

## Lesson Plan – Week 6: Revolutions

**Announcements**

1. Important readings next week- Not many but Goodwin and Skocpol

**Section Goals**

This week we change gears and study revolutions. We have started to look at the various causes of revolutions and have defined revolutions. Our main goal is to the main theories of revolutions, who the key actors are in these theories, and the weaknesses of each approach. By the end of section we will hopefully be able to answer:

- What constitutes a revolution?
- What are the various causes of revolutions?
- What is the difference between voluntarist and structuralist explanations of revolutions?

**Collective Action Game**

Revolution requires collective action. Take out a small piece of paper and put your name on it. You have two options: you may leave 5 minutes early no questions asked or you may gamble for the chance of leaving 10 minutes early (you will not miss any material from the last 5 minutes). For each person who chooses to gamble, will roll a die. If I get a 6 just once, then everyone will get to leave 10 minutes early. If I do not roll a 6 then only those who did not gamble will get to leave early.

*Collective Action Problem:* Event though everyone shares the same interests, does that mean you will collectively act? How do we resolve collective action problems?

**Discussion Questions**

1. **Defining Revolution:** What is a revolution? How does a revolution differ from a Coup (see Davies p. 6)?
  - a) Davies – “Revolutions are here defined as violent civil disturbances that cause the displacement of one ruling group by another that has a broader popular basis for support.”
  - b) Skocpol – “Social revolutions are rapid, basic transformations of socio-economic and political institutions and ...are accompanied and in part effectuated through class upheavals from below.”
  - c) Do revolutions require **violence**?
  - d) What role does the military play?
  - e) Why wasn't the Arab Spring considered to involve revolution?
2. **Revolutionary Timing/ Causes:** What are the causes of revolution?
  - a) What is **Marx's** theory of revolutions?

- b) When are revolutions most likely to occur? Out of prosperity, decline, or a combination of the two? (Marx, de Tocqueville, Davies)
  - c) Is industrialization needed for (modern) revolutions?
3. **Skocpol:** What is Skocpol's theory of revolutions? (use handout)
4. **Structuralist v. Voluntarist Explanations:** Are revolutions inevitable under certain circumstances or are they a function of actors and agency?
- a) How do we characterize each author?
  - b) Who are the actors in Marx's opinion? Selbin?
  - c) Does leadership matter in starting revolutions? Sustaining them? What about culture? What about ideology?
5. **Revolutionary Actors:** Who initiates revolution? The poor, workers, or the rich? Why can't the poor initiate revolution in Marx or Davies view?
- a) Why do people revolt? Self-interest? Collective interest? What is the **collective action** problem? How does each reading address collective action problems necessary for revolution?
  - b) What role do the bourgeois have in revolutions? How does this relate to what we learned about in Moore?
  - c) Given Davies and Marx's view, is revolution possible in Africa today? What about India with such a large rural population?
6. **Revolutionary Prevention:** What prevents revolution?
- a) Why didn't we see a revolution following the Great Depression?
  - b) Davies – "There appears to be no sure way to avoid revolution short of an effective, affirmative, and continuous response on the part of established governments to the almost continuously emerging needs of the governed."
7. **Revolutionary Consequences:** What are the consequences of revolutions?
- a) Do modern revolutions have to lead to more equality? ("progressive revolutions")