Voters, protest and policies: Bridging public opinion, social movement outcomes and policy responsiveness research

16-17th June 2014, University of Leicester

A research workshop sponsored by:

The RESPONSIVEGOV project (http://www.responsivegov.eu/) and

The MOVEOUT network (http://moveout.statsvet.uu.se/)

Monday 16th June

Rooms 1 & 2 Ogden Lewis Suite

9.00-9.30   Welcome and introduction of the ResponsiveGov Project and the MoveOut network.

9.30-11.00   Theoretical approaches to the study of movement outcomes and responsiveness to collective action

Making the Implicit Scorecard Explicit. A Theoretical Elaboration and Empirical Exploration of the WUNCness of Collective Action.
Ruud Wouters & Stefaan Walgrave (University of Antwerp)

Reading Protest Camps with Arendt's concept of Power
Fabian Frenzel (University of Leicester)

A Conceptual and Theoretical Approach to Governmental Policy Responsiveness between Elections
Laura Morales (University of Leicester)

Discussant: Edwin Amenta (University of California Irvine)

11.00-11.15   Coffee break

11.15-12.45   The public, the media and institutional configurations as moderators of movement success

Politics, Movements, and Policy: Analyzing the Influence of Movements over U.S. Old-Age Policy in Its Formative Years
Edwin Amenta (University of California Irvine)

When, how and under what circumstances do demonstrations make a difference?

Jacquelien van Stekelenburg (Free University, Amsterdam)

Political process, popular protest and the EU: the case of ACTA
Louisa Parks (University of Lincoln)

Discussant: Jennifer Earl (University of Arizona)

12.45-2.30   Lunch break and free time for networking

1.15 – 2.30   Advisory Board meeting of the ResponsiveGov Project, Ogden Lewis suit adjacent room
(Free time for all other participants)

2.30 – 4.00   The role of elections and political parties in shaping governmental responsiveness to protest

External shocks and governmental responsiveness to public opinion. A case study of nuclear energy policy after the Fukushima disaster
Laura Morales, Daniel Bischof, Maarja Lühiste and Luca Bernardi (University of Leicester)

Political Exchange between Trade Unions and Governments in an Age of Austerity
John Kelly (Birkbeck College, University of London)

Discussant: Neal Caren (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

4.00 – 4.45: Refreshments/reception

Tuesday 17th June

Rooms 1 & 2 Ogden Lewis Suite

9.15 – 10.30   Studying rhetorical responsiveness

The impact of electoral competition on rhetorical responsiveness
Luca Bernardi (University of Leicester)

Cheap talk or keeping/making promises? Parties' verbal statements between elections
Daniel Bischof (University of Leicester)

Discussant: Christine Arnold (Maastricht University)

10.30 – 11.00 Coffee break

11.00 – 12.15 The impact of movements and protest on public opinion

"On a scale of 1-5, how much impact do US social movements have on public opinion?"
Neal Caren (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill)

Attitudes towards political discontent – Government and contentious politics in Twitter
Camilo Cristancho (Autonomous University of Barcelona)

Discussant: Marco Giugni (University of Geneva)

12.15 – 13.15 Lunch break

13.15 – 14.45 Movements, participation and the role of the political elite

How Do Members of Parliament Perceive and Deal with Social Movements? Linking Democratic Responsiveness and Social Movement Outcomes
Marco Giugni (University of Geneva) and Maria Grasso (University of Sheffield)

The policy effects of participation: Cherry-picking among local policy proposals
Joan Font (IESA-CSIC)

Postponing the school closure: effects of protests in Swedish municipalities
Katrin Uba (Uppsala University)

Discussant: Maarja Lühiste (University of Leicester)

14.45 – 16.00 The outcomes of regime/system-challenging movements

Impact of Electoral Protest on Institutional Engineering under Electoral Authoritarianism
Anton Verevkin (Saint Petersburg State University)

Protest, Elections and Austerity Politics in Greece
Maria Kousis and Kostas Kanellopoulos (University of Crete)

Discussant: Katrin Uba (Uppsala University)

16.00-16.45   Refreshments and conclusion

ABSTRACTS

Making the Implicit Scorecard Explicit. A Theoretical Elaboration and Empirical Exploration of the WUNCness of Collective Action.

