EXPLAINING MOBILIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE 2020-21 FARMERS' MOVEMENT IN INDIA

Rubyna Boodhoo

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Department of Political Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Boston College
Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences
Graduate School

April 2024

Explaining Mobilization: A Case Study of the 2020-21 Farmers' Movement in India

Rubyna Boodhoo

Advisor: Thibaud Marcesse Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Boston College

ABSTRACT

This is a case study of the 2020-21 Farmers' Movement in India which brought an alliance among farmers who belong to historically different social groups by their social status, land ownership, and amount of land owned. It also brought together farmers and laborers as a united front, and for the first time, an alliance of urban-based individuals and civil society groups, workers, students, and opposition political parties came together to support the farmers and their cause. How do people of different social groups and ethnicities construct common interests and act collectively?

I review the literature on the structural and historical theories of peasants' uprisings, the collective action theory, and the political opportunity structure to explain why the movement emerged and how it emerged. I argue that the movement emerged as a consequence of economic grievances and the potential for mobilization which is determined by the political opportunity structure. Farmers feared that the Farm Laws that were intended to liberalize agricultural marketing by facilitating intrastate trade, contract farming, and direct marketing would lead to the collapse of the state government-regulated marketplaces and eventually to the collapse of the minimum support price system. The discontentment of farmers, farmers' unions, and opposition parties provided the political opportunity structure for the movement.

I argue that economic grievances and political opportunity structure are necessary conditions for the emergence of social movements, but they do not explain how people of different social groups and ethnicities construct common interests and act collectively. Communities converge on a common frame through the process of frame alignment. Therefore, framing is a necessary and sufficient condition for participation in a social movement. The process of frame alignment creates common interests and non-monetary selective incentives like solidary and purposive incentives which are necessary and sufficient conditions for collective action.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Professor Marcesse for his help, guidance, and patience in completing this daunting and challenging endeavor. Without his leadership and ever-helpful knowledge this project would never have been completed. I would also like to thank my second reader, Professor Easter.

I owe a great deal to Shirley Gee for helping me navigate through the administrative procedures of the thesis, and for always doing so with kindness.

Most of all, thank you to my family for supporting me.

INTRODUCTION

On November 26, 2020, tens of thousands of farmers marched to Delhi and set up protest camps on the outskirts of the capital, braving the harsh weather conditions and the COVID-19 pandemic. The protest, qualified as one of the "largest and longest farmers' struggles in the history of modern India" (Frontline August 15, 2022), belies doubts about the political capability of the peasantry to unite (Marx 1852; Moore 1966; Stokes 1978). The farmers were protesting against three Farm Laws enacted by the government on September 27, 2020: the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, the Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, collectively referred to as the Farm Laws in this document.

The Farm Laws sought to increase economic efficiency by changing the rules around the sale and pricing of farm produce to allow private buyers to purchase agricultural produce directly from farmers outside the Minimum Support Price (MSP) system. The MSP is a government guarantee that insures farmers of certain crops, including wheat and paddy, against price volatility. Farmers and agricultural workers were concerned that the Farm Laws may lead to the possible phasing out of the MSP and the subsequent erosion of state subsidies for produce procured under the MSP. The protesters stayed at the camps in Delhi for almost a year, until the Indian prime minister agreed to repeal the Farm Laws on November 19, 2021.

Sporadic protests started in several states in north India in September 2020, including Punjab, western Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana, when the Farm Ordinances were submitted to Parliament. The protests were taken to the national level when the farmers marched to Delhi in November 2020. The Delhi protest camps became the focal points to sustain the farmers'

movement across India. Over the period September 2020 to November 2021, 3,197[1] Farmers' Demonstration Events (FDEs) were recorded across 30 states/union territories. The highest FDEs were recorded in Punjab and Haryana, which together with Uttar Pradesh, are considered the breadbasket of India.

India has a long history of peasants' movements dating back to at least the 1920s and 1930s (Mukherjee 1988), but the peculiarity of the 2020-21 Farmers'[2] Movement as it is commonly referred to, is the coalition of diversified interests brought together in collective action. The movement brought an alliance among different farmers who belong to historically different social groups by their social status, land ownership, and amount of land owned. It also brought farmers and laborers together, and, for the first time, an alliance of urban-based individuals and civil society groups, workers, students, and opposition political parties came together to support the farmers and their cause. The puzzle is: how do people of different social groups and ethnicities construct common interests and act collectively?

I seek to address this question in this thesis with a case study of the 2020-21 Farmers' Movement: why did the movement emerge, and how did it emerge? I consider explanations of economic grievances, and political opportunity structure which refers to selected aspects of the political system that are important in mobilizing people to participate in joint protest activities. I conduct a regression analysis to assess the relationships between the FDEs and these variables. Based on my findings which show a relatively large non-explained factor, I argue that economic

---

[1] Data was compiled from database of the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). https://acleddata.com

[2]The term 'farmers' is used for the market-oriented cultivators who emerged in the post-Green Revolution in India (Gupta 1997). In contrast, the term 'peasants' is used to denote people with people with varied interests in land ranging from subsistence to surplus producers (Arora 2001).

grievances and political opportunity structure are necessary but not sufficient conditions for collective action. I find through my research that a common frame is a necessary and sufficient condition for participation in a social movement because it operates through a process of frame alignment whereby individual interests, values, and beliefs are aligned to the social movement's organization, activities, goals, and ideology. By common frame, I mean action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement. A common frame embodies common interests and non-selective incentives such as solidary and purposive incentives, two conditions that are necessary and sufficient for participation in collective action. Using the comparative method, I compare the FDEs in Punjab and Haryana - two outlier states with the highest FDEs and similar economic grievances - and attribute the large variation in FDEs between them to a difference in the common frame.

To differentiate and distinguish between the varied interests of the participants in the social movement, and to identify shared interests, I use the official classes of farmers categorized by size of operational holdings[3]: (1) marginal farmers less than 1 hectare; (2) small farmers between 1 and 2 hectares of land; (3) semi-medium farmers between 2 and 4 hectares; (4) medium farmers between 4 and 10 hectares; and, (5) large farmers 10 hectares and above. I also identify participants by caste, including Dalits, Jats, and Adivasis, and by religion. This analytical approach allows me to answer these questions: how do Muslim and Jat farmers collaborate after the Muzaffarnagar riots that divided western Uttar Pradesh along Hindu-Muslim lines? How does the urban-rural divide close?

[3] Agricultural Census 2015-16 (Phase 1). All India Report on Number and Area of Operational Holdings. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. Government of India. 2019.

Further, I consider the role played by organizations such as trade unions in enabling and sustaining the movement. I focus on the Bharatiya Kisan Movement (BKU) and the Samyukta Kisan Morcha United Front (SKM) which was created to lead the movement. Since its formation in 1978, the BKU has provided a platform to big and middle-class farmers across caste and religion (Gupta 1997). It emerged as a strong political force in the farmers' protests of the 1980s and played an important role in overthrowing the Congress government in the 1989 elections (Kumar 2022). I explore the strength of the association between the number of FDEs by state and the participation of the BKU and SKIM in the 2020-21 Farmers' Movement.

I also consider how communities of discourse by the trade unions and other organizations created a cultural semblance that penetrated customary boundaries and brought people of different identities together. Often constructed on vested interests and common causes, communities of discourse can also work as catalytic agents to create closer networks and bring different factions of society together (Mehta 2022). I find evidence of a common frame. A change in the political system becomes an opportunity only if it is perceived as such by movement agents. Thus, political opportunity cannot be understood without framing.

The first chapter of the thesis explains the context and scope of the 2020-21 Farmers' Movement. It compares the alliances in the countryside with the New Farmers' Movements that emerged in India in the 1980s. The second chapter reviews the structural and historical theories of peasants' uprisings and the political opportunity structure. It situates the contribution of the thesis to social movement literature. The third chapter is the theory and hypotheses chapter. It predicts when a social movement emerges. The fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters explain how economic and political factors and framing increase the likelihood of participation in social

movements, and why a common frame is a necessary and sufficient condition for participation in a social movement.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND

The structural approach to social movements maintains, and attempts to demonstrate empirically, that individual behaviors are channeled by a series of structural constraints caused by institutions, in particular political institutions (Fetner and Smith 2007). The neo-institutionalist approach complements the structural approach by trying to situate the actor in his context (Scheniberg and Lounsbury 2008). The political process approach to social movement, in particular the statist version (Tarrow in McAdam et al. 1996), is grounded in the neo-institutionalist view of society and emphasizes the role of political and economic structures, especially state structures, in social movements.

This chapter seeks to explain the role of the political and economic structures within which the 2020-21 Farmers' Movement emerged. It explains the context and scope of the protest. The chapter also explores the alliances in the countryside and compares them with those that existed when the New Farmers' Movements emerged in India in the 1980s. The objective is to locate the 2020-21 Farmers' Movement in a broader historical context of agrarian political dynamics to explain the particular alliance of actors in the movement. I compare three key relations: relations between farmers and the state, between farmers and large capital, and relations within the countryside between large farmers, small and marginal farmers and landless laborers. I find that while the New Farmers' Movements were led by better-off farmers from dominant castes in their search for improved terms of trade and excluded the smallest farmers, the landless, and the Dalits (Pattenden and Bansai 2021), the 2020-21 Farmers' Movement is a caste-class alliance of large, small and marginal farmers, and landless laborers (Lerche 2021).

1.1. THE CONTEXT OF THE PROTEST

This section provides the context of the 2020-21 Farmers' protest. It explains the importance of the agricultural sector in the Indian economy, and the operation of, and issues with, the agricultural procurement system. It also explains the rationale for the Farm Laws and the farmers' contentions of with them.

1.1.1. The agricultural sector

The Indian agricultural sector grew at a rate of about 2.6 percent per annum after independence, as compared to a growth rate of about 1 percent per annum prior to independence, making the country the second-largest producer of rice, wheat, vegetables, and fruits in the world. The higher growth rate is attributed to a rapid increase in the land under cultivation and radical progress in farming methods and production technology, brought about by the Green Revolution. Agriculture is a major occupation in India, employing about 44 percent of the workforce in 2021, while the industry and services sector employed about 26 percent and 31 percent of the workforce, respectively. Though a main source of employment, agriculture's contribution to GDP is only 17 percent, compared to 26.1 percent for industry and 48.4 percent for services. The low contribution of agriculture is due to farm productivity that has almost stagnated (Purkayastha 2021). India is already making maximum use of its agricultural land; it is using about 51 percent of its area for agriculture, compared to a world average of 11 percent, of which rainfed drylands constitute about 65 percent. Thus, there is little scope to expand the land under cultivation. This situation, coupled with poor agricultural research output, has led to stagnated crop productivity.

1.1.2. The agricultural system

A landmark feature of the agricultural system is the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC), which was adopted by many states in the 1960s. The APMC or mandi is considered to be an innovative and democratic solution to ensure better prices for agricultural produce through auctions, and protection of farmers from the high costs of marketing and loss of produce (62nd report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture 2018-19)[4]. There are about 7,246 functioning mandis in India (Pingali et al. 2019), found in all but four states: Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, and Manipur. They serve as physical entities that regulate market practices such s methods of sale, methods of grading, and methods of payments. At the mandis, the government is mandated to procure certain agricultural commodities from farmers through the middlemen, also known as commission agents. The latter acts as intermediaries between farmers and those seeking to buy their produce; their role is to control the auction and deliver the harvested crops to buyers. In essence, the agricultural institutional setting consists of three economic markets: (1) a market for intermediate inputs for farming; (2) the APMCs where the farmers sell their output to government-licensed intermediaries; and, (3) the retail or private markets where the intermediaries sell the agricultural produce. Those farmers who do not sell their agricultural produce in the APMCs sell them directly to the private markets.

