

Subnational Opposition to Globalization

Paul Almeida, *University of California, Merced*

Using a unique dataset on the geographic distribution of reported protest events from local sources, the study explains the variation in community-level mobilization in response to neoliberal reforms in two countries in the global periphery. Building on insights from macro, cross-national studies of protests related to market reforms, this article highlights local structural conditions that more likely generate popular contention in poorer countries. Count regression models show that localities with greater levels of state and community infrastructure (highways, administrative offices, universities, NGOs and local chapters of oppositional parties) were associated with heightened collective action opposing the privatization of health care and public utilities. These state and community infrastructures were shaped by national contexts in the era of state-led development preceding the current epoch of accelerated globalization.

Introduction

In the late 1990s and early 2000s a new wave of opposition emerged in the developing world challenging the dismantling and privatization of social welfare services and institutions. International advocacy organizations have documented dozens of large-scale campaigns in Africa, Asia and Latin America against economic austerity measures and public sector privatization (Ellis-Jones 2003). Nowhere has this trend manifested such force as in Latin America (López Maya 1999; Almeida 2007; Roberts 2008; Bellinger and Arce 2011). Indeed, between 1997 and 2005 economic liberalization policies (and/or their mismanagement) initiated the mass mobilizations and overthrow of presidencies in Argentina, Bolivia and Ecuador. In addition, between 1998 and 2011, unpopular economic reform measures were either directly or indirectly associated with the rise of several left-of-center governments in the region (Gates 2010; Silva 2009).

These liberalization policies form part of the broader process of economic globalization sweeping the global South over the past 30 years. In particular, public sector privatization programs are viewed as a key component driving a more intensified form of globalization (Robinson 2004). Using the cases of El Salvador and Costa Rica, this study examines *subnational* variation in coordinated collective action in response to economic restructuring and privatization in the developing world. Even though El Salvador and Costa Rica differ in the way their local class structures articulated with the global economy for most of the 20th century (i.e., repressive military and landed

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oligarchy in El Salvador and democratic governance with small landowners in Costa Rica) (Paige 1997), both countries have re-inserted themselves in the global capitalist economy in a similar fashion in the late 1990s and 2000s (Robinson 2003).

Employing a unique dataset assembled and geo-coded from local sources, I analyze the territorial distribution of oppositional campaigns against public sector privatization in El Salvador and Costa Rica. The campaign in El Salvador occurred in 2002-2003 over a partial privatization of the public health care system. The Costa Rica campaign took place in early 2000 in opposition to the combined privatization of electrical power and telecommunications. These episodes of contention represent two of the largest mass mobilizations in the recent political histories of El Salvador and Costa Rica and appear similar to the patterning of other major outbreaks of popular opposition to economic liberalization in the global South. Nonetheless, mobilization against economic liberalization is not uniform across the political districts of nation states.

Local communities in the developing world vary in their resistance to neoliberal reforms. By utilizing an infrastructural perspective that delineates the community characteristics associated with heightened levels of collective action, we can better understand the differences between localities in their levels of mobilization against economic liberalization. Such an approach applied to subnational collective action builds on macro-oriented, cross-national comparisons and country case studies of opposition to globalization by emphasizing variations at the local level.

State-Building and Infrastructural Development Prior to Accelerated Globalization

Although globalization scholars emphasize the homogeneous nature of economic integration across the developing world (Centeno and Cohen 2010), the manner in which state-led development takes place in the pre-globalization era has important consequences for the patterning of opposition in the contemporary period. The era of the development state in Latin America runs roughly from the 1940s through the early 1980s, ending with the debt crisis in the global South (Walton 1998). Between 1940 and 1980, in both Costa Rica and El Salvador, the national governments expanded bureaucratic administration, educational institutions and transportation infrastructures on an unprecedented scale. Primary and secondary education grew markedly with the building of hundreds of schools, extending educational access to hundreds of thousands of citizens in the two nations. National highway systems were also erected integrating national economies beyond the prior transportation emphasis on the coastal port enclaves for the agro-export trade (Bulmer-Thomas 1987). Despite these general similarities, Costa Rica and El Salvador also differed in political and economic development strategies in this period.

Costa Rica maintained one of the strongest welfare regimes for a peripheral state in the world economy during the period of state-led development (Edelman 1999). The country is also one of the longest standing democracies in the developing world. By the early 1970s, the Costa Rican state had penetrated nearly every administrative district with DINADECO, its community development agency, which organized

state-sponsored associations to meet local infrastructural, social and economic needs (Mora 1989). In this same period, the national university system was extended with several satellite campuses distributed across the national territory. In contrast, El Salvador was under military rule during the period of state-led development. The Salvadoran government constructed and expanded public universities in a few cities and subsequently shut them down for years at a time when students and staff opposed the brutality of the security forces (Almeida 2008). Rural and urban communities were under military and police surveillance by para-military squads linked to the central security apparatus (Williams and Walter 1997), which eventuated in a prolonged civil war in the 1980s. Localities were forced to develop self-help associations and organizations outside of the state (and often clandestinely) in order to meet everyday material needs.

