

ISCKMC 2022**International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****REVOLUTIONS, MODERNIZATION AND CONTEMPORARY
CIVILIZATIONS**

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Abstract

The article addresses one of the fundamental issues in the theory of revolution – the problem of modernization in revolutions. The Modern history took several centuries in the history of mankind and formed a modern society. The transition to the state of Modern society was a revolutionary transition for humanity and often passed through precisely socio-political revolutions. The article is devoted to determining the key modernization consequences of revolutions and is based on an analysis of the sixty-four revolutions of the XVII–XX centuries and several dozen examples of countries that avoided this socio-political phenomenon. The key problem is to include in the mandatory modernization processes of all revolutions, which structural elements are primary, and which were the result of changes launched by revolutions. The author is looking for answers to questions: what is modernization and how to consider various modernization processes? Are modernization processes integral and characteristic of the phenomenon of revolution? do revolutions necessarily lead to modernization and in what areas? The main conclusion: modernization, if we mean by it the transition from a traditional, rural, agrarian society to a secular, urban, industrial society, was an integral result of all the revolutions that formed modern civilizations.

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Keywords: Modernization in revolution, theory of modernization, theory of revolution

1. Introduction

The approach to revolutions as ways and means of modernizing a state became widely accepted and most influential in the mid – 20th century. Overall, the modernization theory dates back to the Enlightenment and is based on the idea of progress. The chief theoreticians of modernization in the 19th – early 20th centuries were Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim and, and Max Weber (Gilman, 2003; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Shults, 2019a). In the late 1950s through 1960s the modernization theory was one of the most popular in the Western hemisphere. Researchers of this period (T. Parsons, E. Shils, W. Rostow and others) formed the main ideas of modernization theory. In the 90s, the modernization theory was reborn (Gilman 2003) and under new circumstances “the generation of the 90s” preferred the term “post-modernization” to “modernization” (Inglehart, 1997).

Modernization is defined as the transformation from a traditional, rural, agrarian society to a secular, urban, industrial society. Also, what is meant under the modernization is a trend associated with industrialization, increased urbanization, professional specialization, and higher level of education (Inglehart, 1997). Interestingly, there is a correlation between modernization and democracy since social changes inevitably lead to democratization (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005).

The modernization in theory of revolution was “reborn” in the last third of 20th century and is associated, in the first place, with the Israeli sociologist Shmuel Eisenstadt (Shults, 2019b).

Revolutions, according to Eisenstadt (1978), entail changes aimed at modernizing most aspects of social life, economic development and industrialization, “growing centralization and participation in the political sphere” (p. 52). Eisenstadt (1978) connected the terms modernization and modernity to the civilizations of Modern history. Eisenstadt (2004) considers modernity as a different type of civilization which has developed in one of the Great Axial Civilizations – the Christian-European one. At the same time, Eisenstadt (2002) defended the concept of multiple modernization, which argues that modernization does not necessarily have to follow a single Western pattern, and modernization and westernization are not identical processes and concepts. Western patterns of modernity, from Eisenstadt’s (2002) point of view, “though they enjoy historical precedence and continue to be a basic reference point for others”, are not the only authentic modernities” (p. 32).

Two meanings, proposed by Eisenstadt, who construed modernity as the Modern history and as the present, created an essential problem, i.e., revolutions lead to standards set by the modern history through the revolutions in England and France, or an orientation to the Present takes place in an effort to catch up in terms of development with the advanced countries of the time. This variability of interpretation resulted in considerable divergence in approaches. Modernization came to mean not so much modernity and modernization as an emphasis on the semantic message, “an improvement,” i.e., a creation of something principally better and achievement of a higher level. Over time, in addition to improvement, modernization came to mean an inevitable industrialization, economic growth, political and military superiority, etc., including the building of a country, which is strong economically, politically, militarily, scientifically and in other aspects, simultaneously advancing the wellbeing of the nation.

In the late 1930s Crane Brinton (1965) concluded that the revolutions in England, America and Russia resulted in “more efficient and more centralized governments” (p. 109).

This conclusion became quite popular with researchers (Foran, 2005; Huntington, 1997; Jouvenel, 1962). In the 1970s, Theda Skocpol took up this postulate as one of the major systematizing principles and research results. According to Skocpol (1979), more centralized, bureaucratic states, “powerful at home and abroad” emerged after Revolutions. Thus, one of the revolutionary modernization features came to be called consolidation of power, its concentration and greater centralization, which strengthen the state, primarily, on the international arena.