The APMCs guarantee a Minimum Support Price (MSP) which has been set to deliver a return of at least 50 percent to farmers in previous years (Saini and Chowdhury 2023). To have access to the APMCs, farmers and traders have to pay a market fee, which is used for the

[4] Sixty-second Report. Standing Committee on Agriculture (2018-2019). Agricultural marketing and role of weekly Gramin Haats. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare. Lok Sabha Secretariat. New Delhi.

construction and maintenance of the physical infrastructure of the APMCs. The MSP also assures sale and payment to farmers over 23 agricultural produce, based on the recommendation of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices. Farmers are notified of the agricultural produce the government will procure before each of the two planting seasons, but often there is low awareness among farmers about the prevailing MSP. The NSS--SAS[5] 2012-13 reveals that less than 25 percent of farmers in rural agricultural households are aware of the MSP in each of the planting seasons. In addition, over time, due to some factors that include vested interests, myopic policymaking and bureaucratic shortcomings, the APMCs have deteriorated. The culture of excessive state control of the APMCs has discouraged free trade of agricultural produce across and within state boundaries, and private investment in the sector. This has led to a mismanaged value chain with a large number of intermediaries and a compromised price received by farmers (Saha et al. 2023). For instance, the producers' share of consumer prices can be as low as 56 percent for paddy, and 32 percent for fruits and vegetables (see Footnote 3).

1.1.3. The Farm Laws

The Farm Laws are linked to neoliberal reforms that India embarked on under the Congress party-led government in 1991 (Narula 2022). They came at a time when the government was trying to facilitate economic recovery, as the country had been hit by recessions in the quarters from April to June 2020 and July to September 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the first quarter, the GDP dropped by a massive 24.4 percent, and in the second quarter by a further 7.4 percent (Economics Observatory, June 2021). The sharp drop is the

[5] National Sample Survey's Situational Assessment of Agricultural Households.

largest in the country's history. According to the Ministry of Finance[6], the Farm Laws would have a positive effect on the agricultural sector that it qualifies as inefficient. It claims that they would benefit farmers, in particular small and marginal farmers who represent about 85 percent of all farmers, by giving them a choice to sell their produce directly to a processing factory, or the private sector. The Farm Laws would also incentivize private investment, which would bring better cold storage facilities, an improved food supply chain, and better engagement of farmers with wholesalers, retailers, and exporters. However, farmers did not agree; they feared that the new laws would lower prices for their produce, incentivize the hoarding of essential goods, and remove the MSP.

For instance, the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act allows for intra-state trade of farmers' produce beyond the physical access of the state government-regulated marketplaces (mandis) in free, unregulated spaces. However, farmers fear that the likely outcome of this Act would be a collapse of the mandis, as the players in these markets are bound to move out to the unregulated market spaces. This would entail the end of the MSP.

Furthermore, the Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act provides a legal framework for farmers to enter into contracts with buyers for the sale of future produce at a predetermined price. It enables farmers to engage in direct agreement with corporates to sell their produce, without oversight. As these agreements increase outside the wholesale markets, farmers fear that they could further fragment the markets and

---

[6] Economic Survey 2020-21, Volume 2 (pp 253-258) Ministry of Finance, Department of Economic Affairs, Economic Division, New Delhi.

leave small farmers dependent on terms set by big corporates, or be cut out of the industry altogether.

In addition, the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act removes some food produce from the list of essential commodities. Food essentials like cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onions, and potatoes would no longer be under the purview of the central government. Under the amended act, they would only be regulated under extraordinary circumstances like famine or war. The reason for the amendment to the Act which came into force in 1955, was to ease the business environment as entrepreneurs tend to get discouraged by the regulatory mechanisms in the outdated Act. Although India is a surplus producer in most agricultural commodities, farmers have been unable to get better prices due to a lack of investment in cold storage, warehouses, processing, and export. Severe logistical limitations lead to a loss of produce between 4 to 18 percent annually.

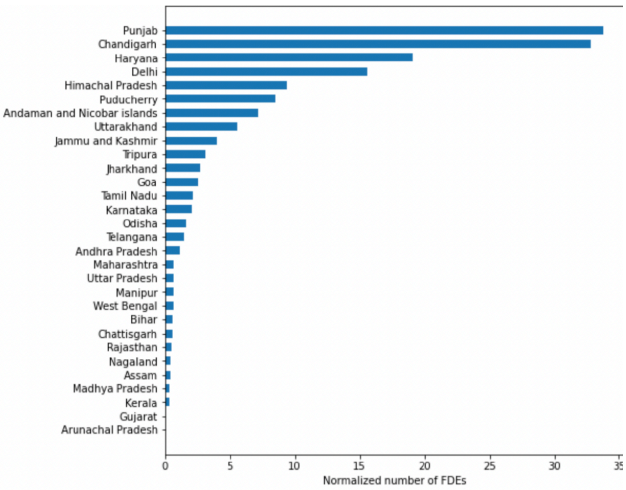
However, farmers view the "unlimited storage" that the Act aims to provide to buyers as an opportunity for any buyer with enough money to stock up. They fear that without oversight the buyers can also start to dictate prices. Collusion among a set of large buyers is well-known in the Indian agriculture market. For instance, in a study of the grain market in India using the auction theory, Banerji and Meenakshi (2004) find that collusion among large buyers depresses market prices appreciably because the two players with the highest valuations for the grain are part of a cartel which disallows them to bid simultaneously at any lot. Additionally, the collusion also keeps prices relatively close to the MSP.

1.2. THE SCOPE OF THE FARMERS' MOVEMENT

Demonstration events started in Punjab on September 15, 2020, a day after the Ordinances were submitted to Parliament. Twelve days later, they extended to western Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, all of them states in the Green Revolution belt. The movement evolved nationally when farmers joined trade unions in a nationwide strike with the massive participation of 250 million workers (Joy 2020). Tens of thousands of farmers marched from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan to Delhi. The farmers established protest camps on the outskirts of New Delhi, and stayed there despite harsh weather conditions and the COVID pandemic, until the Indian government relented and the Prime Minister announced the repeal of the Farm Laws on November 19. 2021. In many ways, the Delhi march was a continuation of the protests that erupted in September (Crowley 2020). Farmers and workers came together to protest against the neo-liberalization of the Indian economy.

A total of 3,197 FDEs were recorded across the 30 states/union territories in India. The highest number of FDEs was recorded in Punjab and Haryana, which recorded 1,018 and 530 FDEs, respectively. Together, they represented about 49 percent of the total FDEs. Moreover, the two states and western Uttar Pradesh had the longest duration of FDEs about 61 weeks. Only six states/union territories did not record any FDEs: Ladakh, Sikkim, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep, and Meghalaya. The mean number of FDEs per million population is 4.4 and the standard deviation is 8.2, which indicates a high dispersion around the mean. The uneven distribution of FDEs across states is shown in Figure 1.1 that follows.

Figure 1.1. Normalized number of FDEs by state, 2020-21 Farmers' Movement



I normalized the number of FDEs by population and used the interquartile range method to find outliers. I found four outliers: Delhi, Haryana, Chandigarh, and Punjab (from lowest to highest). However, as the de facto source of the contentious Farm Laws, farmers from different states went to Delhi to demonstrate. Similarly, farmers from both Punjab and Haryana went to Chandigarh, the capital of the two states, to demonstrate. Essentially then, Punjab and Haryana are the outliers on the upper bound.

1.3. THE PATTERNS OF ALLIANCES

This section considers the patterns of alliance in social movements over time, and in particular in those of the New Farmers' Movements that emerged in the 1980s. I make a comparison with the 2020-21 Farmers' Movements.

An analysis of farmers' movements in the history of India shows a historical shift in patterns of alliance over time. After independence, peasants' movements were organized around

the contradiction in a landlord-dominated, class-divided agrarian society, or the contradiction between landed and non-landed groups - the "land to tiller" issue. Their demands ranged from land reform to rent reduction, and a houseplot. They organized landless laborers, small tenants, and poor peasants such that landed groups had to form counter-organizations both to defend their interests and to wean off small and middle peasants from the influence of such radical movements (Lindberg 1994).

However, since the late 1970s, a different type of movement has been emerging on the rural political scene, acting on another contradiction. These are the remunerative-prices movement (Lindberg 1994) that has acted on the issue of the price of agricultural produce, the price of agricultural inputs, such as fertilizers, and electricity, and terms of credit for farmers from state-owned organizations. These movements acted on the contradiction between the state and the peasantry. The state was seen as the main target of the protest, not the local landlords as in the earlier movements after independence but before the 1970s. The 1980s in particular, were notable for mass marches on Delhi and other urban centers by rural actors who were protesting for higher agricultural prices and subsidies, and for a better allocation of resources for rural India (Varshney 1995). It was the Bharat versus India contradiction. Urban India was getting rich at the expense of rural India (Bharat), and the farmers' movement was a movement for a "second independence"[7].

The shift in the form and location of collective actions in the Indian countryside is explained by the changing nature of agriculture after the Green Revolution (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987). Taking a broader political perspective, the Rudolphs argue that the central

[7] These are the words used by Sharad Joshi, the leader of one of India's biggest farmers' movements, the Shektari Sanghatana (Bengal and Corbridge 1966).

government in India under Nehru (1947-64) enjoyed a good deal of autonomy from civil society at large and from local dominant groups, in particular. During that time, rapid industrialization, agrarian reform, and a stable democracy based on "federalism, secularism, and socialism" prevailed. But, from 1966 to the late 1980s, the autonomy of the central government was compromised by the powers of different groups, including farmers, students, and the organized working class. This caused civil society to retaliate, especially the elements of rural civil society who felt cheated by the urban-industrial biases.

Furthermore, the Green Revolution had locked many Indian farmers into extended circuits of capitalist commodity production. The bullock capitalists - small and medium-sized self-employed independent agricultural producers operating between 2.5 and 14.99 acres of land (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987:337) - prospered under the Green Revolution, and their share of operating land increased from 42 percent in 1954-55 to 51 percent fifteen years later. They took the lead in organizing agrarian politics in a quest for remunerative prices. Their main demand was for lower agricultural input prices and higher farm output prices. The Rudolphs suggest that the leaders of the new farmers' movement targeted New Delhi as the destination of their marches because it is the de facto source of the prices that matter to the farmers in India's Green Revolution belt in north and west India. Farmers' movement sought to prevent further 'unfair' resource transfers from rural India using roadblocks and sit-ins.

The bullock capitalists were successful in obtaining remunerative prices for agricultural commodities from the state because of their sense of organization and their capacity for mobilization (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987: 360). They were also successful because they were able to subsume class politics in India. Their leaders emphasized the opposition between India

and Bharat, thus sidelining socio-economic divisions in rural India. Charan Singh, one of the leaders, minimized social stratification in the villages by claiming that he represented all peasants, even though landless laborers who worked in the fields of others were completely left out of this group of peasants.

