

Lesson Plan – Week 7: Explaining Social Revolutions: Cases

Announcements

1. Important readings next week- All!
2. Papers returned next Tuesday via email (if you want a hard copy let me know)

Section Goals

This week we continue to study revolutions but focus on cases of revolutions and think about revolutions in the context of Third World countries. We have looked mostly at the Russian and Iranian revolutions. Our main goal is to understand the main theories of revolutions, understand the different factors that drive Third World revolutions, and deeply understand the cases of Russia and Iran. By the end of section we will hopefully be able to answer:

- What are the various causes of revolutions? In the Third World?
- Why did Russia/Iran have a revolution?
- Where are we most likely to see a revolution today?

Discussion Questions

1. **Libya:** Does Libya count as a revolution? There has been entire state failure, but was it driven by the masses or by external actors? Does this matter?
2. **Summary of Theories:** Fill out the revolutionary theories handout on the board. Specifically explain the factors in Marx, Davies, Skocpol, Selbin, and Goodwin and Skocpol.
 - a) What role do political structures, economic factors, social organization, leadership, and ideology play in these theories?
 - b) How would we classify these theories: structuralist or voluntarist?
3. **Third World Revolutions:** Are third world revolutions different? Why?
 - a) What do Goodwin and Skocpol say are different about these revolutions?
 - b) What are the factors that cause these revolutions?
 - c) Do y'all agree that revolutions are only likely to happen under particular authoritarian regimes?
 - d) Do they agree with other theories?
 - e) Is this a structuralist or a voluntarist perspective?
 - f) Do they miss anything important about revolutions today?
4. **Russia:** Anyone want to give a brief overview?
 - a) Fill out the table on the board. Why was there a revolution in Russia?
 - b) Who were the main **actors** in this revolution? How did they overcome the collective action problem?
 - c) What was the role of the class structure in Russia?
 - d) What role did leaders play? Do you think that revolution would have occurred if Lenin hadn't existed? (Do you think the Mensheviks would have gotten to revolution?)
 - e) Does Russia fit Goodwin and Skocpol's theory? Why or why not?

5. **Iran:** Anyone want to give a brief overview?
 - a) Fill out the table on the board. Why was there a revolution in Iran?
 - b) What was the role of religion in the Iranian revolution? Was this purely a religious revolution?
 - c) What role did the economy play? How does this fit into Davies theory of **relative depravation**?
 - d) What role did leaders play? Do you think that revolution would have occurred if Khomeini hadn't existed
 - e) Does Iran fit Goodwin and Skocpol's theory? Does Iran disprove Skocpol?
 - f) We saw that monarchies in the middle east tend to be more stable. Why then did Iran have a revolution?

6. **Revolutionary Prospects:** Do you think that we are likely to see another Revolution anytime soon? In which countries would this be most likely?
 - a) Do you think that ISIS could lead to a revolution? What about the prospects for revolution in the Middle East? (Think about our earlier discussion of Libya)
 - b) Given Davies and Marx's view, is revolution possible in Africa today? What about India with such a large rural population?

7. **Revolutionary Prevention:** What prevents revolution?
 - a) Is there anything that could have been done to prevent the Russian or Iranian revolutions?
 - 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."

8. **Revolutionary Consequences:** What are the consequences of revolutions?
 - a) Do modern revolutions have to lead to more equality? ("progressive revolutions")
 - b) Do revolutions generally result in the desired outcome of the revolutionaries? What ends up happening? Think about both Russia and Iran.