

Reanalyzing Small-Scale Protest: Is Success More than Just a Numbers Game?

Marc S. Polizzi
Dr. Moisés Arce, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to redefine how researchers analyze small-scale protests. Because of their small size, these sorts of opposition efforts are often ignored. However, by looking the salience of the issue, rather than the number of participants, researchers can better explore the impact that these groups have on national policies. I first propose how networks play a key role in the success of a protest movement. I explore this proposition by analyzing two cases within the Peruvian context. In addition, I analyze two other cases of small-scale protest. The first is the contention over the privatization scheme of the telecommunications company in Costa Rica. I supplement this case with an analysis of contention over mineral extraction in Guatemala. My empirical results demonstrate that the success of a small-scale protest is a function of the presence of networks, which supplement the organizational and resource capacity of concentrated movements.