Do protests make a difference?
Social movements against privatisation

Based on my PhD thesis: “Do Protests Make a Difference? The Impact of Anti-Privatisation Mobilisation in India and Peru”

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Content

(1) Goals – what and why?
(2) Theoretical background
(3) How? Cases, data & method
(4) Results
Three goals

...to examine and answer 2 questions:

How the mobilisation of protests affects public policy?

Which protest strategies and political contexts help social movement to achieve its goals?

... to complement the research on social movement outcomes with a data from developing countries

Study: protests against privatisation in India and Peru

- Why privatisation?
  An important policy-issue affecting many citizens, not only public employees

- Why India & Peru?

  India: democratic, active mobilisation against the reforms which started in the 1990s

  Peru: varying regime type & varying public support to privatisation
Consequences of political actions
(collective or individual acts)

INTENDED

POLITICAL CHANGE
Social/Cultural (public opinion)
Personal (biographical)

LEGISLATION & DECISIONS
Agenda setting

Policy change

Social movement – protest characteristics (size, disruption)

Dynamic factors:
- Political allies
- Public support

Structural factors:
- Political regime
- Party system

Outcome

Interaction effects
Direct effect
Indirect effects

Mechanisms:
- threatening
- persuasion

25/04/2009
Operationalisation & hypothesis

**Protest mobilisation** → government's decision to **postpone or halt the privatisation** of an enterprise it had planned to sell out → **longer duration of the process**

**Hypothesis:** Protests led to policy change if...

...these are large and disruptive (direct effect)

...are mobilised in a democratic context

...protesters have political allies or enjoy public support

25/04/2009

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How? Data & method

**Own database** with details on:

- protest actions (when? who? what kind?)
- enterprises (privatised or not-when?, sector)
- background information (public opinion, allies, political regime, economic factors)

**Sources:** local & international news media, WB data on privatisation, government decisions, official statistics, interviews

25/04/2009
## Indian labour movement

Trade union membership and party-affiliation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Union federation</th>
<th>Political party</th>
<th>Members millions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS)</td>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>3.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC)</td>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>2.706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC)</td>
<td>Janata Dal, CPI</td>
<td>0.923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre of the Indian Trade Unions (CITU)</td>
<td>CPI(M)</td>
<td>1.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS)</td>
<td>non-affiliated</td>
<td>1.477</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Sinha (2004), Candland and Sil (2001)

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Leaders of the Peruvian trade unions’ federation in a protest for improving workers’ rights (Lima, 2006)

Trade union activists in Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad, 2005)
Protests & privatisation in India & Peru (1990-2004)

Unit of analysis: enterprise that the government aimed to privatise

Dependent variable: duration of the privatisation process for every unit

Independent variables: protests, political allies, public opinion (Peru), political regime (Peru)

Control variables: economic situation & sector of the unit, % of state ownership for sale & the amount sold to workers, macro-economic situation of a country
Results – protesting matters!

Direct (independent) effects
Large or disruptive anti-privatisation protests

Longer privatisation process, eventually no sell-out

Interaction effects:
- protests in a democracy are more “successful” than those in a non-democracy
- public opposition to privatisation helps protesters only slightly, as regime effects are stronger
- movements’ political allies have a mixed role

Protest impact is dependent on political regime
Conclusions

... social movement mobilisation can play an independent role for policy change

... the impact of anti-privatisation protest is related to its characteristics & political context

... future research needs to focus on the role of political allies, study other policy-issues & countries

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