The Collective Action Factors:
Russian Mass Protests 2011-2012
Motivation

Why do individuals participate in collective actions?

- (Olson, 1965): small groups VS large groups
- The aims of collective actions – specific public goods => «free-rider» problem
- But how can one explain the participation in large-scale actions like voting? (Downs, 1957; Tullock, 1968; Fiorina, 1976; Aldrich, 1993; Blais, 2000; Cohen, 2003; Gerber, Rogers, 2009; Bowles, 2012)
Broad Research Context

- Collective actions determine the success for groups for lobbying their interests, but...
- They also affect the dynamics of political and economic institutions

Collective actions\(_t\) \implies \begin{align*}
\text{Resource distribution}\(_t\) & \implies \begin{align*}
\text{Political power de-facto}\(_t\) & \implies \text{Economic institutions}\(_t\) \implies \text{Resource distribution}\(_{t+1}\) \\
\text{Political power de-jure}\(_t\) & \implies \text{Political institutions}\(_{t+1}\) \implies \text{Economic performance}\(_t\)
\end{align*}
\end{align*}

«Since we do not yet have a satisfactory theory of when groups are able to solve their collective action problems, our focus will be on the second source of de facto political power» (Acemoglu, Johnson, Robinson, 2006)

Collective actions face:
1. strategical cooperation problem
2.a costs of coordination
2.b costs of participation
My paper

- Which factors affect costs of coordination and participation in mass actions?
- Harsh conditions and low population concentration cause high costs of collective actions, while developing of telecom technologies decreases them.
- Political regime matters.
- Russian mass protests 2011-2012 case.
Structure of the Paper

- **Theory**
  - How does geography affect collective action?
  - The impact of collective actions on politics
  - The impact of politics on collective actions

- **Empirical Tests**
  - Hypothesis
  - Data
  - Analysis
Geography and Collective Actions - 1

Country’s border
Higher population concentration:
- Decreases the costs caused by harsh geographical and weather conditions
- Decreases the rate of «free-riders»
Empirical Evidence

(Tilly, 2003): «the dense population of Paris made it inevitable that in times of trouble large brawls occurred regularly; it did not take much time to see the rise of sizeable mobs such as the crowd that stormed the Bastille on July 14, 1789»

(Dowe, 2001): «1848 - Year of Revolutions». Among the 30 most populated cities in Europe in 1800, 11 of the top 15 were shocked by the revolutionary wave 9, most of them were capital cities of sovereign or vassal states; while none of the next 15

(Compante, Do, 2008): Population Concentration Index («Gridded Population of the World»)
- Kuweit VS Saudi Arabia
- Movement of capital cities: 9 times since 1960 (Kazakhstan, 1997, Tanzania, 1996)
- Positive effects (Alesina, Glaeser, 2004)
### Saudi Arabia VS Kuwait: *feel the difference*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Voice and accountability</th>
<th>Political stability</th>
<th>Government effectiveness</th>
<th>Regulatory quality</th>
<th>Rule of law</th>
<th>Control of corruption</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait-1996</td>
<td>-0.47</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
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<td>0.61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia-1996</td>
<td>-1.62</td>
<td>-0.52</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>-0.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kuwait-2007</td>
<td>-0.46</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia-2007</td>
<td>-1.59</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Russian case

- (Treivish, 2003): Even in the most populous regions, population density remains at least 2 times lower than in the nearest western post-communist countries.

- (Ekiert, Hanson, 2003; Getachew, Lankina, 2006): The success of political and economic reforms in post-soviet world well-defined territorial distribution.

- (Turovsky, 2005): Distances between Russian cities make them «highly fragmented, isolated, immersed in their own problems».