In short, Costa Rica and El Salvador made major progress in the mid-20th century developing social, economic and administrative infrastructures. However, their respective political-economic governing regimes resulted in differing distributions of these infrastructures across local districts as well as distinctive state-society relationships. These development state infrastructures established in the decades prior to the epoch of accelerated globalization, set the stage for both the local level capacity of opposition in the global era as well as the varied composition of that opposition across nation states. Hence, the histories of state-led development in the global South laid the sediment for the patterning and character of the opposition to economic restructuring in the contemporary age of global integration.

Threats of Globalization and Subnational Analysis

The new economic restructurings associated with globalization such as privatizations are often viewed by opponents as threats to the social accords reached during the post World War II period of national economic development. In this era, authoritarian, democratic, and populist-oriented governments provided an expanded basket of social services and subsidies to the popular classes (Walton and Seddon 1994). The weakening of these welfare provisions are viewed as harms to economic well-being in the globalization age and are predicted to create more discontent in rational choice and threat models of collective action (Opp 2009). They increase the costs of inaction by vulnerable groups such as labor and the urban poor that may see a decline in wages, employment, and access to vital services (Vreeland 2003). Structural adjustment programs that debilitate the welfare state have been linked with more intensive levels of rebellion in cross-national research (Auvinen 1996). Nonetheless, we know much less about the conditions associated with *local level* variation in opposition to market reforms.

To date, studies of opposition to economic restructuring in the developing world tend to aggregate collective action at the national level. These designs work well for large sample cross-national studies in terms of highlighting broad conditions associated with mass mobilization in response to economic liberalization. For example, Walton and Seddon (1994) find in quantitative cross-national comparisons of austerity protests that IMF Pressure (number of loan restructurings), overurbanization and

level of unionization are among the most consistent correlates of intensive rebellion. [Auvinen \(1996\)](#), in a sample of 70 developing countries, also finds political protest related to IMF funding where urbanization and economic development are relatively high. In a more recent cross-national study (of 131 developing countries between 1981 and 2003) on the impact of structural adjustment on rebellion and demonstrations, [Abouharb and Cingraneli \(2007\)](#) report a positive influence of IMF and World Bank pressure (length of time under structural adjustment) as well as annual Gross Domestic Product and the export of primary commodities.

The above cross-national studies, using different time periods and samples of developing countries, all concur that key independent variables such as overurbanization, GDP and economic development serve as general proxies for the kinds of resources and “organizational infrastructures” ([Walton and Seddon 1994:45](#)) that likely come into play in actually mobilizing people in particular protest campaigns and rebellions, but are difficult to capture with highly aggregated cross-national data. Analyzing *subnational* opposition to economic liberalization allows for a more fine-grained analysis of community structures and strategic resources where the mobilization process actually occurs ([Auyero and Moran 2007](#)).

State and Community Infrastructures

This study maintains that analysts need to classify more precisely the local assets inside a community that are most likely to be converted into collective action *in the developing world* ([Boudreau 1996](#)). In order to build probabilistic models of the emergence of collective action in developing countries, it is necessary to discern which types of administrative, physical, social and organizational properties are more favorable for common people to appropriate locally and engage in social movement-type activities. A local infrastructural perspective assists by specifying the baseline conditions under which mass mobilization most likely emerges.

To further partition a locality’s set of assets that may generate collective action in response to globalization processes, I define different types of *state* and *community infrastructures*. Localities differ in their levels of state and community structures with important consequences for assembling collective challenges. In addition, developing countries have varied histories in the pre-globalization era of state-led development in terms of the distribution of particular types of state and community infrastructures.

State infrastructures are defined as physical and organizational units *constructed by national governments* to sustain ongoing economic and administrative activities. State infrastructures were originally developed in the pre-globalization era with different national contexts shaping their distribution. Community infrastructures include locally operating social organizations that may be used for collective action campaigns ([Andrews 2004](#)). Such organizations connect at times to national and international networks such as political parties or transnational nonprofit organizations, but their local activities are most consequential for community-level mobilization.

State Infrastructures

Localities vary in the extensiveness of state-created infrastructures. Those locally anchored political, cultural and physical components of the state infrastructure that assist in most efficiently mobilizing people to reach target audiences act as strategic assets (Ganz 2009). Three types of state infrastructure that facilitate collective action in the global South include administrative infrastructure, transportation infrastructure and higher educational infrastructure.

Administrative Infrastructure

The modern state serves as a major target and arbiter for social movement demands (Jenkins and Klandermans 1995; Amenta and Young 1999). Locations where local government offices are stationed provide one means of institutional access for groups to express their grievances to state managers and public officials (Inclán 2008). Such administrative outposts are largely concentrated in provincial capital towns and cities that house regional public administration office and services (Silva 2009). This uneven geographical distribution of government offices and state representatives provides fewer incentives for aggrieved communities to mobilize protest events over economic policy in villages, regions and towns that lack direct access or proximity to the state (Boudreau 1996).

Transportation Infrastructure

Transportation routes provide another strategic locale for protesters to gather and apply disruption, or “the seizure of space... as a means of exerting pressure on people outside that space” (Tilly 1986:376). Oppositional groups from northern Mexico to southern Argentina routinely apply the road blockade as a major protest tactic in their opposition to economic liberalization measures. The largest confederation of indigenous peasant organizations in Ecuador (CONAIE) has shut down the country on multiple occasions between 1990 and the 2000s through the use of barricades on the country’s major highways, including a successful campaign to halt a free trade agreement in the spring of 2006. Similar blockade actions occurred in Argentina throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s, led by the unemployed workers’ movement, which was putting up more than 2,000 roadblocks a year by 2002 at the height of the country’s debt crisis (Auyero 2006). Indeed, in the concluding chapter of his comparative study of protest over economic reforms in six South American countries, Silva (2009:271) found that, “the roadblock emerged as the most novel form of struggle during our episodes of anti-neoliberal contention.”