Going forward, the 2020-21 Farmers' Movement was largely led by farmers' unions and activists from Punjab, Haryana, and western Uttar Pradesh. The northern farmers benefited from the strong support of the All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC)[8], a platform of 400 farmer organizations from around the country representing diverse rural producers, including small farmers, agricultural workers, women cultivators, and indigenous Adivasi and Dalit communities. Punjab's farmer unions together with the AIKSCC were central in forming the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella body that comprised more than forty farmer organizations that represent different groups of farmers with varied political ideologies, such as the All India Kisan Sabha[9] (AIKS) and multiple affiliates of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU).

Both the SKM and the BKU played a predominant role in rallying farmers to the movement. The BKU, which provides a platform for big and middle farmers across different religions (Gupta 1997) and especially for Hindu and Muslim Jat farmers, was also predominant in the New Farmers' Movement in the 1980s. One particular organization, the BKU (Ekta-Ugrahan), Punjab's largest farmers' union, made conscious efforts to forge relations across class

[8]The AIKSCC was formed in 2017 by the All India Kisan Sabha which is the peasant wing of the Communist Party of India, and participated in the March 2018 "Kisan Long March" when roughly 50,000 farmers from across the state of Maharashtra marched to Mumbai demanding land rights, and a legally guaranteed MSP.

[9] The AIKS is the farmers' wing of the Communist Party of India.

and caste divides (Pattenden and Bansai 2021). It did not join the SKM but supported them in their calls for mobilization. In previous years, the BKU (Ekta-Ugrahan) had joined multiple mobilizations by Dalits and landless agricultural workers in Punjab, which had to a large extent facilitated the cross-caste and -class movement (Sinha 2020). For instance, along with other farmer and farm labor unions, it supported an agitation by Dalits in the Mansa district in 2010 to ensure they received compensation and rehabilitation when their homesteads were acquired for a power plant. It has also supported the Zameen Prapti Sangharsh Committee (ZPSC) organization demanding land rights for Dalits, both by providing funds and by protecting against physical attacks by dominant Jats. The ZPSC actively participated in the 2020-21 Farmers' Movement too.

The contradiction caused by the Farm Laws between petty and large-scale capital has brought broad-based farmers' opposition to the state, amplified by the government's dogged commitments to corporate interests. While a small group of landed households accumulate through farming, employ agricultural wage workers, and tend to invest or accumulate outside of agriculture (Lerche 2015), most farmers are petty commodity producers who combine capital and labor within their households. They own land, tools, and machinery, and their agricultural work is done primarily by the household members. They may also employ wage agricultural laborers during the peak season. Moreover, for the majority of farmers who possess less than one ha of land, work incomes outside the farm are essential. While much of their identity and standing in the community is tied to landownership, they are farmer-laborers who combine wage labor with farming (Lerche 2021).

The different classes of farmers and farm laborers have different class interests, but when it comes to the Farm Laws they are united by the fact that they all stand to lose. This is because they no longer hold the structural power they were holding in the 1980s as farmers because the agrarian question of capital has been bypassed in India. Capitalist development and capital accumulation within the agricultural sector have not served as an engine for capitalist development across the economy since India embarked on neoliberal reforms in 1991. Instead, financialization drives its non-agricultural development (Chandrasekhar 2016) and has resulted in service sector and construction-led growth (Ghose 2016). As noted earlier, agricultural contribution to the economy as measured by its contribution to GDP has fallen dramatically, while the absence of a domestic rural market is a major impediment to a domestically-oriented industrial strategy. The economic role of farmers in India's now global capitalist development has never been so small (Lerche 2021). Therefore, they all stand to lose with the Farm Laws.

Furthermore, as agriculture has been losing its importance economically, it has also been losing its importance as a source of employment. Many people have shifted out of agriculture. In 2018-19, there was about 43 percent of the labor force employed in agriculture as compared to 60 percent in 2020 (O'Neill 2024). It is more and more difficult for small farmer-cum-laborer households to live on their farming income alone. The prevalence of these farming households has increased over time. Further, landless laborer households have to a large extent moved out of agriculture to look for jobs in non-agricultural sectors, often as seasonal migrant workers. The poorer majority of farming households have more in common with landless laborers than capitalist farmers.

Despite these common interests, there may still be a caste-class divide that has been carried over from the agricultural to the non-agricultural sector because the jobs that the farming caste people tend to get differ from those that Dalits get (Lerche 2021). Dalits can primarily access informal, insecure, temporary, and demeaning jobs. However, the move-out of agriculture has led to some delinking between landowning farmers and Dalits, which has sometimes lessened contradictions in rural India (Lerche 1999), thus increasing the potential for an alliance.

1.4. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROTEST EVENTS

This section provides a brief overview of some of the major events of the 2020-21 Farmers' Movement. In general, it was a campaign of strategic nonviolent resistance (Narula 2022), although there had been a few incidents of confrontation between the protesters and the authorities. An event timeline is in the Appendix.

On January 26, 2021, India's Republic Day, confrontations peaked when farmers' unions held a rally near Delhi's Red Fort and some farmers diverged from the agreed route. Police used tear gas and batons to try to turn them back. At least one protestor was killed during the clashes and several others were injured on both sides (CNN, January 27, 2021). The SKM subsequently condemned the events as "unacceptable" and dissociated itself from the farmers who diverged from the agreed routes (BBC 2021). Several protestors entered the Red Fort and some raised the Nishan Sahib flag, which is an important symbol to Sikh communities representing truth, justice, and sovereignty (The Hindustan Times, January 27, 2021). The State used the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and sedition laws to clamp down on protesters. The UAPA has been called an "assault on citizens' [constitutional] rights to expression, assembly and

association" as it "criminalizes various forms of non-violent political activity, including political protest," and defines "terrorist activity" so vaguely and broadly that it can be weaponized against human rights activists and political dissenters (India Civil Watch Int'l 2018). The Indian authorities' attempts to crush dissent drew opprobrium from Amnesty International, the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and multiple media bodies, among others (Narula 2022).

Despite the repressive state tactics, the protest camps on the borders of Delhi - Singhu, Tikri, and Ghazipur - became the epicenters of the protest movement. The SKM was joined by the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee, an organization of landless laborers in Punjab. This added a big boost to the protest, which had so far been seen as largely one by landowners. One factor that was positive to the protest movement was the fact that the BJP began suffering electoral losses in multiple states, in part because of the farmers' anti-BJP campaigning. The pressure was on for the BJP to resolve what was becoming a political crisis in time for key state elections in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, which were looming on the horizon.

Furthermore, on January 28, 2021, tensions rose at Delhi's Ghazipur border after the administration in the neighboring Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad district issued orders for protesting farmers to vacate the site by night. The epicenter of the movement shifted from Punjab to the Jat-dominated villages of Western Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. For the first time since the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots that divided rural Western Uttar Pradesh along Hindu-Muslim lines, Muslim farmers were alongside Jat farmers in several farmers' meetings across the region (Singh 2022).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter sets the background to my thesis and situates its contribution to existing literature on social movements. I review the structural and historical theories of peasants' uprisings, the theory of collective action and the importance of selective incentives, the political opportunity structure, and the framing theory. I argue that economic grievances and the political opportunity structure are necessary conditions for the development of a social movement, but that they are not sufficient conditions. On the other hand, I argue that framing provides the two conditions for social movements to emerge: shared interests and selective incentives. Therefore, framing is a necessary and sufficient condition for social movements to emerge.

2.1. STRUCTURAL AND HISTORICAL THEORIES OF PEASANTS' UPRISINGS

If collective action among peasants has historically been rare, peasant uprisings have been a crucial political force in the modern world and the last century witnessed peasant uprisings in major parts of the world, including Russia, Mexico, and China, which led Wolf (1969) to call it the "century of peasant wars". Moreover, the peasant uprisings assumed sufficient scale and intensity to topple the most powerful of regimes, and at times, sufficient intensity to threaten seriously, if not to topple, the most powerful of regimes and landed upper classes.

There are two basic theories of peasant uprisings that have been advanced. One is structural theory that focuses on different systems of class relationships, and the other historical theory that focuses on the increasing economic insecurity of the peasantry caused by the

transition to the modern world. The two theories assert that peasant grievances are structurally based and arise as a consequence of conflicts of interest between peasants and more powerful groups. They also assert that the occurrence of protests is primarily shaped by the intensity of peasant grievances and the potential of peasants for mobilization, but differ in the explanation of these factors.

Structural theorists argue that both the intensity of peasants' grievances and the potential for mobilization are a product of different systems of class relations. For instance, Paige (1975) argues that the intensity of grievances depends mainly on the source of upper-class income (land or capital), and that mobilization depends primarily on the form of lower-class income (in-kind or cash). In manorial and sharecropping estates, the upper class derives their income mainly from land, not capital. As productivity increases are relatively small, the class struggle over the distribution of income is intense, and approximates a zero-sum conflict (Jenkins 1982). On the other hand, in small farmer systems when the upper class series its income from capital, productivity increases are higher. As a result, the upper classes are in a better position to grant economic concessions to the lower class, thus channeling actions toward reforms rather than uprisings. Thus, the potential for rebellion is lower for the lower classes.

In contrast to structural theorists, historical theorists, who can be identified as either market theorists or exploitation theorists, argue that peasant grievances are a consequence of increasing economic insecurity. The market theory (Wolf 1979) asserts that the rapid expansion of the commercial market destroys the economic security of the peasants, thus stimulating uprisings. Traditionally, peasants live at a subsistence level and keep the market at arm's length. But, the intrusion of the market economy transforms the agrarian economy and destroys these

security measures. The peasantry is threatened by the high insecurity of the rural economy in which the availability of land and the reward received by peasants' producers are determined by world prices and the market (Chirot and Rain 1975). The likelihood of protest is highest when the peasants feel threatened by the rapid expansion of the market economy. The more rapid and large-scale the process of commercialization, the greater the likelihood of a protest.

Alternatively, the exploitation theory (Moore 1966; Scott 1976; Skocpol 1979) asserts that peasant grievances center on increasing economic insecurity caused by a growing market that forces landlords to extract more surplus from their peasants. Moore argues that agrarian-based empires provided the most likely environment for peasants' uprisings. In these empires, landowners depended on the central authority to extract an economic surplus. Thus, they had no incentive to reorganize their farms as commercial ones to take advantage of expanding market opportunities. They would appropriate a relatively fixed base of peasant production rather than a fixed share of an expanding product (Jenkins 1982). They also tended to be less involved in the peasants' villages. This reduced involvement left the villages sufficiently autonomous to serve as the basis for collective action.

Scott (1976) extends this argument to colonial settings. He argues that peasants do not work to maximize the possibilities of profit because they focus on minimizing risks to subsistence. In his view, the central and overriding problem of peasants' households, especially the poorest ones, is to provide enough income for the family to survive. Scott argues that traditional peasant societies were organized to minimize the risk to subsistence by establishing reciprocal relationships in the village and most distantly with the state (Scott). For the peasants, the exploitative relationships were those that did not guarantee subsistence in times of adversity,

even if they took away less on average than those relationships that guaranteed subsistence (Scott 1976:170-171). For instance, the colonial state imposed unremitting taxes on households which threatened subsistence during poor harvest times. These threats to subsistence generated resentment from the peasants against the landlords and led to the outbreak of agrarian unrest in many parts of South Asia (Scott 1976).