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When are protest actions effective? According to Tilly (2004), targets, bystanders and opponents judge protest actions following an implicit scorecard. This scorecard is captured by the WUNC-acronym. WUNC might sound odd, but the idea is not. WUNC stands for *worthiness, unity, numbers* and *commitment*. Protest actions that convincingly display WUNCness, strongly communicate program, identity and standing claims. In a simple formula: W*U*N*C equals protest impact; WUNCness signals the existence of potential voting blocs—worthy, unified, numerous and committed ones—willing to enter, realign or disrupt extant polity. Our goal in this paper is twofold. *First*, the work of Tilly on WUNC displays is scattered and touches upon many different concepts in diverse disciplines (literatures of social movements, representation, responsiveness,…). We therefore integrate and theoretically elaborate on the WUNCness of collective action and construct a movement centered theory of protest impact. *Second*, although the ideas of Tilly on WUNC are appealing and straightforward, until now, no work has empirically investigated the WUNCness of collective action. We argue that in current western societies, the mass media forum is the master forum of public discourse and hence the arena where demonstrators would preferably want to display WUNC. So, in the second part of this paper we operationalize WUNC (and the flipside of each WUNC component) and measure WUNC-displays in television news reports. All protest actions organized in Brussels (2003-2010) which succeeded in eliciting attention of the main public and commercial broadcaster in Belgium (Flanders) are analyzed (N=564). We ask whether movements are able to come across as WUNC in television news coverage; which movements fare better in the media arena than others, and hypothesize about relations between different WUNC components.

Reading Protest Camps with Arendt's concept of Power

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For the study of collective political action, protest camps play an important and still not sufficiently recognised role (Feigenbaum et al. 2013, Frenzel et al. 2013). In this paper protest camps relationship with government will be analysed with recourse to Hannah Arendt's (2006) reflections on power. Arendt differentiates between the concept of power and the meaning of politics in modern constitutions. In the latter, politics is merely a matter of 'limited government', the safeguarding of individual and collective rights against government and rule – be it democratic or monarchical. In her concept of power – in contrast – Arendt describes a collective phenomenon where there is no difference between rulers and rules. Power is potential (*potenza*), and by definition a collective phenomenon.

In a sense, much social movement and protest activity aims at, and corresponds to, Arendt's notion of 'limited government'. Putting forward demands and requesting limits, social movements take the role of the ruled and appeal to government through protest, law and lobbying. Often, protest camps do precisely this: they put themselves in the way of building projects or they attempt to change government policy in some way. But protest camps also, importantly, point beyond this notion of politics as 'limited government'. In its constitutional capacity as a political space, a protest camp creates the possibility to overcome the very idea of a separation between rulers and ruled, at least within its claimed space, its re-created territory. This is why protest camps, for example in the Occupy movement, did not attempt to formulate specific demands. The aim was not merely to limit government, but to replace it with new forms of political organisation. In this way a protest camp can be read as an attempt to a 'new beginning', the political meaning that Arendt gives to revolutions.

References

Arendt, H., 2006. *On revolution*, New York: Penguin Books.

Feigenbaum, Anna; Frenzel, Fabian and McCurdy, Patrick (2013) Protest Camps. Zed Books: London

Frenzel, F., Feigenbaum, A. and McCurdy, P. (2013), Protest camps: an emerging field of social movement research. *The Sociological Review*. doi: 10.1111/1467-954X.12111

A Conceptual and Theoretical Approach to Governmental Policy Responsiveness between Elections

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Democratic governments are expected to be responsive to the preferences and demands of their citizens, at least to a certain degree. There is a vast and increasing scholarship in empirical political science that aims at establishing how much governments respond to the changes in opinion of the public. There is, however, less conceptual and theoretical elaboration on what responsiveness exactly is, when we should expect it — both from a normative and an empirical perspective —, how does it relate to the presence and absence of electoral mandates and pledges, and how can we analyse responsive dynamics between elections.

This paper contributes to the scholarship on representation and responsiveness by providing a conceptual and theoretical framework to the study of governmental policy responsiveness between elections. To this aim, the paper addresses the following questions: How often should we expect representative governments to respond to the public's wishes and in which circumstances? Who is the 'public' or the represented that the governments should respond to? What is the (normative) relation between the existence of electoral mandates and pledges and the expectation of governmental responsiveness? Regardless of when governments *ought* to be responsive, when are they *likely* to be responsive?