2. Problem Statement

Systematization of approaches in historiography brings forth three main principles of modernization after revolutions:

- i. Modernization is a transformation of economy and a state’s social and political systems in compliance with principles accepted in the countries of the modern history.
- ii. A transformation to the modern condition, which implies that of the most advanced countries of the time, i.e., modernization of economy with orientation to the global leaders in order to sustain competition, that is, “to catch up with and overtake” and to become competitive in a tough and adverse environment.
- iii. Consolidation of power that leads to consolidation of a state and enhancement of its strength and role on the international arena.

3. Research Questions

Indeed, as a result of all the revolutions or consecutive revolutions in a single state, or an impact of revolutions and a strong influence of the countries where those revolutions took place and brought about changes (England and its colonies, the influence of the Napoleonic wars, the consequences of World Wars I and II), the social structure and the economy of the states changed in compliance with standards of the modern history, which standards were created by the Dutch, the English, the American and the French Revolutions, i.e., modernization proceeded in conformity with the first principle. Indisputably, in the so called less developed countries that had different historical traditions before the Contemporary history, the results of those revolutions do not fully coincide with the European and North-American counterparts. However, in Russia, as well as in the countries of South-East Asia, Latin America, Middle East and Africa, the revolutions (a phenomenon distinguished from other political or protesting events like coups, revolts, etc.) resulted in abolition of privileged social strata, the third stratum became the mainstay of the society, both juridically and in actual fact; and the economy moved to capitalism in a way associated with cultural and historical traditions and the specifics of ideology. The modern history and its continuation are the era of capitalism with its peculiarities and different paths of development.

The second and the third principles provoke serious objections.

4. Purpose of the Study

Determining the key modernization consequences of revolutions. The key problem is to include in the mandatory modernization processes of all revolutions, which structural elements are primary, and which were the result of changes launched by revolutions. What is modernization and how to consider various modernization processes? Are modernization processes integral and characteristic of the phenomenon of revolution? do revolutions necessarily lead to modernization and in what areas?

5. Research Methods

Comparative analysis of the sixty-four revolutions of the XVII–XX centuries and several dozen examples of countries that avoided this socio-political phenomenon.

6. Findings

To whom were modernization tasks of the Dutch (1566–1609) and the English (1640–1653) revolutions oriented? During those revolutionary times, those were the economically most advanced countries, so they didn't have to orient themselves towards outpacing competitors in the outside world. The Great French Revolution did not ideologically orient itself to the English one, but was building a radically different society and economy. The English Revolution made few changes in England, which remained the Mistress of the Sea and a contender for the global domination. Within a short time, the French Revolution had turned France into a European superpower. However, this had been achieved not through an economic development (as a matter of fact, the country was devastated), but thanks to the revolutionary spirit of the masses prepared to bring the new faith to “the rest of mankind.” The idea of the modernizing landmark in countries' development through revolutions can be applied to some revolutions of the 19th century, for instance, the Meiji Restoration, the Swedish and the Norwegian Revolutions. However, it is especially true of the Russian Revolution. It was the first revolution in which the ideas of modernization in conformity with the Western standards and of the building of the most progressive social system by leaping over development stages for “catching up with and overtaking” the capitalist countries became particularly pronounced. In the 20th century, this idea and these standards were embraced by most of the revolutions; hence the idea of modernizing functions of the revolutions according to the second principle. However, the revolutionaries' ideas do not mean that the revolution was really “concerned” with the modernization.

To this, it must be added that many prominent researchers of the theory of revolution in the 20th century denied the modernizing impact of revolutions on the economy (for bringing it to the most advanced condition of the day), that is, revolutions lead to a collapse of economy and an erosion of economic conditions (Sorokin, 1967); “economics is relatively unimportant to revolutions” (Huntington, 1997, p. 23); “revolutionary regimes can often focus resources and create hothouse growth in selected industries” (Goldstone, 2001, p. 177); but there is no evidence that revolutions become an instrument in removing blockages to economic development (Goldstone, 1991); on the contrary, “the political revolution of France did not in any sense unleash great economic forces, it “stalled the process of modern

economic development in France” (Dahredorf, 1990, p. 102). On our part, we should add that the revolution in China, which is considered – along with the Russian Revolution – the most outstanding example of a revolution’s “modernizing functions,” did not promote the country’s economic development. It was only the economic reforms of the 80s through the 90s of the 20th century that led to real industrialization of China, making it into a modern industrially developed power.