Higher Education Infrastructure

Higher education in the developing world experienced a tremendous upsurge with university expansion and growth in student enrollment accelerating from 1960 to

the present (Schofer and Meyer 2005). Public universities, and especially students, maintain a long history of opposition to regimes in the developing world (Altbach 1984; Zhao 2001). As public institutions, the university community (students, faculty and staff) frequently views aggressive public sector privatization policies as a reversal in the state's commitment to protect economic and social welfare rights for civil society. University students and staff often assist as brokers (Diani 2003) by organizing other social sectors such as nearby communities and high school students. University students in particular benefit from a distinct stage in their life course (relatively few time constraints) that enables them to dedicate more time to activism (McAdam 1988). Large concentrations of university students residing in the same town or neighborhood also offer favorable ecological conditions for mobilization in comparison to communities that lack universities (Van Dyke 1998; Zhao 2001; Andrews and Biggs 2006).

Community Infrastructure

The greater the number of associations and organizations in a community the more rapidly a campaign of collective action can be mobilized and sustained (Morris 1984; McCammon 2003; Andrews 2004). Sampson et al. in their research on neighborhood-level civic activity in Chicago contend that, "episodes of contention tend to develop within established institutions or organizations" (Sampson et al. 2005:678). Vital community-based organizations that may be activated to participate in campaigns against unwanted economic changes in lesser-developed countries include nongovernmental organizations and local chapters of oppositional political parties.

Nongovernmental Organizations

The missions of NGOs range from community development and public health to anti-violence campaigns and reducing alcohol abuse. Many of the new social movements in the global South are partially sponsored by NGOs such as environmental groups, feminist collectives, gay rights and the rights of indigenous minorities. In the era of economic globalization and welfare state retrenchment, NGOs offer some of the only organizational forces active in rural, remote and marginalized communities providing vital services and maintaining direct contact with the local population. In the 1980s and 1990s, less-developed countries witnessed the rapid proliferation of NGOs (Bradshaw and Schafer 2000; Drori et al. 2006). At times, NGOs are co-opted for specific social movement campaigns (McCarthy 1987). That was the case in Guatemala, where emerging NGOs engaged in nation-wide campaigns to open up public debate about the Central American Free Trade Agreement and stall its implementation. Another example, was in South Africa in the early 2000s, where groups of NGOs (e.g., the Anti-Privatization Forum and the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee) coordinated several campaigns against the privatization of public utilities and rising consumer prices (Buhlungu 2006).

Local Oppositional Political Parties

Oppositional political parties (those parties outside of executive power) can use unfavorable economic policies to mobilize larger constituencies (Kriesi 1995). When a majority of public opinion stands against unwanted liberalization measures, oppositional parties may capitalize on the issue (Maguire 1995; Stearns and Almeida 2004). Political parties remain one of the only coordinated organizational units in the democratizing developing world.

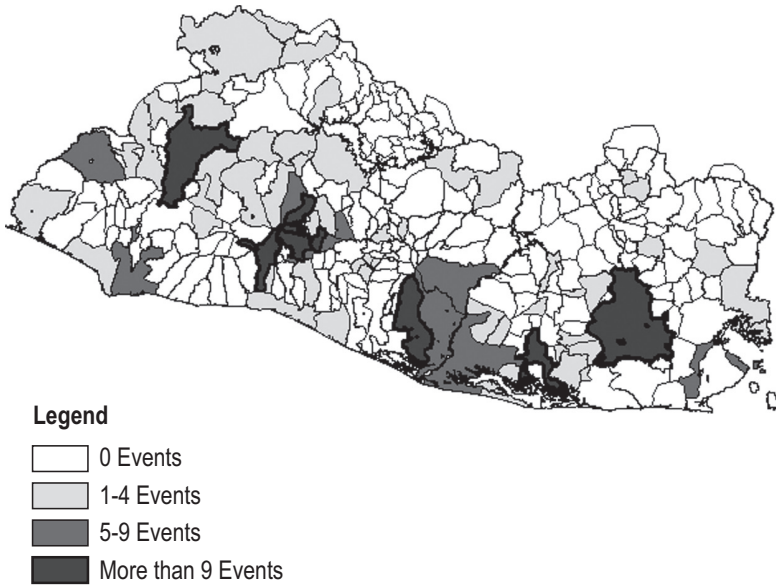
Oppositional political parties not only act in their conventional roles within parliamentary bodies, but they are increasingly mobilizing people in the streets in protest campaigns (Goldstone 2003). Similar to other types of social organizations that produce mutual awareness and common identities over a vast territorial space (McCammom 2001), oppositional political parties unify various groups and supporters in many regions across a country. This was certainly the case for Bolivia in the early 2000s as the MAS and MIP oppositional political parties mobilized thousands of indigenous peasants, students and urban workers in dozens of communities to protest coca eradication, water privatization and for the renationalization of natural gas (Van Cott 2005). Moreover, at the community level, local chapters of oppositional parties often hold weekly meetings and create public forums to debate and deliberate on national policy issues such as economic restructuring. Where nationalist, populist and left-leaning oppositional political parties have a local territorial foothold, we would expect more collective resistance to neoliberal reforms (Almeida 2010).