Politics, Movements, and Policy: Analyzing the Influence of Movements over U.S. Old-Age Policy in Its Formative Years

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This paper reanalyzes data from Amenta, Caren, and Olasky (2005), regarding the influence of the Townsend Plan and the old-age pension movement on old-age policy in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s and tested various political mediation models of influence on public policy, through crisp-set qualitative comparative analyses. The aspects of public policy included the generosity of state-level old-age pensions, as well as whether senators voted for a radical (failed) amendment for a generous universal pension. The results supported a joint-effects political mediation model. Two structural political conditions were necessary to both high pensions and voting for radical pensions, whereas there were both "movement" and "institutional political" routes to favorable outcomes. However, the institutional political route involved not public opinion, but electing governments of different ideologies into office, a standard influence on policy in cross-national research. Here these arguments are revisited with fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analyses across a wider set of causal measures, including a measure of public opinion: to see how well the initial results hold up under these new specifications, as well as to gauge more closely the different routes to change in public policy. It will also help to address other potential joint influences. It will also be able to ascertain the different causal combinations involving factors that are prominent in the literature on the development of public policy, but that do not involve movements, as well as assess the role of public opinion. It is possible that social movement mobilization is a standard INUS condition (an insufficient, but a non-redundant part of a combinatorial condition which is itself unnecessary but sufficient for the occurrence of an outcome).

When, how and under what circumstances do demonstrations make a difference?

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Protest surges throughout the world. Yet, the question that interests many an observer—*does protest makes a difference?* —is still waiting for conclusive answers. As protest *types* and their outcomes vary widely, we choose to focus on nowadays' quintessential unconventional political action: street demonstrations. We conceptualize political impact of demonstrations as the effect they have on political agendas, i.e. whether or not issue-attention increases after a demonstration. The focal question reads: *When, how, and under what circumstances do demonstrations influence the political agenda?*

In order to make sense of protest-outcomes, one should understand the peculiarities of the broader socio-political context in which a demonstration takes place. Demonstrations that 'work' in a given context may simply be ineffective in other socio-political settings. This requires data on a variety of demonstrations in a variety of socio-political contexts with diverging outcomes. Fortunately, we can exploit a dataset 'Caught in the act of protest. Contextualizing Contestation' (CCC)[1] comprising data on 85 demonstrations spread over nine countries regarding a variety of issues. This dataset encompasses next to data on over 18,000 demonstrators, issue-related public opinion, organisers, media coverage of issue and demonstration.

The outcome variables are operationalized as parliamentary and governmental issue attention (parliament questions and interpellations/weekly ministerial meetings). They represent trend-deviations—decreased or no attention is classified as 'failure', increased attention as 'success'—exemplary for political science agenda-setting research and recently imported into the protest-outcome domain. The predictor variables are grouped into three categories: demonstration characteristics, and political and social context.

Obviously, this is a rather ambitious project in terms of data collection and data preparation. For this workshop our goals are less ambitious. We take the opportunity of this workshop to test the validity and reliability of our conceptualizations and operationalizations. In order to so, we collect and prepare the uncomplicated available data in Dutch on The Netherlands (and perhaps Belgium).

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[1]See www.protestsurvey.eu

Political process, popular protest and the EU: the case of ACTA

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The paper investigates the campaign against the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA), which culminated in a European Parliament (EP) vote against signature in July 2012. A political opportunity approach is adopted which, it is argued, allows us to consider the role of public opinion and media coverage (among other contextual factors) when tracing paths to campaign outcomes. Following calls for a better specified model of political opportunity, a model for assessing the outcomes of campaigns on EU policy is sketched for the European Union. Each of the main EU institutions is considered in turn in terms of the political opportunities and threats they present to social movement organisations (SMOs) that seek to influence EU policy. Variables for considering contexts not tied to the EU's structure are also described, allowing public opinion to be brought back in. This approach is then used to look at the ACTA case, interesting for a host of reasons. First, ACTA sparked widespread protests and media attention; second, the EP's power of consent over international trade agreements was seen as new; third the case has interesting parallels with a previous campaign on the Services Directive. At first glance, ACTA appears to be a clear cut case of protest causing a reaction from the EU. However, this obscures the long-term advocacy work of a host of insider and outsider groups. Without that work, ACTA was unlikely to have been defeated in the EP. A political opportunity approach allows attention to be focussed not only on spectacular protests, but also on the less spectacular groundwork of advocacy groups linked in loose 'open source' coalitions with other more protest-oriented SMOs.

