

Women in Transition: The Revolution Effect on Gender (In)Equality

Pre-Dissertation Fieldwork Report

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November 2024

Why do some social revolutionary movements favor pro-women legislation and not others? My research evaluates the determinants of gender inequality in revolutionary contexts and proposes a theory of gendered redistributive decision-making. I detect a cross-national pattern of women empowerment expansion following leftist revolutions since 1900. I complement this analysis with a comparative historical study of leftist revolutions post-WWII, with Cuba as the primary case of interest.

With the support of a Tinker Pre-Dissertation Research Grant, I conducted a second field research trip to collect necessary archival research in Cuba. Last summer, I traveled to Cuba to become familiar with relevant national and subnational information sources, such as research institutions and government agencies, as well as establish necessary on-the-ground contacts with current and past government officials, researchers, and local universities in the three major regions of the island. During this second research phase, I leveraged these contacts to gain access to hardly-consulted national archives and libraries in Havana. I also established an official partnership with a local research institution.

During the four weeks I spent in Cuba, I collected secondary and primary data on how gender policies were designed and implemented during the post-revolutionary period in Cuba. I digitized national and regional newspapers and magazines and consulted over 300 media and government sources. I also conducted over 20 interviews with revolutionaries, regime insiders, and women in high-level positions. This qualitative and oral data will be critical in analyzing the evolution of revolutionary elites' approaches to formal and informal concessions on women's citizenship and property rights. Through this field research process,

I have also been able to refine my theoretical argument and identify the fundamental mechanisms through which some revolutions—but not all—have supported women's incorporation into revolutionary regimes through citizenship expansion.

This project is part of a broader research agenda exploring the effects of revolutionary transitions on three dimensions of inequality: (1) economic inequality, (2) gender inequality, and (3) racial inequality. The CLACS Field Research Grant provided vital resources for me to conduct exploratory research and collect necessary archival data that will facilitate the development of this agenda. Further, it allowed me to travel to a site not eligible for federal funding.