparallel power and privilege. Basedau and Lacher (2006), however, disagree, and in their study of 37 petroleum-rich states, they found that the countries with higher levels of petroleum revenues were relatively more stable than the countries without petroleum revenues.⁵ Therefore no direct correlation can be made regarding regime instability and petroleum economies.

There are however, specific issues that arise from a petroleum economy that can be linked to regime instability. Smith (2007) believes that the social conditions under which petroleum revenues become available are responsible for affecting how petroleum revenues are used in a society. This in turn is the determining factor in the stability of a political system. Smith states that inability to properly develop infrastructure and correctly privatize the use of the petroleum revenues is the catalyst for social dissent, upheaval, and consequently regime change. To come to this conclusion Smith used a quantitative approach by creating a dataset of economic, social, and political indicators that may be present in 107 different countries (both petroleum-rich and non-petroleum-rich countries included). He then used this dataset to determine if the petroleum-exporting states are more unstable than the petroleum importing states. The flaw with Smith's argument is that he places too much emphasis on the failure to create the proper infrastructure in the late-development stage of the petroleum economy. Thus, he is too

⁵ Some outliers did appear in the study leading the authors to temper any conclusive statements about the effect petroleum economies have on political and social infrastructure

heavily reliant on the failure of the domestic economic infrastructure, and fails to account for the social, political, and cultural stimuli for a regime change.

David Painter (1986) argues that the reason petroleum-rich regimes might be unstable is due to the destabilizing effects of US foreign policy over the last half century. He examines the history of petroleum, petroleum corporations, and corporatism, and explains how these factors have worked to influence and shape U.S. foreign policy towards the petroleum-rich regimes in the Middle East. Painter argues that after WWII, U.S. policymakers, faced with an increasing demand for petroleum products, colluded with the lobbyists from the petroleum industry. This set in motion plans to use private petroleum corporations to enhance US foreign policy goals. The shift in policy created a connection between the public and private interests in the U.S., and allowed both the private and public actors to advance the private interests of the petroleum corporations through the use of public organizations. The union of these public and private actors provided the U.S. with the ability to better control the world petroleum reserves, combat economic nationalism, and contain the Soviet Union. To support his argument, Painter uses archival data and interviews with key U.S. officials, and cites many examples throughout the world (including Iran) where the U.S. has intervened to foster and distort the internal political process in the hopes of a beneficial result for themselves and the private petroleum corporations.

While Smith and Painter both demonstrate that regime instability can be linked to petroleum economics, it does not necessarily mean that there is a direct correlation between the two. On the surface, the coups in Iran and Venezuela were over debates about how to best organize the respective petroleum industries of each state. This analysis is too simplistic - the coups were not only about oil, but rather about a broader struggle over societal hegemony. Mossadegh and Chavez, and the groups they represented or were said to represent, challenged the status quo. The traditional power holders in Venezuela (business, trade, union, and military leaders) and Iran (business, royalists, religious, and military leaders) felt threatened by the emerging strength of the popular forces. Using the historical bloc of the prevailing hegemony and by bringing together the prominent actors from all sectors of the bourgeoisie a plan to remove the head of the counter-hegemonic forces was laid out. The historical literature on the two

respective countries will demonstrate how this scenario developed and why the Iranian one faltered while the Venezuelan popular forces successfully resisted.

Iran – Historical Literature Review

To fully understand the reasons for the Iranian coup, the relevant history of Iran needs to be examined, as the roots of the coup date back to the beginning of the 20th century. The literature examined in this section will help to unfold this history and shed light on the international and domestic variables that culminated in the removal of Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh from office.

Abrahamian (2008), Kinzer (2003), Daniel (2001), Malek (2005) and Moaddel (1989) all indicate that the origins of the Iranian coup of 1953 can be traced back to a conflict over the control of petroleum revenues generated by the Anglo-Persian Petroleum Company (APOC). The conflict over the APOC revenues was initiated eight years before the company had been created, when a British entrepreneur named William Knox D’Arcy in 1900 agreed to fund exploration for minerals and petroleum in Persia. In 1901, D’Arcy offered Shah Mozzafar al-Din Qajar \$20,000 to obtain rights to explore for petroleum in Persia that would last for sixty-years. The extent of land D’Arcy was given covered all of Persia except for the 5 Northern provinces. In addition to the \$20,000, the Persian government was also able to get 16% of the petroleum companies’ annual profits (Malek 2005). This deal would later be called the D’Arcy concessions, and historically it has been seen as a concession that burdened Persia/Iran⁶ for years to come. The reason that Mozzafar al-Din Qajar accepted D’Arcy’s deal was that the policies⁷ of his father (Naser al-Din Qajar) had made Persia indebted to both England and Russia. The existing debt to both England and Russia created financial turmoil throughout Mozzafar al-Din Qajar’s reign, forcing him to look for any avenues to procure funds (Abrahamian 2008). D’Arcy’s offer, while very low, provided Mozzafar al-Din

⁶ In March 21, 1935 Reza Shah Pahlavi asked the international community to call the country Iran instead of the ancient name of Persia. Thus, throughout this chapter Persia will be used when referring to the country prior to 1935 and Iran after 1935. When there is a general reference to the country Persia and Iran will be used interchangeably.

⁷ Persia was short of money due to the squandering of money by Naser al-Din Qajar on personal extravagance and opulence, thus forcing him to borrow from major imperial powers such as Britain and Russia.

Qajar with some income at a time when he was desperate to lessen his financial burden. Mozzafar al-Din Qajar, however, mostly failed to get Iran out of its financial crisis, leading to his reputation as an ineffectual leader (Daniel 2001).

Once D'Arcy had obtained the rights to explore for petroleum, he hired geologists to explore in Iran. However, for the first eight years D'Arcy's crew was unable to find anything. This led to D'Arcy soliciting help from Burmah Petroleum Company, a Scottish petroleum company that helped him start up APOC in 1908, and in May of 1908 D'Arcy finally found petroleum. In 1913 APOC began the production of petroleum from a refinery in Abadan. However, D'Arcy ran into financial issues and needed customers for the petroleum (Abrahamian 2008). Before the start of World War I, D'Arcy negotiated with Winston Churchill, who was at the time First Lord of the Admiralty, and who offered to inject money into APOC in return for APOC supplying the British Navy with petroleum. By doing this, Churchill obtained a controlling interest in APOC, and the British government became de facto owner of APOC (Kinzer 2003).

After these events, APOC looked to widen its hold on the Middle East petroleum fields by buying out the Turkish Petroleum Company and then renaming it the Iraq Petroleum Company after World War I. APOC thus became highly profitable, and a source of tension and resentment in Persia (Abrahamian 2008). Many of the Persian governments' industrial reforms were predicated on the use of the petroleum revenues, but as they only received 16% of the revenues, many of the reforms were abandoned due to lack of funds. The Persian government had no other source of significant revenues, and was dependent on the oil revenues to fund government initiatives. This dependence led to APOC being given free reign to run its refineries (Malek 2005). With free reign in hand, APOC exploited the Persian employees at APOC's refineries, leading to increased resentment on the part of the Persian people, who not only were being deprived of the use of revenues generated by their own natural resources, but were also being mistreated when they obtained jobs working at APOC refineries.

The Persian Constitutional Movement (1905-1911) forced the hand Mozzafar-al-Din Shah, and the Persian parliament (*Majlis*) was created by his decree. Mozzafar-al-Din Shah was too weak and ineffectual to maintain absolute power, and the Persian Constitutional was able to persuade him to reform Persia from an absolutist monarchy to

a constitutional monarchy (Daniel 2001). This was an important event, as it allowed Persian politicians to negotiate directly with the English government. The most significant of these negotiations took place from 1927-1931, when Abdolhossein Teymourdash, a member of the Persian parliament, negotiated directly with English politicians regarding the grievances of the Persian people. Teymourdash argument for re-negotiation of the concessions was that the contract signed by Mozzafar-al-Din Shah in 1901 was signed by a non-constitutional government under great stress and was thus no longer legally binding. Now that the Persian government had fundamentally changed, the old treaties needed to be re-visited. The British government, however, did not want to give up any concessions and after four years of negotiations, Reza Shah rebuked Teymourdash for his failure and unilaterally cancelled the D'Arcy agreement (Kinzer 2003). This led to the British government taking the case before the international court in The Hague. There the arbiter urged both parties to come to an agreement, and Reza Shah, who had previously been steadfast in cancelling the agreement, was coerced into accepting the British demands (Moaddel 1989). This was a highly unpopular stance with the Persian people, and even Reza Shah's own inner circle of advisors rebuked him for going back on this hard-line stance. While unpopular, it did lead to a new agreement being reached in 1933, which was presented as being beneficial for both parties. The new agreement, however, historically has been seen as a disaster and a failed opportunity by the Persian government to obtain a beneficial agreement. The major grievance with this new agreement was that not only did it extend the British rights by 32 years and give APOC access to the most profitable land in Iran, but there was no mechanism to enforce the concessions made by APOC in the new agreement (Malek 2005). As a result, APOC failed to live up to many of its promises, including providing the labourers a higher income, building housing, schools, hospitals, roads, and a telephone system. These were infrastructural developments that the Iranian government could not do itself, due to its small share of the petroleum revenues. In addition, Reza Shah's policies and introduction of new institutions were primarily aimed at increasing the state's, and consequently his, power and control. His policies transformed the Majles into an ineffectual institution that worked for Reza Shah, contrasted with the Majles from 1909-1925 that was composed of independent politicians. "Reza Shah retained the electoral law, but closely monitored

access into parliament. He personally determined the outcome of each election and thus the composition of each Majles – from the Fifth in 1926 to the Thirteenth in 1940.” (Abrahamian, 2008: 78). The historical impact of this was that when Mossadegh took office, Iranian society was not as politically democratic as Venezuela was at the time Chavez took office. This had two effects; the first effect is that Mossadegh was not as free as Chavez to enact his preferred policy without interference from the Monarchy. The second effect is that Iranian society was not as used to electing heads of state as Venezuela was. Both of these factors weakened Mossadegh’s influence and support. In Venezuela, Chavez supporters understood the illegality of a coup, whereas in Iran, the majority of Iranians tacitly accepted the Monarchy to be ‘entitled’ to the position of head of state.

The furor against APOC, which became Anglo-Iranian Petroleum Company (AIOC) in 1935, continued to grow. Throughout the 1930s, and most of the 1940s Iranians put pressure on their government to demand greater concessions and tension between the British and Iranian governments grew. The issue that most Iranians had was the fact that the administrative side of AIOC was completely British run, and that no Iranians had any input or access to the company books (Malek 2005). This meant that the percentage of the revenues going to the Iranian government was set by the British government, and there was no way to double check this amount. Despite the Iranian government’s demands, the British government would not relent, and it was at this point in history that the National Front (NF) (*Jebhe-ye Melli*), with Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh as the leader, appeared at the centre of the Iranian political scene.

The NF was the most prominent political force behind the petroleum nationalization movements that emerged in Iran during the 1940s. It was an umbrella organization formed from a broad spectrum of middle-class parties and associations (Siavoshi 1994). The most important groups within this coalition were the Iran Party, the Toilers Party, the National Party, and the Tehran Association of Bazaar Trade and Craft Guilds. Abrahamian (2008) goes into detail describing the class and cultural backgrounds of these prominent factions:

The Iran Party started as an engineers’ association but had developed into a nationwide organization with a program that was both socialistic and nationalistic. Originally allied with the Tudeh, it gravitated towards Mossadeq after 1946. It

was to become Mossadeq's mainstay, providing him with his most reliable ministers, technocrats, and even military supporters. The Toilers Party contained a number of prominent intellectuals who had broken with Tudeh because of the Soviet oil demands and the crises over Azerbaijan and Kurdistan. Chief among them were Al-e Ahmad, the well-known writer, and Khalel Maleki, an older member of the "Fifty-three" who had been prominent in Tudeh and in later years became the main Iranian theorist of the "Third Way" – a non-communist and non-capitalist road to development. The National Party was a chauvinistic organization confined to Tehran University. It harped on the glories of pre-Islamic Aryan Iran and the return of "lost territories" – especially Bahrain and parts of Afghanistan and the Caucasus. Influenced by fascism, its propaganda targeted the minorities – especially Jews, Armenians, and Bahais – and accused them of being unpatriotic "fifth columns." The educated middle class in Iran – like its counterparts the world over – was not always liberal, tolerant, and progressive (Abrahamian 2008: 115)

Early on, the NF and Mossadegh enjoyed the support of the most politically active cleric of the time, Ayatollah Sayyed Abul-Qassem Kashani. From this early composition of the NF it is evident that it was an uneasy alliance between several classes, social groups, and ideologies (Moaddel 1989). This alliance was proven to be fragile over time. Some members splintered off due to differences in policy, such as Ayatollah Kashani, who argued with Mossadegh over secular reform, leading to his eventual withdrawal of support for Mossadegh. Since Kashani was a popular voice for the rural poor, his withdrawal of support resulted in the loss of support for the NF by the peasantry as well. The NF's support amongst the lower classes, and the left-wing of Iran was already thin due to the NF's contentious relationship with the Tudeh Party (Party of the Masses or *Hezb-e Tudeh*). This highlights the importance of culture in the Iranian case, as Wright (2008) describes the difference between culture and ideology; "ideology refers to the conscious aspects of subjectivity: beliefs, ideas, values, doctrines, theories, and so on. Culture refers to the non-conscious aspects of subjectivity: dispositions, habits, tastes, skills" (196). Therefore, in Iran the traditional habits of the rural poor, and their reliance on the leadership of a traditional intellectual (i.e. Kashani) made the formation of a larger, more inclusive coalition with the NF difficult.