2.2. COLLECTIVE ACTION AND SELECTIVE INCENTIVES

The structural and historical theories of peasants' uprisings have been criticized by Lichbach (1994) for assuming that peasants resist the commercialization of agriculture. Rational-actor theorists argue that aggrieved peasants are neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for peasant uprising (Olson 1965). According to the theory of collective action, most protests are about a public good which is nonexcludable and nonrival. These two characteristics of public goods ensure that peasants will enjoy them even if they do not join in the protest. The possibility of enjoying a free ride rather than paying a cost deters the rational peasant from participating in the protest. Moreover, a single peasant is unlikely to make much of a difference to the outcome if he participates in the protest. This is another deterrence to participation for the rational peasant. Yet, history reveals that peasants rebel and sometimes in large numbers.

Lichbach (1994) argues that selective incentives often motivate peasants to participate in collective action. Selective incentives are private, excludable goods or side payments that peasants receive for participating in collective action. They act as a motivation for peasants to participate in collective action, implying that material self-interest drives peasant struggles. Together with the nonexcludable and nonrival public goods, they are payoffs that peasants

receive for participating in collective action. The stronger the selective incentives for contributing to the provision of the public good, the more likely that individuals will contribute.

While Lichbach perceives selective benefits as primarily material benefits, Clark and Wilson (1961) argue that incentives can also be solidary or purposive. Solidary incentives are intangible benefits with no monetary value. They derive from the act of associating and include rewards such as socializing, the sense of group membership and identification, and the status resulting from membership. Their common characteristic is that they tend to be independent of the precise ends of the association (Clark and Wilson 1961: 135). Purposive incentives, like solidary incentives, are intangible benefits but they derive mainly from the stated ends of the association, rather than the simple act of associating.

2.3. POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURE

Political opportunities are defined as changes in the political environment that are capable of translating the potential for collective action into actual mobilization (Tarrow1994). As Tarrow explains, a focus on political opportunity can explain why "even groups with mild grievances and few internal resources may appear in movement, while those with deep grievances and dense resources - but lacking in opportunities - may not" (Tarrow 1994: 18). Political opportunity refers to the interaction of activists' efforts and more mainstream institutional politics, and is defined as the external environment within which movement participants evaluate how effectively collective action can attain desired goals (Klandermans 1988).

The political opportunity structure is based on the premise that protests outside mainstream institutions are closely tied to more conventional political activity within. This is not

a new idea for political science or sociology. Lipset (1963) explains the nature of grievances, the composition of constituencies, and the form of political mobilization by looking at the relationship between the state and society.

Jenkins and Klandermans (1993) build on this idea of the state and society. Political opportunities are primarily structured by the organization of the state, the cohesion, and alignment among political elites, and the structure, ideology, and composition of political parties. In this sense, social protest is inherently a political act because (1) the state regulates the political environment within which protesters operate; and, (2) social protest is, at least implicitly, a claim for political representation. The political context sets the grievances around which social activists mobilize, advantaging some claims rather than others, while the organization of the polity makes some strategies of influence more attractive and effective than others. As Meyer (2004: 128) argues, the wisdom, creativity, and outcomes of activists' choices can only be understood by looking at the political opportunity structure.

Six properties characterize the configuration of political-institutional conditions for this structure (McAdam and Tarrow 2018): (1) the multiplicity of independent centers of power within the regime; (2) its openness to new actors and movements; (3) the instability of current political alignments; (4) the availability of influential allies or supporters; (5) the extent to which the regime suppresses or facilitates collective claims; and, (6) changes in these properties. Proponents of political opportunity claim that it arises less ubiquitously and less easily than grievances and organizational resources and more sporadically, but that it exerts a far more important influence on movement emergence and development.

Research on the political opportunity first established the rationality of the protest movement (Piven and Cloward 1977; Button 1978), and of its participants (Lipsky 1970); McCarthy and Zald 1977), and provided evidence of how the political opportunity structure translates economic grievances into mobilization. In a case study of poor people's movements and the welfare rights movement, Piven and Cloward find that the poor are so politically marginalized and bereft of political opportunities that their best option is to look for opportunities to practice politics of dissent to extract concessions when conditions allow. Furthermore, Button (1978) evaluates the effects of ghetto violence on public policy in the 1960s and finds that many federal executive officials interpreted the acts of black urban violence as politically purposeful revolts that were intended to make demands upon those in power.

In addition, Lipsky (1970) investigates the rent strike and the development of housing policies in New York during the last one hundred years and finds that the protest aimed to draw attention to the injustices or inequities that had been ignored and to attract society's attention and concern momentarily. Lipsky argues that a political protest is a form of communication employed by the powerless to appeal to the powerful and that its success depends on how willing other actors such as the communications media, are to enter the political arena on behalf of the protestors. McCarthy and Zald (1977) also emphasize the dependence of movements upon external support for success, in particular for the mobilization of resources. They also identify the tactics used by authorities to control or incorporate movements.

The first explicit use of the term "political opportunity structure" is made by Eisinger (1973) when he explains why extensive riots about race and poverty took place in some American cities and not others in the late 1960s. He focuses on formal institutional rules to

explain the frequency of the riots; cities that had extensive institutional openings preempted riots by inviting conventional means of political participation to redress grievances, while cities that did not have visible openings for participation reprised or discouraged dissident claimants to foreclose eruptions of protest. He finds a curvilinear relationship between the frequency of protest and the openness of institutions. When institutions are "open", few members of the constituency would protest because it is less costly to use the more direct routes of influence that are available. But when authorities repress constituencies, protest can occur when either of two constitutions are met: (1) there is a space of toleration by a polity; or, (2) claimants are neither sufficiently advantaged to obviate the need to use protest to express their interests nor so completely repressed as not to try to get what they want.

Like Eisinger, Tilly (1978) also contends that the frequency of protest bears a curvilinear relationship with political openness because of repression. He describes repression as "any action by another group that raises the contenders' cost of collective action" and thereby demobilizes action (Tilly 1978:100). Tilly builds on Eisinger's work to develop a more comprehensive theory of what explains the process of choosing tactics within a "repertoire of contention". For Tilly, tactical choice allows the activist to optimize strategic opportunities in pursuit of particular claims at a particular time. Further, Tilly (1995) traces the development of popular politics in Britain over a century and finds that the development of a more democratic Parliament allowed popular politics to move indoors through the development of mass parties and electoral participation.

In practice, several variables affect activists' prospects for mobilization (McAdam 1982). In a case study on African American civil rights over 40 years, McAdam contends that the

movement emerged when external circumstances provided sufficient openness for successful mobilization. He identifies several changes in the policy and the political environment: (1) the collapse of the cotton economy in the South; (2) African American migration to Northern cities; (3) a decrease in the number of lynchings; (4) the declaration of the Supreme Court that segregation in public schools was unconditional; (5) the passage of the civil rights bill. These changes lowered the costs and dangers of organizing African American activism, increased their political value as an electoral constituency, and created a safer place for political mobilization. As African American activism spread and the government began to respond, activists increasingly differed about political aims and tactics. Urban riots led to the repression of some forms of activism, while fiscal and political constraints faced by the federal government limited policy responsiveness and undermined the value of civil rights activism. Thus, the civil rights movement declined.

Costain (1992) traces a political process similar to the civil rights movement in his study of the emergence of the women's movement in the United States. He finds that opportunity structures that legitimated and encouraged activism are: (1) broad changes in the economy; (2) the enrollment of women in higher education; (3) the presence of women in the workforce which provided opportunities for mobilization; and, (4) Congress' attention to discrimination against women.

Tarrow's (1989) findings on the emergence of social movements in Italian politics over the decade 1965 to 1975, reinforce the findings of McAdam (1982) and Costain (1992) that there is a correlation between political opportunity and social movement. Government openness reduced the cost of collective action, and the initial mobilization of one constituency encouraged

others to follow. Protesters included workers, students, religious reformers, and leftist factions within parties. The government's response initially encouraged more mobilization, but some turned violent, which legitimized repression. Repression raised the cost of collective action and reduced protest. At the same time, some of the social movement actors turned their attention to conventional political activity and effectively managed to institutionalize dissent.

As evidenced by the different studies considered above, formal political institutions constitute the core of the political opportunity structure. The degree of openness of these institutions is a function of their centralization and the degree of their separation of power. A greater degree of decentralization widens formal access to the institutions and decreases the capacity of any one party of the system to act. Decentralization enables multipoint access to institutions and decision-making. In federal states such as the US, there are multiple points of relevant access to the national, regional, and local level institutions. In centralized states like France and Sweden, the regional access points would not be as significant as in the US. Further, the greater the separation of power between the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary, as well as within each of these institutions, the greater the degree of formal access and the more limited the capacity of the state to act.

In addition, in Parliamentary systems, the parameters are more specifically concerned with the electoral system and the party system. The number of parties in an electoral system and the internal makeup of the parties determine the process of coalition formation. Liphart (1999) distinguishes between majoritarian and consensus democracies to assess the degree of institutional accessibility of the political system. He finds that majoritarian democracies like Britain, concentrate political power within and between institutions, whereas consensus

democracies like the small Western European states, divide political power and increase institutional accessibility, thus constraining the power of the state to act. In addition, majoritarian states that are also a federal state, like the US, are characterized by a far-reaching separation of power, which increases institutional accessibility.

So far, the review has been on 'old' social movements. There is a different type of social movement, known as the New Social Movement (NSM) which started to emerge in Western Europe in the mid-1960s. Contrary to the 'old' social movements, these NSMs tend to emerge in in countries with relatively open and inclusive opportunity structures, where the pacification of old cleavages has created the political space for new issues, and where these new challenges have been met with relatively favorable responses from the established political system. They differ from the old social movements in their discursive character as they directly call for personal and collective action based on solidarity (Touraine 1985). Further, they are characterized by an independent and 'new' ideology which is anti-state, anti-urban, and anti-capitalist (Arora 2001:104). One important component of the NSMs' mobilizing structures is the Social Movement Organizations (Krieisi 1996). These organizations mobilize their constituency for collective action and they do so for a political goal, that is to obtain a collective good. There are also non-formal organizations that support the NSMs' mobilizing structures. These include kinship and friendship networks, and movement communities.

I now consider some of the criticisms leveled at the political opportunity concept. First, the concept has been criticized for becoming a "sponge that soaks up virtually every aspect of the social movement environment …" (Gamson and Meyer 1996:275). The premise is that exogenous factors enhance or hinder the prospects for mobilization, for particular types of claims

to be advanced rather than others, for particular strategies of influence to be exercised, and for movements to affect mainstream institutional politics and policy (Meyer 2004). Some scholars focus on static, structural relations such as the party system of political representation (Jenkins and Klandermans 1995), and others on dynamic dimensions such as alliance structures (Tarrow 1996). Some consider the institutional setting for a particular group (Lipsky 1970), while others explore the macro-societal-level environment state strengths and weaknesses (Kitschelt 1986). This diversity of understandings has given rise to the criticism that the political opportunity thesis is tautological and inadequate (Gamson and Meyer 1996; Goodwin and Jasper 1999).

Second, the political opportunity concept has a strong bias in favor of the structure, leaving out the nonstructural, that is cultural, dimensions of political institutions and practices (Tarrow 1996; Goodwin and Jasper 1999). Thus, the concept may be attributing a false causality to structure since it is leaving out the nonstructural. Tarrow (1996) reformulated his notion of political opportunities, dissociating it from formal structures such as government bodies, to link it to alliances and conflicts that enable favorable changes for individuals. But, replacing structure with processes and configurations is not the solution, because they still leave out the non-structural.

