

IRD 315: Revolutions in International Relations

WEEK 2: Factors, Causes and Theories of Revolutions

2.0. INTRODUCTION

2.1. FACTORS INVOLVED IN A REVOLUTION

In considering revolution, certain factors exist that greenlight or redlight the outcome of a Revolution. Some of which are;

2.1.1. ECONOMIC FACTOR:

Here, it entails condition that worsens the economic fortunes of a people which breeds in them a feeling of deprivation with the acceptance of the myth or ideology of a change to the current system. As such, such condition fuels the conditions for a revolutions

2.1.2. POLITICAL FACTOR:

Such occurs when the political system of a society is autocratic and authoritarian. Also, this factor occurs as a result of the level of the state effectiveness, regime type, such could be said to influence violence.

2.1.3 EXTERNAL FACTOR:

Here, this factor has to do with an external trigger. It occurs either as an aid to an already existing revolution or cultivation of revolutionary activities. e.g. The Yemeni Revolution (Saudi and Gulf Countries Involvement), The Libya Uprising (Western Involvement), etc

2.2. CAUSES OF A REVOLUTION

Here, revolutions can be caused by

2.2.1. PERCEPTION: which entails a belief by the populace of the illegitimacy of a regime or system.

2.2.2. DISAPPOINTMENT: widespread withdrawal of public confidence and support in government due to a blow in the condition of life.

2.2.3. FAILURE OF THE GOVERNMENT: Vacillation, incompetence, incoherence and failure of the government to fulfil their agreement with citizens

2.2.4. ECONOMIC FAILINGS:

It entails conditions that worsened the economic fortunes of a people which breeds in them a feeling of deprivation with the acceptance of the myth or ideology of a change to the current system.

2.2.5. POLITICAL FAILURES:

Such entails condition that worsens the political fortunes of a people. And so, said conditions breeds in them a feeling of deprivation with the existing order in power. Hence, they are predisposed to the acceptance of the myth or ideology of a change to the current system.

2.3. THEORIES OF REVOLUTION

Theories entail, the prevailing assumptions back by empirically constructed causes and effect analysis that explains a phenomenon. Various theoretical frameworks interpret revolutions, some of which are;

2.3.1. SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY OF REVOLUTIONS

Here, this theory is anchored on an individual's behaviour; it results from when long-term socio-economic development is followed by short term economic reversal. And so dampens the expectation of people. Hence, such revolutions result due to the failure to manage the expectation of people. When there is economic improvement expectation increase, and when there is a reversal, they find it difficult to adjust to such change. Such unmanaged expectation leads to unhappiness and discontent, which further degenerate to political violence and revolution.

2.3.2. RELATIVE DEPRIVATION THEORY OF REVOLUTIONS

It entails the difference in perception of the discrepancy between the standard of living that people believe they deserve and the standard of living they have. When such deprivation intensifies, anger, frustration and political violence may result, which thereby leads to a revolution. E.g., The Revolution in Venezuela

2.3.3. THE J CURVE THEORY OF REVOLUTION

Here a revolution is not limited to economic woes. And so, a Revolution is instead caused by despotism, corruption, lack of political freedom and issues of political participation. Such considerations are high in the minds of citizens which can therefore lead to a revolution. E.g. the Syrian Uprising

2.3.4. EQUILIBRIUM THEORY OF REVOLUTION

Here, this theory base its postulation on revolutions to be hinged on the breakdown of norms and values in a society. For this theory, norms and values coordinate the behaviour of people in a society. Such norms and values system is responsible for the political stability in a society. And so, the government gains its legitimacy from the norms and values harkened unto by citizens. Hence, a government gains its legitimacy from the norms and values; the confidence and trust of people in the fairness and rightness of the mechanism of social governance. Said contract is what guides society. Hence any imbalance in such leads to revolutions.