Subnational Responses to Globalization in El Salvador and Costa Rica

The infrastructural approach is applied to two major campaigns against public sector privatization in El Salvador and Costa Rica (see figures 1 and 2). The campaign in El Salvador surfaced between September 2002 and June 2003 against the privatization of part of the public health care system – the Instituto Salvadoreño del Seguro Social (ISSS). The government created the ISSS in 1949 as a health insurance and medical program for workers in the formal sector during the period of state-led development in the global South. Campaigners, health workers and doctors framed the government's attempts to begin outsourcing the ISSS hospital system and medical services to the private sector as a threat to the dismantling of the entire public health care system upon which 80 to 90 percent of the population depends (González and Alvarenga 2002). Opponents of health care privatization also highlighted the role of international financial institutions such as the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank in financing the reforms as part of the larger process of globalization (Colegio Médico de El Salvador 2002). The campaign to defend public health care from privatization was one of the largest and most enduring national mobilizations against privatization in Latin America with as many as 200,000 participants in coordinated demonstrations (3 to 4 percent of the entire national population) and lasting nearly 10 months (Schuld 2003).

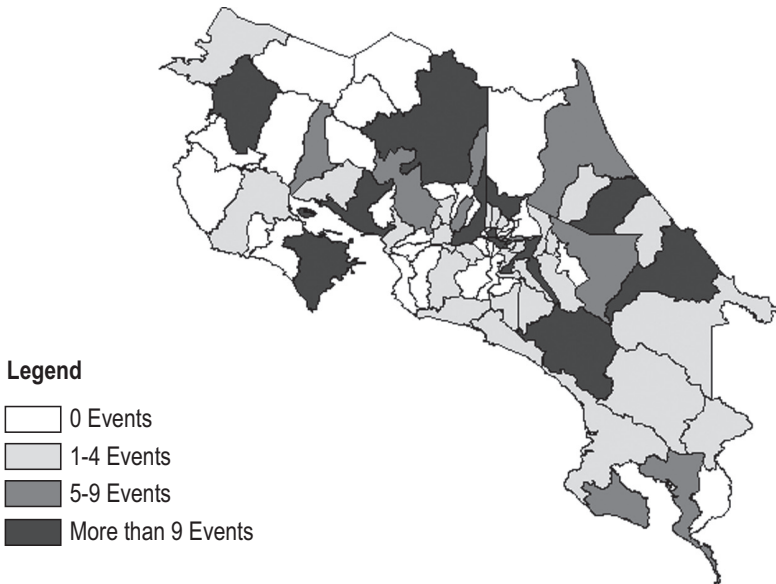
The campaign in Costa Rica took place between March and April of 2000 against the privatization of the state controlled telecommunications and electrical power

Figure 1. Distribution of Local Opposition to Health Care Privatization in El Salvador
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Notes: September 2002-June 2003. Municipalities reporting protest events are shaded.

Figure 2. Distribution of Local Opposition to Telecommunications/Electricity Privatization in Costa Rica
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Notes: March-April 2000. Municipalities reporting protest events are shaded.

system – the Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad (ICE). The Costa Rican state established the ICE in 1949 and added telecommunications to the institute in 1963 at the height of state-supported economic development in Latin America. The ICE stands as one of the public's most favored state institutions with its low cost utility services (electrical power and telecommunications) to consumers and breadth of coverage (Haglund 2010). By the late 1980s, scholars reported that the number of Costa Ricans with telephones in their homes was nearly three times higher than the average in Latin America (Trejos 1988). ICE labor associations and allied activists made frequent references to the ICE as an integral component of the “national patrimony” that “is not for sale” during rallies and street marches. The Costa Rican campaign to impede the ICE privatization legislation involved at least 100,000 participants (4 percent of the national population) and major mass actions in all seven of the nation's provinces (see Figure 2). Both the Salvadoran and Costa Rican campaigns came on the heels of a decade of similar neoliberal reforms and multiple public opinion polls demonstrate that the majority of Salvadorans and Costa Ricans stood against the privatization of the ISSS and ICE, respectively (Castro Valverde 1995). These widespread public sentiments set the stage for campaigns against the privatization policies with the participation of a wide diversity of groups in collective action in both countries.

In El Salvador protest events occurred in 26 percent of municipalities and in Costa Rica 63 percent of municipalities experienced at least one protest event (See figures 1 and 2). The El Salvador campaign produced 550 reported protest events and the Costa Rica campaign generated 473 distinct protests. The mean number of anti-privatization protest events per municipality in El Salvador was 2.1, and in Costa Rica the average was 5.8 events. Both campaigns represented the largest sustained outbreaks of popular unrest in each country's recent history and both national mobilizations achieved their major goals of turning back the government's attempt at privatization – making them important cases for study (Snow and Trom 2002) in the age of globalization. The maps in figures 1 and 2 illustrate the distribution of collective dissent geo-coded across the national territories of both countries.

