



### **THE TENETS OF CHANGE**

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Change is complicated. For this reason, no one has found a perfect formula for implementing change. For my research, I set out to explore the tenets of successful movements rather than the formula by looking at several social and political movements, ranging in time from the Abbasid Caliphate to the present day. I focused on the differences between lasting durable change and short-lived revolts that were temporary. As a result of my research, I recognized five principles that are consistently displayed in social and political movements that had long-lasting implications for the society. These principles include underlying disjunction in the society, a catalytic event, leadership that emerges to combat the problem, unification of people behind this leadership, and equitable treatment before the law.

By far the most important principle of a movement is the underlying social and economic disjunction that brings about a sincere desire for change within the society. When looking at the beginning of political change, you see a polarizing difference in the respective parties, a divergence of attitudes; those who believe things should continue as usual and those who see the need for change. Very rarely in a society that is divided does one not have these differences, for there would be no opportunity for change in a culture in which people did not desire for it.

Every sizeable social change has a tipping point where the critical mass is reached, and there is no turning back. These moments can be traced back to a single catalyzing event that was fueled by the underlying disruption in the society. A catalytic event provides an identity or symbol and creates real legs to the movement, an essential step in transforming the desire for change into actualized change. As the name suggests, these events capitalize on the potential energy and emotions of the underlying social and economic inequalities of the society and serve as the call to action. Additionally, these events energize parts of the society that were politically paralyzed and stuck in the status quo, to mobilize and demand change. For better or worse, these pivotal catalytic events transform the emotions of the people into action and are a call to arms.

When a movement fulfills the above points, it is fueled by raw emotions and desires, needing leadership to identify the goals and carry the momentum forward. A divided or nonexistent leadership leads to failure. As the Latin expression 'Dīvide et īpera' illustrates, it is easier to oppress and control a movement when they are small and divided amongst themselves. For this reason, leadership with a singular message is necessary to enact the change demanded by the movement. Without a singular and clearly defined leadership a movement will remain divided and directionless, creating confusion and resulting in chaos.

Under the favorable leadership mentioned above, society unifies and serves as a credible threat to the current system. Demanding and enacting change in many forms, often with actual or threatened violence. It appears that disjunction and violence go hand in hand; the underlying disjunction within society becomes so profound that society finally acts against the legacy of violence and oppression. In a society in which equal protection exists for all people, there would be no disjunction or oppression that would need to be addressed and remedied, and violence would not be felt by the people.

The last and final tenet of change is that change must be significant and meaningful, not merely replacing one dictator or oppressor with another. For a movement to implement lasting and meaningful change, the legal plunder and corruption must end, and equitable treatment and protection under the law must be established and promoted. Failure to end the disjunction and economic plunder will lead to a continuous cycle of attempted change; rinse and repeat.

In conclusion, rather than finding a formula for success, I found five tenets of lasting change: An underlying disjunction in the society, a catalytic event, leadership that arises to combat the problem, a unification of the people behind this leadership, and equitable treatment before the law. Failure will occur if any but the last step, equitable treatment before the law, is not enacted, causing a break down which leads to the movement never gaining traction. A failure to have equitable treatment before the law results in the same socio-economic disjunction that lead to the movement in the first place.