

HST 201: US History F19 (Escobar)

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The Revolution

by [Joe Escobar](#) - Friday, November 15, 2019, 5:12 PM

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Re: Radical, not conservative

by [Clay Noteboom](#) - Sunday, November 17, 2019, 1:21 PM

I see why someone might agree with Carl Degler's view that the revolution was actually a conservative event. Degler cites the fact that daily life after the revolution was very similar to daily life before the revolution. He says that there was a "lack of profound and widespread social and economics change" (Degler 6). He notes that the social classes were still intact.

But I think that Degler is looking through a microscope, not the telescope, of history. I agree with Gordon Wood that the American Revolution was a radical and history-changing event. I think it played a huge part in shaping what America is like today. Just because there was no "internal violence" or rich vs poor conflict here in America, we still did something huge: we broke free from a very powerful country (Wood 11). And

some of the values we hold today were established by our drive for independence. Americans are fiercely independent, and very defensive when their freedoms are threatened (just look at the gun control debate as an example). While the change was not that noticeable up close, from far away, it ignited our spark of fierce independence, which is now part of our cultural mythology.

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Re: Radical, not conservative

by [Natalie Haffner](#) - Saturday, November 23, 2019, 12:04 AM

I really agree with your point about how the revolution may not have seemed to make a huge change right away, it led to the America we know today. It still blows my mind all of the odds that were against us during the revolution, but our strong desire for independence, that Americans still have today, really boosted us toward the victory.

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Re: Radical, not conservative

by [Warren Pavlat](#) - Saturday, November 23, 2019, 11:32 PM

I think this is a really insightful reframing of the debate, and not how I approached this question from the outset. My question in response would be this: to what degree was the revolution itself responsible for this penchant for liberty and independence? While "breaking free" from the strongest power in the world at the time definitely has shaped our cultural psyche, I would argue that a lot of our principles could be traced back to two other things in our history. Firstly, the British themselves. The framework used to develop our government and rights was largely borrowed from British philosophers and politicians. Secondly, I believe that our isolation from the rest of the western world (at the time of the Revolution, we were almost a month away from Europe by boat) helped foster our independence before we were even at war with Britain. It is certainly up for debate though.

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The American Revolution was NOT a conservative movement

by [Isabella Welch](#) - Sunday, November 17, 2019, 2:49 PM

No, I do not believe that the American Revolution was a conservative movement. I believe that the American Revolution was a movement acted upon by anyone who believed that they wanted freedom from Britain. In Carl N. Deglers article, "A New Kind of Revolution Conservatives Can Be Innovators" the main points that I got from his article is that the revolution was based on religion as well as social class issues. He also only states his "argument" once throughout his entire article, "But certainly-for better or for worse-the continuity brought a degree of social and political stability to the new nation rarely associated with the word "revolution" and serves, once again, to illustrate the truly conservative nature of the American revolt." (Page 5, Carl N. Deglers) In Gordon S. Woods article, "The Radicalism of the American Revolution" he brings up how most people think the Revolution was a social struggle stating, "They have tried to describe the Revolution essentially as a social struggle by deprived and underprivileged groups against entrenched

elites." (Page 8, Gordon S. Wood) The revolution was fought by people who believed they deserved freedom of Britain's power. The first political party was created after the signing of the declaration of independence, after the Revolution, 1793, which was created by Thomas Jefferson and it was the Democratic-Republican party.

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Re: The American Revolution was NOT a conservative movement

by [Ethan Dull](#) - Wednesday, November 20, 2019, 10:11 PM

I enjoyed a reading your response. I thought you used quotes well and provided multiple insightful examples from the text. However, I argued that the American Revolution was a conservative movement. When you stated that the revolution was fought by "anyone who believed that they wanted freedom from Britain", I found myself disagreeing. It is my understanding that 'rewards' the government offered soldiers for their service was a significant persuasion factor. Most of Washington's army was poor laboring men or veterans of the French and Indian war. Of course many middle to upper class citizens played their roles by boycotting, but those were not the colonists that fought against the British. Otherwise I think your argument is strong. You provide a lot of facts, which I particularly like, because it strengthens your debate.