The third principle is the strengthening of power which leads to consolidation of the state and enhancement of its strength and role on the international arena. Following the revolution of 1566–1609, the so called first bourgeois revolution, the Netherlands really obtained a stronger power and became the world’s leading nation. But that was the National-liberation revolution, in which the Netherlands became an independent state with its own national government. The 1640–1653 revolution in England did not in any way influence the power in the country nor its position on the international arena where England, both before and after the revolution, retained a status of the global leader during that time. At first glance, under Napoleon France really became more powerful and started playing a more important role on the international arena, than under the previous monarch. But was it a more powerful nation than during the reign of Louis XIV less than a century previously? The revolutions in Belgium, Italy, and Switzerland in the mid-19th century really strengthened the formal power in those states and made them stronger. However, at issue here are not just revolutions, but a combination of revolutionary processes with those of unification of lands in those states. Sure enough, the United States became more potent and obtained more power. Getting back to China (which, together with the Russian example, became pivotal in conclusions by T. Skocpol), it can be seen that the country had not emerged as a global leader as a result of the revolution. It started to figure as an influential regional state to be reckoned with only after the 90s of the 20th century, that is, nearly half a century following the latest revolution in the country. After the revolutions, virtually none of the states of Latin America, South-Eastern Asia or Africa reached the level of regional, let alone the so called global, leaders. Thus, Skocpol’s conclusions, which had won many supporters, seem not at all indisputable. More to it, the revolutions in the countries of South America and South-East Asia had not made them industrial superpowers that exercise a strong international influence. Conclusions concerning the consequence of such revolutions had been made exclusively based on examples of the English, French, Russian, and Chinese revolutions. It should be noted that in the first two examples those countries had been already in the condition described, which had not been changed by the revolutions whereas in the latter two such changes took place a few decades following the revolutions because of the need to survive in war, as it was in Russia, and to carry out reforms, as it was in China.

Therefore, caution must be exercised in ascribing modernization causes and effects to revolutions in modernizing economy with orientation to the global leaders (for sustaining competition) and fostering the power (leading to consolidation of the state and enhancement of its strength and role on the international arena). The first revolution, that can be presented as purposefully concerned with state modernization, was the 1917 revolution in Russia. The revolutionaries were aware of the purpose and were pursuing it. They oriented their efforts towards the developed countries and Marx’s utopian ideas of socialism.

The Russian Revolution (1905–1917–1922), as well as that in Germany (1918–1923) and China (1911–1949), abolished – rather belatedly compared to the English bourgeois and the Great French Revolution – autocracy and eliminated the so called feudal vestiges.

Bertrand de Jouvenel (1962) assured that:

It has taken a quarter of a century for the Russian Revolution of 1917 to be seen in its true light. A far more extensive authority than that of the Czar has released in the country very different forces, by which it has recovered all, and more than all, of the territory which the Czarist Empire had lost. (p. 72)

Let us disagree with the French social philosopher. Firstly, the empire had lost its territory exclusively following the revolution and the civil war. Secondly, the return to the fundamentals started in the very late 30s as a result of victory in WWII. Thirdly, the power of oriental satraps had always spread farther on than that held by the Russian sovereign, to say nothing of the western kings. However, this did not make those states strong. Rather, on the contrary, they had never been serious figures on the international arena. Having lost its positions after the Crimean War, the Tsarist Russia was still a serious operator on the international arena in the 19th through early 20th century, the condition the USSR started to return to as late as the early 30s.

Targeted modernization, which implies the accelerated state development in an adverse environment (“catch up and overtake them”, retain your independence, etc.), is a direction of radical reforms, not revolutions. Such modernization effects imply Russia under Peter I, Germany under Bismarck, etc. Overall, the successfully targeted and indispensable modernization is rare for revolutions. Its most pronounced cases are the Meiji Isin in Japan, the 1809 revolution in Sweden and the 1814 revolution in Norway.

