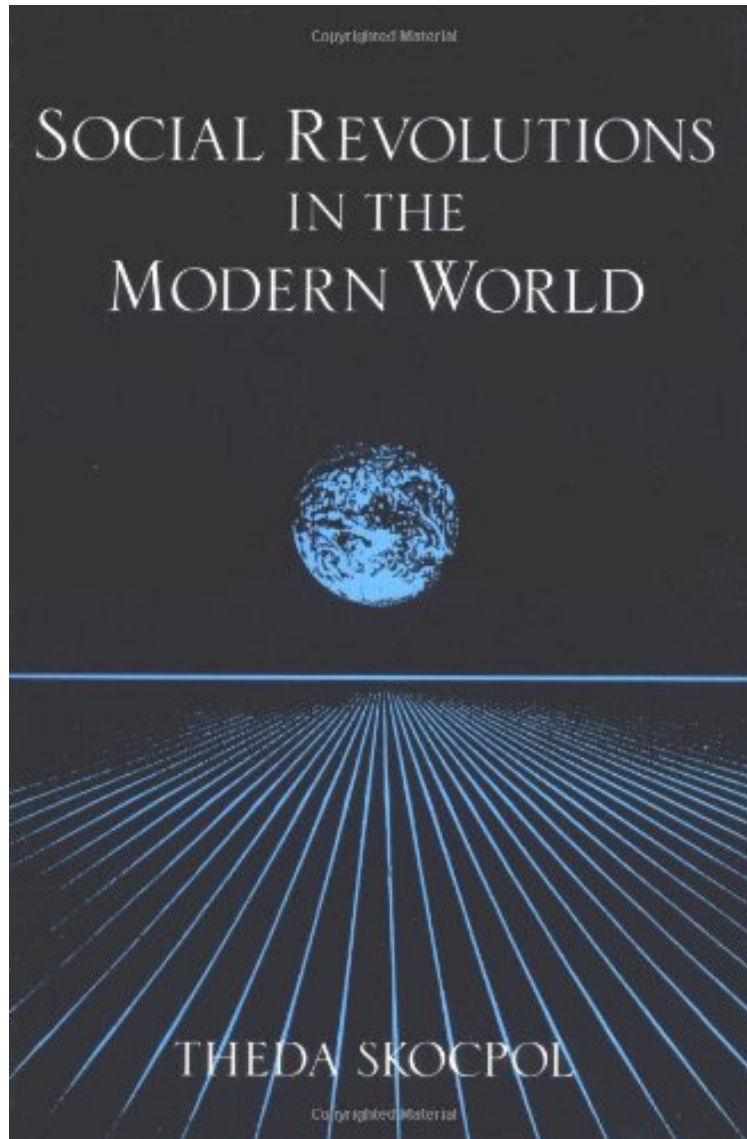


[Pdf free] Social Revolutions in the Modern World (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics)

Social Revolutions in the Modern World (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics)

Theda Skocpol

*DOC | *audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF | ePub*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#1520255 in Books Theda Skocpol 1994-09-30Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.98 x .91 x 5.98l, 1.20
#File Name: 0521409381368 pagesSocial Revolutions in the Modern World | File size: 33.Mb

Theda Skocpol : Social Revolutions in the Modern World (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Social Revolutions in the Modern World (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Skocpol's revolution analysis is top in this fieldBy Janet Deshon