Third, the political opportunities model implies that both expanding and contracting political situations can be opportunities. Some argue that mobilization is facilitated when political opportunity expands (Tilly 1978; McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1984, della Porta 1996), while others find that repression facilitates social movements (Brockett 1995) by nourishing a collective sense of defiance intensifying organizational solidarity. A third position posits a curvilinear relationship between political opportunity and movement mobilization (Eisinger

1973; Tilly 1978; Jenkins 1995). As such, the impacts of political opportunities are contingent; both contraction and expansion of political opportunity can be equally positive or negative for mobilization. More importantly, this implies that the effect of political opportunity may be causally indeterminate. To clarify the impact of political opportunity on social movement, intervening variables may have to be used. There are many such variables, and they include institutional structure (Tilly 1978), and repertoires of collective action and features of the state (Koopmans 1999).

Fourth, while political opportunities recognize the value of the configuration of actors in social movement, it does not explain how people of different identities come together in collective behavior. From the point of view of a mobilizing movement, the configuration of actors has three components: (1) the allies (policymakers, public authorities, political parties, interest groups, the media, and related movements; (2) the adversaries (public authorities, repressive agents, countermovements); and, (3) those not directly involved but who are an attentive audience (Krieisi 2004). Tilly (1978) argues that the configuration of political actors is the result of processes of actor and coalition formation that have taken place previously, but as Krieisi (2004) argues, it is also the starting point to analyze strategic interaction.

Moreover, the configuration of actors can create political opportunities for elites either in a negative or positive sense; in a negative sense, the actions of the actors can provide grounds for repression, and in a positive sense, their actions can give opportunistic politicians the possibility to proclaim themselves as the “tribune of the people” (Tarrow 1994: 98). The chain of effects implicit in the above claims, ranging from negotiation to collective action, is not explained by the political opportunity model.

To resolve the dilemma of causal indeterminacy in the political opportunities model, Meyer (1999) suggests that more empirical research should be carried out to theorize systematically the contrary effects of political opportunities. Intervening variables may have to be considered, whether they are internal or external to social movements, whether they are structural or conjectural. For example, the institutional structure can be a variable that mediates between political opportunities and social movements (Tilly 1978). The study of Koopmans (1999) on Switzerland provides evidence of expanded opportunities to encourage collective action and dissuade confrontational protest vis-a-vis a decentralized state with established direct democratic institutions. Similarly, expanded opportunities can discourage collective action in a state where confrontational tactics overwhelm conventional repertoires. Koopmans also emphasizes that pivotal intervening variables confound any assumption of an invariant causal relationship between political opportunities and social movements; depending on the type of repression and its consistency, whether it is rising or in decline, whether the aims of the movement are reformist or revolutionary, instrumental or identity-oriented, repression may succeed in intimidating protesters.

2.4. FRAMING

The concept of frames explains how individuals identify and understand social events and which norms they should follow in any given situation (Benford and Snow 2000). Tarrow (1999) identifies cultural framing as a determining factor in social movements. He defines cultural framing as the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to develop shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action. For people to be

attracted to join and remain committed to a movement, its issues must be "framed" in a way that resonates with the beliefs, feelings, and desires of potential participants. This involves enabling the active interpretation of grievances, such as the hardships, losses, and traumas associated with neoliberalism, by broader audiences like adherents, bystanders, the general public, and adversaries (Snow 2004).

In anti-neoliberal protests, framing is fundamental to define the problem, assess the blame, and motivate widespread participation in ways that resonate with local beliefs and use familiar styles and idioms (Snow and Corrigall Brown 2005). When combined with disruptive repertoires and large numbers of protesters mobilized in diverse coalitions, effective framing strategies can lead to more favorable outcomes, especially in democratic states (Almeida and Martin 2021). For instance, successful anti-neoliberal campaigns in Latin America used inclusive framing strategies that emphasized the economic threats posed by the neoliberal reforms for large segments of the population.

Furthermore, framing is "meaning" work (Benford and Snow 2000), that is it is an active and contentious process where actors produce and disseminate meanings that differ from and may challenge existing socio-political conditions. Collective frames are constructed in part as movement adherents negotiate a shared understanding of some situation they identify as needing to change. They make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulate an alternative set of arrangements, and urge others to act in concert. These core framing tasks are "diagnostic framing", "prognostic" framing, and "motivational" framing. By performing these core framing tasks, movement actors aim to address the interrelated issues of "consensus mobilization" and "action mobilization" (Klandermans 1984). Consensus mobilization facilitates agreement,

whereas action mobilization facilitates action. Thus, collective action frames are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities of social movements. When social movements succeed in aligning their frames to the frames of non-mobilized individuals - that is, when there is frame alignment - collective action is more likely.

Several empirical studies have focused on identifying and analyzing the various types of diagnostic, prognostic, and action mobilization framings (McCarthy 1994, Meyer 1995). Among these studies, many point to how movements identify the "victims" of a given injustice and amplify their victimization (Benford and Hunt 1992). These studies provide empirical evidence that injustice frames are commonplace across a variety of types of social movements.

In addition to diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing, frames are developed and generated through discursive, strategic, and contested processes (Benford and Snow 2000). The three processes are overlapping. Discursive processes refer to spoken and written communications of movement members that occur primarily in the context of, or concerning, movement activities. It involves the connection and alignment of events and experiences so that they hang together in a relatively unified and compelling fashion. Strategic processes are framing processes that are deliberative, utilitarian, and goal-oriented. They are developed to recruit new members, to mobilize adherents, and to acquire resources among other objectives.

Finally, contested processes take place when activists are unable to construct and impose on intended targets any version of reality that they would like to; rather they are confronted with several challenges in framing movement activities. There are three forms that these challenges tend to take: counter-framing by movement opponents, bystanders, and the media; frame disputes within movements; and the dialectic between frames and events.

2.5. CONCLUSION

One important limitation of the collective action theory which asserts that most protests are about a public good is that it does not explain the preference for a particular public good at a point in time. The structural and historical theories claim that protests are a consequence of grievances and the potential for mobilization. The public good then would be a policy to address these grievances. The potential for mobilization is affected by the political opportunity structure which affects the costs and benefits of participating in the social movement. But as McAdam (1996) argues, social movements can occur even when favorable political opportunities do not appear, because of agents' subjective interpretations of objective political opportunities.

Furthermore, in a study of the life cycle of social movements, Tilly (1978) identifies a four-stage process. In the preliminary stage, people become aware of an issue and leaders emerge. This is followed by the coalescence stage when people come together and organize to publicize the issue and raise awareness. The institutionalization stage and the decline of the movement are the third and fourth stages, respectively.

I agree with the social and historical theories of peasants' uprisings that protests are a consequence of economic grievances and potential for mobilization. The potential for mobilization is determined by the political opportunity structure which affects the costs and benefits of participating in the mobilization. I argue that both economic grievances and political opportunity structure are necessary conditions for the emergence of social movements, but they are not sufficient conditions. I argue that framing is a necessary and sufficient condition for collective action, because it presents, creates, and raises awareness of the economic grievances

that are at the source of the contention, and the public good that the social movement seeks to pursue. A common frame that operates by giving meaning and interpreting relevant events and conditions in ways intended to mobilize participation is a necessary and sufficient condition for participation in a social movement. Communities converge through a process of frame alignment.

This thesis proposes to contribute to the literature on social movements by using the 2020-21 Farmers' Movement in India as a case study to show that economic grievances and political opportunity structure are necessary but not sufficient conditions for the emergence of the movement, while framing is both a necessary and sufficient condition because it embodies shared schemas for a common frame. I support my argument by showing how a variation in framing affects the FDEs in Punjab and Haryana, two outlier states with the highest number of FDEs and similar economic grievances.

CHAPTER 3

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Collective action takes place when the free rider problem is overcome and/or parties are assured of the cooperation of others. Given the complexity of many circumstances, coordination may be difficult even when cooperation is preferred. Above all, a prerequisite for collective action is convergence on a common understanding of interests. Given the obstacles to collective action, how do people of different social groups and ethnicities construct common interests, cooperate to pursue them, assure each other of their commitments, and coordinate their behavior to act collectively?

3.1. THEORY

3.1.1 Propositions

(1) Individuals are rational and seek to maximize their utility.

If individuals are rational and seek to maximize their utility, they will behave by the rational choice theory. According to this theory, individuals who participate in collective action must act as if they were pursuing some set of interests. They also act based on cost-benefit calculations.

(2) Individuals participate in a social movement because of their interests in the public good.

If individuals participate in a social movement, they have interests in the public good. A public good is nonexcludable and nonrival, that is individuals cannot be excluded from enjoying them, and one person's enjoyment of that good does not impinge upon others' enjoyment of that good. These characteristics of the public good give rise to the free rider problem, wherein rational

individuals should prefer to let others pay for collective goods, and to problems of coordination and assurance in collective action.

(3) If selective incentives are provided, individuals have an incentive to cooperate.

Olson (1965) maintains that selective incentives are necessary for collective action. Selective incentives are benefits provided to individuals who cooperate (or costs imposed on those who do not) that do not depend on the achievement of the collective good (Olson 1965:51). Olson emphasizes material benefit, but many theorists emphasize two other broad types of incentives: solidary and purposive incentives (Clark & Wilson 1961), which bring social influence, ideology, and identity into the rational action framework.

(4) Identity interest is a motivation for participating in a social movement.

If individuals identify with a group, self-interest is matched with group interest so that individuals have an incentive to act as part of the group. The incentive to participate in a group comes from the enjoyment of being with the group, though this is likely to be contingent on underlying interests in the cause (Mayer 2014). In his study of the American civil rights movement, Chong (1991:74) concludes that "political activists, it appears, not only wish to achieve particular political objectives, such as a change in government policy, and to fulfill their obligations, but also to voice their convictions, affirm their efficacy, share in the excitement of a group effort, and take part in the largest currents of history".

(5) Institutions help to solve collective action problems.

Rational institutionalists believe that institutions help to solve collective action problems by conferring selective benefits (Olson 1965), reducing the costs of cooperation (Tarrow 1994), and enabling commitment (North 1990). Therefore, institutions may be particularly important for coordinating collective action. Rational institutionalism provides a powerful explanatory framework for many forms of collective action, including opportunity structures in social movements (Tarrow 1994).

(6) Shared schemas can create common interests. There is overwhelming evidence that individuals perceive selectively and engage in limited searches for options (Mayer 2014) because of the biological limits in their analytic capacity. Individuals are bounded in their rationality, relying on the broad schema to interpret experience and behave according to well-established habits and norms. To the extent that interests almost always embody an element of belief about the world, and that understandings are schematic, it follows that shared schemas can help create common interests.

(7) A necessary and sufficient condition for participation in a social movement is that participants must share a common frame.

Collective action is enabled by "collective action frames" (Snow and Benford 1988:198) that operate by giving meaning and interpreting relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, gain bystander support, and demobilize antagonists. Communities converge on a common frame through a process of "frame alignment" whereby some set of individual interests, values, and beliefs and social movement

organization activities, goals, and ideology "are congruent and complementary" (Snow et al. 1986:464). Frame adoption depends on "cultural resonance" (Benford and Snow 2000); a frame that fits the ideology and values of a community is more likely to be adopted than one that does not.

