

Gov 20 Week 7: Revolutions—Cases

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Discussion Questions

1. In what ways does the Russian Revolution fit with Skocpol's structural theory of revolutions?
2. Does Fitzpatrick suggest any elements of the Russian Revolution that might challenge Skocpol? [voluntarism—role of specific leaders and particularities of Lenin and Stalin's personalities]
3. What are some ways in which Third World revolutions are different from Skocpol's vision of classic social revolutions? [urban, cross-class coalitions, often led by middle class]
4. What factors make a Third World state vulnerable to the formation of a revolutionary movement? [closed, repressive state, little control of periphery, state doesn't control civil society and social mobilization]
5. What types of states are particularly vulnerable to revolutionary overthrow? [neopatrimonial or sultanistic with strong foreign support or direct rule colonies]
6. What factors does Halliday say made the Iranian revolution a 'modern revolution'? [high level of economic development; urban uprising; accomplished more through political protest than armed conflict]
7. How did the Shah's policies precipitate the Iranian revolution? [dependence on foreign power; closed patronage networks rather than inclusion; suppressing secular opposition; fragmenting security forces]
8. Is the Iranian revolution best explained by structural, cultural, or voluntarist arguments?
9. Is Skocpol able to reconcile her theory with the case of Iran? [She says structural conditions and state weakness are still key, but acknowledges that uprising doesn't need to be rural, and that culture/ideology can play a bigger role than previously envisioned]

Exercise: Split class into three groups—one must argue that social revolutions are unlikely in the world today, one must argue that Islam is most likely to produce social revolution today, and one must argue that Marxist-Leninist revolutions are still possible in the world today