HealyTheda Skocpol's comparative history of three major social revolutions of the world is one of the leading academic books in this field. She investigates the French, Chinese and Russian revolutions and their commonalities. Although many consider the French Revolution more of a bourgeois or political revolution than a peasant revolt her analysis and comparisons are nevertheless profound. Skocpol should be read in conjunction with Tocqueville's writings on the French Revolution to balance bias. Universities endorse this publication as a recommended reading for political and social sciences. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very Enlightening. By Brittany M Fitz This book is exactly what I was looking for. Her explanation and use of the comparative historical method are very useful. 1 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Good but not as solid as many claim it to be By D. Barnett The following is a book report I wrote for a course in Revolutions - it has not been edited and may appear a bit impersonal :) Theda Skocpol's *Social Revolutions in the Modern World* is an intriguing exploration of both the causes and outcomes of social revolutions. It expands on her previous work, the monumental *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Britain, Russia, and China*, while also bringing her reconciliation of competing theories into modern context; in fact, it is this reconciliation that is the most significant aspect of *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*. Of course, the synthesis of analytical strategies was already accomplished within her previous work; however, even within this synthesis, her preference appears to have been non-ideological explanations, using Marxist revolutionary theory as the basis of her more state-centric model. However, this lopsidedness undermines her intent, particularly as social revolutions are so few that they ultimately provide a limited means of comparative analysis. (1) In fact, Skocpol criticizes others for selective bias in their research but, given the tri-partite foundation of *Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Britain, Russia, and China*, one could charge her with the same. However, this is what makes *Social Revolutions in the Modern World* so stunning: she concedes in the later analysis of the Iranian case that ideology does play a significant role in revolutionary, social change, which implies a much greater reconciliation of competing theories and truly shows growth and expansion of her analytic prowess. Within the introduction of *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, Skocpol outlines a general organizational approach to revolutions and their outcomes with emphasis placed on the state as an almost autonomous actor. Thus, the significance of the state and its comprising, interacting organizations are given preeminence in her comparative analysis exercises, trumping individual psychological factors and their resulting ideologies. Granted, one of the most significant contributions of her previous work, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Britain, Russia, and China*, was the reconciliation of behavioralism, the theoretical model that tended to focus on individual actions, and Marxism, which seemingly serves as the basis for her state autonomy model. (2) However, this reconciliation is rather unbalanced with a preference towards state autonomy and organizational interaction. This preference is evidenced in Chapter Four ("Explaining revolutions: In quest of a social-structural approach") of *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, where Skocpol compares competing theoretical models. The first she explores, the Aggregate-Psychological model (and, by extension, the Frustration-Aggression variant), addresses deprivation as a motivating factor leading to revolutions. However, she finds little empirical support for this model as an explanation of political violence: "Thus it seems entirely in order to conclude that, even if frustration-aggression theorists could explain either individual predispositions to political violence or sheer aggregate amounts of all types added together...they still could not enlighten us as to the causes of revolutions - or any other form of political conflict." (3) The next theoretical model she explores, Systems/Value-Consensus, emphasizes "systemic crises and, especially, revolutionary ideology." (4) However, this theoretical model is also dependent on discontented masses: "This brand of essentially social-psychological explanation [has not] demonstrated to have any greater empirical validity than frustration-aggression theories." (5) The third model Skocpol engages is the Political Conflict Perspective which seemingly reconciles political violence as the result of interacting governments/organizations, which appeals to Skocpol's organizational approach. However, Skocpol contends that, the Political Conflict Perspective doesn't go far enough to suspend psychological influence: "While the political conflict theorists explicitly reject the notions of discontented or disoriented or morally outraged people directly turning to revolutionary behavior that destroys or overturns the regime or the social system, nevertheless they maintain a largely social-psychological perspective on the causes of revolution." (6) Skocpol then argues the need for a structural and comparative historical approach and then invokes Marxism as the solution. However, while her discussion of Marxism is intriguing, particularly when she addresses the dynamism built into Marxist revolutionary consideration, it is interesting to note that Skocpol undermines her praise of Marxism by invalidating its effectiveness as a theoretical model: "Marxist-derived theories of revolutionary processes cannot be uncritically accepted as rigorous, empirically validated explanations. The reason can be straightforwardly stated: The basic Marxist explanation sketch - which argues that revolutions are caused by socio-economic developments that lead to the outbreak of class struggles within, in turn, transform and mark the divide between distinct modes of production - simply does not succeed in laying bare the overall logic of actual historical revolutions." (7) Perhaps, then, this understanding of Marxism is what led Skocpol in her critical review of Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* to modify Moore's Marxist theoretical approach to address "the independent roles of state organization and state elites in determining agrarian societies and landed upper classes' responses to challenges posed by modernization at home and abroad." (8) Such an