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Closet Conservatives

by [Luca Belsito](#) - Sunday, November 17, 2019, 5:38 PM

Carl N. Degler argues the idea that the American Revolution was a conservative movement, to which I agree. He tries to play it off that the American people were innovators as such, however, I feel that is just icing on the cake. He begins his essay by establishing that the Revolution allowed for a separation of church and state, and that many states abolished slavery. Those don't imply conservative tendencies. The Introduction states the, "American Revolution that left untouched the prewar economic and social class structure of an upwardly mobile people."

Degler finally hits home 3 pages into his essay stating, "all cannot be rich, but all have a right to make the attempt." (Degler 3) This argues that people living in the newly formed states had upward mobility, however also establishes that not all people were meant to be rich. Degler's previous statements about slavery and religion prove this: not all states had relinquished slavery, not all states were void of a strong clergy. He later supports his claim through, "It is significant that no new social classes came to power through the door of the American Revolution." (Degler 4) By showing that people are offered upward mobility in writing, and then showing in historical context, Degler has pushed his point across. The majority of the founding fathers, as Degler describes, "chief revolutionists in the western counties were the old leaders" (Degler 4) were in fact the same people that were in charge previously. Thus I stand by Degler's claims, The American Revolution was a conservative movement.

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Re: Closet Conservatives



by [Isabella Welch](#) - Wednesday, November 20, 2019, 10:24 AM

I don't see how that statement made by Degler, "all cannot be rich, but all can have a right to make the attempt." (Delger 3) proves that the Revolution was a conservative movement. Like I stated previously Delger's only comment toward the American Revolution being a Conservative movement lays on page 5 stating, "But certainly-for better or for worse-the continuity brought a degree of social and political stability to the new nation reeky associated with the word "revolution" and serves, once agin, to illustrate the truly conservative nature of the American revolt." other than that he only really talked about the religious aspect of the whole thing. I do not believe that Delger had made a very good point in his article trying to persuade his readers that the American Revolt was conservative. I believe that the word "Revolution" can have different meanings based on who is using it and what the context that is is used for.

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Not Conservative

by [Kaleah Holmes](#) - Monday, November 18, 2019, 11:22 AM

The American Revolution was not a conservative movement. A conservative is averse to change. They would prefer to stay traditional. Our Founding Fathers demanded change. They did not want to continue their routine with Britain. Therefore they changed history. "a momentous upheaval that not only fundamentally altered the character of American society but decisively affected the course of subsequent history." (Page 9 of Was the American Revolution a Conservative Movement?). This Revolution changed everything. A person who is inclined to stay in their traditional life would not set about changing the world.

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Yes to some ideas

by [alex Henshen](#) - Monday, November 18, 2019, 11:25 AM

Yes I agree with delger's claim of religious freedom but not that the revolution was a conservative movement. How we came apron religious freedom could be considered conservative. "Virginia in 1786, in disestablishing the Anglican Church, put no other church in its place and instead passed a law guaranteeing religious freedom."(article 1) The fall of the Anglican church resulted in the idea of separation of church and state. Which is one of the ideas we still live by today and is part of the constitution. He states that, "The ratification of the federal Constitution in 1788 constituted the first step in the acceptance of the principle that a man's religion was irrelevant to government, for the Constitution forbade all religious tests for officeholding."(article 2) All this happened rather peacefully making it seem that it was conservative.

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Re: Yes to some ideas

by [Natalie Haffner](#) - Saturday, November 23, 2019, 8:58 PM

I like this take on the topic. I totally agree with the fact that the religious aspects of the revolution could be taken as a conservative movement, but all in all that was not the underlying cause. Your quote from the second article was one that really stuck out to me cause it made me think about how religion was tied into the revolution and which side of this argument it would ultimately fall on.

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The Revolution Conservative or Radical

by [Ethan Rubus](#) - Monday, November 18, 2019, 5:20 PM

Having read thought both of the articles I side more with Carl N. Degler on that the American Revolution was a conservative movement. One of the first things that Degler mentions is that the revolution started for only limited political and conditional purposes but had social effects that were not anticipated by the leaders during the time. Washington and the other leaders of revolution didn't start the revolution with the intent to radically change everything. This is seen with the Olive Branch Petition that was sent to Great Britain right before the war broke out. If the revolution was a radical event then the Olive Branch Petition would have never been sent.