The Tudeh Party played a significant role in the history of Iran history, specifically with regard to the NF's rise and fall. The Tudeh Party can be defined as an Iranian Communist party, formed in 1941, that had considerable influence in shaping the

ideology of the Iranian lower classes and intellectual left during the 1940s (Azimi 2004). The Tudeh party's relationship with Mossadegh was highly volatile due to several reasons. The first factor is that the middle class (petty bourgeoisie) composition of the NF meant that many Tudeh members viewed Mossadegh as an agent of American imperialism (Amooei 2008)⁸. In time this argument against Mossadegh and the NF was proven false, and the stigma of being associated with the US government disintegrated. However, a much more substantial argument made by Tudeh members against the NF and Mossadegh was based on the Mossadegh administration's dealings with the Soviet Union (Azimi 2004, Amooei 2008, Chaqueri 2001, Gasiorowski 1987). As a nationalist, Mossadegh viewed any outside interference on Iranian sovereignty as improper. The USSR had after World War II occupied parts of Northern Iran (Moghadam, 1989), this was a point of contention for many Iranians, and the Tudeh parties unconditional support (at the time) of USSR policies made them unpopular amongst a large proportion of the Iranian population. Thus, Mossadegh had both a political and ideological reason for viewing the Soviet Union in the same light as Britain. This alienated the Mossadegh administration from the Tudeh leadership who wanted Mossadegh to form friendly relations with the Soviet government. It is important to note that Amooei does not place all the blame on the Tudeh Party. Amooei also blames the NF and the Mossadegh administration for not reaching out and trying to create a meaningful relation with the Tudeh Party. As a former Tudeh member, Amooei tends to defend certain aspects of the party's role. This bias is more evident in *Khaterate* (memories of) Mohammad Ali Amooei (1998), in which Amooei details many aspects of the Mossadegh regime that he believes led to its eventual failure.

Chaqueri (2001) explains that, historically, the working class in Iran was highly marginalized, and only through revolutionary tactics was the Iranian working class able to gain any political clout. The Iranian left party has its origins intrinsically tied to the USSR, which is why Mossadegh's rejection of the Soviet Union was such a large point of contention for the Tudeh leadership (Gasiorowski 1987). In the 1890s several underground political organizations formed in Iran with the goal of mobilizing for social

⁸ Should be noted that Amooei is a former Tudeh member with insider knowledge of what happened during that time period

democracy and workers' rights. Two of the main leaders of this organization were Heidar Amou Oghly and Ali Monsieur, who had strong ties to the Social Democrat Workers' Party of Russia, visited Russia regularly, and helped distribute translated versions of Russian literature throughout Iran (Daniel 2001). The many small organizations eventually consolidated and formed one party (Communist Party of Iran), and in 1925 helped set up the Union of Petroleum Workers in Iran, which was instrumental in pushing for the reforms of the D'Arcy concessions (Chaqueri 2001). The Communist Party of Iran was eventually banned by Reza Shah, and this is when the Tudeh party formed to continue the traditions of the Communist Party of Iran. Therefore the Tudeh Party had its origins rooted in the militancy of the Iranian left, culminating in the Party's belief that they needed support from a military power, such as the USSR to create any systemic change. Thus, the Tudeh Party initially rejected the NF's 'slow reform' tactics. Eventually the Tudeh Party did express support for the NF and Mossadegh, but the initial stigma of rejection lingered amongst the lower classes of Iran (Abrahamian 1982).

The lack of initial support from the Tudeh party highly weakened the NF's hegemonic challenge, as without the endorsement of the Tudeh Party, the NF was merely a middle class party with a varied and weak ideological basis, and a lack of proper organization to truly combat the prevailing hegemony. As Halliday (2005: 106) states, "the coup of 1953 had not one, but several, preconditions: an offensive strategy by Washington and London on the one hand, but also a passive abstention by the USSR and a divided, ineffective, pro-Mosadeq [sic] coalition within." With the backing of a strong organizational coalition, mainly composed of middle class organizations, the NF with Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh as leader harnessed the groundswell of resentment towards foreign interference in sovereign Iranian affairs. By using nationalistic rhetoric and protests, the NF won the 1951 Iranian election where Mossadegh became the Prime Minister of Iran (Abrahamian 1982). As Moaddel (1989) explains, Mossadegh's organization of protests, specifically the ones during October 1949, had a profound effect on his ability to obtain the premiership:

Mosaddeq led a crowd of politicians, university students, and bazaar traders into the Shah's palace to protest the lack of free elections. Once inside, the demonstrators elected a committee of twenty headed by Mosaddeq, which soon became the nucleus of the national Front (Abrahamian, 1982: 251-52).

The National Front then successfully blocked the adoption of the supplemental agreement in the sixteenth Parliament and, in turn, suggested the nationalization of the oil industry. Political pressures within the parliament and massive demonstrations outside the parliament eventually pressured the Parliament to pass a bill nationalizing the oil industry. The Shah refused to ratify the nationalization bill for one and one half months. Finally, on April 30, 1951, Mosaddeq was elected prime minister by a large margin. The Shah had no option but to ratify the nationalization bill, and on May 1, the law went into effect (Moaddel 1989: 8-9)

In July of 1951, Mossadegh broke off all negotiations with AIOC, and moved to fully nationalize the Iranian petroleum industry. The initial British reaction to the nationalization of Iranian petroleum was to demand action against Iran from the World Court/United Nations (Malek 2005; Kinzer 2003). When the court declared it had no jurisdiction over the matter the British government sent warships to the Persian Gulf, and imposed an economic embargo on Iran. The Mossadegh administration did not succumb to British pressure, leading the British government to threaten to launch an armed invasion of Iran. Despite the tough rhetoric, the British government eventually backed down from this threat as the U.S., lead at the time by Harry Truman, did not support the British position.

Truman was opposed to old-style imperialism and was sympathetic to nationalist movements, and did not want to set a precedent of using the CIA to overthrow any foreign regimes (Kinzer, 2003). Once Truman was out of office and Dwight Eisenhower became the president, U.S. policy towards the AIOC situation changed drastically. At the request of Eisenhower, a plan was set to de-legitimize Mossadegh both internationally and domestically. Eisenhower was wary of the mission being portrayed as merely helping the British government regain petroleum reserves, therefore it was decided that the Communist threat to Iran would be emphasized to the media rather than the retrieval of petroleum. The U.S. and the British governments used the media to link Mossadegh to Communism and the USSR, despite the fact that he was politically liberal in ideology (Kinzer 2003). By linking Mossadegh to the USSR, the U.S. and Britain had set the stage for the CIA and MI6 joint coup against Mossadegh.

The coup, nicknamed “Operation Ajax,” was orchestrated by Kermit Roosevelt (Heiss, 1997). Along with MI6, Roosevelt used internal forces within Iran to de-

legitimize Mossadegh and cause unrest. These internal forces included members of the Iranian political parties, such as the Democratic Party lead by Ahmad Qavām, and the Aryan Party lead by General Hassan Arfah (Gasiorowski 1987). These parties were also supported by anti-Mossadegh military officers, including General Mohammed Zahedi, clergyman (eventually including Ayatollah Kashani), most of the major newspaper editors in Tehran, and street gang leaders, the most prominent being Shaban “Beemokh” Jafari⁹ (Diba 1986). The U.S. and British governments directed the coup by providing both the intelligence and financial support to the internal opposition. The CIA gained control of eighty percent of the media in Tehran, so that it could run articles that de-legitimized Mossadegh’s policies and power, setting the stage for the coup attempt (Kinzer, 2003).

While there was strong suspicion regarding the CIA’s role in the 1953 coup, specific details regarding the Iranian coup became officially available to the public after a CIA internal report was leaked to *The New York Times* and published in the April 16th and June 18th, 2000 editions by James Risen. The CIA and MI6 initiated coordinated unrest, throughout Iran, which culminated in the supporters of U.S.- backed Mohammad Reza Shah (Business elite, members of opposition parties), being lead by General Zahedi flooding the streets, and calling for Mossadegh’s removal from office. Riots occurred in Tehran and other major cities, and provided justification for Mohammad Reza Shah to formally dismissing the Prime Minister and ask him to resign (Azimi 2004). Mossadegh refused to resign, and was resolute in his stance that he remain the Prime Minister. When it became apparent to the British and American agents that Mossadegh was not going to step down easily, they advised Mohammad Reza Shah to leave Iran. On 15th August 1953, the Shah was flown out of Iran to Rome, Italy, via Baghdad, Iraq where he signed two decrees, one dismissing Mossadegh as Prime Minister and the other naming General Zahedi as the new Prime Minister (Diba 1986). It should be noted that Zahedi was not independently picked by Mohammad Reza Shah to succeed Mossadegh. Zahedi was picked by the CIA to succeed Mossadegh, and covertly provided with \$5 million dollars

⁹ Jafari is an important figure in Iranian contemporary history. For over half a century Jafari, and his ‘boys’ (drawn from traditional, religious neighborhoods of Tehran) were a major street gang that had influence with politicians, most notably was Jafari’s support of Mohammed Reza Shah; leading to his ‘boys’ being used to depose Mossadegh from office.

after the coup prevailed (Risen, 2000). Despite the decree by the Shah in Rome, Mossadegh again refused to step down. General Zahedi, knowing that he had U.S. and British support, staged a coup on 19th August 1953. Using the Shah's decrees for legitimacy, Zahedi proclaimed himself the Prime Minister of Iran, and allowed the Shah to safely return to Iran on 22nd August 1953. On his return, Mohammad Reza Shah promptly moved to change the Iranian governance system from a constitutional monarchy to a direct rule monarchy and introduced foreign partners into the operations of the petroleum industry (Azimi 2004).

After the coup Mossadegh was detained, convicted with treason, and sentenced to death by a military court. Mossadegh's sentence was later reduced to three years of solitary confinement, followed by house arrest at his residence in Ahmadabad where he passed away on March 5th 1967 (Kinzer 2003). Most of Mossadegh's supporters and allies were also arrested and many of them were executed. The new Shah regime reversed many of Mossadegh's policies regarding oil, allowing for the U.S. and British governments to obtain the majority of the revenues generated by Iranian oil. In return the U.S. government funded the Shah's government and trained his brutally violent secret police SAVAK (*Sāzemān-e Ettela'āt va Amniyat-e Keshvar*), until the Shah was overthrown in the 1979 Iranian revolution (Kinzer 2003).

Venezuela – Historical Literature Review

Business, trade, and union leaders were the main organizing forces against the Chavez administration (Jones 2008, Wilpert 2003). The leader of the opposition was former Venezuelan trade organization leader Pedro Carmona as well as former union and political leader Carlos Ortega, who was initially the head of Fedepetrol (oil workers union) and then was elected head of the Confederación de Trabajadores de Venezuela union federation (CTV – largest trade union in Venezuela) in 2001. Carmona and Ortega obtained the support of the private media stations in Venezuela, specifically Venevisión, owned by Gustavo Cisneros, and generals in the military (such as Vice Admiral Héctor Ramírez & Brigadier General Néstor González). Carmona and Ortega were also provided with financial support from the Washington based NED and moral support from leading members the U.S. government. In addition, Cardinal Antonio Ignacio Velasco

used the power of the Catholic Church in Venezuela to demonize Chavez and to promote the more socially conservative Carmona. In fact, Velasco was on hand the day of the coup to sign papers that gave 'legitimacy' to the Carmona regime (O'Shaughnessy 2011). The composition of this opposition suggests that Chavez's policies towards the business/corporations, specifically the oil industry, was why he was the target of the coup attempt. Therefore, an analysis of the historical background of the petroleum industry and neoliberalism in Venezuela is necessary to understand how the popular-democratic project in Venezuela was able to resist the coup on Chavez.