External shocks and governmental responsiveness to public opinion. A case study of nuclear energy policy after the Fukushima disaster

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To what extent are democratic governments responsive to citizens' demands and preferences between elections? Are governments more likely to be responsive to the expression of public opinion through surveys or to collective and publicly voiced opinion – generally in the form of protests? The main objective of this paper is to propose a new way of analysing the dynamics by which governments become more or less responsive to different expressions of the public opinion (as conveyed in opinion polls and through collective action) between elections. To this aim we study how governments react and respond to various (and sometimes contradictory) expressions of the preferences and demands of the public after an 'external' shock, in this case the nuclear accident in Fukushima after the tsunami of March 11, 2011.

Political Exchange between Trade Unions and Governments in an Age of Austerity

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Amidst the current debt crisis, Europe has witnessed a dramatic deterioration in government/union exchange, in contrast to the 1990s, when union-government concertation over welfare and labour market reform was prominent in Northern and Southern Europe. This deterioration is most apparent in the sharp rise in general strikes aimed against austerity measures (i.e. economic policies aimed at either raising taxes or cutting discretionary public spending with the intention of *immediately* addressing fiscal deficits). Traditionally, general strikes have been important collective action tools for unions to gain influence in social policy reforms, and have also served as a medium for unions to punish governments electorally for unilateral reform. However, general strikes directed at austerity are a more recent phenomenon; in the 1980s, 15 per cent of general strikes in the EU15 (plus Norway) were austerity related, but between 2008 and 2012, 72 per cent of strikes were directed at austerity measures. In this paper, we explore whether unions are less likely to secure concessions from governments, and whether governments incur greater vote share penalties after austerity-related general strikes. We expect austerity strikes to reveal different political exchanges between unions and governments than non-austerity related strikes for two reasons: 1) governments are under greater reform pressures and hence are more likely to act unilaterally, and 2) austerity measures are more likely to exacerbate unemployment and lead to a decline in economic growth which may increase the likelihood of future strikes, placing additional electoral penalties on incumbents.

Postponing the school closure: effects of protests in Swedish municipalities

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In what conditions, if at all, do local ad hoc protest mobilisations succeed? This paper examines how different political coalitions at the municipal level influence the outcomes of protests against the proposed school closures in Sweden during the last twenty years. While usually the strategies and size of the protesting group are considered important for achieving the movement's goals, here the major attention is paid at the role of political parties and their coalitions. Municipal level politics in Sweden does not always mirror the coalitions at the national level - many coalitions are formed across the ideological lines and often small local parties play a decisive role. Such a situation might mediate the impact of the numerous and often very emotional protests. The empirical event history analysis makes use of protest event data from all 290 Swedish municipalities over twenty years. Results demonstrate that protests against school closures often do not manage to avoid the closure, but succeed frequently in postponing the final decisions or implementation of the closure.

The impact of electoral competition on rhetorical responsiveness

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This paper investigates whether incentives coming from electoral competition have an impact on government responsiveness to citizens' priorities. Among the incentives competition may produce, two are considered particularly relevant for responsiveness: the first occurring at the election time is related to the differentiation of the political offer; the second occurs between elections and is related to the government's electoral vulnerability. Two hypotheses derive: (a) the more differentiated the political offer and (b) the more vulnerable the government, the higher the probability of responsiveness. While different stages of government responsiveness exist, this paper focuses on rhetorical responsiveness. There is rhetorical responsiveness when a shift of citizens' priorities leads to a shift of salience in the government in the same direction. In order to study this relationship, a time-series cross-section analysis is implemented. On the citizens' side, citizens' priorities over several policy domains are captured by the so-called 'most important problem/issue' question; on the government's side, executive speeches from the Comparative Agendas Project are used.

