

Lesson plan week 8
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Handout:

Sophomore Tutorial: Democracy - Government 97 (Spring 2014)

Handout for Tuesday, April 1, 2014

Paper discussion

Quick individual activity

Two minutes for everyone to come up with one question and one original idea about the week's topics. The idea doesn't have to be earth-shattering. You can single something out that you thought was particularly interesting, or criticize something you think was off the mark, or say how something applies to current events – whatever you like.

What is revolution?

What are the different outcomes that are being explained this week?

Readings and exercises

If you were plotting a revolution in your country, what do these readings tell you about what you should care about?

Section

Paper:

- If you work hard on it, you will get a lot out of it. This is designed to make you better at reading social science academic articles
- Please meet with me!
- Still need a thesis, still need to have the whole paper support the thesis, an argument that builds is better than an argument that just has a list of paragraphs.
- Be a critical thinker, be creative.
 - The handout on evaluating comparative papers will be very helpful
- Cite readings, cite lecture.
- Look at the feedback I gave you on your last paper. I will be looking at that when reading this paper.

Start with everyone thinking for one minute about a big picture question or comment or thought that you have?

[Review Ziblatt's points on causality

- 1. Is there at least a correlation between cause and effect?*
- 2. Does the cause come before the effect, chronologically?*
- 3. Is there a plausible causal pathway (I.e. story) that links cause and effect and is there any evidence of this?*
- 4. Has the author dispensed with alternative explanations that either could explain the "effect" or both the cause and the effect? e.g. omitted variable bias, reverse causality,*
- 5. What is the author arguing against?*
- 6. How does historical timing matter? At what historical point in time do they start and why?]*

What is a revolution? Won't spend a lot of time on this

- What is your working definition of a revolution?
- Revolution is a contested concept
- We're going to think of it as distinct from a coup. We can think of it as a mass movement that leads to regime change, for at least a short period of time.

This is different than the Skocpol definition, which emphasizes change of the social order, but for our purposes, let's use it to mean a mass movement that leads to regime change, for at least a short period of time.

What are the outcomes that the authors are trying to explain?

Rustow: both what makes democracy possible, and what makes democracy thrive

Fish: democratic stability

Brownlee et al: removal of dictator

McFaul: stable regime change

Ziblatt: electoral fraud

*****Parts of this outline come from Evann Smith*****

Rustow

- this was a difficult article
- What conditions make democracy possible, and what makes democracy thrive?
 - Main point: the answers are different. also, there can be many roads to each of these
- NECESSARY THINGS: national identity; serious and sustained conflict; conscious adaptation of democratic rules; habituation to these rules by elite and ordinary ppl

- Melds it all into 4 phases: decline of authoritarianism, transition to democracy, and democratic entrenchment all in one theory
- Importance of polarization in getting democracy
- Is his claim that national unity is the only background condition necessary for democratization convincing?
 - o Economic development is not a prerequisite for national unity, and thus not for democracy (352)
 - Can you get national unity without basic levels of literacy and communication infrastructure, at least in states larger than tiny ones
 - o Benedict Anderson
- Under what conditions is compromise likely?

But for a transition to occur, a regime must first destabilize; Fish and Brownlee et al. have something to say about which regimes are likely to be most resilient to change

Fish

Rentier mechanism:

- Holds on global comparison, but not the mechanism at play in Russia

Repression mechanism:

- Holds on global level, seemingly yes in Russia
 - o But not really data on internal security spending; so he dismisses it

- o How convincing is this “punting” on the KGB

Modernization mechanism:

- Weak evidence globally, not good evidence in Russia
 - o Ross’ “Oil, Islam, and Women” → female integration into the labor force
 - Maybe he’s not measuring the parts of modernization that matter for democracy
 - e.g. diversification of the economy, non-monopolies, transitions into light industry, entrepreneurship
 - o Think through this mechanism; is he using the right indicators?

Corruption effect:

- This has been considered elsewhere (rent-seeking and corruption; Terry Karl and Phillipe Schmitter)
 - o Ideas brought in here: timing of discovery of oil and institutional strength (Norway and Britain vs. Russia and the Middle East)
 - o How does this connect to ideas of institutional strength (A&R)
- Which way does the causal arrow run? corruption → less open; less open → more corruption

Economic statism

- Hellman and the recalcitrance of partial reformers

Brownlee et al.

- Emergence of uprisings is random
- Regime change is predicated on: money and loyalty
 - o oil wealth
 - o precedent of hereditary succession
 - o only regimes that lack both get an ousted leader
- Regime change here: *not democratization*, just authoritarian ousters

- What explains variation in regime change (ie removal of dictator) in 4 of 14 Arab countries?
- IV: oil and history of hereditary succession (mechanism: makes coercive agents more loyal to ruler, crack down or not on opposition)
- “The pattern of regime stability during 2010–12 was that *either* oil wealth *or* hereditary rule was enough to preserve authoritarian continuity unless outside powers intervened.”

This brings us back to transitions.

McFaul

- Thinking about transitions, McFaul has the opposite conclusion from Rustow about the role of polarization
 - o Balance of power, for McFaul, is *unequal* when a stable transition takes place, and the ideological orientation of whichever party is more powerful will prevail in the new regime.

- o i.e. *transition by imposition*
- Does he explain where “democrats with a decisive power advantage” come from? (no)
 - o If an explanation is too proximate to an outcome, how satisfying is it?
- Discussion of scope conditions
 - o Pacted transitions theory that came from Southern Europe and Latin American democratization don’t seem to explain post-Soviet transitions.

And once we get the institutional change?

Ziblatt

Challenges us to think about the transition process and what institutional changes might actually mean.

- Once we have electoral procedures, how democratic are they?
 - o how much fraud is there?
 - o more land inequality (significant source of wealth → more fraud)
 - o mechanism: indirect method (institutional capture)
 - o persistence of “slanted playing field”
 - elections alone don’t make democracy
 - can potentially bolster entrenched interests

Exercise: (adopted from Chiara Superti’s exercise)

Each group is a consulting team hired by the U.S. State Department to analyze the probability of and potential for democratic consolidation in Nigeria, and to suggest possible policy interventions. Nigeria is an oil-rich weakly-institutionalized democratic country where the corruption, modernization, repression, and rentier mechanisms all hold, which is to say they are all, at the moment, preventing democratic consolidation.

How would you invest a budget of 1 billion dollars? Pick 1 to 3 possible interventions and also think about how you would divide up the money among the chosen interventions. For each choice tell me what reading (if any) would support the intervention. (Think about readings from this week, but also last week, which was on the relationship between income and democracy.)

1. Military interventions
2. Military supplies to opposition movements
3. Financial aid to opposition movements
4. Programs to strengthen media institutions, internet access, etc.
5. Economic investments in large industries
6. Programs to favor female literacy
7. New elementary schools

8. Private (highly specialized and advanced) universities
9. Funding local political/anti-regime NGOs
10. Direct cash transfers to citizens
11. School lunch and school uniform programs
12. Funding local non-political NGOs
13. Promotion of trade agreements with neighboring countries
14. Promotion of trade agreements with the US
15. Technical assistance to improve business conditions for private firms
16. Technical assistance to the government for economic reforms
17. Family planning initiatives
18. Diplomatic program to mediate the relationship between the regime and opposition groups
19. Promoting land reforms and land redistribution
20. Other (specify)