- (Gaddy, Hill, 1999; Mikhailova, 2005): Low temperature increases transport and living costs of households, decreases personal welfare.
Latitudinal profile of Europe

Population Density, Democracy and Property Rights Protection

27/08/2012
Anton Sobolev (HSE, Moscow)

The Collective Action Factors
The Impact of Collective Actions on Politics

- (North, 1986) Collective action as source of bargaining power
- (North, Weingast, 1989): «Glorious» revolution and credible commitment problem
- (Gehlbach, Keefer, 2011): Threat of Collective Actions limits the autocrat’s rent-seeking behavior increase the domestic investment
- (Acemoglu, Robinson, 2006): Threat of collective actions is an incentive for elites to democratize
Selective incentives (Olson, 1965):

- **Positive**
  - «Bear only for members of trade-unions!» (Ilf, Petrov, 1931)
  - Redistriburional coalitions (Mesquita et al, 2003)
  - Trust (Popkin, 1979)
  - Social status (Kriger, 1992)

- **Negative**
  - Hutu’s mobilization against Tutsi (De Forges, 1999)
(Miner, 2011): Internet technologies decreases the costs of cooperation. (The rise of opposition voters’ turnout in internet-developed regions in Malaysia election, 2008)

(McGuire, Olson, 1996; Tucker, 2007): Falsifications: difference between median voter’s ideal point and the official policy

Economics: welfare and inequality (Cramer, 2003)

(Acemoglu, Robinson, 2006; Aghion, Alesina, Trebbi, 2004; Oleinik, 2010; Lukes, 1971; Flores, Smith, 2010; De Mesquita, Smith, 2010): Repressiveness of Political Regime
Are You Ready to Repress?

- Cyclone Nargis (Burma, 2008):
  - 138 000 dead
  - «Dead people cannot protest»

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Hypotheses

Geography:
Population Concentration, Temperature, Density of autoroads and railways

Scale of Mass Protests Actions

Falsifications
Repressiveness of Political Regime
Telecom Infrastructure
Data – 1: Dependent Variable

- Mass protests actions 2011-2012
- Dataset: 440 mass actions / 309 antigovernment rallies
- Integrum regional newspapers database
- Mass actions occurred in 75 regions
- Estimated number of participants in the most large-scale antigovernment rally in the region, 4.11.2011-30.05.2012 (Organizers, UVD, mean)
- Control for population size
Data – 2: Independent variables

- Population concentration index (Herfindahl–Hirschman Index formula for the urban population):
  \[ PCI = S_1^2 + S_2^2 + S_3^2 + \ldots + S_n^2, \]

- Control for rural population

- Control for density of autoroads and railways
Data – 2: Independent Variables

- Geography: mean temperature of January, distance from Moscow (Rosstat)
- Telecom: share of households internet users, number of mobile phone per capita, number of PC per caputa, number of fixed phones per capita
- Falscifications: share of fraud in elections (Shpilkin, 2011)
Kernel Density Estimation of Logged Number of Participants of the Most Crowded Protest Meeting in the Region

- Number of Participants (ORG)
- Number of Participants (UVD)
- Mean Number of Participants
Population Concentration and Meetings

Number of Participants per capita (ORG) vs. Fitted values
Politics: Fraud VS Repressiveness

- The figure shows the relationship between United Russia Share of Votes and the turnout for the State Duma Elections 2011.
- The scatter plots display the data points for different regions, with fitted values indicating trends.
- The left panel focuses on the relationship between the number of participants and the share of votes.
- The right panel illustrates the correlation between the share of fraud and the United Russia Share of Votes.
The Collective Action Factors

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27/08/2012

Repress...

Number of Participants per ca (ORG)  Fitted values
Conclusions

- In regions with lower density concentration and harsh conditions collective actions have less scale character. This correlation is robust even if we control for all political, economic and telecom factors.
- Factors which affect the costs of participation overlap with the problems of strategic cooperation.
- The growth of collective action potention is important factor for incumbent behavior
- But the political elite’s response is also important: repertoire of instruments to manage protests action is great (from oppositional leaders’ prosecution to capital movement)