Tinker-Salas (2009) believes the inception of petroleum production in Venezuela fundamentally altered the socio-cultural landscape as well as the context in which the regime change would be possible. Through his analysis of the Venezuelan petroleum history (mostly done through archival research) Tinker-Salas concludes that insufficient attention has been paid to the influence that the petroleum companies have had in shaping the cultural discourse. He believes that through the funding of literature, media, and the political process itself, petroleum companies were able to change how the petroleum industry was perceived in Venezuela. Traditional literature regarding the petroleum economy largely ignores the Venezuelan citizenry. Tinker-Salas' methodology seeks to give a voice to the Venezuelan people by taking an inward look at Venezuela (drawing upon his own experiences growing up in an petroleum camp), allowing him to fully examine the elite and middle classes of the country and their role in consolidating power for the petroleum companies throughout the 1980s. Tinker-Salas concludes that petroleum companies and the business class (most importantly owners of media corporations) had succeeded in linking private petroleum exploration to the advent of modernity and democracy in Venezuela. Moreover, the accounts of the Venezuelan history presented by the petroleum companies always show the corporate leaders, technocrats, and foreigners in a positive light, calling them the purveyors of modernity in Venezuela. Coronil also touches on this point, calling this phenomenon the *fiction* of the petroleum industry. Coronil explains that throughout the modern history of Venezuela, state authority has been predicated on promises to the citizenry that social problems can be solved by revenues generated by Venezuela's vast oil reserves.

Thus transformed into a petrostate, the Venezuelan state came to hold the monopoly not only of violence, but of the nation's natural wealth. The state has exercised this monopoly dramaturgically, seeking compliance through the spectacular display of its imperious presence—it seeks to conquer rather than persuade. ... By manufacturing dazzling development projects that engender collective fantasies of progress, it casts its spell over audiences and performers alike. As a “magnanimous sorcerer,” the state seizes its subjects by inducing a condition or state of being receptive to its illusions—a magical state (Coronil 1997: 10)

Tinker-Salas builds upon Coronil's point, and outlines that there came a point in Venezuelan history where the decaying social conditions made it difficult for the petroleum companies to continue the discourse that private exploration was 'good' for Venezuelans. However, before this point was reached, the Venezuelan oil industry was already close to 100 years old, and rife with corruption.

In Venezuela, while the presence of petroleum was known for centuries, it was not until the early 1900s that the formal petroleum industry was born. In 1908 President Juan Vincent Gomez granted concessions to explore, produce, and refine petroleum throughout Venezuela (Karl 1997). Gomez's concessions mostly went to his close friends and family, who in turn relayed them to the foreign companies. One major foreign corporation who used this path to become involved in Venezuelan petroleum was the Caribbean Petroleum Company, later renamed Royal Dutch Shell, and today simply known as Shell (Wilpert 2003). Shell discovered the first major petroleum field in Venezuela in 1914, but the onset of World War I halted the petroleum industry and it was only after the war that Venezuela appeared on the list of top exporters (Karl 1997). Once the petroleum industry was up and running it began to flourish, and by 1935 it was the world's second largest petroleum producer (Karl 1997). While this was good for the petroleum industry, frustration was aroused amongst the Venezuelan population over the organization of the industry. Gomez was essentially a dictator, took advantage of the petroleum industry, and acted contrary to the interests of the Venezuelan citizenry. He allowed the United States government to help write the Venezuelan petroleum laws in 1922, which were highly favourable to foreign corporations (Wilpert 2003). Gomez also neglected many other sectors and social problems, such as education, health, agriculture, and other domestic industries. These transgressions, similar to the Iranian case, fostered

popular resentment of the foreign companies. This resentment started the desire for the nationalization of Venezuela petroleum, and forced subsequent governments to recognize the need to control their own natural resources (Mommer 2002).

A key moment in the nationalization process was the Petroleum Law of 1943, in which it was proposed that there would be a fifty-fifty split in the petroleum revenues between the petroleum industry and the government (Mommer 2002). The Petroleum Law was a landmark moment in Venezuelan history as it marked the first recognition of the Venezuelan subsoil as a national property, and legislated that the state's duty was to safeguard it on behalf of the collective (Coronil 2008). The Petroleum Law of 1943 set the stage for the collective consciousness that arose in Venezuela regarding the use of the petroleum revenues, and allowed for incremental tax increases and state-promoted economic development. Following the Petroleum Law of 1943, the legitimacy of the Venezuelan government became increasingly dependent not just on the formal victories in the elections, but also on the substantive ability to use petroleum revenues for the collective welfare of the Venezuelan citizenry (Coronil 2000).

The legitimacy of the democratic regime came to depend not just on its formal origin in electoral contests, but on its substantive achievements – its ability to promote collective welfare through its use of oil revenues. Nationalism, which had been centrally identified with the achievement of political independence, became intimately tied to the complementary task of attaining economic development and collective prosperity (Coronil 2000: 35)

After the Petroleum Law was put into practice, and with Venezuela's chartered membership into the newly established Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Venezuela became a major player in the geopolitics of petroleum. Seeing the power that Venezuela could have, in the 1970s President Rafael Caldera began to further nationalize the Venezuelan petroleum industry. In 1976 *Petróleos de Venezuela S.A. (PDVSA)* was established as the Venezuelan state-owned petroleum company (Mommer 2002).

The apparent nationalization of the petroleum industry, along with the new Venezuelan constitution of 1961¹⁰ and the Punto Fijo Pact of 1958,¹¹ were key factors

¹⁰ Guaranteed social and political rights for all Venezuelans (Buxton 2001)

¹¹ The Punto Fijo Pact was an accord between the major Venezuela political parties (Democratic Republican Union (URD), Social Christian (COPEI) and Democratic Action (Acción Democrática, AD)

that made Venezuelan democracy appear strong from an outsider's perspective. However McCoy and Myers (2004), Buxton (2001), and Karl (1997) debunk the theory that Venezuela was a strong democracy. McCoy and Myers explain that while the Punto Fijo Pact was seen as a successful power sharing alliance that provided stability for the political system, which was rare in Latin America, in reality the Punto Fijo Pact led to the entrenchment of a two-party system in Venezuela for almost half a century. As Buxton (2001) states, over the next four decades after the Punto Fijo Pact, control of the Venezuelan government alternated between two parties. Drake (2000) and Karl (1997) both point out that while observers outside of Venezuela pointed to high voting levels, revenue generated by the petroleum industry, and generous social programs¹² as evidence that Venezuela was a relatively stable state, in reality it was rife with corruption (Karl, 1997). In fact, the overreliance on the petroleum sector to the detriment of other sectors had plunged Venezuela into the economic crises that it faced in the late 1970s and 1980s (Tinker-Salas 2009). In addition, while technically the Venezuelan petroleum industry was nationalized, rampant corruption within the system allowed the state apparatus to be used to consolidate a large source of power for the petroleum companies (Tinker-Salas 2009).

Ellner and Salas (2005), Buxton (2001), Karl (1997), and Sonntag et al (1985) detail the corruption that was evident in the Venezuelan, with Buxton (2001) going as far to credit the deterioration of Venezuela society for Chavez's electoral victory. Buxton argues that Chavez's electoral victory was not an endorsement of a new *Bolivarian* vision but rather a rejection of the old Venezuelan political system, which had grown stale and become a hindrance to democracy. Ellner and Salas (2005) believe that the Venezuelan government's neglect of the development of a truly diverse economy that could handle the ups and downs of the global economy was the impetus for the economic crises of the 1970s and 80s. Overdependence on the petroleum industry also allowed for corruption to flourish within the government, especially within the state-owned petroleum company (PDVSA), which had initially been created for the benefit of the citizenry, but had become an increasingly corrupt entity (Karl, 1997). Corruption festered in PDVSA

which looked to stabilize democracy by having all parties respect the results of elections, and include members of opposing parties in their government.

¹² free universal education, free health care, relatively decent minimum wage

despite the official nationalization of the petroleum industry, due to the fact that the managers were easily able to elude government regulations. The avoidance of government regulations by PDVSA culminated in the 'state-owned' company opening itself up to foreign investment, directing resources into the purchase of foreign companies (such as CITGO), and increasing its petroleum production in direct violation of the OPEC quotas (Karl, 1997). PDVSA's decision to violate the OPEC quotas were harshly reprimanded by OPEC and caused Venezuelan petroleum revenues to decline drastically during the 1980s. The loss of the petroleum revenues, coupled with competition from newly exploited deposits in Mexico and the North Sea, meant that the Venezuelan government could no longer afford to provide any social assistance to the increasing number of people living under the poverty line (Karl, 1997). One of the major sectors of the economy avoided by the Venezuelan government was agriculture. The government's neglect of the rural sector resulted in a massive rural-to-urban migration that significantly shrank the Venezuelan rural population and made the country an importer of food (Sonntag et al 1985). This food crisis further lowered the standard of living and created a large population of urban poor who depended on the very social welfare programs that were being cut.

With the Venezuelan economy further deteriorating through an increase in external debt and capital flight, sentiments grew amongst the business elite implement some neoliberal reforms. The Venezuelan bourgeoisie saw it as an opportunity in the economic crisis to further their own economic agenda and advocate for the implementation of neoliberal policies. Neoliberal policies were first introduced into the Venezuelan system during the late 1970s by the country's elite with the help of several International Financial Institutions. This move successfully put pressure on the politicians to introduce these primary neoliberal reforms in the form of the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) throughout the 1980s (Wilpert, 2003). SAPs privatized the public programs, introduced cuts in government spending on social programs, incorporated some user fees, promoted exports, raised the banking interest rates, liberalized trade, devalued the currency and removed price controls and states subsidies. The introduction of SAPs did help slowdown the rate of inflation, and it allowed the government to pay off its debts while exponentially increasing the amount of foreign

investment in the Venezuelan economy. However, the introduction of SAPs also created some new social problems. These problems included a decrease in wages, lowered standard of living, growth in poverty, and an increase in informal employment and class polarization (Ellner, 2004). The sense of the collective culture that had been ingrained in the Venezuelan society was challenged and eroded by the proponents of neoliberalism, who disproportionately enjoyed its benefits while the majority of the population felt the burden of living through the harsh conditions of the 1980s Venezuela.

The severe economic conditions of the 1980s in Venezuela were the catalyst for the substantial backlash to neoliberalism amongst the populous. Sensing that the public atmosphere was negative, President Carlos Perez ran his re-election campaign on an anti-neoliberal platform. Despite Perez's anti-neoliberal campaign rhetoric, however, once in office he instituted further neoliberal reforms. Some of these reforms caused the price of gas to rise dramatically leading to a popular uprising known as the *Caracazo* (started February 27th, 1989).

Maya-Lopez (2002), who studied the *Caracazo* in detail, believes that Venezuelans were offended by the rise in gas prices, as petroleum was seen as a natural resource to be used for the benefit of all citizens, not merely as a means to make a profit for the administrators of the petroleum industry. The removal of these regulations by the government allowed gas prices to increase drastically and it was seen as a betrayal of the people. The *Caracazo* protests were vigorously quashed by the military. Perez's decision to involve the military escalated the situation and resulted in estimated 500–2000 deaths over a 5 day period (Maya-Lopez, 2002). The *Caracazo*, however, was just the beginning of the protests and the resistance to the neoliberal reforms in Venezuela. Gott (2000) details the failed coup attempt in 1992, lead by Hugo Chavez on Perez, for which Chavez was incarcerated. While Perez survived this coup attempt, his acceptance of the neoliberal reform made it difficult for him to overcome the electoral challenge of Rafael Caldera (Gott, 2000). Caldera, who had earlier left COPEI and participated in the formation of a new, more leftist party, was able to win the election by opposing neoliberal recommendations made by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

Unlike Perez, during his first two years in office (1994-95) Caldera was the only Latin American president to choose not to heed to the IMF recommendations. Due to his

rejection of these neoliberal recommendations, Caldera continually came under pressure from the Venezuelan business elite and the International Financial Institutions to change his policies. Eventually, to help alleviate another Venezuelan economic crisis, Caldera announced that he would be implementing a set of neoliberal reforms (Maya-Lopez, 2002). In reality, the neoliberal package had the opposite effect to the one desired. Ellner (1996) explains that gas prices rose significantly higher than what the government originally planned, and that taxes were increased on wholesale and "luxury" goods that alienated the majority of the population, intensifying the backlash against neoliberalism.

