



Taking Power: On the Origins of Third World Revolutions

By John Foran

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Analyzing the causes behind thirty six revolutions in the Third World between 1910 and the present, this text attempts to explain why so few revolutions have succeeded, while so many have failed. The book is divided into chapters that treat particular sets of revolutions including the great social revolutions of Mexico (1910), China (1949), Cuba (1959), Iran (1979) and Nicaragua (1979), the anticolonial revolutions in Algeria, Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe from the 1940s to the 1970s, and the failed revolutionary attempts in El Salvador, Peru, and elsewhere.

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Review

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"Foran's magnum opus is a must read for scholars of revolution and social movements, third-world development, and global conflict. It is impressive not only for its breadth in terms of the number and variety of revolutions that he discusses (making it a valuable reference book), but also for its theoretical insight and methodological transparency and rigor." - John G. Dale, George Mason University

"Foran's book has raised the bar for comparative studies of revolution. More than any prior comparative work on revolutions, it takes seriously culture, contingency, and the importance of understanding revolutionary attempts, failures, and reversals. In doing so, Foran has set down a superior foundation for us all. It should be the starting point for all future work on modern revolutions." - Contemporary Sociology

"John Foran's Taking Power presents a sophisticated yet parsimonious account of the great revolutions, near-revolutions, and defeated revolutions of the past century. This carefully crafted and well written book is the most comprehensive study of Third World revolutions now available. Foran's theory challenges one-dimensional theories of Revolution as well as ad hoc accounts of individual revolutions. Scholars - and perhaps revolutionaries - will be debating his ideas for years to come." - Jeff Goodwin, Professor of Sociology, New York University

"John Foran's deftly written, persuasively argued, theoretically sophisticated, and substantively rich text serves as a delightful compendium of the very best and latest thinking about matters revolutionary." - Eric Selbin, Chair of the Political Science Department, Southwestern University

About the Author

John Foran is Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he is also involved with the programs on Islamic and Near Eastern Studies, Latin American and Iberian Studies, and Women, Culture, and Development. His books include Fragile Resistance: Social Transformation in Iran from 1500 to the Revolution (1993), A Century of Revolution: Social Movements in Iran (1994), and Theorizing Revolutions (1997).

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