Cheap talk or keeping/making promises? Parties' verbal statements between elections

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Political statements are often described as "cheap talk" used to silence the masses in the momentum of widespread opposition to the political elite's position which is not succeeded by long-time policy positions. However, political science lacks clarity on whether the "cheap talk" assumption is tenable. Are politicians' verbal statements short-sighted tranquillisers? Or are they instead made with consideration of parties' past policy promises or anticipating future pledges? While studies on parties' mandates in manifestos and positions during election campaigns are manifold, the reasons for politicians' statements between elections are less well known – especially in comparative perspective. This paper seeks to contribute to this debate by using data on politicians' verbal statements after the Fukushima nuclear accident and party manifesto positions prior and after it in 12 advanced democracies collected within the ResponsiveGov project.

"On a scale of 1-5, how much impact do US social movements have on public opinion?"

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Having the general public care about your issue while simultaneously having them support your position on the issue is a delicate balance that many social movement scholars and activists regard as critical to achieving positive movement outcomes. Based on prior work, we expect that movements with events that are large, dramatic, frequent, and associated with established organizations are best able to increase the awareness and favorability of their issue, especially when their actions are featured prominently in the media. While coverage associated with violent tactics may increase issue awareness, we hypothesize that it likely to negatively impact issue favorability. We test these hypotheses using new public opinion data and a newly combined dataset of social movement activities and newspaper coverage. Our data covers 13 major US social movements, such as the environmental, African American civil rights, and gun rights, between 1960 and 1995. To measure public favorability towards social movements, we collected public opinion polling data from 109 different survey questions across 13 different social movement issues spanning 35 years. Our explanatory variables measure the type and count of contentious political acts by issue with data from the Dynamics of Collective Action (DoCA) project; the non-protest coverage of organizations with coverage data from the *Political Organizations in the News* (PONs) Project; and SMO resources, such as budget and size, with newly collected data from the Encyclopedia of Associations. We also include control measures on the political and institutional environment.

Attitudes towards political discontent – Government and contentious politics in Twitter

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Online social media have transformed collective action in multiple ways and have become a mean for expressing public frustration towards the functioning of democracy. However, we know very little about potential outcomes of the multiple forms of citizen engagement that have been enabled through these communication networks. Previous research shows that political use of social media influences the more traditional forms of collective action in terms of political expression and attitudinal components of individual involvement. This paper looks at public responses to contentious politics in order to shed some light on the formation and diffusion of attitudes towards the legitimacy of actors, their grievances and repertoires. It questions the potential of social movements for promoting a broad acceptance of political dissent and non-electoral forms of action by exploring the extent and conditions in which interactions between citizens, social organizations, political elites and the news media deal with contentious politics on Twitter. We look into the digital footprints of protest events in order to identify tweets which express attitudes and establish their polarity with manual and automatic content analysis. We then use social network analysis to identify interactions between the actors who express these attitudes in order to trace influence and framing dynamics within issue networks. Evidence from six demonstrations on eviction, Catalan nationalism and the *Indignados* in Spain between 2011 and 2013 speaks to the potential of contentious politics for capturing the attention of actors in electoral spheres and reacting to concerns on the legitimacy of non-electoral involvement. We identify patterns of diffusion which signal the role of electoral and non-electoral actors in shaping public opinion and individual attitudes towards policy issues and decision processes. The wide diversity of repertoires and grievances in our sample provide external validity to our findings on the influence that elites and public opinion leaders have on the perceptions and attitudes of their audiences on Twitter. These results are relevant to move forward the research on cultural outcomes of protest politics and revisit traditional questions regarding the acceptance of social movements and their recognition from opponents or the state.

How Do Members of Parliament Perceive and Deal with Social Movements? Linking Democratic Responsiveness and Social Movement Outcomes

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This paper looks at the responsiveness of members of the parliament to the challenges coming from social movements and protest activities from a subjective point of view. More specifically, we examine how parliamentary elites see social movements and the ways in which they deal with them. By doing so, we tackle at the same time the issue of responsiveness and that of the political impact of social movements. To do so, we will use existing survey data from the PARTIREP project and the EPRG MEP survey. The PARTIREP research team has conducted a comparative survey of members of 60 national and regional parliaments in 15 countries. This survey includes a question on how parliamentarians evaluate the efficacy of social movements. This analysis will be complemented by one the responsiveness of members of the European Parliament based on the EPRG MEP survey. This survey also includes questions about the relationship between parliamentarians and various groups, including social movement organizations. We will test for the effect of various characteristics of parliamentarians on the way they perceive and deal with social movements by means of multi-level regression analysis in which we control for the effect of country-level variables.