3.1.2. Frame Theory

Individuals are rational beings who seek to maximize their utility. They participate in social movements to pursue their interests in the public goods that the social movements aim to produce. But, the non-excludability and non-rivalry characteristics of public goods give rise to collective action problems, primarily the free rider problem, and problems of assurance coordination. Selective benefits, either material or non-material, such as solidary and purposive incentives, motivate individuals to cooperate. Institutions confer selective benefits, reduce the cost of cooperation, and enable commitment. Evidence shows that individuals are bounded in their rationality and that understandings are schematic. To the extent that interests almost always embody an element of belief about the world, shared schemas can create common interests. A frame embodies shared schemas. Therefore, a necessary and sufficient condition for participation in a social movement is that participants must share a common frame. Communities converge on a common frame through the process of frame alignment, whereby some parts of the individual frame and the social movement's frame are congruent and complementary. The process of frame alignment creates common interests and non-monetary selective incentives such as solidary and purposive incentives are two necessary and sufficient conditions for individuals to participate in

collective action. A variation in the common frame causes a variation in participation in the social movement.

3.2. HYPOTHESES

3.2.1. Conditions for participation in social movements

If farmers are rational, they will seek to maximize their utility. They will participate in a social movement because of their interests in the public good. Therefore, a necessary condition for farmers to participate in a social movement is that they must have interests in the public good.

But, this is not a sufficient condition, because the characteristics of a public good cause the free rider problem, as well as assurance and coordination problems. Thus, rational farmers will act on cost-benefit calculations. The presence of institutions that confer selective benefits and reduce the costs of cooperation is another necessary condition, but it is not sufficient to enable collective action.

The assumption that individuals are rational has been questioned and there is ample evidence of individuals being bounded in rationality. If farmers are bound in their rationality, they will participate in a social protest if they share a common frame. Entman (1993) explains that a frame selects some aspects of perceived reality and makes them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, or moral evaluation of the item described. Therefore, a third condition is that farmers must share a common frame to participate in a social movement. This is a necessary and sufficient condition.

3.2.2. The public good: repeal of the Farm Laws and legal guarantee for the MSP

The impetus for the movement was the three Farm Laws (Pal 2022). The public good was the repeal of the Farm Laws that deregulate the sale and marketing of agricultural produce, and the legal guarantee for the MSP for farmers' produce. The first law allows farmers and buyers to engage in trade outside the state-regulated market yards. The second one enables agri-corporations to enter into individual contracts with farmers at a pre-fixed price without a legal mechanism to enforce payment. The third law overturns a prior regulation by which the central government controls the prices and limits the stock of essential commodities such as food grains. The first two laws are contentious because they are viewed as dismantling the remaining vestiges of state support for agriculture, while the third law raises fears that removing price controls on essential commodities will lead to unchecked food inflation in a highly food-insecure country (Sethi 2021).

Market reforms activate collective action by the perceived threat or loss in the well-being of particular groups (Pinard 2011). A protest may emerge to impede the looming threat of the impending implementation of legislation, for instance. Some scholars (Tilly 1978; Bergstrand 2014) even claim that losses are more likely to produce mobilization than productive gains. Moreover, the scope of the threat is also important (Almeida and Martin 2022). The larger the population impacted, the larger and broader the protest movement. For instance, a national policy that increases food prices has the potential to trigger a major protest campaign because it substantially affects large lower and middle-income groups.

I make a hypothesis that the more farmers affected by the Farm Laws, the higher the number of protest events. I use the MSP to measure the impact of the Farm Laws on farmers. Paddy and wheat farmers have received nearly IRs18 trillion from the MSP in the last 10 years, a 2.5 times increase from the preceding decade before 2014, while farmers producing oilseeds and pulses received IRs1.25 trillion from the MSP in the last decade[10]. Previously, government procurement of oilseeds and pulses was negligible. I make the following hypothesis:

H1: States, where farmers earn a higher MSP, have a higher number of protest events

3.2.3. Unions

Institutions are particularly important in mounting, coordinating, and sustaining social movements that lack compulsory coordination and are seldom in a position to solve their collective action problem with internal resources. Therefore, social movements draw upon external resources to coordinate and sustain collective action. Unions, in particular, are broad-based institutions that draw on both economic and political leverage to mobilize individuals (Lyon and Schaffner 2021). With a wide social base and very often privileged channels of access to institutional decision-makers, either directly through the political administration or indirectly through political parties, trade unions can increase the mobilization capacities of social movements and the chances of success of the social movements. Moreover, unions increase the likelihood that non-members participate in political protest through social ties and aggregate union strength.

[10] The Economic Times February 13, 2024. Farmers protest: Is legal guarantee for MSP the best solution?

I make a second hypothesis that the higher the participation of unions, the higher the number of protest events. Trade unions account for about 28.4 percent[11] of the actors who participated in the 2020-21 protest movement. The most prominent union organizations are the SKM and the BKU, which together account for 26 percent of union participation. The SKM was formed in November 2020 as a broad coalition of farmers' unions and organizations that represent different groups of farmers with varied political ideologies to coordinate the mobilization against the Farm Laws. On the other hand, the BKU is a much older organization which was formed in 1978 and emerged as a strong political force in the 1980s (Kumar 2022). It has played a prominent role in providing a platform to big and middle farmers across different castes and religions (Gupta 1997). I make the following hypothesis:

H2: States with a higher union participation rate have a higher number of protest events

3.2.4. Framing the collective good

Before a community can engage in collective action, its members must share an interest in an end. Interests must be commonly constructed so that individual interests align to form a shared interest in a collective good. In market reform protests, framing is fundamental to define the problem, assess the blame, and motivate widespread participation in ways that resonate with local beliefs and use familiar styles and idioms (Snow and Corrigall-Brown 2005). Framing is "meaning" work (Benford and Snow 2000), and effective framing strategies influence public opinion. Mayer (2014) goes further and asserts that narratives can alter individual beliefs and

[11] This figure was calculated from data compiled from ACLED's database on actors who participated in the protest movement.

construct interests. He argues that just as narratives in the mind can construct interests, shared narratives held in many minds can construct common interests (Mayer 2014: 101). One particular factor that contributes to the efficacy of narratives is their resonance with the stories a community already holds in mind, particularly with public narratives that are at the core of a community's culture.

I argue that the framing was "anti-corporatism" or against big capital. Each of the Farm Laws facilitates state withdrawal and private participation in different aspects of the agricultural markets. For instance, the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce Act undermines the APMC or "mandi" system and the public procurement system and creates a situation where all farmers - from large to marginal - are forced to become price takers and enter into "exploitative" farming contracts with large private corporations. Landless agricultural workers, smallholders, and tenant farmers have also argued that corporatization would drive land grabbing and mechanization and would force them out of agriculture into urban slums (Shah and Sandwell 2023).

Furthermore, the 'anti-corporatization' framing of the protests recognizes that greater corporate control over agriculture would allow the manipulation of food prices at the cost of vulnerable populations. I argue that this narrative used by the unions has a historical resonance with the marginalization of small and marginal farmers and the increasing precariousness of landless laborers in the early decades of the Green Revolution. Dasgupta (1977) produces evidence that the distribution of operated land in Punjab shifted in favor of rich farmers under the Green Revolution. Moreover, Bardhan (1977) concludes that in Punjab and Haryana, the proportion of people at the minimum level of living increased. I hypothesize that states where

there is a high proportion of small and marginal farmers are likely to have more protest events than those states where this is not the case.

H3: States with a higher proportion of small and marginal farmers have a higher number of protest events

3.3. Regression

3.3.1. The regression model

I run a multivariate regression with the equation:

$Y = a + b1X1 + b2X2 + b3X3 + b4X4 + b5X5 + b6X6 + e,$

where,

Y is the number of protest events

X_1 is the average value of MSP that farmers earn by state

P is the participation rate of the SKM and the BKU in the movement X2 = 1 if $0 \leq P < 10\%$ and 0 otherwise

$X_2 = 1$ if $0 \leq P < 10\%$ and 0 otherwise

$X_3 = 1$ if $10\% \leq P < 20$ and 0 otherwise

$X_4 = 1$ if $20\% \leq P < 30\%$ and 0 otherwise

$X_5 = 1$ if $30\% \leq P < 50\%$ and 0 otherwise

X_6 is small and marginal farmers as a proportion of agricultural households

a is a constant and ϵ is the error term.

3.3.2. Regression results

The regression was run on Stata and the results are shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Regression Results

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	26
				F(5, 20)	=	6.12
Model	824.632062	5	164.926412	Prob > F	=	0.0014
Residual	538.756792	20	26.9378396	R-squared	=	0.6048
				Adj R-squared	=	0.5060
Total	1363.38885	25	54.5355542	Root MSE	=	5.1902

Norm_FDEs	Coefficient	Std. err.	t	P>|t|	[95% conf.	interval]
Ave_MSP	0.71	0.28	2.57	0.018	0.13	1.28
Pless10	1.81	3.25	0.56	0.585	-4.98	8.59
Pless20	2.93	4.28	0.69	0.501	-6.00	11.87
Pless50	9.33	3.86	2.42	0.025	1.28	17.39
Land	-7.75	15.55	-0.50	0.624	-40.19	24.69
_cons	2.21	13.61	0.16	0.873	-26.18	30.60

.

The results indicate that the variable average MSP per capita is statistically significant. The data suggests that states with higher average MSP per capita have a higher number of protest events. The correlation coefficient is 0.7, which is considered a strong correlation. The results also indicate that the variable participation rate of SKM and BKU is statistically significant, but only when their participation rate is between 30 percent and 50 percent, the highest categorical value. The correlation coefficient is 9.3 which is strong. The data suggests that states with a union participation rate of 30 percent or more have a higher number of protest events. The results also show that the variable “proportion of small and marginal farmers” is not statistically

significant. I cannot reject the null hypothesis that states with a higher proportion of small and marginal farmers are unlikely to have more protest events.

Finally, the regression shows an adjusted R^2 of 0.51 percent, which means that the independent variables only explain about half of the variation in the FDEs. On this basis, I argue that economic grievances and the political opportunity structure are necessary but not sufficient conditions for the emergence of the 2020-21 Farmers' Movement. I elaborate on this in the chapters that follow.

CHAPTER 4

ECONOMIC FACTORS

The puzzle with the MSP as an economic factor behind the emergence of the 2020-21 Farmers' Movement is that it covers 23 agricultural produce that represent only about 28 percent of total agricultural produce in India. Of the total farmers who cultivated any of the 23 MSP crops (84.5 million), only about 9.7 percent or 8.2 million reported selling their crops at MSP in 2018-19 (Saini and Chowdhury 2023). Two crops benefit predominantly from the MSP: wheat and paddy. However, there are large variations between states, as shown in Table 4.1.

The proportion of farmers selling paddy that benefits from the MSP is as high as 44 percent in

Table 4.1. Percentage of farmers selling paddy to agencies in selected states

State	Sold to agency (of those who cultivated)	Sold to agency (of those who sold)	Sold of those who grew	State's procurement share
Chhattisgarh	38	52	73	33
Punjab	44	46	96	9
Telangana	19	22	86	9
Uttar Pradesh	2	7	35	9
Haryana	34	45	72	7
Bihar	2	5	40	4

Source: Compiled from Gupta et al. (2021).