Molina (2004) puts forth the argument that Caldera made himself very unpopular in Venezuela by trying to please everyone. The ruling business class wanted substantial neoliberal reforms and further cuts in government spending. In contrast, the working classes wanted social assistance and felt that the social programs that were being offered were too light and not effective enough. Caldera attempted to regain his popularity amongst the working classes by pardoning Chavez, but this tactic failed as it allowed Chavez to run against him in the 1998 presidential election (Ellner, 1996). Chavez ran for a new party called The Movement for the Fifth Republic, which garnered a lot of support from the Bolivarian circles and the organized segments of the urban working class of Venezuela. Chavez's 1998 presidential campaign focused on an anti-neoliberal platform, critiquing Caldera and "savage neoliberalism", and proposing to increase the role of the state to ensure economic justice and social equality (Gott, 2000). Chavez's campaign was successful, and in 1998 he was elected as the President of Venezuela. Chavez took his election victory as a mandate to counter the implementation of the neoliberal reforms in Venezuela. Mommer (2002) states that once in office Chavez's aspirations were to free the Venezuelan economy from foreign influences: foreign corporations, the U.S. government, and the International Financial Institutions. Vanden (2003) examines how Chavez went about trying to achieve this goal by implementing many new initiatives and policies designed to help the poor and working classes of Venezuela who had been disadvantaged by the neoliberal policies (Vanden, 2003). Vanden (2003) and Mommer (2002) both agree that the main point of contention by the Venezuelan business class and International Financial Institutions was Chavez's plans to strengthen the nationalization of petroleum by stipulating in a new constitution that

PDVSA could never be privatized, and that the revenues generated by PDVSA would go towards social aid programs.

The new constitution intensified the divisions between Chavez and the opposition. Byerly (2006) studied the international media's response to Chavez's electoral victory and presidency. He cites many international newspapers, and qualitatively analyses the bias of the ruling class towards Chavez, and how the world economy opposed the Chavez administration due to his efforts to reorganize OPEC. Chavez was motivated to do this so that Venezuela would receive a better price for its petroleum abroad. As a result, the actions of Chavez and OPEC strengthened the price of petroleum, as it doubled to a healthy price of over \$20 per barrel, and a Venezuelan named Ali Rodriguez became the new head of OPEC (Gott, 2000). James (2006) provides a clear analysis of the U.S. government's reaction to Chavez. The Bush administration began to publicly show its concern for the events in Venezuela, and as Chavez gained more influence, the American hostility grew and the senior U.S. officials began to question the Chavez administration's 'commitment to democracy'. James (2006) states that:

The Bush Administration has attempted to undermine Venezuela's sovereignty through media, intelligence, financial, and political channels. Since Chavez's election, the Bush Administration has used destabilization tactics, many of which parallel the documented maneuvers used against progressive governments such as Chile in 1973 (James 2006: 1)

Bak (2001) highlights other policy changes that enraged the domestic opposition against Chavez, specifically union leaders. The Chavez administration union reform called for elections for new union leaders. Corrupt union leaders, however, such as Pedro Carmona and Carlos Ortega, wanted to maintain their status within the union and thus protested any changes to how union leaders were decided. These and other 'radical' changes in the policy turned the business class against Chavez, and were the primary impetus for the coup attempt that followed.

The coup of April 2002 has been described in several types of media, including a documentary that captured the coup as it was happening. Some of the better sources for information about the coup are Ellner (2005 & 2004), Hawkins (2003), Vanden (2003) and *The Revolution Will not be Televised* (2002). The majority of the details regarding

the coup have been extracted from this film and have been supplemented at times by other sources for completeness and context.

To summarise, the Venezuelan coup was initiated by a general strike on the 9th of April 2002 that was organized by trade and union leaders Carmona and Ortega. The strike did not have the desired effect, and Chavez remained defiant, leading to an indefinite strike being declared. A large group of people, urged on by Pedro Carmona, marched towards the presidential offices and demanded Chavez's resignation on the 11th of April 2002. When this group of strikers reached the presidential palace, gunfights and confrontations between Chavez supporters and the opposition marchers ensued. The conflict was aired on all of the private stations, however, the documentary footage shows that the private media stations (Venevisión) used unethical practices and camera distortions to blame any violence that occurred on the Chavez government. This situation also provided the generals (Héctor Ramírez & Brigadier General Néstor González) and the business elite (Gustavo Cisneros owner of Venevisión) with a mouthpiece to stoke anger against Chavez.

On the 12th of April, the private networks claimed that Chavez had turned himself over to the military and voluntarily resigned. Pedro Carmona assumed the presidency, heading up a transition civilian-military government. Right after assuming the presidency, Carmona announced that he would be repealing many of the Chavez administration's social and economic reforms and reinstating the neoliberal policies.

Documentary footage shows that Chavez supporters were informed by unconventional media sources (mostly the Internet) that Chavez had not yet resigned. Pro-Chavez demonstrations were initially small, until the information slowly disseminated throughout the city, culminating in mass demonstrations throughout Caracas. The apex of the demonstrations occurred when a large group of pro-Chavez demonstrators marched towards the palace and called for Chavez to be returned to office. The overwhelming protests forced many generals to announce their support for Chavez, allowing the Chavez administration personnel to retake the palace from the opposition, and Chavez to regain presidency on the 14th of April, which he still holds to this day.

The descriptions of the Venezuelan and Iranian coup indicate that class structure was a key component of why the Venezuelan resistance succeeded while the Iranian one

failed. The Venezuelan support for Chavez was mostly urban-industrial, while in Iran it was mostly rural-agrarian, with clerics and traditional intellectuals holding a lot of influence over them. In addition, the historical context of the two coups is a major component of how they occurred and the differing outcomes. The Iranian coup occurred during intense Cold War geopolitical manoeuvring and was pulled into the ideological debate between capitalism and communism. The Venezuelan coup occurred after the Cold War, in a global economy defined by neoliberalism. Both coups can be seen as events that occurred within the broad ideological battle for control of the world economy; however they occurred at very different historical points in relation to organization of global capitalism. These points and other variables will be examined in depth in the next chapter, which analyzes and compares the two coups to find an answer as to why one resistance prospered while another failed.

Chapter 4 – Analysis of the Forces Involved in the Iranian and Venezuelan Coups

By using the alternative coup theory as described in Chapter 2, and focusing on the economic, geopolitical, and historical context of the resistance to the coups, and how this helped shape the popular forces against the prevailing hegemony of the era, four major points of examination become evident. The first point of examination is an analysis of the dominant hegemonic forces, and the influence that foreign entities, such as the US and British government, had or wished to have. The second point of examination is the class composition of Mossadegh's coalition versus Chavez's coalition. The third point of examination branches off the class composition to discuss the strategy of the Iranian and Venezuelan popular forces, specifically looking at the differences between using a decentralized approach (Venezuela) versus using a top down approach (favoured by both Mossadegh and Tudeh). Finally the last point of analysis is the role that technology and media played in each coup, as well as how they were utilized by the popular forces.

Variations in the Influence of Hegemonic Forces

The Iranian and Venezuelan coups occurred at different stages of both US and British imperialism. For Iran in 1953, the US was the ascending imperial force, and the British were still a dominant force trying to maintain their empire. By 2002, Britain had lost most of its imperial powers, and was now a follower of the US state. In addition, in 2002 the US was conducting a war in Afghanistan while planning another war in Iraq. The US had become an overstretched descending imperial force. During the 1950s, when the Iranian coup d'état occurred, Cold War politics dominated the international realm. The hegemonic war between the ideologies of capitalism and communism was the justification for many of the political decisions made by the leading states. Against this backdrop, Mossadegh initiated his plans to nationalize the Iranian petroleum industry. While Mossadegh was ideologically a social-democrat, and neither a capitalist or

communist ideologue, his decision to do so placed him in the middle of the Cold War (Mossadegh, 1981). This meant that he was being pressured from both the US/British and the USSR to accommodate their grand Cold War strategies. The schism with the USSR was one of the key reasons why Mossadegh lacked the support of the influential Tudeh Party, and its many supporters in the urban lower classes and intellectual left-wing of Iran. This meant that Mossadegh's effort to change the status quo was waged by a weak coalition against the strong hegemonic powers of the US and Britain. Britain and the U.S. publicly portrayed Mossadegh's initiatives as an attack on the hegemony of capitalism, despite in private knowing that the plan was merely to regain British petroleum, thereby allowing British economic hegemony to be maintained. The U.S. and Britain tried to use several international organizations, such as The Hague's World Court and the UN, to persuade Mossadegh against challenging the status quo. The Iranian Prime Minister, however, was also able to use these same organizations to make his case for change. Due to the significant changes in the Iranian political system, Mossadegh was also able to obtain control of the state apparatus. Having control of such an influential organization allowed him to make a stronger challenge to the prevailing hegemony of the time. The challenge, however, was not strong enough, partially due to the fact that the US and British governments were much more focused and resolute in their plans to overthrow the Mossadegh regime.

Once legal means to combat Mossadegh dissipated, the US and Britain switched from a war of position to a war of movement, placing operatives on the ground with the resources to fight a BEDAMN (propaganda and political action program) against Mossadegh. BEDAMN was originally conducted in Iran by the CIA starting in the early 1940s as a means to combat the Tudeh Party and the USSR as one part of a five-point strategy. Other points included espionage activity, arming of tribes for guerrilla warfare, and the creation of evasion routes in case of a major war. BEDAMN itself was a codename for a propaganda war which cost the US government about \$1 million per year (Gasiorowski 1987). BEDAMN included anti-communist articles and cartoons planted in Iranian newspapers, and the distribution of leaflets. BEDAMN also included direct

attacks on Soviet allies and Tudeh members. These attacks consisted of hiring street gangs to disturb Tudeh rallies and providing funding to right-wing, anti-communist organizations (Somka and Pan-Iranist parties) who regularly fought Tudeh mobs in the streets of Tehran (Gasiorowski 1987). The US government was using a lot of resources to maintain its supremacy through both direct and indirect coercion. Once Mossadegh and the NF became a greater threat than the Tudeh party, BEDAMN's gaze was focused upon the NF.

BEDAMN was used to erode the NF's base, which consisted mainly of the Toilers and Pan-Iranist parties (NF's affiliation with the anti-communist Pan-Iranist Party was not kindly viewed by the Tudeh) as well as the supporters of Ayatollah Kashani. The US made significant efforts to splinter the relationship between Kashani and the NF. The reason for this was that Kashani was a nationalist who had anti-capitalist beliefs and opposed oppression, despotism and colonization, making him very popular amongst the more religious rural peasantry (Gasiorowski & Byrne, 2004). Kashani's nationalist tendencies initially made him a staunch supporter of Mossadegh and the NF, and his endorsement during the election campaign helped Mossadegh gain support in the rural parts of Iran. In an attempt to splinter the alliance between Kashani and Mossadegh, the CIA hired several Iranians to harass religious leaders while posing as Mossadegh supporters and staged the bombing of a cleric's home (Risen, 2000). CIA propaganda depicted Mossadegh as an immoral person who was using Kashani for political gain. Additionally, money was funnelled to Mullah Mohammad Taqi Falsafi to create a pro-US clerical alternative to Kashani (Gasiorowski, 1987). Eventually Kashani withdrew his support for Mossadegh, leading to a loss of support for Mossadegh amongst the rural and religious working classes in Iran. The US and Britain succeeded in fracturing alliances that the NF had made, greatly reducing the NF's ability to build a popular-democratic organization that could eventually form a new historical bloc.