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Freedom as a major societal change resulting from the American Revolution

by [Emily Fosnight](#) - Monday, November 18, 2019, 6:24 PM

The American Revolution produced significant and deep societal change in America in many different aspects, one of those societal aspects was freedom. The idea of independence, not just from Britain, but from any obligation to another human being. "...we can best understand the revolutionaries' appeal to independence, not just the independence of the country from Great Britain, but, more important, the independence of individuals from personal influence (handout p.13)."

"The revolutionaries wanted to create a new republican world in which 'all offices lie open to men of merit, of whatever rank or condition'" (handout p.14). They wanted to destroy the ideal of monarchical blood lines in positions of power and make it so all men, even the son of the poorest man, would have a chance to obtain office as long as he possessed the proper abilities. "...the revolutionaries believed they were 'so far republican' that they considered 'a man's merit to rest entirely with himself, without any regard to family, blood, or connection'" (handout p.14). In a statement from Thomas Paine, "Virtue is not hereditary" (handout p.14). Among the state constitutions and laws, revolutionaries dismissed and degraded the power of family and hereditary privilege (handout p.14).

On page 13 of the handout, it states, in the Virginia declaration of rights, that men in the new republic would be "equally free and independent," and obtaining property would make them so. They associated having property with independence, and without independence a man would have no public spirit, or influence; and without the peoples' influence, there could be no republic. Jefferson was so keen on this idea that he proposed the state of Virginia grant every man fifty acres that didn't have that many (handout p.13). In doing

so, Jefferson wished men to own land and enough of it to be successful, not only for the economy and good will, but in order to make the republic successful. "In a monarchical world of... multiple degrees of dependency, nothing could be more radical than this attempt to make every man independent" (handout p.13).

"The Revolution became a full-scale assault on dependency." (handout p.13) It came to pass that there were generally two types of people, those who can live of themselves, free men, and those who cannot, servants. "Dependency was now equated with slavery, and slavery in the American world had a conspicuous significance" (handout p.13). Imagine being an indentured servant at this time, now associated with slavery.

"...the revolution suddenly and effectively ended the cultural climate that had allowed black slavery, as well as other forms of bondage and unfreedom, to exist throughout the colonial period without serious challenge. With the revolutionary movement, black slavery became excruciatingly conspicuous in a way that it had not been in the older monarchical society with its many calibrations and degrees of unfreedom; and Americans in 1775-76 began attacking it with a vehemence that was inconceivable earlier (handout p. 15). American's began questioning slavery. Slavery was outlawed with the Northwest Ordinance in 1787, which allowed the creation of 3-5 new states (book p.189). A few years later, Pennsylvania led the way with the gradual emancipation, which said that children born to slaves after a certain date would become free at the age of 28 (book p. 186).

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Re: Dependency

by [Clay Noteboom](#) - Tuesday, November 19, 2019, 7:35 AM

Thank you for that reference to dependency, Emily. It's definitely how I would describe the effect of the revolution on American consciousness (handout 13). Modern-day Americans see dependency as something to be avoided. I think this passionate, ongoing drive towards independence is uniquely American.

Wood, as a "strict constructionist," sees the revolution in the same way (Intro to readings, 120). He argues that the revolution brought about "the independence of individuals from personal influence," and as a result, shaped the way we think (Wood 13). It certainly shaped the way we organized our new government.

Modern-day Americans fear monarchy and big government; they fly flags that say "Don't Tread on Me"; they will vote against their own interests to assert their independence; they protest when they perceive injustice or a loss of rights. They still fight for independence. Conversely, they look down upon those who are dependent on the state for welfare.