Punjab, 38 percent in Chhattisgarh, 34 percent in Haryana, and just two percent in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. For wheat, this proportion is about 61 percent in Punjab, 39 percent in Haryana, 16

percent in Madhya Pradesh, 10 percent in Uttarakhand, and 2 percent in Uttar Pradesh. Similarly, there are variations between states selling wheat to agencies, as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Percentage of farmers selling wheat to agencies in selected states

State	Sold to agency (of those who cultivated)	Sold to agency (of those who sold)	Sold of those who grew	State's procurement share
Punjab	61	72	85	22
Uttar Pradesh	2	8	28	15
Haryana	39	55	71	18
Madhya Pradesh	16	28	58	34
Bihar	1	2	38	2
Uttarakhand	10	62	16	4

Source: Compiled from Gupta et al. (2021).

Table 4.2. shows that of those farmers who cultivated wheat, Punjab had the highest proportion of sales to agencies (61 percent), followed by Haryana (39 percent), and Madhya Pradesh (16 percent).

In addition, given that paddy and wheat are staple grains, many households grow these crops for self-consumption and have no surplus to sell in the market. According to the NSSO-SAS Survey (2018-2019), there were 52 percent and 39 percent of all farmers growing paddy and wheat respectively, and 6 percent of them each for paddy and wheat sold to agencies. Thus, considering the figure that Saini and Chowdhury (2023) gave for the estimated percentage of farmers benefiting from the MSP, and the percentage of farmers who sell paddy and wheat to

agencies, I argue that the percentage of farmers benefiting from the MSP is about 10 percent or 12 percent.

However, one needs to recognize that while 10-12 percent are direct beneficiaries of the MSP, there are also indirect beneficiaries of the MSP. These beneficiaries are those farmers who sell their produce in the market but benefit from it because the MSP props up market prices (Niti Aayog 2016-17). Thus, the MSP conveys important market information to those farmers who do not benefit directly from the MSP.

Another puzzle with the MSP is, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the NSS-SAS 2012-13 found that less than 25 percent of farmers in rural agricultural households are aware of the MSP in each planting decision. In another study carried out on the awareness among farmers of the MSP, Aditya et al. (2017) also inferred that less than 25 percent of farmers know about the MSP of the crops that they grow. They also found that there is high awareness of the MSP in states where the procurement of food grains through designated agencies procure the produce from farmers. These states are Punjab, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh.

If awareness of the MSP among farmers is less than 25 percent, what explains that the MSP is statistically a significant factor in explaining the number of FDEs? I argue that the regression results are highly skewed because of the presence of Punjab which is an outlier with a normalized FDE of 33.8 and Haryana which is a smaller outlier with a normalized FDE of 19.1, compared to a median of 1.6. Moreover, both Punjab and Haryana registered the longest duration of protest more than 61 weeks and 60 weeks, respectively. In contrast, in both Chhattisgarh and Telangana, the normalized FDEs were 0.5, and in Uttar Pradesh 0.7. However, about 75 percent of the FDEs happened in western Uttar Pradesh, which explains the low normalized FDEs, as

western Uttar Pradesh has a much lower population than the state of Uttar Pradesh. Even then though, the normalized FDEs in western Uttar Pradesh is low at 1.7.

Punjab and Haryana - a state carved out of Punjab in 1966 - have been the two main beneficiaries of the MSP for wheat and paddy, since the adoption of the Green Revolution technologies in the 1960s. The two states were the first sites chosen for the implementation of these technologies because of their fertile land. In addition, the farmers from both states had secured land tenures due to land reforms and consolidation of land holdings in the region from the late colonial period onwards. This acted as an incentive to the farmers to invest in the crops which though high-yielding, require high costs of chemicals and irrigation (Sinha 2020).

In addition, the government instituted the procurement system that exists now, with the mandis and MSP to induce farmers to invest. The mandis in Punjab and Haryana operate with commission agents who, as mentioned before, act as intermediaries between farmers and traders. These commission agents, who may or may not own land, operate in a network based on reputation and patronage (Narula 2022). Often, they are prominent leaders of farmers' unions, and members of leading political parties in the state. They play an active role in the agricultural system, as well as in the community. Farmers rely on them for credit, price information, transportation, and storage. Small farmers, in particular, use the MSP as an estimate of expected income against which household expenditure can be managed. They also go to the commission agents often to borrow funds to meet expenses as varied as education, social functions, and migration abroad (Sinha 2020). Farmers benefit from concessions in the repayment of loans to the commission agents and prefer going to them rather than formal credit providers, even if the interest rate is higher. As Pal (2022) points out, the commission agents are a "necessary evil" in

the trading system. Farmers fear that the introduction of the Farm Laws might eventually lead to the closure of the mandis, which could make more than 300,000 mandi labor and commission agents redundant.

As discussed earlier, Punjab and Haryana are not the only states that benefit from the MSP. But, farmers from these two states received the highest monthly average value from the MSP operations, IRs19,000 and IRs16,000, respectively in 2018-19 (Saini and Chowdhury 2023), while farmers from Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh earned an average MSP between IRs6,000 and IRs9,000. Moreover, the monthly earnings of agricultural households in Punjab and Haryana are the highest among all states; they were IRs 23,000 and IRs18,500 respectively in 2016-17[12], as compared to Uttar Pradesh IRs6,700, Madhya Pradesh IRs 8,000, and Chhattisgarh IRs8,500. Farmers in Punjab and Haryana earn 2.6 times and 2 times more than the average monthly earnings of agricultural households in India, respectively. They have more to lose than farmers in other states in terms of income with the introduction of the Farm Laws, which may explain their outlier FDEs.

Further, an analysis by class of landholding size reveals that in Punjab the procurement system has a pro-large farmer bias, whereas the bias favors smaller land-sized classes in Haryana (Table 4.3.).

[12] NABARD All India Rural Financial Inclusion Survey (2016-17)

Table 4.3. Sale to agencies as a percentage of total sales by size-class of farmers in selected states for paddy, 2012-2013

State	Marginal farmers (< 1 ha.)	Small farmers (1-2 ha.)	Semi-medium farmers (2-4 ha.)	Medium farmers (4-10 ha.)	Large farmers (>10 ha.)
Punjab	33	39	50	45	70
Haryana	65	41	41	37	46
Chhattisgarh	48	48	50	60	0
Telangana	25	16	17	16	0

Source: Adapted from Table 5 Gupta et al. (2021:64).

However, in Chhattisgarh, marginal and small farmers benefit from the decentralized procurement system, with almost half of them selling paddy to agencies.

In the case of wheat, the share of sales to agencies in Punjab varies between 60 and 77 percent across landholding size (Table 4.4.)

Table 4.4. Sale to agencies as a percentage of total sales by size-class of farmers in selected states for wheat, 2012-2013

State	Marginal farmers (< 1 ha.)	Small farmers (1-2 ha.)	Semi-medium farmers (2-4 ha.)	Medium farmers (4-10 ha.)	Large farmers (> 10 ha.)
Punjab	60	63	69	71	77
Haryana	83	62	39	30	49
Madhya Pradesh	19	20	38	44	68

Source: Adapted from Table 5 Gupta et al. (2021:64).

In the case of Haryana, marginal and small farmers sell a higher share of their wheat surplus to agencies than the other landholding class sizes. On the other hand, in Madhya Pradesh, where

wheat procurement surpassed that of Punjab in 2020-21, the share rises with landholding size. Hence, there is substantial variation across states in the landholding class sizes that benefit from selling their wheat and paddy surplus to agencies. The variation could explain why farmers of different landholdings have come together to protest against the Farm Laws, which threaten to do away with the MSP procurement system.

Another factor that affects the FDEs, which still has to do with the existing procurement system, is the Public Distribution System, which plays a crucial role in reducing food insecurity. Once procured, wheat, paddy, and other foods are provided at a subsidized rate to households below the poverty line. It is estimated that about 66 percent of the population benefits from this system (Khera and Somanchi 2020). The Farm Laws, especially the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act which removes several food produce from the list of essential commodities, could be a threat to the Public Distribution System with dire consequences for "laborers, shopkeepers, arhtias [commission agents], students, employees, and young boys and girls, because we all know that our stomachs are filled by farming" (The Leader of the Kratikari Pendu Mazdoor Union cited in Sinha 2020). The Public Distribution System was even more important at a time when COVID-related poverty was significant, with an estimated additional 75 million people falling below the USD2 poverty line in 2020 (Kochhar 2021).

Furthermore, about 82 percent of Dalits and Adivasis were below the poverty line in 2009-2010., and were benefiting from the Public Distribution System. They continue to find themselves at the bottom of social hierarchies. The landless Dalit caste who represent about 18.5 percent of the rural population, form the core of agricultural laborers. In Punjab, Haryana, and western Uttar Pradesh, the farmers from the dominant farming groups are predominantly Jats

who exploit the local Dalits as well as seasonal migrant farm laborers from Bihar and Jharkhand, who are also Dalits and other castes like Adivasi and OBCs (Lerche 2021). The Dalits and Adivasis would have felt concerned by the Farm Laws, in particular by the potential threat they represent to the Public Distribution System.

In addition, as explained before, the structural changes relating to the overall trajectory of agrarian development and the kind of economic development taking place outside of the agricultural sector, have undermined the importance of the agricultural sector both economically and as a source of employment. Consequently, (1) there is a prevalence of small farmers-cum-laborers; and, (2) landless laborer households who have moved out of the agricultural sector looking for wage labor in the non-agricultural sector. Moreover, the last five years or so, have seen a decline in non-agricultural employment for the first time since India's independence (Lerche 2021), which has compelled petty farmers and landless laborers to stay in agriculture with a likely fall in standard of living (Kannan and Raveendran 2019). Thus, there is a commonality between these two "classes of labor" (Bernstein 2007), in that their economic interests now stretch beyond the agricultural sector into the non-agricultural sector.

Finally, the decentralized procurement system, apart from helping to cover more farmers under the MSP, has the merit of economizing the transport and administrative costs involved in procurement and distribution operations. The difference between the economic costs of the state governments and the central issue price is passed on to the governments as a subsidy. In addition, state governments can charge an assortment 12 of taxes and fees on the purchase of crops within the mandis. These taxes and fees are paid by the central government to the state governments as income for them. They can range between 8.5 percent (in Punjab) to less than 1 percent of the

value procured (Verma 2020). But, with the Farm Laws, private companies will be able to purchase crops outside of mandis, and thereby not have to pay any tax or fee. Consequently, states may lose a considerable amount of revenue that could have been used to fund local projects. For instance, Punjab earns an annual revenue of IRs35 billion from mandi taxes and fees (Verma 2020). Thus, the Farm Laws may bring a diminishing of regional autonomy vis-a-vis the central government. This explains the participation of the opposition parties in the movement.

CHAPTER 5

POLITICAL FACTORS

The Hindutva nationalist party, the BJP, had a landslide victory in both the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections, especially in the northern states/union territories of India. A year later, the Farmers' movement took place, bringing agrarian politics to the forefront of Indian politics after a gap of three decades. About 46 percent of the FDEs took place in the northern states/union territories, and 33 percent in Haryana and Punjab alone. How to reconcile these two contradicting trends that states that voted for the BJP would protest against its economic reform policies? What explains the broad unity in the Farmers' Movement among social forces that are generally opposed to each other in a society that is marked by caste hierarchies and social polarization? I argue that discontentment at the level of the states/union territories, farmers' unions, opposition political parties, and at times at the level of allied parties, provided the political opportunity structure for the farmers' mobilization.