The policy effects of participation: Cherry-picking among local policy proposals

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Participatory processes developed at the local level have received considerable attention. Surprisingly though, one of their potential main effects – their impact on public policies – has been the object of scant systematic research. While some of these participatory processes have only a loose connection to the policy process, even amongst those that are more policy oriented, the general impression is that they have only limited impact on final policies.

One of the possibilities is that politicians and officials cherry-pick from amongst the proposals emerging from these participatory processes, adopting only those more favourable to their own interests. The goal of the paper is twofold. First, we offer a theoretical model that aims to explain both the types of policies and the types of participatory processes that are more likely to be excluded as a result of a cherry-picking orientation. Second, we present the methodology used to develop a systematic test of fate of a substantial sample of policy proposals coming out from 40 participatory processes developed in three Spanish regions and present a preliminary analysis of the results. We use a database where each policy proposal is a case, including about 15 variables at the municipality level (e.g., population, budget, party of the mayor), about 20 variables at the process level (from issues covered to types of participants) and about 15 variables about the policy proposal itself.

We can distinguish two basic types of explanations: contextual or policy-related. _Contextual explanations_ are those that have an effect on any proposal that emerges from a given participatory process, i.e. those explanations that would affect equally the sixteen proposals coming out from a participatory budget in a given year. Such explanations could relate to the _characteristics of the municipality_ (e.g., extremely constrained budget, local government extremely supportive to any participatory proposal) or to _the characteristics of the specific participatory devices_ (e.g. highly visible or legally binding). In comparison, _policy related explanations_ are those that are specific to each proposal, including factors such as their cost, the degree of social polarization that the proposal creates or the place of the issue on the local agenda. In summary, we can say that there would be three main types of factors to understand why a proposal has success or not: _the polity_ (the organizational context), _the process_ (the characteristics of the participatory device) and _the policy_ (the features of the proposal itself). All these ingredients will affect _the cherry-picking_ process and, as such, why a citizen input becomes or not a public policy.

Impact of Electoral Protest on Institutional Engineering under Electoral Authoritarianism

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During both parliamentary and presidential elections of 2011 – 2012 in Russia, there was opportunity to see the phenomenon of "Observers' movement" which can be considered as a special form of social movement. This movement emerged spontaneously in response to numerous electoral violations during election campaigns and used election observation as means to express protest to the authorities and provide fair vote counting. The core of this movement was represented by several organizations, and most of them were created during the protest campaign.

In this paper I analyze the authorities' response to the "Observers' movement". I explore institutional changes within both party and electoral laws implemented after the protest. I show that, despite the official statements that goal of reforms was to increase electoral openness and develop political competition as well as representation of interest groups, the real effect of this institutional engineering was connected with attempt to minimize movement's impact on election results. Institutional changes left the key instruments for maintaining the regime of electoral authoritarianism untouched.

Protest, Elections and Austerity Politics in Greece

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The purpose of this paper is to shed light on the impact of the (euro) crisis on the political system in Greece through a relational approach. Economic contention, democracy and economic voting have been accompanied by rapid distrust in national and European political institutions by Greek citizens. Aiming to understand and illustrate how repertoires of contention and the financial crisis regime have been shaping each other, the paper offers new findings based on protest event analysis of the large contentious events against Memoranda and austerity policies by Troika (European Commission, ECB, IMF) and the Greek state.

The sources used to code information on economic and political claims are major, national as well as international newspapers and alternative electronic media. Following Kriesi's (2011) conceptualization of economic voting in West European (WE) and Central & East European (CEE) countries vis-à-vis the economic crisis, the findings show that Greece stands somewhere in between: both centre-right and centre-left governments imposing austerity in the 2008-2012 period faced a severe electoral punishment like in most WE cases. However, unlike in WE, the political system in Greece changed radically. New political parties, especially of the far right, appeared and had an immediate success in the ballots like in many CEE cases. At the same time nevertheless, unlike both in CEE and WE, the political parties of the left were significantly empowered in Greece. Alternative paths of the May 2014 European and the regional elections in Greece will be discussed in relation to a spiraling economic and political process.