Methods

The study examines two of the most extensive campaigns against public sector privatization in Latin America. Protest campaigns involve, “a set of discrete actions that can be subsumed under a common but specific goal or slogan.” (Rucht and Neidhardt 1999:68) In this case, both countries (El Salvador and Costa Rica) experienced specific campaigns bounded in time and unified under the goal of preventing public sector privatization. The dependent variable is protest at the local level. Protest events were defined as three or more people engaging in social movement activities (i.e., march, sit-in, roadblock, rally, hunger strike, labor strike) (Rucht and Ohlemacher 1992) connected to the larger campaigns against privatization. For such studies in collective action research, protest event analysis is employed using primarily newspapers (Koopmans 2002). In geographical and cross-sectional research of protest occurrence

and distribution, scholars find it critical to document each protest event or the entire population of reported events (Chang 2008). Using multiple sources is the best means to achieve this (Franzosi 1987; Beissinger 2001). For both campaigns an original dataset was assembled and geo-coded on community-level collective action using local newspapers and archival sources.

For the Salvadoran health care privatization campaign, four hardcopy national newspapers were coded by protest event and geographical location for the entire period of the campaign (September 2002 through June 2003). In ideological terms (Mueller 1997), two of the national newspapers are considered right wing (*El Mundo and El Diario de Hoy*), another is center-right (*La Prensa Gráfica*), and the final newspaper is considered left-of center (*Diario CoLatino*). In addition, I incorporated chronologies produced by the leading health care unions involved in the strike (STISSS and SIMETRISSS) as well as NGO reports of the events. For Costa Rica, two national hardcopy newspapers, *La Nación* and *Diario Extra*, were coded daily for protests events between March 1, 2000 and April 6, 2000. Additional sources were used for El Salvador because of the larger number of municipalities (N = 262) in comparison to Costa Rica (N = 81). The author also interviewed several key leaders of both campaigns during field research visits from 2002 through 2009, and observed first hand the campaign in El Salvador in 2003 (including street marches, road blockades and labor strikes).

Independent Variables

Structural Controls

The study employs four structural variables to control for past protest, population size and the sectors most threatened by privatization and likely to rebel. These variables allow us to examine economic policy threats affecting the social sectors highlighted in large-cross national studies and rational choice models of collective action, but measured here at the local level.

Past protest taps into the amount of previous protest communities engaged in against specific economic reform policies. In El Salvador, there was a smaller campaign against health care privatization between November 1999 and March 2000. Municipalities that participated in this previous campaign were scored 1, while all others were scored 0. Costa Rica has a longer history of mobilizing against economic liberalization measures at the national level as it was one of the first countries in the developing world to enter a severe debt crisis at the beginning of the 1980s (Rovira Mas 1987). The two largest campaigns before telecommunications and electricity privatization include the 1983 national protests against electricity price hikes in the face of an International Monetary Fund loan that forced subsidy cuts to the state energy sector (Alvarenga Venutolo 2005) and a 1995 national strike by public school teachers and labor unions against pension system reforms and privatization (Menjívar Ochoa 1999). Hence, in Costa Rica, protest experience was measured as an interval variable ranging from 0 to 2, based on the number of these national campaigns in which a community participated. These

previous campaigns (even several years prior) act as streams of collective discontent that may connect to larger episodes of contention in the present (Silva 2009).

The second structural control is *population density*, the municipality population per square kilometer.¹ Localities with large populations provide more individuals and groups for campaign organizers to recruit. Regions that are more densely inhabited have been found to produce more collective action against the threat of economic liberalization measures in developing countries (Walton and Seddon 1994). In towns and cities with large and concentrated vulnerable populations, information flows through social networks rapidly accelerating the pace of coordinating collective action (Spilerman 1976; Beissinger 2001). A third structural control is the *percentage of public sector workers* of the economically active population per municipality. Public sectors workers are the largest subpopulation directly threatened by privatization (Vreeland 2003) and may be the most likely social segment to resist its implementation (Lee 2007).

A final structural control variable incorporated into the analysis is *focal organization*. Economic measures and privatization policies directed at *specific* state institutions often first mobilize the workers under the impending economic threat (Abouharb and Cingraneli 2007). Such public institutes are termed “focal organizations” because they are most threatened by the privatization policy. For example, Chong and López de Silanes (2005) found that strikes occurred in 47 percent of public sector institutes under the threat of privatization on a global scale and in 66 percent of public enterprises in Latin America. Hence, we would expect public employees, workers and civil servants to be likely candidates for mobilized opposition to privatization of the institute in question (Sandoval 2001). Collective resistance would more likely surface in those regions where state institutions undergoing an imminent privatization are geographically concentrated. In the case of El Salvador and health care privatization, the focal organization involved the employee associations within the public hospital system. The total number of public hospitals per municipality in 2000 was used to represent the strength of focal organizations in El Salvador. In Costa Rica the focal organization encompasses the employee associations within the Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad, which produces, distributes and manages the country’s telecommunication and electrical power systems. The number of ICE installations (office, power plant or regional headquarters) in a municipality in 1999 was used to measure this structural control.