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The Revolution was Radical, not Conservative

by [MariAnna Hinojosa](#) - Monday, November 18, 2019, 6:27 PM

While both authors made solid, supported arguments, I tend to agree more with Gordon Wood's view of the American Revolution as a radical revolution. The definition of "revolution" is "a forcible overthrow of a government or social order, in favor of a new system" which is what was intended by the patriots, and what occurred in the end. While Carl Degler made a good point that the revolutionaries were upper class men who already held power and maintained that power after the revolution, I don't agree that that was their main objective for revolt. The fact that the leaders of the revolution were intellectuals with formal education, political support, and financial stability is what I believe allowed the revolution to be as "civil" as it was. They saw the social and political wrongdoings by being under monarchical control and wanted to change that, not only for themselves but also for the "commoners". As Wood said, "The Revolution not only changed the culture of Americans...it made the interests and prosperity of ordinary people--their pursuits of happiness--the goal of society and government." (pg. 11) If the patriots had not intended social change and order for others than themselves, they wouldn't have been so set on protecting the rights of "ordinary" people.

In comparison to other revolts that grew from the lower class and from those with little to no voice or stature, the American Revolution differed as Wood said, "It certainly does not appear to resemble the revolutions of other nations in which people were killed, property was destroyed, and everything was turned upside down." (pg. 8) This is what, I believe, gave this Revolution the upper hand and, in turn, success. The video of the British View of the American Revolution referred, several different times, back to the promise of freedom to the African Americans that joined the British side and the British being their allies, but by gaining their support the Brits believed they could win the war. They didn't mention that the revolution itself paved the way for the freedom of blacks in America. As Wood said, "...it is important to realize that the Revolution suddenly and effectively ended the cultural climate that had allowed black slavery..." (pg. 15)

In conclusion, I believe that the American revolution was not necessarily a conservative movement but a radical movement that has shaped the way that we Americans, even to this day, feel toward government and power. We are free to express our discontent and act on it and make change happen within our communities and country. The spirit of revolution will probably always stay within American culture.

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Shifting Priorities

by [Eric Shoaf](#) - Monday, November 18, 2019, 6:51 PM

At first, yes, the Revolution was a conservative movement. The intentions of the patriots were simply to get out from under the thumb of Crown and be able to govern themselves. But this was more radical than the colonists thought at the time.

The lasting impact of the idea of self government, and representation within the government, led to a shift in American priorities after their freedom was won. The idea of "all men are created equal" did indeed have a lasting impact, and it was a direct result of the revolution. By revolting from the Crown, Americans took control of their destiny, instead of having it be controlled by the king. The new system of government they eventually created reflects this. Our government is a representative government, and any free citizen can hold a position of power. This is a more liberal idea, at least for the time.

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Re: Shifting Priorities



by [Emilia Carpenter](#) - Wednesday, November 20, 2019, 8:57 PM

Super awesome description of the ideas that were floating around during the revolution. I agree with you 100% that at first it was a conservative movement, however I think that they had those intentions the whole time it was just who was involved at the time and what was the values behind it. I think the patriots always wanted to self govern but for different reasons. Some really hated the way that they were being treated and they wanted to change that, but some wanted someone else to just take charge and have it change for them. I think once there was a large number of everyday colonist in the mix, the movement had gone so far radical that it was obvious to some why it is a radical movement. However that conservative start really gets people and is hard for some people to look past.

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The revolution was not radical

by [Karlie Ranck](#) - Monday, November 18, 2019, 7:10 PM

Gordon S. Wood had a very different view of the revolution than I typically thought about it. Whenever I think of revolutions I think of bloodshed, violence, protests, fighting, and so on. I personally don't know much about the American Revolution and just sort of figured there was lots of bloodshed during the revolution; however, Gordon S. Wood convinced me otherwise. I guess most of the revolution was focused around governmental progress. Making speeches, legislative halls, writing learned pamphlets, and so on. This was a very interesting fact that I had just figured was not the case because other revolutions in other countries during that time period were very much filled with bloodshed to a degree. Typically the level of radicalism is gauged by how much the economy and people suffer, but they really did not suffer very much at all compared to other revolutions around that time period in other countries which is why Wood thinks the revolution was not radical. Honestly, I agree with wood. When comparing the American Revolutions to others I would much rather be living in America during the American Revolution. Because of this fact, I agree with Gordon S. Wood.