In Venezuela in 2002, the dominant force internationally was now mainly the US, with the British Empire having been relegated. Bromley (1998) states that "the very success of the USA in Saudi Arabia (and later in Iran) meant the defeat of British

imperialism in the Middle East as part of the creation of a unified international capitalist economy under US hegemony” (30). However, in 2002 the US was a dominant force that was distracted, looking to fight several battles in several locations across the world. The “War on Terrorism” was the US government’s main concern. While Hugo Chavez was clearly demonized by US who did work to remove him from office due to the importance of access to Venezuelan oil, the urgency, intensity, and amount of resources used by the US to go after Chavez was dwarfed by the expenditure¹³ that had been used to remove Mossadegh. It was mostly the domestic opposition to Chavez that lead the way, with financial and moral support from hegemonic forces. There were no direct CIA operations in Caracas and as the US was busy working to control Middle Eastern petroleum reserves, the government did not put significant resources into the removal of Chavez. The transition from a war of position to a war of manoeuvre which occurred in Iran never happened in Venezuela. It was mainly a propaganda war without much direct action from US officials and operatives. In addition, the US's leadership position in the unified capitalist hegemony, which works not only to secure US interests but also equally to serve other capitalist powers, meant that “the United States has already lost the ability to determine the shape of this coordination on a unilateral basis” (Bromley 1998: 30). It would not have been good geopolitical strategy for the US to conduct direct action against Venezuela without the cooperation of other capitalist powers, especially at a time when the US was trying to convince its allies (mostly in vane) to invade Iraq. Bromley (2005) also makes an interesting point, that:

“the long-term objective of US hegemony after the Second World War was never to achieve political and economic objectives through direct territorial control and influence over other sovereign states; that was always a fall-back position necessitated by the opposition to-or the lack of development of forms of political

¹³ US spent \$1 million dollars annually on the Iranian propaganda war alone (Gasiorowski 1987), and Zahedi himself was given \$5 million after the coup (Risen, 2000). These do not include the expenditures on other aspects of the campaign against Mossadegh, such as paying operatives. In Venezuela the total expenditure from the NED towards the Venezuelan opposition is believed to be \$15 million (Tucker, 2004). Depreciating this value using an inflation calculator (<http://www.dollartimes.com/calculators/inflation.htm>) gives comparative value in 1953 of \$2.26 million.

independence consistent with a liberal world-wide economic order” (Bromley, 2005: 2)

Venezuela under Chavez was a prime example of economic policies that were turning away from neo-liberalism. However, it was still a major supplier of oil and the Venezuelan government was not a national security threat, so the resources to conduct direct action were funnelled into Afghanistan and Iraq instead. This meant that the Venezuelan domestic opposition was the primary force conducting the logistics of the coup against Chavez. The international support for the Venezuelan coup was not as strong as that for other coups, and despite funding of the opposition parties by the NED, international support was ineffectual (Barracca 2007)

Another factor related to the prevailing hegemonies of the period is the way in which the leaders of the popular forces faction perceived their relationship to the ruling forces. Mossadegh, as he describes in his memoirs (1981), did not want to be involved in broad geopolitical debate, and wanted no part of the Cold War. The NF’s mandate was narrowly focused on Iran and the nationalization of oil, and was not perceived as force for toppling US/British or capitalist hegemony. Chavez, and the MVR, on the other hand were much clearer about their objective to combat the prevailing hegemony. Chavez portrayed himself from the beginning of his rise to prominence as an anti-neoliberalist. He embraced his role as the leader of the popular-democratic movement against neoliberal structural adjustment policies, against capitalism, and against the leading Western powers. In his election campaign Chavez described neoliberalism as “savage” (Gott, 2000). Once in office, and as the head of the state apparatus, Chavez went out of his way to reverse as many of the neoliberal policies as he could and worked to move Venezuela towards a more socialist state model (Vanden, 2003).

The conviction of the two leaders, and their respective organizations, along with the way objectives were stated were key factors in the differing outcomes of the coups. For the popular forces movement to be successful and eventually lead to the formation of a new hegemony and historical bloc, the process of the political class formation as defined by Otero (2004) is needed. By making his objectives and his alliances clear,

Chavez's struggle against neo-liberalism in Venezuela became much more clearly defined. The recognition that there is a struggle between one's own group and the dominant group leading to the formal organization and coalescing of the groups and their demands, and the formation of *leadership* (Chavez's role) to represent them to the prevailing hegemony is essential to the success of the counter-hegemonic project. The NF's failure in terms of understanding the need for these strong alliances when challenging the status quo was a key reason why Mossadegh was eventually displaced from office. The MVR did a much better job of creating the allegiances necessary to withstand a challenge than the NF did, the fact of which is highlighted by the many schisms amongst NF supporters. These schisms were then exploited by the coup perpetrators to de-legitimize Mossadegh and to temper the resistance of the coup. As Gramsci (1988: 249) noted, any class that has ambition to obtain and maintain control of society must look past the narrow interests of their own class and form allegiances with other social forces in order to create a long-lasting historical bloc that will fundamentally change the organization of society. This leads into the second point of examination, which is the class composition of Mossadegh's coalition versus Chavez's coalition.

Class Composition & Counter-hegemonic Strategy

The second and third points of examination, as noted in the introduction to this chapter are class composition, and counter-hegemonic strategy. These two points of examination are highly intertwined, and therefore will be examined together in this subsection.

Broadly speaking, Mossadegh's supporters were drawn from the middle class of Iranian society, while Chavez garnered more support amongst the lower classes of Venezuelan society. The middle class of Iranian society can be split into two different groups: i) the bazaar petty bourgeoisie that formed a traditional middle class and ii) a modern middle class consisting of white-collar employees and university-educated professionals (Abrahamian, 2008). Due to historic links between the mosque and the bazaar, the middle class of Iranian society had a strong religious component to it as well.

“Despite economic modernization, the bazaar continued to control as much as half of the country’s handcraft production, two-thirds of its retail trade, and three-quarters of its wholesale trade. It continued to retain craft and trade guilds as well as thousands of mosques, hayats (religious gatherings), husseinihs (religious lecture halls), and dastehs (groups that organized Muharram processions). Ironically, the oil boom gave the traditional middle class the opportunity to finance religious centers and establish private schools that emphasized the importance of Islam (Abrahamian, 2008: 138).

Thus, the oil money helped nourish tradition, as segments of the middle class of Iranian society were dependent on the oil boom and the proposed nationalization of the petroleum industry because it gave them the opportunity to finance religious centers and private schools, emphasizing the importance of Islam, and allowing their children the tools needed to go to universities (Abrahamian, 2008).

Mossadegh himself came from an aristocratic family highly involved in politics, and was a direct descendant of many prominent historical figures in Iran. He was always known as a liberal democrat, and his two main political desires were to transfer power from the royal court to the parliament and to increase Iran’s control of its petroleum industry (Gasiorowski, 1987). These two policy decisions were popular amongst the petty bourgeoisie in 1940s Iran. Mossadegh rode these two policies to an electoral victory, made much easier due to the Shah’s failed attempt to rig the elections and the lack of concessions obtained by the Iranian government in the AIOC negotiations. Mossadegh and the NF garnered much of their primary support from the middle class of Iranian society. However, to have a coalition that was strong enough to run the parliament, support from other classes was also needed. The NF was thus a broad coalition that also included workers, leftist intellectuals (anti-Soviet leftist, as pro-Soviet leftist tended to support the Tudeh Party), ultra-nationalists, bazaar merchants, and rank-and-file clergy. To create this coalition the NF needed to make alliances with the ‘leaders’ of these diverse groups, such as Ayatollah Kashani (most influential Ayatollah), Mozzafar Baqai (head of Toiler Party), and Karim Sanjabi (head of Nationalist Party). By obtaining the support of these leaders and their constituents, the NF with Mossadegh at its helm was able to win control of the state apparatuses. It was the manner in which

the NF obtained support, however, that eventually lead to the movements demise. The NF sought to gain the support of the lower classes of Iran by making alliances with their leaders instead of building any organic grassroots relationship with the rural, urban, and religious poor of Iran. This meant that the NF's support amongst these groups always hinged on the personal relationship of Mossadegh and other political leaders that represented them. It was all a top-down relation.

Once Mossadegh's position as the leader of the NF and de facto head of the nationalist movement was challenged and undermined by other NF members such as Kashani, Baqai, and Makki (founding member of NF), his power rapidly eroded. These members broke relations with Mossadegh over political issues such as cabinet appointments, stances on secular reform, economic policy and counter-hegemonic strategy (Abrahamian 2008). The Kashani example explained previously was a prime example of how CIA tactics (hired several Iranians to harass religious leaders while posing as Mossadegh supporters and staged the bombing of a cleric's home) and Mossadegh's strategy (forcing through secular reform) combined created tension between two political leaders (Kashani and Mossadegh) and lead to Mossadegh's lack of support amongst the rural parts of Iran. Highlighting the flaw of a top-down strategy for change as it depends too highly on the individual motivations and whims of political leaders.

Kashani was one of many defections from the NF that all but removed the NF's support amongst the lower classes. Mossadegh, through no fault of his own, but due to his own background was mistrusted by the lower classes of Iranian society, who had experienced false promises by Iranian aristocrats before. Thus, Mossadegh mainly appealed to the middle class and he needed to make alliances with popular representatives of the lower classes to have a large enough coalition to maintain power and move towards building a new historical bloc/hegemony. These defections greatly weakened his position in parliament and made him unpopular among a vast majority of the Iranian population. The defections also lead to greater competition and parallel counter hegemonies, challenging the NF's organization and weakening the collective counter-hegemony in Iran.

Another parallel counter-hegemony to the NF and a key component of Mossadegh's support was the Tudeh Party, but it was belated and lukewarm support. The Tudeh leadership did not trust the NF's leadership and questioned Mossadegh's 'leftist' credentials, viewing him as being too appeasing and soft towards the U.S. and Britain (Amooei 2008). The volatile and fragmented support of the Tudeh Party for the NF and Mossadegh is what pushed the NF towards the formation of a very broad coalition. If the NF and the Tudeh Party had maintained a better relationship, then Mossadegh may have been able to withstand the coup. However, the Tudeh Party and the NF both believed in a top down approach to social change, and their conflict with each other over the proper strategy to achieve similar goals kept their relationship cold. The constituents of the Tudeh (politically left-wing intellectuals, and urban poor) and the NF had a common antagonist (US and Britain) at that point in history and both groups wanted greater sovereignty. However, instead of moving beyond the narrow interests of their own class, exerting intellectual and moral leadership, and making alliances with a variety of social forces over a long-period of time in order to allow the historical bloc to form (Gramsci 1988: 249), both the NF and the Tudeh Party argued over strategy and the role the USSR would play. This duelling of counter-hegemonies was a main factor in the failure of the resistance to the coup. The NF and Tudeh party needed to be cohesive in order to create a potentially new historic bloc, and while they did work together on several occasions, as will be detailed below, their ideological in-fighting severely weakened the national-popular movement in Iran.

Several examples illuminate the role that the Tudeh Party might have played if it was fully supportive of Mossadegh. In 1952 after Mossadegh returned from The Hague, he had a meeting with Mohammed Reza Shah. In this meeting, Mossadegh explained that to better protect Iran from foreign and domestic factions, he, as Prime Minister should be given more executive power and obtain control of the armed forces (Diba 1986). The Shah refused and Mossadegh retaliated by resigning the next day. The Shah appointed a new Prime Minister (Ghavam Saltaneh), who was more in line with the interests of the U.S. and British governments (Azimi 2004). This enraged the Tudeh

Party, who had their differences with Mossadegh, but found Ghavam to be much worse. The Tudeh Party organized mass rallies in support of Mossadegh. Violent confrontations between Mossadegh supporters and the police broke out in front of the parliament (Daniel 2001). Mossadegh supporters included Tudeh Party members and the traditional supporters of the NF, along with Ayatollah Kashani and his followers, who helped in the rallies more out of their dislike of Mr. Ghavam than support for Mossadegh (Amooei 2008). The Shah had no recourse but to reinstate Mossadegh and grant him control over the ministry of defence. The Tudeh party was an essential force that kept Mossadegh in power in this instance, but in many other scenarios it was a destabilizing force. The Tudeh organized many demonstrations to force Mossadegh's hand on various policies, and this led to the erosion of Mossadegh's support amongst the left-wing.

Despite the volatile and fragmented support that the NF received from the Tudeh Party, in the end the Tudeh Party worked to try and keep Mossadegh in office during the coup. In fact, on August 15, four days before the eventual coup, Tudeh supporters in the military helped to thwart the first coup attempt on Mossadegh (Chaqueri 2001). However, this inadvertently had the effect of allowing the coup attempt on the 19th of August to succeed. After the Tudeh party members learned of the coup they began to demonstrate and call for the Shah to be removed from power as well as a change from the constitutional monarchy to a republic in Iran. Despite the fact that Mossadegh was not a supporter of the Shah, he and his cabinet did not support the Tudeh Party's strategy, which led them to order soldiers into the streets to arrest the Tudeh members. This severely weakened the Tudeh Party's network and morale, and the Tudeh leadership called off all preparations to fight another coup attempt (Amooei 2008). A couple of days later Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh was removed from office by General Zahedi by decree of the Shah, and support of the CIA, and MI6. The NF's failure to form alliances that were more than just politically convenient, garner grassroots support from the lower classes, and failure to have a clear vision/consciousness of how a strong national-popular movement could combat the prevailing hegemony were key factors in why Mossadegh was able to be dispossessed from office.