Unlike the 1917 revolution, Peter the First’s reforms brought Russia to the level of the leading European nations. This impetus sufficed for nearly a century and a half (the Crimean War already revealed Russia’s backwardness). The Prussian reforms of 1806–1812 and Bismarck’s reforms had done more for Germany’s economy, state, and public institutions than its revolution. Peter the First’s and Bismarck’s reforms constituted modernization in the course of the reforms; they were not the result of revolutions. Neither the Russian Revolution of 1917, nor the German one of 1918 produced this effect.

Since 1928, the annual GDP had not significantly exceeded the pre-revolutionary level, amounting to 4.2 %, whereas the growth rate in the 50s had markedly exceeded it, i.e., 5.7 % per annum, which had led the Soviet economy to the highest ever figures, 40 % of the US GDP in 1955, 60 % in 1965, and 52 % in 1975. In the 80s, the GDP growth was 2 % per annum (Ofer, 1988). The Soviet economy, one of the rapidly growing in the 1950s, became in the 1980s one of the slowest (Cohn, 1983). As Paul Gregory, a researcher of the Russian economy pointed out, the Soviet economy had made a big leap, but considering the growth in the long-term perspective, the growth figures of Russia’s pre-revolution economy over a long period would not be lower than those of the Soviet economy (Gregory, 2004).

However, the researcher considers the growth figures of the pre-revolution economy over a short period of time, comparing them to a long period of subsequent development, which is not quite sufficient for far-reaching conclusions. This must be noted without fail. However, the state of things described

shows that a significant economic growth proceeded several decades after the revolution and was obviously linked to certain factors that impacted this development. The termination of those factors (driving forces) resulted in growth reduction and, eventually, the dramatic economic recession in the 1980s.

It should be pointed out that the forced industrialization and the rapid economic growth definitely distinguish consequences of the Russian Revolution from Meiji Isin as well as other social upheavals before and after it. This is so primarily because the revolutionaries themselves, along with their followers and successors, regarded those revolutions as a chance to carry out radical reforms expressly for a targeted and well defined modernization.

It is worthy of note that in Japan this process lasted about half a century. In Russia (the USSR) the breakthrough occurred in the late 1930s (during preparation for the war) and during and after World War II (at the expense of an enormous strain and total mobilization of all resources, human in the first place).

So, the tool of targeted modernization implies changes within a short time. However, the revolutions, except very rare cases, gave no fast positive changes in the state's economy and its position on the international arena which would dramatically stand out from the country's previous history.

Returning to the basic definition of modernization, which is understood as a transition from agricultural, rural and integral communities to industrial and post-industrial societies located predominantly in the cities (Vishnevsky, 2006), it must be noted that this process has indeed become an inalienable result of all revolutions. Theda Skocpol did not include urbanization among the attributes of a revolution since France and China, after their revolutions, remained agrarian or primarily agrarian countries. It was only after the Russian Revolution that accelerated industrialization was carried out, which led to speedy urbanization (Skocpol, 1979). The American political scientist drew on short-term periods. However, if an estimation is made based on longer periods (such changes are impossible within short periods of time), it is obvious that increased urbanization also took place in France and China as well as other countries that underwent revolutions.

Another key issue is democratization of the society and political structures during modernization.

Jack Goldstone stresses, that "revolutions tend to produce not democracy but authoritarianism" (Goldstone, 1991). Unlike other investigators of modernization, Dahrendorf (1992) concluded that the democratic route to modernity is the exception rather than the rule. From the point of view of the English sociologist, "it may be true that without modernization there can be no democracy; but modernization is merely the necessary, not the sufficient condition for the establishment of democratic regimes" (Dahrendorf, 1992, p. 17). As the most effective example, Dahrendorf (1992) cites the political and social system of England which, to this day, has retained vestiges of the previous system such as social classes and the constitutional monarchy. Despite these facts Britain is a model of democracy. In our opinion, here too it is necessary to rely on longer time periods. Eventually, at longer historical periods the modernization leads to greater democratization of the society, which process is observed in all the countries throughout the modern and the contemporary histories.