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Re: The revolution was not radical

by [MariAnna Hinojosa](#) - Friday, November 22, 2019, 12:20 PM

I am a little confused on your stance on the subject. Gordon Wood believed the Revolution was a radical revolution despite it being different from other revolutions that occurred around that time. Like you explained, revolutions had been violent and often fought by the lower class, but that was one of the reasons Wood believes it was radical because social change happened for the lower and upper classes. You state that "Wood thinks the revolution was not radical", but he clearly stated on page 9 of the reading, "It was as radical and social as any revolution in history, but it was radical and social in a very special eighteenth-century sense." I definitely agree with your thoughts on it being a better revolution to live through than others, like the French Revolution for example. Though I believe the American Revolution was a radical revolution full of economic, social, and governmental change that paved the way for the liberties that we enjoy as Americans today.

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The Revolution not a Conservative movement

by [Patryce Miller](#) - Monday, November 18, 2019, 8:05 PM

While both sides give good points I am leaning towards Gordon S. Woods The Radicalism of the American Revolution. He points out that the "...social conditions that generically are supposed to lie behind all revolution-poverty and economic deprivation- were not present in colonial America." "...does not mean that colonial society was not susceptible to revolution." (Was The American Revolution a Conservative Movement? p.8) He said, "Even when we have recognized the radicalism of the revolution, we admit only a political, not a social radicalism." (p.9) I agree with even the textbook agrees with him on page 236 in the conclusion, "...Constitution was fully compatible with the liberty and equality proclaim during the Revolution. Nothing resembling American federalism had ever been tried before." Meaning this was a revolution that was not the usual kind of revolution we heard before in the 18th century. And If you just consider the last part of the quote from the textbook p.236 it said: "Nothing...had ever been tried before." If it was a conservative movement then why did they(colonial American) do something that the never had done before? Isn't that the opposite of conservative? Conservatives being averse to change or innovation and holding traditional values (oxford dictionaries). Making this not a Conservative movement Revolution. And I think Carl N. Degler forgot that the founding fathers did it because of the taxation that England was giving us which is politic and not social. When he was comparing it to other revolution in the timeline use our way of thinking. This is why I disagree with Carl N. Degler and agree with Gordon S. Woods.

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Yes, the American Revolution was a conservative movement

by [Ethan Dull](#) - Monday, November 18, 2019, 8:50 PM

The colonists were not so unlike from common people from the mother land, England. Although the demographic was different, colonists made efforts to retain British culture amongst themselves.

It is evident that white colonists were some of the most "prosperous people under the British Crown". (text 6) Therefore, instead of overthrow an extreme imperial force, they were striving more to be undisturbed by the British. Seeing the revolution from a financial standpoint, the Atlantic ocean was a buzzing trading scene with a lot of money in it. The British was trying to obtain as much of that money as possible, as were other colonial forces like Spain and France. Americans too wanted a big slice of the worlds trading money. In order to do that, they felt it necessary to declare their independence and for their own government that acted as a revised version of their British counterparts.

Although it could be argued that the revolution was radical due to the number of people killed and property destroyed, those are simply aspects of war. The majority of fighting was lower class colonists who were offered reimbursement for their service. Therefore, it is safe to say that some revolutionary fighters were in it for their own personal reasons.

The American Revolution fits the definition of a revolution because there was a violent resistance to an overbearing government and the formation of a new one. However, it was more so an intellectual battle rather than a radical one. Colonists conserved British social practices and the government strived to become a wealthy country that displayed a better example of England.

Sum of ratings: [3 \(1\)](#) 3[Permalink](#)[Show parent](#)[Edit](#)[Split](#)[Delete](#)[Reply](#)**Yes I agree with Carl N. Degler**by [Hunter Schultz](#) - Monday, November 18, 2019, 9:31 PM

So I agree with Carl. N Degler based on how he states his facts and how he backs up those fact more then once. he also shows how many of high ranking people in the military are tied to conservative beliefs. He states that high ranking officials like washington have background of politics wealth and religion that tie them to views of conservative beliefs. Conservative nowadays are looked at som wealthy people who want taxes lowered and less government control. They sometimes are of religious belief especially during the American Revolution. And we have many conservative politicians mainly on the republican side. He states that high ranked/ powerful people in the time of the A.R. And after we're wealthy, involved in politics somewhat, upper middle class and known/popular. he then states "these conservative, upperclassman leaders proclaimed the revolution suffered no repudiation in the course of the struggle. stating his case even more. I also am somewhat conservative myself which effects my choice.