Measures of State and Community Infrastructure

State Infrastructure

Administrative infrastructure was measured as a dummy variable; municipalities that serve as the provincial capital were coded as 1 and all others 0. El Salvador has 14 provincial capital cities and Costa Rica has 7. *Transportation infrastructure* in El Salvador was measured by municipalities in which one of the country’s three major highways passes through, and coded 1 for a highway transecting its boundaries while all others municipalities were coded 0.² In Costa Rica a highway was also measured

as a dichotomous variable whereby municipalities that have one of the country's two major transportation routes passing through were coded 1 and all others 0.³ For *higher education infrastructure* in El Salvador and Costa Rica, municipalities that maintain a public university or a regional branch of one were coded 1, and all others were coded as 0.

Community Infrastructure

I incorporate two measures of infrastructure at the community level. They include *nongovernmental organizations* and local *oppositional political party* strength. Nongovernmental organizations were measured as the total number of NGOs listed from directories in 1998 in the municipalities of El Salvador and Costa Rica.⁴ Local oppositional political party strength was measured as the total number of votes received by left-leaning parties (logged) for parliamentary elections in El Salvador in 2000 and in 1998 for Costa Rica.

Event Count Analysis of Subnational Opposition to Economic Liberalization

Results are presented from multivariate count regression models of subnational anti-privatization protests (measured as the total count of protests in a locality) in both El Salvador and Costa Rica. Count regression models are appropriate when the dependent variable is a non-negative integer (in this case the count of local protest events). If linear regression models are used to analyze count data, it would likely lead to "inefficient, inconsistent, and biased estimates" (Long 1997:217). In both countries, the negative binomial regression models were chosen over standard Poisson regression models based on tests for over-dispersion of the distribution of the count (over-dispersion occurs if the variance of the count is larger than the mean). In both count models (tables 1 and 2) the alpha values (which represent the actual amount of dispersion in the count dependent variable) are significantly different from zero, indicating that the negative binomial count regression models are the more appropriate estimation procedures (Poston and McKibben 2003).⁵ Incidence rate ratios are also presented in the tables in order to interpret the rate of change in the count dependent variable associated with a unit increase or decrease in the independent variable.⁶

Results

Table 1 presents a negative binomial regression model on the count of anti-privatization protest in El Salvador (the count of protest events per community). State and community infrastructures were associated with greater counts of local collective action. Housing a provincial administrative capital in a municipality attracted significantly higher levels of protest. Communities with a major highway passing through experienced a higher incidence of mass protest. Indeed, a community with a major transportation route was associated with a 123 percent increase in the total number of expected anti-privatization events. The movement in El Salvador held several national

**Table 1: Negative Binomial Count Regression Model
Predicting the Intensity of Municipal Level Protest against
Privatization in El Salvador**

Independent Variable	Coefficient	Incidence Rate Ratio
State Infrastructure		
Administrative Infrastructure (Provincial Capital)	.809* (.383)	2.247
Transportation Infrastructure (Highway in Municipality)	.802*** (.238)	2.229
Higher Education Infrastructure (Public University)	-.687 (.541)	.503
Community Infrastructure		
Nongovernmental Organizations	.049** (.019)	1.050
Oppositional Political Party Votes (ln)	.772*** (.168)	2.165
Structural Controls		
Past Protest	.106 (.322)	1.112
Population Density	-.043 (.081)	.958
Percent Public Sector Workers	-.687 (.541)	.016
Focal Organization (Public Hospitals)	.025 (.059)	1.025
Constant	-6.688*** (1.008)	
Log likelihood	-221.590	
Pseudo R ²	.31	
N	262	

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed tests)

days of protest whereby roadblocks were synchronized in multiple strategic locales and highway intersections to shut down commerce for several hours.

Two types of community infrastructure also produced more counts of collective action – NGOs and local chapters of oppositional political parties. The density of NGOs acted as an everyday resource that could be appropriated for the health care campaign. Indeed, civil society organizers formed ad hoc coalitions of dozens of NGOs to support the campaign (such as the *Alianza Ciudadana contra la Privatización* and the *Foro de la Sociedad Civil*) and coordinated several of the blockades on highway routes. Many of these participating NGOs (CORDES, CRIPDES, *Asociación para el Desarrollo Integral de la Mujer*) are most active in distant and poor rural communities out of the reach of urban activists. Each additional NGO operating in a Salvadoran community produced a 5 percent increase in the number of expected protest events. In

El Salvador's recent democratization, a sizeable portion of the NGO community acts as a central opponent to economic liberalization policies perceived as harmful to marginalized populations by lending organizational assets to specific mobilization campaigns.

In terms of the local mobilizing capacity of parties, left-leaning oppositional political parties increased the likelihood of heightened contention in communities where they maintain an organizational foothold.⁷ Indeed, the FMLN oppositional party repeatedly called on its supporters to actively participate in the health care protest campaign during the party's weekly Friday evening public rally – *la Tribuna Abierta* (Leiva 2002). Moreover, even high-ranking FMLN party officials, such as mayors and members of parliament, “led by example” by participating in street marches and roadblocks during the campaign.⁸

Table 2 provides a negative binomial regression model on the count of local protest against economic liberalization in Costa Rica. Similar to the results for protest events in El Salvador, state and community infrastructures increased the probability of heightened counts of collective action in response to privatization policies at the local level. In observing the role of administrative infrastructure, provincial capital towns offered recognized public squares and state offices increasing the incidence of protest. The strategic transportation infrastructure of highways produced higher counts of local collective mobilization. Highway blockades came to symbolize the entire campaign, and incidents of collective protest were much more frequent in communities transected by a major national transportation route.