Compared to Mossadegh and the NF, Chavez and his supporters were much clearer about their objective to combat the hegemony of their time. As a result Chavez developed a support base that was much more aligned with his administration's worldview, and much more resolute in its support for his project. Chavez's rise to prominence was predicated on his stance against neoliberalism, and this meant that his policies and the proposals in his campaign were more narrowly defined than the NF's broad policy goals to nationalize oil and move away towards a constitutional monarchy. This meant that once Chavez was in office and had begun his policy initiatives, his support base was not as fluid as that of Mossadegh. No conflict, such as the one between Kashani and Mossadegh could be taken advantage of by Chavez's opponents. The reasons for this had a lot to do with Chavez's support from the Bolivarian Circles. Bottom-up support was therefore critical.

Chavez won the presidency of Venezuela by running as the head of the Fifth Republic Movement (MVR). The MVR was formed in 1997 as a left-wing socialist party that was committed to the Bolivarian Revolution and represented the lower classes of Venezuelan society. This meant that the party received most of its support from what are now termed Bolivarian circles, which are grassroots organizations that bring together community leaders and neighbours throughout Venezuela's shantytowns and villages. In 2001 the Chavez administration passed policy that declared Bolivarian organizations autonomous and decentralized from the state government (Lopez 2005). The goal of Bolivarian circles was to decentralize the Venezuelan government, and the Chavez administration passed several policies to ensure this was the case.

Bolivarian circles throughout Venezuela conduct social and political activism intended to aid the disenfranchised population of Venezuela. Activities include providing food and after school care for lower class families along with supporting small local business. The Chavez administration helped in this endeavour by creating a line of credit for small businesses that were owned by previously disenfranchised populations, such as low-income Venezuelans, women, indigenous peoples, and other minorities (Sanchez 2003). Chavez's anti-neoliberal rhetoric and his association with Bolivarian circles made

him very popular with the lower classes of Venezuelan society and the intellectual left-wing of Venezuela. These same attributes also made Chavez despised amongst the business elite of Venezuela and its US allies.

In effect, Bolivarian circles are the practical manifestation of the concept of “participatory democracy” that was laid out in the 1999 constitution (Ellner, 2004). The concept had been established as the main tenet and tool for social transformation. When the new constitution was ratified, it initially mobilized over 700,000 Venezuelans to become organized into Bolivarian circles across both rural and urban Venezuela (Lopez 2005).

In addition to Bolivarian circles, many other Chavez administration policy initiatives worked to de-centralize power and fulfill campaign promises to the lower classes, keeping Chavez highly popular amongst the rural and urban poor. The 1999 constitution also contained a highly contentious provision that forbade PDVSA from ever becoming privatized. The Venezuelan bourgeoisie opposed this provision on several ideological and economic grounds, but the majority of the Venezuelan citizenry saw this provision and Chavez’s attempts to reorganize OPEC as positive. By maintaining that PDVSA was part of the Venezuelan government and by reorganizing OPEC, Venezuela was able to receive a far better price for its oil abroad (Gott, 2000). The revenue generated by PDVSA and through the re-organization of the Venezuelan budget, allowed Chavez to fulfill many of his campaign promises to the lower classes of Venezuela by funding many social programs that raised the standard of living amongst Venezuelans (Vanden, 2003).

The new constitution also moved to decentralize the government in the areas of education, health care, and agriculture, giving communities greater power over how to organize these sectors. The most crucial aspect was governmental funding of the education department of Venezuela. By funding the education system, the education and consciousness of lower-class Venezuelan peoples were raised. In addition to direct educational programs, such as opening more schools and daycare centers, many stipulations were made in the new constitution that encouraged grassroots educational

organization. Several neighbourhoods were provided with the resources to create local community centres where a multitude of resources could be accessed, ranging from books to medical help.

Three main stipulations introduced into the new constitution regarding health care included: i) the definition of health and the role of the state, ii) the type of health care system, and iii) how the health care system was to be financed (Feo & Siqueira, 2004). In the new constitution health or the right to health care was defined as a social right (not a civil right, as civil rights are individualist in nature) and it affirmed that the state has an obligation to provide and promote health care for all citizens of the state. To accomplish this, the government was required to create a health care system that is decentralized and participatory, and the focus of the system was to provide research and funding for prevention of illnesses. Funding for the health system was to be paid by the state through various forms of taxation (Feo & Siqueira, 2004).

Another alternative included the government-sponsored health care program *Misión Barrio Adentro* (Inside the Neighbourhood), which provided Venezuela with an alternative to the privatizing neoliberal trend in health care (Muntaner et al, 2006). *Misión Barrio Adentro's* goal was to meet the constitutional requirements of health as a social right through a public health care system that spans all levels of care. The program is described as being based on the principles of equity, universality, accessibility, solidarity, multi-sectored management, cultural sensitivity, participation, and social justice (Muntaner et al, 2006). The seeds of the program lay in the new constitution of 1999, and its benefits and span have continually increased since then.

The program is run in conjunction with the Cuban government, which sent Cuban physicians to various marginalized neighbourhoods in Caracas. After the initial success of the program, its reach was extended to other municipalities with the intended goal of organizing a national Primary Health Care Program, which culminated in the provision of free health care in hundreds of Venezuelan *barrios* by over 20,000 Cuban health personnel and a large number of Venezuelan health professionals. Reluctance on behalf of the Venezuelan medical establishment to participate in the program meant that the

Venezuelan government had to provide health care training with the goal of eventually replacing all of the Cuban personnel with local Venezuelans (Muntaner et al, 2006).

Overall, the *Misión Barrio Adentro's* initiative was to provide immediate care by creating health centers in poor neighbourhoods (by 2006 over 2,000 planned community centers had been built in poor neighbourhoods). In addition, the pre-existing primary health care system was incorporated into the program. Community health centers were provided with a health team consisting of at least one physician, a community health worker, and a health promoter, and were equipped with medications to be distributed at no cost to patients (Muntaner et al, 2006). Social work was also conducted to prevent illness through daily surveys and consultations of people in the *barrios* by the health workers (who are required to come from or live in the neighbourhoods they work in).

Another key step in the decentralization of the Venezuelan government was to establish institutional change regarding land reform and the agrarian system of Venezuela. This again was instituted in the new constitution of 1999. In the new constitution legislators stipulated several clauses that dealt directly with agrarian reform (Ellner, 2008). These stipulations can be summarized by drawing off of the information provided by Ellner (2008, 2004), Magdoff (2008), Ramachandran (2006), Gott (2004), and Hawkins (2003)¹⁴. To briefly summarise, the new constitution moved Venezuela away from old policies that focused on commercial crops for export, where the rewards of the land were appropriated disproportionately to the owning class of Venezuela and

¹⁴ Eight Stipulations:

- i) State should promote sustainable agriculture
- ii) State is responsible for the food security of the citizenry
- iii) Promotion of financial and commercial measures and interventions with regard to technology transfer, land tenure, infrastructure and training
- iv) The State is responsible for the promotion of conditions that make it possible to create employment opportunities, and maintain the well-being of the citizenry
- v) State needs to compensate domestic agricultural industry by providing benefits, and state protection;
- vi) Large estates are detrimental for society, and that measures should be taken to convert these estates into productive units.
- vii) Nationalization of water, all waters within the Venezuelan borders become the nation's property and are public domain.
- viii) State has an obligation to promote the rational use of land, for the benefit of the Venezuelan citizenry.

transnational corporations, to policies that were far more beneficial for the majority of Venezuelans. These changes in the constitution necessitated further changes in legislation and social institutions. Legislation regarding agrarian reform, the Law on Land and Agrarian Development, was passed in November 2001 and implemented in December 2002 (Ramachandran, 2006). The legislation called for a limit on how much land a single entity could hold, raised taxes on larger estates, and redistributed land to the poor and working class. The main features of the Law on Land and Agrarian Development were that it provided for a land ceiling, a tax on land not currently in use, and the redistribution of land to the poor (Ellner, 2008). These changes were opposed by the owning class, and the policies were battled in the Supreme Court until the Chavez administration was able to fully implement the new law. Through this act, land reform sovereignty was given back to the people of Venezuela, who now had control of their own food supply.

The de-centralization of the government and the empowerment of the lower classes strengthened Chavez's alliances and allowed for strong popular-democratic sentiments to grow. This was of the utmost importance, as these were the people (organized by Bolivarian Circles) that came out into the streets after Chavez had been removed from office and demanded his return. The importance of grassroots organization is that it provides what Gramsci (1988: 35) termed "organic cohesion" to the counter hegemony. Grassroots organizations forge relationships among leaders, intellectuals, and the citizenry, whereby understanding and knowledge are based on common goals and passions. Through this interaction "between governed and governing, between led and leaders...one achieves the life of the whole which alone is the social force, one creates the historical bloc" (Gramsci, 1988: 350). Chavez, whose biography is much different to Mossadegh's aristocratic upbringing, grew up in a small village in a lower class family. Chavez experienced the ramifications of unjust economic policies throughout his early life, and thus had an insider perspective as to the issues faced by the lower classes (Ellner 1999). This perspective allowed him to organize and work with community leaders to create new policies that would be beneficial to lower class

Venezuelans. The Chavez administration's promotion and support of grassroots organization helped Chavez form the alliances and reciprocity that could lead to a new historical bloc, replacing the corrupt two-party system that had been in place for over half a century.

Looking back at the coup theory literature, specifically Ibrahim (2009), it can be seen that in general, coup attempts arise if there is a challenge to the status quo or to the prevailing hegemony. This could mean one of two things: one is that the population is disenchanted with the status quo and its representatives in office, or as was the case in both of both Iran and Venezuela, the popular forces are able to gain control of the state apparatus (through political-democratic means) in a war of position and the groups who had benefited from the status quo look to take back control of the political system. The outcome of the coup can be narrowed down to how effectively the competing forces can wage either a war of position or a war of manoeuvre.

In both Iran and Venezuela, the popular forces looked to wage a war of position, as they did not have the resources or the belief in waging a war of manoeuvre. The coup against Mossadegh succeeded while the one against Chavez failed because Chavez had formed sound, effective alliances that strengthened the popular-democratic historical bloc through the waging of a war of position. Mossadegh's plea to the United Nations, his defence of the Iranian policies at The Hague, and his belief that the best way to obtain the benefits of the oil revenues was by using the already existing Iranian political system to nationalize the oil industry all illustrate his belief in waging a war of position. However, unlike Chavez, Mossadegh did not engage or foster grassroots organizations in Iran. Mossadegh wanted to use the prevailing hegemony's own institutions against it to create change, but his change came from a centralized point of view, focused at the top. Chavez, on the other hand moved to de-centralize power in Venezuela, and encouraged grassroots organizations to take on more responsibility within their own communities. Grassroots programs are needed to inform the people of why the policy initiatives are needed, who is in opposition to them, and who stands to gain from an alternative form of the societal organization. It was the combination of the state apparatus and the

grassroots organizations that were responsible for spreading the knowledge to the people, and through these different organizations/institutions the coup attempt was deterred in Venezuela. Fighting a war of position from a purely subordinate position is extremely difficult and having some control over a major organizing institution in society is necessary for the objectives of the popular forces to be relayed to as many people as possible. This is important for political-cultural formation and, as explained by Gramsci (1971) when discussing the collective will, is manifested throughout history. “Any formation of a national-popular collective will is impossible, unless the great mass of peasant farmers bursts simultaneously into political life” (Gramsci 1971: 123). The point to be taken and its relation to the Iranian and Venezuelan coups is that an instrument for change cannot be effective if it leaves the collective will in a primitive phase of formation. The failure to expand organizations to cover a nation-wide collective will in essence lead to the dismantling of the collective into individual wills, which can potentially take conflicting paths (Gramsci 1971). Gramsci states that “All history from 1815 onwards shows the efforts of the traditional classes to prevent the formation of a collective will of this kind, and to maintain "economic-corporate" power in an international system of passive equilibrium.” (1971: 123). In Iran the national-popular movement failed due to internal competition. The social forces in Iran lined up to splinter the national popular factions along political, religious, and urban/rural schisms, leading to a flawed strategy to consolidate a collective will. In Venezuela the social forces involved in the popular-democratic movement were much more unified, and this coupled with a strategy of using grassroots organization to bring about a collective will made the Venezuelan popular-democratic movement much stronger than the Iranian one.