Sum of ratings: [1 \(1\)](#) 1[Permalink](#)[Show parent](#)[Edit](#)[Split](#)[Delete](#)[Reply](#)**Re: Yes I agree with Carl N. Degler**by [Emilia Carpenter](#) - Wednesday, November 20, 2019, 9:03 PM

I am love that you are acknowledging that you are somewhat conservative and that could effect what you chose. I find my self to be leaning toward a more liberal sense in some ways and not in others however I think we forget to take that into view. I agree that the leaders most likely had a conservative driving force but I am not sure if it was a conservative movement since I think the majority of the people who were fighting for change and agreeing were being driven by radical beliefs, Vocabulary.com defines radical belief as "that society needs to be changed, and that these changes are only possible through revolutionary means." which I think stands very true to what the colonist believed. They wanted change, they wanted to have control over their own lives, and they were not going to just sit around and not do anything, so they rallied together and made something happen. I really like your view point however! Great job!

Sum of ratings: [1 \(1\)](#) 1[Permalink](#)[Show parent](#)[Edit](#)[Split](#)[Delete](#)[Reply](#)**Re: Yes I agree with Carl N. Degler**by [Hunter Schultz](#) - Thursday, November 21, 2019, 6:59 PM

I would like to thank you for challenging my view on the subject and so I went and read the new information given out and also took the packet into affect. I looked at the revolution your stance and now having this new information I can agree with you quite a bit. I think the revolution was in some forms driven by radical beliefs of the American people which your backed up definition proves. from what I read the Americans did want change and some people did want to be more free especially the slaves. But unfortunately that didn't happen for most. now challenging my own view from my first post the new information given to us throws out the part where most leaders and powerful were in some forms wealthy and have previous political background as I stated is to an extent true. But they also

weren't qualified and said in the new info around 80% of people in high positions such in war and politics were only there because of there stature not because they were qualified. So again I agree with the American people wanted to be free and wanted change. thank you for making me look at it from another angle and widening my view on the historical event much appreciated.

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Conservative revolution?

by [Natalie Haffner](#) - Monday, November 18, 2019, 9:35 PM

No the revolution was not conservative. Like Gordon S. Wood said, the revolution could be measured by "the degree of social misery or economic deprivation suffered, or by the number of people killed or manor houses burned." He said that when measured this way the revolution would seem conservative, but if measured by "the amount of social change that actually took place by transformations in the relationships that bound people to each other," than the results are different. Yes, with these quotes both sides could be argued, but I think the argument for "no" is stronger. The amount of social change that took place for the revolution should be the biggest indicator, although some may argue the same about deaths or losses is better. I do think that the number of deaths and battle wins and losses are important, I think that a better indicator is the amount of social change. That is why the colonists wanted the freedoms. They wanted to make their own decisions about rules and laws free from the crown, but every revolution has a purpose like this. Just as Wood later said of the American Revolution, "it was as radical and as revolutionary as any in history."

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Re: Conservative revolution?

by [Eric Shoaf](#) - Thursday, November 21, 2019, 4:36 PM

Well, I would disagree with your reasons, because the freedoms the colonists were fighting for, the right to self govern specifically, are more conservative. They wanted to be able to limit the government more, which is a more conservative idea.

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Revolutions are not just for the rich.

by [Samson Maberry](#) - Monday, November 18, 2019, 10:03 PM

The rich don't push a movement any way they please. They can help move it foreword but they can never make one start. in Gordon S. Wood's artical he talks about how the the American revolution was much more far reaching and made a unique democratic society that otherwise was very uncommon for the time period because most revolutions before had been led by the wealthy who just wanted a change and not just the people who would do all the work.