Similar to the influence of transportation corridors in El Salvador, municipalities in Costa Rica connected to a major highway were associated with a 143 percent increase in the expected count of protests. In the final days of the campaign, in the first week of April 2000, the movement ratcheted up the pressure on the state to reverse its privatization policy by coordinating dozens of roadblocks in all seven provinces of the country, partially resulting in the government's decision to back down and negotiate with the opposition. The government viewed barricades on national highways as so effective that the Costa Rican legislature passed a special law in 2002 making such acts a serious criminal offense with heavy penalties (Arévalo Solórzano 2002). A similar law, but even more restrictive, was passed in El Salvador in 2006 against highway sit-ins and other types of disruptive protests (Cardona 2009).

A locality with a university produced a three-fold increase (311 percent) in the incidence of protest compared to communities that lacked an institution of higher education. Municipalities with a public university (even an extension campus) reported some of the most confrontational protests between youth and security forces in the campaign (i.e., where mass arrests and/or injuries occurred) such as in San Pedro, Heredia, Pérez Zeledón, Liberia and Puntarenas. In the town of Turrialba, in the province of Cartago, the Atlantic region extension campus of the University of Costa Rica served as the hub of the local anti-privatization campaign. The university community from this satellite campus coordinated several highway road blockades, street marches and public forums in the region from March 21 to March 27, 2000 (Comité Cívico de Lucha 2000).

Table 2: Negative Binomial Count Regression Model Predicting the Intensity of Municipal Level Protest against Privatization in Costa Rica

Independent Variable	Coefficient	Incidence Rate Ratio
State Infrastructure		
Administrative Infrastructure (Provincial Capital)	.638* (.331)	1.893
Transportation Infrastructure (Highway in Municipality)	.889*** (.224)	2.432
Higher Education Infrastructure (Public University)	1.413*** (.283)	4.109
Community Infrastructure		
Nongovernmental Organizations	-.001 (.008)	.999
Oppositional Political Party Votes (ln)	.217* (.112)	1.243
Structural Controls		
Past Protest	.368* (.178)	1.445
Population Density	.150* (.071)	1.162
Percent Public Sector Workers	-1.660 (2.601)	.190
Focal Organization (Telecommunications and Electrical Power Establishments)	.097 (.084)	1.102
Constant	-1.698* (.783)	
Log likelihood	-148.905	
Pseudo R ²	.26	
N	81	

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed tests)

In both models of protest counts in El Salvador and Costa Rica (tables 1 and 2), oppositional political party strength increased collective action at the community level. This particular community structure for enhancing mobilization appears especially vital in coordinating local collective action in the period of increasing globalization and democratization in the developing world. Opposition parties can use their *local* membership base to mobilize against unpopular economic policies with expectations of building a wider constituency in the near future (Almeida 2010). In El Salvador and Costa Rica, oppositional parties such as the FMLN and *Fuerza Democrática*, not only attempted to impede privatization in their legislatures, but also mobilized in the streets and called on their rank and file adherents to marshal local support against privatization in their respective communities.

Discussion and Conclusion

The evidence presented in this study highlights the importance of state and community infrastructures in producing local collective action in the global periphery. Activists utilized components of state infrastructure to launch collective action campaigns in both countries. In El Salvador and Costa Rica, community groups repeatedly blockaded transportation routes in attempts to exert collective influence on the state's privatization policy. Newspaper reports and qualitative scholarship frequently document the importance of barricades on major transportation corridors as a core tactic of oppositional groups throughout Latin America and other regions in the global South for a variety of purposes (Silva 2009). Local NGOs, political parties and university students were critical in organizing the blockades. Additionally, in both countries, the administrative infrastructure of provincial capitals appears to have supplied community level incentives for mobilization by housing local government bodies to present claims and garner media attention.

Public universities have taken an integral part in Costa Rican popular contention since the 1970s, including the peasant movement. The university community led the generation defining protest campaign against a government mining contract with the ALCOA transnational aluminum corporation in 1970. In mid-1995, university staff and students participated by accompanying public school teachers in a major national strike against pension system reform. In 2000, the public university acted in a vanguard role in the movement against telecommunications and electrical power privatization by mobilizing several other sectors and creating a wider public debate on the potential costs of privatization. In El Salvador, public universities have also played a crucial role in social movements in the 20th century (Almeida 2008). However, they exist in few of El Salvador's 262 municipalities, whereas in Costa Rica there is a public university in nearly 20 percent of municipalities. Moreover, the Salvadoran military occupied public universities and shut them down in the 1970s and 1980s as Costa Rica's universities were expanding. Nonetheless, each municipality with a university in El Salvador reported a protest event against health care privatization. These municipalities include El Salvador's largest cities (i.e., San Salvador, San Miguel, Santa Ana), where the student movement likely concentrated its mobilization efforts in piecing together large street marches.

