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Q7(c)

To what extent revolution replaces the existing order of society? Discuss.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · Sociology GS 1 · 15 marks · Politics and Society

Politics and Society: Sociological theories of power; Power elite, bureaucracy, pressure groups, and political parties; Nation, state, citizenship, democracy, civil society, ideology; Protest, agitation, social movements, collective action, revolution.

Core demand of the question

- To what extent revolution replaces the existing order of society? Discuss
- Keep the discussion within a 15-mark length

Revision summary

Revolution can replace political order and, in **Marx's** aim, the mode of production.

Charisma routinises into new staff (**Weber**); bureaucracy and oligarchy return (Michels).

Durkheim, Mead, and gender analysis show slow everyday remainder.

India **1947** replaced the colonial state more than caste society.

- **Extent:** high for sovereignty, uneven for class, low for honour in the short run.

Introduction

Revolution is a rapid, extra-ordinary break in political sovereignty and, in the Marxist sense, in the mode of production. It can replace a ruling staff and a legal order. The extent to which it replaces the whole existing society is historically limited.

Body

High extent: what can be replaced

- **Karl Marx:** a **social revolution** transforms relations of production, not only the palace. 1789 and 1917 aimed at that extent, with different outcomes.
- **Max Weber:** charisma and then a new legal-rational or traditional staff can replace legitimate domination.
- The French Revolutionary calendar of rights and the Soviet property law show deep legal replacement.

Limited extent: what persists

- **Emile Durkheim:** moral density and habits do not change on a decree day. Anomie can follow the break.
- George Herbert Mead's self and everyday generalised others change slowly.
- Family, gender, and unpaid care, as later feminists showed after Oakley, often survive as patriarchal order inside a new state.
- Bureaucracy, in **Weber's** and Robert Michels's keys, reconstitutes minority rule.

- **Robert K. Merton:** manifest new man, latent old networks.

Indian discussion

- National movement and 1947 replaced colonial sovereignty more than village hierarchy. Caste and property showed high persistence.
- **Naxal and other revolutionary projects faced the same extent problem:** state smash versus social structure.

Discussion of extent

- **Political order:** often high replacement of personnel and constitution.
- **Class structure:** possible but reversible or incomplete.
- **Status honour and kinship:** lowest extent of replacement in the short run.
- Talcott Parsons would call a full replace a new system; most revolutions are hybrid.

Flow diagram

Revolution -> New sovereignty staff
Revolution -> Possible new production
Kin gender honour habit -> Limited replacement

Conclusion

Revolution can replace sovereignty, law, and a ruling class to a large extent. It replaces everyday honour, gender, and moral habits to a much smaller extent unless a long process follows. Marx names the ambition; Durkheim, Weber, and Mead name the remainder.

Facts & figures

Social revolution

Marx: transformation of production relations, distinct from a mere palace coup.

Routinisation of charisma

Weber: revolutionary gift becomes office or tradition.

Anomie after rupture

Durkheim: old regulation gone before new morals bind.

1947

Indian political replacement with marked persistence of agrarian and caste structures.