The Influence of new Technology/Media

The final point of examination regarding the two coups is the role that technology and the media played in the events and how it affected the outcomes of each coup. Marx (1999) believed that those in charge of the mode of production had a significant advantage and increased control over how consciousness and prevailing ideas are formed

in society. In most contemporary societies the media system is an instrument for the production of knowledge and consciousness. Within a capitalist social formation, the ruling class has unequal access to the media and can perpetuate its hegemony while preventing new historical blocs from forming. Therefore, the media has both an economic as well as political cost and value, and is inevitably an object of competition for control. In this section it will be shown that changes in technology, specifically access to technology from the 1950s to the 2000s played a role in Chavez's ability to withstand the coup attempt.

Looking back at the Iranian coup, just prior to the coup attempt on Mossadegh the U.S. and Britain decided that the communist threat to Iran should be emphasized rather than the retrieval of oil. The U.S. and British governments used BEDAMN, which was a media propaganda organization created and ran by the CIA and MI6 with help of their domestic allies to discredit Mossadegh and his administration (Mossadegh, 1981). This propaganda war was used to link Mossadegh to the Soviet Union, despite the fact that Mossadegh was politically liberal. This act set up the context for the two opposing historical blocs, as the British and U.S. governments had now drawn Mossadegh into the Cold War and the geo-political dynamics and consequences that accompanied it. In fact, in Mossadegh's memoirs, Mossadegh (1981) states that a key reason why a coup did not occur earlier than 1953 was that the domestic forces (monarchists, segments of the army) in Iran, who *believed* the discourse of Mossadegh as a communist, were afraid of going forth with coup plans until Joseph Stalin had passed away. The domestic and a large proportion of the international opposition were weary of the retaliation from Stalin despite Mossadegh having *no relation* with him; this was the strength of the media narrative.

Within Iran itself, the CIA organized with domestic forces to wage a local propaganda war against Mossadegh (Kinzer, 2003). The combination of the domestic and international media's propaganda war was too much for Mossadegh to counter. Mossadegh had no tools or resources at his disposal to combat the hegemony of the western powers. It got to the point that the CIA controlled four-fifths of the media in

Tehran, allowing it to publish news articles, cartoons, along with news and radio broadcasts that delegitimized Mossadegh (Kinzer, 2003). Facing this onslaught of propaganda, the Iranian populous started to at best become apathetic to Mossadegh, and at worst, wanted him out of office. The coup perpetrators were successful in using their hegemonic power to strengthen their own historical bloc, and were much more unified than the national-popular faction that Mossadegh hoped to build. The CIA tactic was to form the alliances with the domestic forces that would take the fight to Mossadegh and due to their financial and technological advantages they were able to quash the evolution of the national-popular organization that Mossadegh needed to build.

The NF's only chance to fight back against the coup perpetrators was to form very strong domestic alliances. The one group that could have helped the NF achieve this was the Tudeh Party. However, due to tensions between the Tudeh and the NF over the role of the Soviet Union in the Iranian politics, the Tudeh Party actually ended up weakening Mossadegh's support (Chaqueri, 2001). The irony of the situation for Mossadegh and the NF was that internationally he was losing support due to British and U.S. government allegations that he was a pawn for the Soviet Union, while domestically he was losing support due to his lack of relations with the Soviet Union and the Tudeh Party. If Mossadegh had had the resources and the general population had been able to access certain media forms, the NF could have demonstrated this irony to the citizenry and exposed the propaganda, helping Mossadegh attempt to hold on to the office. However, due to the lack of resources available to him, Mossadegh could not deal directly with the lower classes of Iran, especially with the rural population. In his memoirs (1981) Mossadegh states that he could not communicate with rural Iran and was dependent on intermediaries. The only form of communication that he had was print media as very few people outside of Tehran had even a radio. The issue with print media, especially in 1950s Iran, was that it was relatively slow to disseminate information, making it difficult to mobilize populations quickly, which is needed in when combating a fast moving coup attempt against a prevailing hegemony that has much better lines of communication. Lacking communication and thus being dependent on intermediaries left the NF and

Mossadegh in a difficult situation, as Mossadegh's "once-unchallenged position as leader of the nationalist movement grew increasingly precarious" (Gasirowski 1987: 12). Departures from the NF by key figures such as Kashani, Makki and Baqai, coupled with the lower class support they influenced, left the NF weakened. In addition, the defection of these leaders to the opposition also eroded Mossadegh's power in parliament (Gasirowski 1987). These technological and organizational disadvantages for the NF made it difficult for national-popular sentiment to become cohesive enough that it could potentially lead to a new historical bloc. The CIA and the Shah were able to use the media and other resources to perpetuate their hegemony. This action created a narrative where the majority of Iranians were not initially angered by the illegal removal of Mossadegh from office. On the other hand, the opposition to Mossadegh had a very tangible consciousness of what the consequences of the NF's new policies would be for them. They stood to lose their personal wealth, social status, and political influence due to the nationalization of the oil economy. For the lower classes and the majority of the Iranians, the consequences of the Mossadegh policies and the true reasons why he was being targeted by the U.S. and British governments and the Iranian ruling elite were not clear. Confusion, disorganization, schisms, and infighting amongst the Mossadegh supporters and the apathy throughout the populous weakened any chance of a new historical bloc emerging. If the NF had had access to the same technology that Chavez and his supporters had access to, it would have been easier for Mossadegh to disseminate information throughout the population and the national-popular forces would have been more unified, focused, and better able to combat the ruling hegemony.

In Venezuela, media technology was also used by the coup perpetrators, however in this instance the incumbent also had media resources to combat the prevailing hegemonic discourse. The tactics used by the opponents of Chavez to delegitimize his administration included launching 'general strikes' to create chaos and disrupt the economy, along with the use of the media to create an unflattering narrative of the Chavez administration (Ellner, 2005). The international media vilified Chavez for his rebuke of neoliberal policies, with major U.S. newspapers, including the *New York Times*,

The Wall Street Journal, and the *Washington Post*, running articles that portrayed Chavez as a dictator (Byerly, 2006). The U.S. government began to publicly show its concern for the events in Venezuela, questioning the Chavez administration's commitment to democracy (Gott, 2000). In addition, the NED, an agency of the U.S. government, quadrupled its funding for the Venezuelan opposition party in the year leading up to the coup attempt (Tucker, 2004: Appendix 3, P.1).

Domestically the media, specifically Venevisión (owned and operated by Gustavo Cisneros, a prominent Chavez opponent), looked to de-legitimize and turn popular opinion against Chavez. The first concrete example to illustrate the influence of the media in the Venezuelan coup occurred on the eve of the coup. The private media outlets claimed that the strikes were being run totally by the unions who were upset with the totalitarian initiatives of the Chavez administration. These outlets included the *Associated Press* and *Reuters* (Byerly, 2006). However, no one mentioned what the initiatives were, and if they had, a different story would have been told that was contrary to the notion of Chavez as a dictator. The initiatives that the Chavez administration had wanted passed were for the unions to have the elections to determine their leadership. This led the current union leaders to oppose Chavez, as they did not want to give up their existing power (Hawkins, 2003). This was not reported in the private media, as it would be a challenge to the hegemony of capitalism, which sees 'true' freedom and democracy as only products of capitalism. The Chavez administration was trying to bring electoral democracy to the unions, but the union leaders, who were also members of the ruling elite, wanted to maintain control. In fact, two months before the coup, the Venezuelan union leaders facilitated talks between the opposition leaders and the NED to discuss the coup plans (Gacek, 2005). Jones (2008) states that according to Chavez ally Jorge Garcia Carneiro (who was taken prisoner at Fuerte Tiuna), several coup perpetrators (including General Enrique Medina Gomez, Venezuela's military attaché in America) had told him that the plot had been planned for over nine months. Thus the media reports that the general strikes were only about union unhappiness with Chavez's "totalitarian" policies were false. Gustavo Cisneros, head of Venevisión, helped to organize the coup attempt

against Chavez and accordingly the media reports emanating from Venevisión regarding the strike were deliberately misleading. This was the first in many falsehoods portrayed by the private media in Venezuela.

On the day of the coup itself, the private media was instrumental in helping the coup perpetrators remove Chavez from the presidential palace. The private media, in conjunction with the leaders of the coup, claimed that Chavez had resigned with the acknowledgement that he had caused the killings at the palace (Gottberg, 2004). However, as was shown in the documentary (*The Revolution will not be Televised* 2002), the shootings were an optical illusion created by Venevisión. The private media showed the Chavez supporters shooting from a bridge at the people on the street below the bridge. However, in the documentary, they pulled the camera back and showed that no one was walking below the bridge, and in fact, it was the Chavez supporters who were being fired upon from above. Snipers were shooting at them from the apartment buildings. This information is confirmed by Carneiro, who says that coup perpetrators had indicated to him that there had been a plan dating back over a year to kill marchers with snipers as a way to ensure fewer deaths in the event of a coup (Jones 2008). Lucas Rincón Romero, the highest ranking military officer, confirmed this information in his testimony to the National Assembly and named Vice Admiral Héctor Ramírez as a key organizer of the coup attempt. On the day of the coup Ramírez recorded a message for the private media (including CNN correspondents) a few hours *prior* to the shootings that accused Chavez of killing innocent bystanders and calling for his resignation. This message was then broadcast after the shootings occurred (Jones 2008). Brigadier General Nestor Gonzalez also went on the private networks to call on Chavez to step down, with the effect that Chavez was forced to remain in Venezuela instead of continuing on to his planned presidential visit to Costa Rica. This was deliberate, as Gonzalez knew that a coup was going to occur and wanted Chavez to be in Venezuela for it.

It is clear that a main weapon for the opposition to Chavez was the private media networks. However unlike in Iran, Chavez had access to a substantial public broadcast system. The Chavez administration had been using the public airwaves since his election

victory to engage the public in discourse about the organization of Venezuelan society (Yel 2004). Chavez himself hosted a weekly question and answer program, which helped engage and mobilize the lower classes of Venezuelan society. The coup perpetrators were aware of this resource and therefore one of the first acts of the opposition was to locate and take over the public television stations (*The Revolution will not be Televised* 2002). By disconnecting the Chavez administration's link to the public, the opposition ensured that only the private media version of the events was broadcast. Thus Chavez was portrayed as a killer, allowing the opposition to gain broader support amongst the military and the public, thereby officially starting the coup.

The coup perpetrators were conscious of the power of the media and the need to shape public opinion to maintain hegemony. Throughout history media that reaches a wide audience has been the dominion of the ruling class, as was seen in the Iranian coup where Mossadegh had no avenue to combat the falsehoods spread about him in the media. The only recourse counter-hegemonic forces had in the past had been direct confrontation with the prevailing hegemony. In modern societies however, with the advent of new technology, new forms of media and access are available to counter-hegemonies, allowing them to fight the hegemonic narratives and discourses through alternative media sources (the Internet being a key component, along with the ease at which writings can be printed and disseminated, and the greater access people have to a broader range of TV and radio programs) that can be accessed more readily by a large proportion of the population than in the past.

In the Venezuelan case, the Chavez administration gained control of the political system and the media resources that came with it (Byerly, 2006). In addition, new technologies allowed Bolivarian Circles to provide knowledge and information to the lower classes of Venezuelan society, with the intended goal of creating class-consciousness and a popular-democratic counter-hegemony (Gottberg, 2004). By educating people about their rights as citizens given to them by the 1999 constitution, class-consciousness was fostered through a bottom-up approach, not a top-down approach (which is what Mossadegh tried to do). The reason that this higher level of

consciousness was achieved in Venezuela is due to the greater amount of resources and access to media technology that was available to Chavez's supporters.

In Iran, the international/Iranian media were used by the Iranian ruling class to justify the removal of Mossadegh from power. To counteract the hegemonic knowledge that is produced by those in power, the counter-hegemonic knowledge must be disseminated through the use of alternative forms of media. Otherwise the majority of people are not educated regarding what policies entail and how they affect their daily lives, and the existing hegemony will always be able to exert its dominance on society.

In Venezuela, due to new avenues of information, a higher level of the class-consciousness was achieved by the Venezuelan citizenry, and this was a major reason why the popular-democratic forces in Venezuela were able to withstand the coup attempt. Public television stations were used for the purpose of building class-consciousness and informing the working class about the rights that they were given by the constitution. In Iran, this was not available to Mossadegh, as he did not control the public airwaves in Iran, and even if he did the reach of them was minimal, as very few people in rural Iran had access to television. People started to become more aware of their position in society and the rights they had (Ellner, 2004). In addition, the increased education about the rights afforded to them by the constitution allowed for the backlash against the coup to form. Before the working class had paid little attention to politics and saw coups as being inevitable and out of their realm of influence. But by then the people knew their rights and marched onto the palace to demand that Chavez be reinstated, asserting that it was unconstitutional to remove a president without a referendum (Igatura et al 2005). This type of information and education would not have been available to the working class without an increased funding for the social programs.