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Re: Revolutions are not just for the rich.



by [Natalie Haffner](#) - Saturday, November 23, 2019, 12:35 AM

I really like this point of view. I never thought about how revolutions before the American one were led mostly by the rich and the American revolutions involved everyone, the rich and poor. I have to disagree with your first statement though. I think that the rich can start a movement. they think that they have this power over everything and that everything should go with their wishes and that can start or move a movement forward.

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I Would Say No, The American Revolution Wasn't A Revolution

by [Devyn Crummett](#) - Monday, November 18, 2019, 10:16 PM

I would say that the American Revolution wasn't a revolution. It was brought up that a revolution usually brings around both Political and Social change. And in the case of the American Revolution I only see it bringing about Political change.

On page 11 Gordon Wood says that a sort of revolution situation existed in many of the colonies, but there was little evidence of those social conditions that we often associate with the Revolution.

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American revolution is a revolution

by [Patryce Miller](#) - Wednesday, November 20, 2019, 7:41 PM

The definition of Revolution is 1. an overthrow or repudiation and the thorough replacement of an established government or political system by the people governed. 2. Sociology. a radical and pervasive change in society and the social structure, especially one made suddenly and often accompanied by violence. Compare social evolution(dictionary.com). The American Revolution did follow the first definition of Revolution making it a revolution. The American colonies overthrow the government England had set up in America. They might not have been like the traditional revolution like the french revolution. where there is a change in social status(handout p.4) but they were a political revolution.

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Re: I Would Say No, The American Revolution Wasn't A Revolution

by [Isabella Welch](#) - Friday, November 22, 2019, 6:34 PM

I have a few concerns about your post. I agreed with the No argument, meaning that I think that the American revolution wasn't a conservative movement. In your post I'm slightly confused as to whether you believe it was specifically a conservative movement or not. I do however believe it was a revolution, hence why its known as The American Revolution. A revolution can have many meanings to it, such as to overthrow a government or social order, or to resolve something.

Sum of ratings: [0 \(1\)](#) 0[Permalink](#)[Show parent](#)[Edit](#)[Split](#)[Delete](#)[Reply](#)**Why I agree with NO (Gordon S. Wood)**by [Emilia Carpenter](#) - Monday, November 18, 2019, 10:38 PM

I have to agree with Gordon S. Wood, I believe the American revolution was actually a radical movement, however I also see that at the beginning of the revolution, it could have been conservative movement. At first in class we talked about how it was the upper class males who were running the revolution, they had the money to go to the meetings and travel and lead. So it makes sense for it to be a Conservative movement because most of them were conservatives. However I believe when more people got involved, it turned radical. Gordon said "The Revolution did not just eliminate monarchy and create republics; it actually reconstituted what Americans meant by public or state power and brought about an entirely new kind of popular politics and a new kind of democratic officeholder." I think that directly links the movement to the radical/democratic side more than it does conservative wise. I watched this video and It really helped me understand what I was already starting to gasp from this essay and class. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-EhHjZ5sdIE> I think it does a good job explaining why it is hard to decipher if the revolution was a conservative movement or not, and that's because it was and wasn't. At the start of the revolution, it was conservative driven, it had a lot of conservative parts too. Like the importance of preserving liberty, and the privileges of provincial communities against centralized states. Then at a pretty big turning point, our "Elite" leaders of the revolution got frustrated with how everything was going, and turned to their fellow colonists for help, that is when the tide turned and it became more of a radical/democratic movement than conservative.

Sum of ratings: [2 \(1\)](#) 2[Permalink](#)[Show parent](#)[Edit](#)[Split](#)[Delete](#)[Reply](#)**The Revolution-Yes to Carl N. Degler's viewpoint**by [Sidney Axtell](#) - Monday, November 18, 2019, 11:10 PM

I mostly agree with Carl N. Degler's viewpoint. Degler explains that through an imaginative use of metaphor, how the final break with England was a new kind of revolution, a "conservative revolution" to save colonial ideas and habits of governing. I believe that the American Revolution was a conservative movement since it focused on maintaining the already existent liberties in the colonies instead of creating new ones. They were fighting to carry on with their lives the way they had been once before. It was an attempt to preserve the democratic leaning that was in the colonies from the very beginning. Degler explains that colonial society only developed equality for white people. It did not change the American society. A specific example Degler uses is, "The American Revolution created a struggle not only for home rule but also one for who should rule at home. This progressive, or conflict, interpretation dominated most of the writings on the American Revolution from 1910 through 1945. During this time progressive historians searched for the social and economic conflicts among groups struggling for political power." (Page 121 in article: Was the American Revolution a Conservative Movement?)