Similar to public universities, NGOs also showed differing mobilization effects across the two countries. NGOs were more important in producing heightened levels of community mobilization in El Salvador than in Costa Rica. The state has served to facilitate collective action at the local level in Costa Rica in the mid-to-late 20th century (such as the government's community development program DINADECO) whereby there is less need to rely on nongovernmental entities.⁹ NGOs also came under criticism in Costa Rica in the late 1990s acting as conduits for the reception of international funding, with few ties to social movements outside of the capital city (Macdonald 1997; Edelman 1999). In El Salvador, however, the government's extremely repressive past in *the pre-globalization era* has forced civil society to construct its own organizations outside of the state. Many of the key NGOs participating

in collective actions formed during the civil war (1981-1992) to assist the victims of state violence displaced by the conflict (González 1991).¹⁰ NGOs have also served to coordinate crucial functions in similar economic campaigns in Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Nicaragua, South Africa, Uruguay and Zambia (Ellis-Jones 2003). Because there is a wide debate on the contributions of NGOs to collective action, variations in a state's administrative capacity to deliver basic services may explain differences in the roles of third-sector voluntary organizations in different societies (Grindle 1996). The relative importance of different local infrastructures (NGOs and universities) in El Salvador and Costa Rica demonstrates that more attention needs to be given to past development histories and levels of repression *before the age of globalization* in current studies of opposition to economic restructuring.

Oppositional political parties acted as a local organizing structure that showed consistency across both countries; local party strength was associated with higher counts of protest in opposition to privatization. This is especially noteworthy given that leftist political parties were much larger in El Salvador at the time of these anti-privatization campaigns. Even smaller oppositional parties that received less than 10 percent of the vote (such as *Fuerza Democrática* and *Pueblo Unido* in Costa Rica) made a difference with thousands of sympathizers distributed (unevenly) throughout the national territory. In the period of globalization and the weakening of traditional social movements such as trade unions and agricultural cooperatives, political parties remain one of the last associational entities in developing countries with an organizational reach in dozens of communities.¹¹

Even though economic threats are often highlighted in the large sample cross national literature as producing anti-globalization type contention (i.e., number of IMF restructurings, high inflation, etc.), in the multivariate models in El Salvador and Costa Rica, it was largely the infrastructural resources that were associated with higher counts of protests at the subnational level than the sectors most threatened by privatization. *National* policies such as the privatization of services created the initial incentives for mobilization, but did not account for variation in the level of collective action across administrative districts. Many social groups vulnerable to privatization policies such as public sector labor unions are largely concentrated in a few urban zones in developing countries. This study suggests that for a large oppositional campaign to materialize across a wide geographical area, threatened social groups such as urban labor unions need to enlist the support of other social sectors such as students, NGOs and local chapters of oppositional political parties that can appropriate portions of the state infrastructure within their communities in order to sustain heightened mobilization.

Notes

1. Municipality population size was multiplied by 1,000 and divided by municipality territorial size in squared kilometers for scaling purposes in both El Salvador and Costa Rica.
2. The three major highways in El Salvador include the Troncal del Norte, the Pan-American Highway and the Coastal Highway (El Litoral).

3. In Costa Rica, the two major highways are the Pan-American Highway (running north to south) and the Braulio Carrillo Highway that runs from the capital city to the country's major ports on the Atlantic coast in Limón.
4. The year 1998 is the only year that exhaustive listings are available for NGOs in both countries. These data provide a good fit for collective action that takes place in the early 2000s because the NGOs have been in existence for several or more years before the protest campaigns began.
5. In the case of El Salvador, I use a negative binomial regression instead of a zero-inflated negative binomial regression model to estimate protest counts because all Salvadoran municipalities have a positive probability of experiencing a protest event (Long and Freese 2005).
6. The percent change in the estimated count of the dependent variable (protest events) is calculated by exponentiating the count regression coefficient b (creating an incidence rate ratio), which is then subtracted from 1 and multiplied by 100, holding other variables constant (Long and Freese 2005).
7. Oppositional political party control of local municipal governments was also tested and did not produce significant positive effects in El Salvador or Costa Rica.
8. See for example, "Huelguistas, sindicatos y efemelenistas en marcha." *Diario de Hoy*. Oct. 17, 2002. P. 4.
9. For example, a local DINADECO organization in the southern San José working-class district of Hatillo wrote a letter to the president and the legislative assembly on March 20, 2000 denouncing the ICE privatization legislation (letter in possession of the author).
10. In El Salvador NGOs originally served the needs of the displaced by the civil war and the return to communities of origin after the war. In the 1990s, Salvadoran NGOs assisted with a wide variety of community development needs ranging from literacy classes, forming agricultural cooperatives, to constructing local water canals. Recent literature on Costa Rican NGOs is more critical of their operations in comparison to other Central American countries whereby a substantial proportion of operating budgets is directed at paying full-time staff in the capital with few resources reaching impoverished rural communities (see Edelman (1999) and McDonald (1997) for a more extensive discussion of these differences).
11. While the decline in traditional social movements in Latin America resembles similar processes in advanced capitalist countries, there are some major differences. The demands of the new social movement sector in industrialized democracies tend to be postmaterialist and concerned with cultural and identity issues (Inglehart 1990). In Central America, material type issues (e.g., economic policies) have led to the largest mobilizations in the past two decades, especially over economic austerity, free trade, privatization and structural adjustment. With extraordinarily high poverty rates in Central America, even the newer social movements engage in campaigns over material demands (often in coalitions). In addition, most new social movement theorists would not likely emphasize the role of national opposition parties in playing a decisive role in the recent mobilizations (see Kriesi 1995, for one exception).

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