assertion inherently speaks to socio-psychological conditions as the response to modernization would arguably be shaped by psychological impact. One of the greatest features of Skocpol's work is the inclusion of an essay by William H. Sewell, Jr.: "Ideologies and social revolutions: Reflections on the French Case." By opening herself for scrutiny to one of her peers and then writing a response to said scrutiny, Skocpol provides a more complete and robust work, particularly given that the partial intent of *Social Revolutions in the Modern World* is to improve her process of comparative analysis as outlined in *Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Britain, Russia, and China*. Within his essay, Sewell rightfully commends Skocpol's "brilliant contribution to the sociology of revolutions,"(9) but criticizes her treatment of ideology as a revolutionary factor, believing her consideration of ideology to be inadequate. As such, Sewell explores an alternative, ideologically-oriented conception of the French Revolution, which arguably reveals the significance of ideological motivation in revolutionary action. Early in his assessment, Sewell discusses Skocpol's strategy of reconciliation of competing theories, describing it as an "inspired compromise,"(10) that combines the best features of narrative and hierarchical strategies in tackling the problem of multiple causation. However, Sewell asserts that Skocpol's compromise is not complex enough, particularly as she conflates ideology with class struggle or state consolidation. This is an intriguing assertion as Skocpol essentially makes the same counterargument in her rejoinder to Sewell. The lynchpin of Sewell's argument is the development of competing ideologies and the essential substitution of one ideological dynamic for another on August 4, 1789. Skocpol contends that the consideration of ideology in these terms is too simplistic: "The point is that no single acting group, whether a class or an ideological vanguard, deliberately shapes the complex and multiply determined conflicts that about revolutionary crises and outcomes."(11) Through this exchange, Skocpol and Sewell reveal each other's strategies to be unable to contend with all variables that facilitate revolutions, which is typical with any analytical strategy. However, Sewell's argument for ideological consideration adds further depth to understanding causes of revolutionary action as well as social development and serves to undermine another of Skocpol's assertions: "One could conclude that national modernization at this point, insofar as it is possible at all, requires a socialist-mobilizing revolution (with participatory-style, not Western-style, democratization). Today, the price for underdeveloped countries of either Western-style formal democracy or conservative authoritarian bureaucratic or military (de facto) dictatorship is stagnation or, at best, partial and warped industrialization through penetration by multinational corporate capital."(12) The development of South Korea easily disproves this assertion, particularly when compared vis--vis its Northern neighbor (which initially maintained a participatory form of socialized democracy) over a long period of time.(13) Granted, neither South nor North Korea represents the social revolution that Skocpol is dedicated to explaining; however, at this point Skocpol is speaking rather ubiquitously. Furthermore, both nations present cases of profound social change which should be considered given the violent attempt at political reconciliation. And, given the profound impact of ideology in the development of North Korea and South Korea, Sewell's argument appears quite sound. Interestingly enough, Skocpol appears to adopt a more sympathetic view towards ideology as a revolutionary factor when exploring the Iranian Revolution. She begins this discussion by establishing her consistent exploratory norm but with a minor modification: "Social revolutions as I define them are rapid, basic transformation of a country's state and class structures, and of its dominant ideology. Moreover, social revolutions are carried through, in part, by class-based upheavals from below. The Iranian Revolution seems to fit this conception [emphasis added]." (14) Granted, Skocpol has given consideration to ideology in the past but, as previously stated, has relegated to a position of conflation with state structures. However, this is normally explicitly stated within her work; in this case, the dominant ideology is given heightened importance. This is reinforced later when Skocpol says, "Shi'a Islam was both organizationally and culturally crucial to the making of the Iranian Revolution against the Shah." (15) Of course, Skocpol assesses the Iranian Revolution within the context of organizational relevance but the fact that she addresses the Shi'a ideology as "culturally crucial" reveals that, in this case, she considers ideology to be significant in and of itself. Intriguingly enough, Nikki R. Keddie in her article, "Comments on Skocpol," praises "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution" for being an advance on her book *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Britain, Russia, and China* specifically due to Skocpol's appreciation and inclusion of religious, intellectual and cultural forces.(16) However, Keddie's admiration of Skocpol's more robust analytic strategy is countered by her comments of Skocpol's neglect of the full impact of the economic and political power the "rentier economy put into the shah's hands,"(17) suggesting that Skocpol's analytic pendulum has swung too far the other direction (i.e. the adoption of ideological explanatory processes has resulted in too little attention on state/organizational forces). That being said, Skocpol contends that the Iranian Revolution does not fit within her state-centric theoretical model and that this "special instance" demands a different approach.(18) Furthermore, Skocpol contends towards the end of *Social Revolutions in the Modern World* that "the ideologies of politically active groups are certain to be among the causal factors that matter for explaining similar and varying revolutionary way."(19) Theda Skocpol has greatly contributed to the understanding of social revolutions through a process of reconciliation between, at the time, seemingly conflicting theories of historical analysis. As has been demonstrated, this reconciliation favored a state-centric approach relegating ideological considerations to a conflated role, explained only within the context of state or sub-state organizations. However, as Iran has presented a rather unique case within the limited arena of social