Sum of ratings: [2 \(1\)](#) 2[Permalink](#)[Show parent](#)[Edit](#)[Split](#)[Delete](#)[Reply](#)**Yes: The Revolution Was Conservative in Nature**by [Warren Pavlat](#) - Monday, November 18, 2019, 11:57 PM

I believe the American revolution, on the whole, was not a revolution in the stricter sense. There were obviously social and political changes, however, these changes don't seem to have substantial "depth" to fit the stricter definition of a revolution. When one points to some of the differences between America just after the revolutionary war, and its western European contemporaries, it is important to note that many of these differences originate from America's earlier history.

For starters, the core practitioners of the American Revolution were almost exclusively wealthy, educated, or influential people in the American colonies; and remained as such after independence from Britain (Degler, P 4-5). While many of the ideals put forth by these men were certainly not pro-class stratification, and in a general sense argued for egalitarian principles, no mass transition of real power or wealth actually occurred alongside the revolution. Slaves were not freed at a national level to hold with these high-minded ideas, neither land nor wealth were distributed. Although there was no Monarchy (this was not an entirely new concept to the world, see the Dutch), there were still essentially wealthy and powerful men of the privileged class running the state and controlling the economy.

As for the differences that did exist between post-revolution America and the rest of the western world at the time, it seems to have more to do with its colonial background and piecemeal genesis. The tilt towards religious liberty most certainly had ties to the fact that many of the first waves of "American" colonists came specifically to find sanctuary from religious persecution and enshrined this in many foundational documents at the state level (see Rhode Island). Regarding the general independence and libertarian philosophies of the American revolutionaries, I believe that is largely a product of the geography. Not only were they distant from their European progenitors, weeks away at the time, they also existed in a yet wild and largely untamed or undeveloped land. Self reliance was more dependable in America at this time in history than help from a nation-state administered thousands of miles away.

In conclusion, while things certainly shifted in America at this time, some of these things were set in motion long before Lexington and Concord or the Stamp Act. Other aspects of the Revolution seem to have been limited to ideology, with only meager shifts in governmental structure and the ruling class.

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Yes, the American Revolution was a conservative movement

by [Leon Bohmer](#) - Wednesday, November 20, 2019, 7:52 PM

Yes, the American Revolution was a conservative movement, I say this with a caveat however. It is perhaps more accurate to say, the American Revolution began as a conservative movement, and during the course of intervening events it took on a revolutionary/radical tone. Ultimately the American Revolution did not begin as a push for independence, but rather the colonies organized in order to have grievances of taxation and representation redressed. The Continental Congress, formed to be the voice of the colonies, was not a radical group, they were the most well respected and wealthy men in the colonies, life under British rule had served them well. The congressional delegates used, legal, diplomatic and economic methods, in an attempt to persuade the British government into capitulation and accepting American demands. It was only after the failure of these methods and violence generated by actors, mostly, not under the control of the Continental Congress, that led to an escalation of events that would culminate into a war for independence. A quote by Carl N. Degler, can sum up the American Revolution pretty well, "...wars and revolutions frequently take on a life of their own irrespective of their first purposes." (Forum 3 Reading Packet pg. 1)

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The more that I have read and learned I'm starting to believe that The Revolution was perhaps both. I believe that it was started as a conservative movement but was quickly turned into a more radical one. As I stated in my first post that the revolution was started for only limited political and conditional purposes but had social effects that were not anticipated by the leaders during the time. This plus the Olive Branch Petition support that the revolution started out as more of a conservative movement, but as fighting broke out like at Bunker hill It quickly turned more radical until there was no going back.

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