

Social Networks, Class Struggle and Revolt

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Abstract

When do people revolt? From Marx to current times of Arab Spring rebellions this question has been a challenging one. Seminal studies of Michael Chwe (1999, 2000) provide an analytical framework in which both the structure and the strategy matter for the people to revolt. The analysis was based on mainly random networks. We extend the analysis onto small-world, hierarchical and preferential attachment networks. These are more realistic than the random networks. First, we examine for a various set of threshold distributions whether different networks hamper or foster the success of revolt. Cliques are critical. As in Marx (1850) and E. P. Thompson (1966), class consciousness emerge from practice of communication within the cliques and from creating and sustaining a shared common knowledge of opposition. Second, we seed radical insurgents into specific network coordinates and see the consequences; whether insurgents could initiate revolt in high threshold sub-networks. Third, we underline the importance of social network sites in which there are distinct "communities" for social and political issues and common knowledge can be shared with regards to both threshold levels and revolt behaviour.

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