revolution, Skocpol augmented her comparative, methodological process, elevating ideology to a position of preeminence. This allowed for a more robust evaluation and demonstrated Skocpol's ability to adapt. Thus, perhaps the greatest aspect of *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, is the development of Skocpol's methodology and how this development, when taken in its totality, may serve as a model for other historical, comparative analysis. (1) Theda Skocpol, "Explaining Revolutions: In quest of a social-structural approach," in *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, ed. Theda Skocpol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 99. (2) Robert H. Cox, "Theda Skocpol's Contribution to Comparative Politics"; available from [...]; Internet; accessed 11 November 2009. (3) Theda Skocpol, "Explaining Revolutions: In quest of a social-structural approach," in *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, ed. Theda Skocpol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 104. (4) *Ibid.* (5) *Ibid.*, 106. (6) *Ibid.*, 110. (7) *Ibid.*, 115. (8) Theda Skocpol, "A critical review of Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*," in *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, ed. Theda Skocpol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 45. (9) William H. Sewell, Jr., "Ideologies and social revolutions: Reflections on the French Case," in *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, ed. Theda Skocpol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 169. (10) *Ibid.*, 170. (11) Theda Skocpol, "Cultural idioms and political ideologies in the revolutionary reconstruction of state power: A rejoinder to Sewell," in *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, ed. Theda Skocpol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 200. (12) Theda Skocpol, "A critical review of Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*," in *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, ed. Theda Skocpol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 47. (13) History Channel, *Inside North Korea*, (History Channel, 2004), video documentary. (14) Theda Skocpol, "Rentier state and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution," in *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, ed. Theda Skocpol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 240. (15) *Ibid.*, 249. (16) Nikki R. Keddie, "Comments on Skocpol," (*Theory and Society* 11, no. 3 (May 1982); 285-292); available from [...] -Comments-on-Skocpol; Internet; accessed on 12 November 2009. (17) *Ibid.* (18) Theda Skocpol, "Explaining social revolutions: First and further thoughts," in *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, ed. Theda Skocpol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 17. (19) Theda Skocpol, "Reflections on recent scholarship about social revolutions and how to study them," in *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, ed. Theda Skocpol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 337.

In this collection of essays, Theda Skocpol, author of the award-winning *States and Social Revolutions* (CUP, 1979), updates her arguments about social revolutions. How are we to understand recent revolutionary upheavals in countries across the globe? Why have social revolutions happened in some countries, but not in others that seem similar? Skocpol shows how she and other scholars have used ideas about states and societies to identify the particular types of regimes that are susceptible to the growth of revolutionary movements and vulnerable to transfers of state power to revolutionary challengers.

This work is very useful for the student reader because of its presentation of fundamental views in the field and as an introduction to conflicting major theories in the study of social revolution. It is of interest to the most sophisticated reader in its assertion of Skocpol's views. It is a worthwhile addition to a university library as well as the private one of any person interested in social revolution." *Perspectives on Political Science* "...provides an extremely useful companion to [Skocpol's] thinking. The experience of reading it is an unusual one, for Skocpol writes with equal intelligence, grace and lucidity." *International Affairs* "...one of America's leading comparative sociologists refines and expands the arguments she made in her 1979 book, *States and Social Revolutions*, to account for the numerous Third World revolutions since then....consistently sophisticated and informative." *Foreign Affairs* "A sophisticated research design using Boolean qualitative comparative analysis is used to examine more than two dozen instances of attempted armed insurrection in Latin America since 1956 to account for successes in Cuba and Nicaragua and failures everywhere else. Skocpol uses these works to assess what has been learned about social revolutions to date....This is a well-chosen set of Skocpol's writings on revolution over three decades, and it can be read profitably in whole or in part by all who would follow in her footsteps." John Foran, *American Political Science From the Back Cover* This series publishes comparative research that seeks to explain important, crossnational domestic political phenomena. Based on a broad conception of comparative politics, it hopes to promote critical dialogue among different approaches. While encouraging contributions from diverse theoretical perspectives, the series will particularly emphasize work on domestic institutions and work that examines the relative roles of historical structures and constraints, of individual or organizational choice, and of strategic interaction in explaining political actions and outcomes.