The process of modernization, if this is understood as realization of certain notions concerning the modern society, inevitably leads to its democratization. In the short-term perspective the revolutions most often end in dictatorships, but in a longer-term perspective democratization takes place in all the countries

that have undergone a revolution. In England this happened following the death of Cromwell (5 to 8 years after curtailment of the democratic institutions). Then it happened again along with the “Glorious revolution” and lasted throughout the 18th and the 19th centuries. In France, it was so following the revolution of 1830 and then in 1848 (less than half a century later). Also, various reforms were implemented before the end of the 19th century and throughout half of the 20th century. In Eastern Europe and Russia the so called velvet revolutions were carried out in the early 1990s (after four and seven decades, respectively). It means that in any case, in the medium- and long-term perspective (the History always deals in long periods), those who had undergone revolutions passed over to more democratic regimes compared to those before the revolutions.

For Huntington “modernization is a structural cause of revolution, whereas for Moore revolution is a structural cause of modernization”. Chalmers Johnson makes a conclusion that “paradoxically, both are probably right” (Johnson, 1982, p. 64).

Here it is logical to agree that it is rather difficult to determine which process entails the next one. However, in light of the issues under consideration, some points must be specified. A revolution brings about sharp and radical changes which had not taken place in the state by way of evolution, whereas their absence prevented becoming a modern state, i.e., a state in compliance with “standards” (requirements) of the Modern history (contemporary for subsequent revolutions). Thus, a revolution becomes, indisputably, a structural cause for further modernization of the state, in which event such processes as urbanization, industrialization and democratization are systematically interconnected and interdependent, but are spaced at a considerable time interval from each other.

As Dahrendorf (1992) noted, modernity involves two primary elements: ‘the generalization of citizenship rights’, and mobilization, “which is a precondition of economic growth, i.e. mobilization of people and their needs, demands and wishes” (“Tocqueville used ‘democracy’ much as we are using ‘modernity’ here”) (p. 16).

For several centuries the European countries (as well as the USA) have displayed a steady expansion of the citizens’ election rights, which eventually involved all the social strata and groups. It was with good reason that many social philosophers defined the 20th century as “a century of a crowd” and a century of “ruling masses.” This shows the processes of democratization of the European countries and the US, in which all the society (almost without exception) obtains equal rights and opportunities to enjoy them.

Exceptional cases make it possible to single out main components of changes, for example in Denmark, where no revolution took place due to the relevant reforms, and Japan, where the revolution had outpaced time and became a targeted event. The important thing is what had happened in the Danish and Japanese societies, i.e., changes in the social structures like abolition of the privileged class. Changes in the political structure (and in culture) took place in the course of reforms during the second half of the 19th century and as a result of World War II. Democratization manifested itself in levelling the rights of the bulk of the population and in the population’s growing influence on the state’s policies and economy.

Martin Malia (2006) points out, that ‘Western revolutions’ are “in the first instance a political and ideological transformation, not a social one” (p. 37). However, this runs counter to the data about revolutions that we possess. The English Revolution had changed the machinery of political power. Also,

the social relations had been transformed. Similar processes took place following the French Revolution. As Piotr Sztompka (1993) has noted, revolutions are the most spectacular manifestations of social change.

Richard Lachmann (2000), analyzing the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Western Europe during the early modern history wrote that:

England and France emerged from their revolutions with fundamentally different social structures that had the effect of making England a far more adept international competitor in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries than was France (or was the Dutch Republic, Spain, or any other European power). (p. 128)

7. Conclusion

A revolution becomes, indisputably, a structural cause for further modernization of the state, in which event such processes as urbanization, industrialization and democratization are systematically interconnected and interdependent, but are spaced at a considerable time interval from each other.

Revolutions must not lead to democracy and democratic changes as they are understood today. However, the obvious consequence of all revolutions is elimination of the privileged class and establishment of a new social structure (similar to the countries of Western Europe and America “in compliance with the modern history standards), which inevitably leads to democratization during society’s development. This change of the society’s structure in consequence of the revolution, which change historically leads to urbanization and democracy, is – in all likelihood – the sole sign in which the thesis of modernization in the course of revolution cannot be disputed.

All revolutions changed, in the first place, the social content of the society. It was this change – in which the third social class becomes the sole social group – that enabled those economic changes, i.e., the mobilization economy. Before revolutions the states are agrarian countries with a predominant agricultural population, whereas after revolutions the development goes on in the wake of a dramatic reduction of the rural population and the increase in the number of urban citizens who ensure the industrial growth. The changed social structure led to economic development on a different basis and called for a gradual and unavoidable development of democracy.

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