The challenge was that despite Chavez's access to public TV and radio stations, in the international realm he was relatively isolated (Yel, 2004). This illustrates the importance of creating strong domestic grassroots organizations that can withstand international pressure. Bolivarian Circles were then a key component to the resistance to the coup, and a key component to alternative forms of information. Bolivarian Circles

organized through the internet and spread information through websites. Other examples of unconventional media that were used to counteract the coup are websites such as Vhealdines.com or Trinicenter.com that provided a counter balance to the ideas of the ruling class in Venezuela (Igatura et al, 2005). Were it not for the independent Internet news sources, the developing story in Venezuela would not have been made public. For example, initially the private media refused to report the massive rallies calling for Chavez's return to office. However, once unconventional sources had reported it, a snowball effect occurred, with more and more people joining the rallies and making it impossible for the private media to ignore them any longer (Gottberg, 2004). Without those sources, the rallies would not have become as large nor as influential as they did, the popular-democratic forces would have been quashed as it was in Iran, and the trajectory of Venezuelan society would have been put on course with the prevailing hegemony of neoliberalism. The Internet is such a technological leap that it cannot yet be fully controlled by the ruling class of the society and as such poses a threat to this class because it provides a resource that a greater amount of people can use to create and disseminate knowledge. Technology is merely a tool, however tools that are backed up by organized alliances with concrete goals and aspirations for societal change have the potential to be effective instruments for change. As with any technology however, there is also the potential that it will eventually be co-opted by the prevailing hegemony.

An example to show how the popular-democratic movement in Venezuela used the media and how they were aware of the power of the media occurred on the 13th of April 2002. On this day several groups of demonstrators lay siege to the various TV channels in the capital. The reason for this reaction was that in the days following the coup, the media decided not to represent the adverse reaction of the popular sectors to the overthrow of Chavez (Gottberg, 2004). The demonstrators had no existence in the Venezuelan corporate media, and Venevisión aired cartoons while in the streets people were fighting against the transitional government. The Chavez administration supporters demanded that the stations inform its audience of what was going on in the country. Some stations agreed to transmit the demonstrator's message, however they only sent out

images without sound, or had disclaimers displayed saying that these images were being transmitted by force (Gottberg, 2004). The interesting point from this is not the media portrayal, but the fact that the demonstrators demanded that they be represented. This reveals the emerging consciousness of the popular-democratic supporters, and the knowledge they had that some sort of mediation through television guaranteed them a social and political existence.

Mossadegh did not have access to the same technology as Chavez, and did not support grass-roots organization in the same manner. Thus, class-consciousness was not fostered in Iran to the same degree that it was in Venezuela, which weakened Mossadegh's alliances. To fight the dominant hegemony and its detrimental consequences, alternative ways to organize society need to be understood by a relatively large percentage of the population. Grassroots education and alternative media are effective tools to spread information. The power of the media in shaping the ideas of the people is extraordinary, and with new technological advances it is no longer a tool that is simply used by those in positions of power. It is much more difficult for the ruling class to have a monopoly on the media in modern societies, making it harder for the ruling class to create the narratives that abolish the political rationality of the poor and working class, labelling them violent and ignorant of how economies work while also portraying them as the 'mob'. This is key, as hegemony works through both consent and coercion, and if counter-hegemonic forces can be portrayed through the media as a 'gang' or a 'mob' then the dominant hegemony can obtain legitimized support from the rest of the populous. However, if alternative media is used to debunk the myth that a counter-hegemony is merely an irrational mob, and portray themselves as 'civil society,' then the counter-hegemony will garner more support, eventually leading to more and more alliances being formed and the potential for a new historical bloc emerges.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

The preceding analysis of Iran and Venezuela used the alternative coup theory outlined in the theoretical literature review. This alternative approach uses Gramscian concepts to analyse the resistance to the coups by examining the geopolitical, economic, social, and technological context in which resistance is formed. Through this analysis, four main variables emerge that explain the differing outcomes of the Iranian coup of 1953 and the Venezuelan coup of 2002. The first of the four key variables identified in this thesis is the strength of hegemony and the relation between the dominant international and domestic ruling forces. The conclusion from this variable is that, in the Iranian case, the dominant international hegemony had a more focused agenda and a more intimate relation with the domestic ruling class than in the later Venezuelan case. In 1953 the US, and especially the British, were intent on Mossadegh's removal, and mobilized a lot of their resources to remove him from office. By the early 2000s, the US and British governments were still more focused on Middle Eastern geopolitics, fighting wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the removal of Chavez was an ancillary goal. This "distraction" gave Chavez and the Venezuelan popular-democratic forces a distinct advantage, as the opposition they faced was weaker than the one Mossadegh's supporters had to contend with.

The second and third key determinants identified are Chavez and Mossadegh's supporter's class composition and counter-hegemonic strategies. These two factors are highly intertwined and focus more on the effects caused by Mossadegh and Chavez's plans and actions. The class composition of the popular forces' leadership and grassroots constituencies is important to know when discussing how cohesive and unified each popular force was. The historical record shows that Mossadegh's supporters came from a wide range of classes, but were mostly composed of the middle class (petty bourgeoisie). Chavez, on the other hand, garnered most of his support from the lower classes of Venezuelan society and grassroots organizations called Bolivarian Circles. The importance of this difference is that in both societies the majority of the people belonged to the lower classes yet, organizationally, Chavez enjoyed a more widespread support

amongst the popular forces due precisely to the organized influence of the Bolivarian circles.

In contrast with the Venezuelan case, Mossadegh and the NF had to make alliances with leaders who represented less organized and mobilized lower classes to gain their support. Using exclusively a top-down approach to stimulate societal change is risky, as the Iranian case showed: the NF and Mossadegh were too reliant on other leaders, due in part to the fact that they did not have the resources and access to reach and mobilize the Iranian population outside of Tehran without intermediaries. If personal relationships with intermediaries became strained (either through pre-existing cultural/political/religious conflicts or aggravation by the coup perpetrators) then an entire section of the NF's base was lost. This was clearly the case when the CIA hired street gangs to pretend to be Mossadegh supporters and had them harass Islamic clerics and vandalize mosques in an effort to create a schism between Mossadegh and Ayatollah Kashani. Losing Kashani's support meant that Mossadegh lost popular support amongst the rural religious poor (Kashani's base). The top-down strategy used by the NF was clearly a failed approach to build a national-popular counter-hegemony, leaving the support base too fickle and deprived of a cohesive goal. The NF's strategy to make alliances with party leaders and community leaders, while failing to have any direct association with people in the communities themselves, made the movement weak as not enough people were mobilized to counteract the coup attempt.

The bottom-up approach to societal change that was used in Venezuela has a much better chance of succeeding as the population's allegiances to an organization are more organic and not based solely on political machinations by a leadership that is not as close or accountable to its grassroots constituency. This bottom-up approach gave the Chavez administration a transformative aspect, which the NF lacked due to Mossadegh's and other NF leader's personal history of entrenchment within the Iranian political system. In Otero's (2004) typology of leadership types, popular leaders in Iran were either corrupt-opportunist or charismatic-authoritarian; while in Venezuela Chavez promoted a democratic-participatory leadership and modes of participation among the grassroots. The "leadership types" variable in political-cultural formation, therefore,

cannot be analyzed in isolation from “modes of participation” by the grassroots: it is a relational variable between leaders and led.

The Venezuelan popular-democratic leadership was thus more intertwined with grassroots organizations, and was therefore more trusted by the general population. This is why the class composition of Chavez’s supporters is intricately linked with a popular-democratic counter-hegemonic strategy. The Chavez administration, on the other hand, had a much more intimate relationship with his constituencies, directly engaging them through the public radio and TV stations and visiting local community centers in person. In addition, Chavez passed several policy initiatives regarding education, health, and land reform that helped strengthen local communities and de-centralize the Venezuelan government. These public policies allowed for a bottom-up approach to flourish, with Bolivarian Circles as the key component, which helped keep Chavez in power and the Venezuelan popular-democratic project alive.

The last key factor discussed in this thesis relates to the technological context in which the two coups occurred. During the 1950s in Iran, the resources that were available to the NF and the types of media that the general population had access to made it more difficult to conduct a bottom up approach. The NF felt that it had no other options but to go through intermediaries to reach the mass population. Chavez, in contrast, was able to utilize the fact that more people had access to media technology to directly engage with the lower classes. Conversely, however, as the details of the Venezuelan coup show, the media was a key tool for the coup perpetrators (as it was in Iran as well). In Venezuela, nonetheless, the popular-democratic movement also had access to media, including television, radio, internet and print sources. The popular-democratic counter-hegemonic forces in Venezuela used this new technology to fight back against bourgeois and imperialist hegemony, and was successful in exploiting this technology to mobilize sufficient Chavez supporters to force the transitional government to return Chavez to power. In essence, greater access to and the speed at which communication could be conducted due to new technologies allowed popular-democratic forces in Venezuela to forge a class consciousness and organized collective action of resistance much more quickly than Mossadegh’s supporters were able to in Iran. This is not to say that the NF could not have done this with the technology available to it in

1950s Iran. But the access and resource imbalance between the NF and the prevailing hegemony meant that there was no room for error for it. Furthermore, the very fact that the Tudeh Party posed a parallel and competitive national-popular faction with an allegiance to the emerging Soviet Union weakened the NF's support enough for it to fail. The key with new technology in the twenty-first century is that it allows for quicker communication between the supporters of the popular movements and their respective leaderships.

The four determinants discussed above were derived from the alternative coup theory proposed in this thesis. It is based on Gramscian concepts and a bottom-up approach to understand the resistance to forced government change. This alternative coup theory has allowed for the exploration of class, history, and culture in Iran and Venezuela. Specifically the relationship between popular movements and societal organizations and institutions was illuminated. Hegemony contains an inherent paradox, in that each ruling-class hegemony represents a broader range of interests than those of the ruling class by including some of those of its popular antagonists. Even bourgeois hegemony, therefore, allows for greater social mobility, political freedoms, and most importantly, access to old and new organizations. Analysis of the ability of the popular forces in Iran and Venezuela showed that Venezuelan society was much more open and prepared for a popular movement to flourish. Venezuelan society was at a point in history where the specific class interests of the ruling class and its imperialist allies had become apparent to the lower classes, thus allowing for a strong popular-democratic movement to form. The greater recognition of the struggle between one's own group and that of the dominant group in Venezuela, as compared to Iran, lead to better organized and influential organizations coalescing to demand better societal conditions from the ruling class.

Another benefit of using the bottom-up approach to coups proposed here was its ability to analyze the relations of force and unity in a society, and how this affects the strength of popular organizations. Popular forces need to be aware of the fundamental configurations in society that cannot be changed easily or rapidly at a specific time in history (i.e. number of cities, urban population, number of firms, etc...), and what aspects of society can be used to further the goals of the popular collective will.

Future research into the comparison of the Iranian and Venezuelan coups would benefit by focusing on questions of ethnicity, given that in both ethnic divisions have played a role in creating class divisions and the schisms in both societies. Thus, while notions of culture were touched upon in this thesis, a much more in-depth analysis of culture and ethnicity are needed to accurately understand the influence that they play in the results of coup attempts and the configuration of popular-led historical blocs. In addition, more research into the aftermath of the coups would be beneficial, especially in terms of the broad regional and geopolitical consequences of each coup. The Iranian coup d'état had profound effects on the historical trajectory of the Middle East. An examination into what the failure of the counter-hegemony entailed for global politics would be beneficial. In Latin America a similar analysis would also be worthwhile, as the success of the popular-democratic counter-hegemonic project in Venezuela has inspired other Latin American states to move away from neoliberalism in several South American states (Silva, 2009).

Studying the aftermath of a 'failed' coup and a 'successful' coup at the domestic level would provide further insights regarding the projects of the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces and their diverging views and policies on the economy and society. By removing the primacy of a top-down focus on the coup perpetrators and focusing also on bottom-up resistance, a greater understanding of societal change becomes apparent. When studying resistance to coups it is necessary to examine the counter-hegemonic forces instead of only attributing societal change to the machinations of the ruling classes and their prevailing hegemony. A bottom-up approach will also give counter-hegemonic forces a legitimized existence and further their popular-democratic projects.

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