5.1. THE LOK SABHA AND ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

The year 2014 marked the biggest electoral win in the country's modern history since 1984, with the BJP's victory in the Lok Sabha elections with a total of 282 seats out of 543 seats. The scale of the BJP's victory took most observers by surprise. The party won the votes of castes, ideological adherents, demographic groups, and geographic areas that had not previously been solid BJP votaries (Rukmini 2019). In particular, there was a dramatic reversal in states/ union territories in northern India, as shown in Table 5.1. that follows. These states/union

territories include states from the Hindi belt, such as Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan,

Table 5.1. BJP wins in northern states/UTs in India: 2009, 2014, and 2019 Lok Sabha Elections (% seats won)

State/UT	2009	2014	2019
Delhi	0	100.0	100.0
Haryana	0	70.0	100.0
Himachal Pradesh	75.0	100.0	100.0
Jammu & Kashmir	0	50.0	50.0
Punjab	7.7	15.4	15.4
Rajasthan*	16.0	100.0	96.0
Uttarakhand	0	100.0	100.0
Uttar Pradesh (UP)	12.5	91.3	77.5

Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh.

* In Rajasthan, the BJP won 24 seats in 2019 instead of 25 because it contested only 24 seats and formed an alliance with the Rashtriya Loktantrik Party (RLP).

Source: Compiled from State-wise Lok Sabha Result 2009, 2014, and 2019. https://www.lokriti.org

Furthermore, the BJP retained the support it built in 2014 and expanded it both geographically and socially across India in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) won 303 seats out of 543, and its vote share increased from 31.5 percent to 37.5 percent. In Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Jammu & Kashmir, the BJP maintained the percentage of seats it had won in 2014, which was 100 percent in the first

three states and 50 percent in Jammu & Kashmir. In Haryana, it improved the number of seats it won from 70 percent to 100 percent. But, in UP, it registered a slight decline from 91.3 percent to 77.5 percent of seats won from 2014 to 2019, although its percentage of votes increased from 42.3 percent to 49.6 percent over that period. In Punjab, where the BJP is not as popular as in the other states, it maintained its share of 15.4 percent of seats in 2019, although there was a slight increase in its percentage of votes from 8.7 percent to 9.6 percent.

The BJP also improved its electoral results in terms of the number of seats and vote share in many states/union territories, for example in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Of the total 303 seats that the BJP won, 204 were in states where it won with a margin of more than 50 percent of the votes, indicating that even a united opposition would not been able to stop the victory of the BJP. The highest vote share of the BJP was in Himachal Pradesh with 69.1 percent of votes, while in Delhi its vote share reached nearly 60 percent[13].

In addition, the BJP expanded its support base enormously in rural India, despite visible signs of farm and rural distress among farmers in the Hindi-speaking states in north India (Kumar 2020). While maintaining its traditional votes from urban and upper caste voters, the BJP consolidated its votes from the Dalits, Adivasis, and young voters. In 2019, the vote share of the BJP increased by 6.8 percent in rural constituencies, by 3.5 percent in semi-urban constituencies, and by 2.2 percent in urban constituencies (Kumar 2020). The BJP also made inroads among the Other Backward Castes (OBCs), an umbrella of different castes, who make up 40.9 percent of the population of India, and thus represent an important vote bank for political parties. In recent

[13] State-wise Lok Sabha Result 2019.

years, it has successfully mobilized non-Yadav OBCs and non-Jatav Dalits in UP, which has put state parties in a tight spot.

The consolidation of votes of the BJP, particularly among Hindus and across caste, has been attributed to its narratives on nationalism following the Pulwama[14] and Balakot[15] events. Many Indians gave credit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the two events, and unsurprisingly they voted to give the BJP a second term in office in 2019. The farmers' issues in the Hindi-speaking states in north India became secondary to the narratives on nationalism. Moreover, evidence suggests that as many as 32 percent of the people who voted for the BJP would not have voted for it if it were not for Modi (Kumar 2020).

However, the results at the Assembly elections show a different trend from the Lok Sabha elections for the BJP. For instance, in 2018, the Congress party emerged as the single largest party in three- Hindi-belt and BJP-ruled states: Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh. The vote shares of the BJP in these three states had shrunk considerably compared to the 2014 Lok Sabha election results; in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan they were 41 percent, 33 percent, and 38.8 percent in 2018, compared to 55.0 percent, 48.7 percent, and 50.9 percent, respectively in the 2014 Lok Sabha. The 2018 Assembly election results also represented a decrease of 3.9 percent, 8 percent, and 6.4 percent in each of these states respectively, compared to the assembly election results of 2013. On the other hand, the performance of the BJP in the 2020 Assembly election in Delhi improved, and it won 5 more

[14] The Pulwama event was one of the deadliest attacks on Jammu and Kashmir on February 14, 2019.

[15] The Balakot strike took place on February 26, 2019 when Indian warplanes entered Pakistan to drop bombs on a terrorist camp near the town of Balakot.

seats than in 2015,. But it was a local party - the Aad Aadmi Party - that won the majority of the seats, ousting the Congress party which had ruled for three consecutive terms in the process.

Furthermore, in Haryana, one of the hot spots of the protest, the BJP fared less well in the 2019 Assembly elections than in the 2014 one, winning fewer seats. Haryana ended up with a hung assembly. The consolidation of the votes of the Jat, Dalit, and Muslim community in favor of non-BJP parties accounts for the poor performance of the BJP. The BJP was the recipient of the caste and community-based electoral polarization and divisions it had encouraged (Kumar 2019). It suffered major losses in rural and semi-rural constituencies along the Grand Trunk road belt, which is reflective of the impact of the large-scale violence that Haryana witnessed in the agitation of the Jats demanding the OBC status for their community. This demand was primarily about getting reservations in government jobs. The protest went on for almost a week, bringing the state to a standstill during that time. Although the agitation resulted in violence against other communities, it was a manifestation of the sense of anger against increasing joblessness and stagnation in the agriculture sector (Suthar and Kumar 2022). The cumulative effect of this was a demand for more representation in government jobs for Jats.

In Punjab, another hot spot of the protest, the 2017 assembly election winner was the Congress party with 77 out of 117 seats, just one short of winning a two-thirds majority. Before 2017, Punjab votes had always alternated between the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), a steadfast ally of the BJP since 1998, and the Congress party, giving each a five-year break. This did not change in the 2017 Assembly elections, despite the presence of a third party in the fray, the Aam Aadmi Party. The SAD had always managed to gain the support of its core constituency of rural voters, the Jat Sikh landed peasantry. But, in the 2017 elections, the SAD-BJP alliance faced an

alienated rural constituency on account of repeated crop failures, inadequate and erratic compensation to aggrieved farmers, spurious pesticides being distributed by the government, a flawed crop procurement process adopted by government agencies, farmers' suicides, and the issue of the MSP (Kumar et al. 2018). The vote share of SAD fell from 34.7 percent in 2012 to 25.2 percent in 2017., while the BJP's vote share also dropped from 7.2 percent to 5.4 percent.

The story is different in Uttar Pradesh, the Hindu heartland and a coveted political stronghold. The BJP had a landslide victory in the 2017 Assembly election with 312 seats and 39.7 percent of the vote share, a power shift from the Samajwadi party that won in 2012. The alliance-led BJP won 325 out of 403 seats. The BJP had been seen as a party of upper castes, but this perception changed when the party formed an alliance of non-Yadav OBCs and non-Jatav Dalits against the Samajwadi party's Yadav vote bank and Bahujan Samajwadi party's Jatav vote bank.

Further, the BJP scored impressively in western Uttar Pradesh, the "Jatland", which also has a high Muslim, Dalit, and backward caste presence. The pre-poll narrative in western Uttar Pradesh was spewed by the anger of the Jats against Modi for reasons including the center's "failure" to give Jats reservation. The issue is the same as that of Jats in Haryana and adds evidence to the dire state of the agriculture sector. There was also anger against the demonetization policy of the BJP government. Therefore, it is quite surprising that the BJP actually won in that part of Uttar Pradesh. Its success is attributed to the ability of the party to consolidate the support of leftover castes, like the Gujjar, Tyagi, Brahmin, Saini, and Kashyap (Ramaseshan 2017).

In addition, the BJP brought the rich-poor equation to the electoral space and backed its rhetoric with demonetization. It thus created a new divide in Uttar Pradesh that played in its favor. It brought together a broad alliance of poor communities that had been underrepresented in the past, the Economically Backward Classes[16] and the non-Jatav Dalits. It was also able to ideologically unite and consolidate the urban upper caste base with the rural poor, through the surgical strikes against terrorists in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. Thus, the BJP created a message of hope, optimism, and unity through promises of development and law and order, anchored in its narratives on nationalism.

5.2. FARMERS' UNIONS AND OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES

The BKU is a strong political force that plays an important role in the emergence of the 2020-21 Farmers' movement. Formed in 1978, it provided a platform to big and middle farmers, across different castes and religions (Gupta 1997), and represented both Hindu and Muslim Jats under the farmers' identity. The 2020-21 protests started in Punjab led by the BKU, whose mobilization strategy remains one unified peasantry; it does not differentiate between rich farmers, agricultural laborers, and poor peasants with small and marginal landholdings, and its agenda is to protect the interests of all farmers and fight against injustice to all rural areas (Gill 2022).

When the Farm Ordinances came out in 2020, the BKU and other farmers' unions acted quickly to organize the protest. They translated them into Punjabi and printed and distributed them among the activists and farmers' leaders for discussion. They spread the word that the

[16] The Economically Backward Classes is a subgroup of people earning less that IRs800,000 in India (bank bazar.com).

farmers' livelihoods were at stake. This was enough to galvanize the rural areas, leading to a large number of demonstrations by farmers in the villages, towns, and cities of Punjab. There were spontaneous rallies, flag marches in the villages on motorcycles and tractors, and rallies in towns and at district headquarters by different factions of farmers' unions. Some factions of the farmers' unions started to coordinate their efforts for a joint struggle with Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, as well as with other neighboring states. This resulted in the formation of the Coordination Sangharsh Committee on September 19, 2020, which consists of representatives of 32 farmers' unions. The Committee led the organization of the joint protest demonstrations. Then, on November 7, 2020, the SKM was formed to provide a key leadership role in the protest.

The focus of the protest shifted from the villages, towns, and cities to the capital of Punjab, Chandigarh. Members of the major farmers' unions met with the Chief Minister of Punjab in July 2020 and urged him not to implement the Ordinances in Punjab. He agreed and promised to take up the issue in the forthcoming Legislative Assembly of Punjab that was to be held around mid-August 2020. Meanwhile, the Union Government converted the three Ordinances into three Bills by getting them passed through the two houses of Parliament in July 2020. The SAD, the oldest ally of the BJP, fearing erosion of its support base of the peasantry, withdrew its support of the NAD government and asked its sole representative, Harsimrat Kaur Badal, to resign from the Union Cabinet. It voted against the three Bills in both houses of the Parliament.

Once the BJP obtained the approval of both houses of Parliament, it moved fast on procedures to get them into Acts. Punjab's Legislative Assembly passed a unanimous resolution on August 22 2020 that the Farm Acts will not be implemented there. The resolution had the

support of the Punjab Congress, the Aam Aadmi Party (which represents the Opposition), and the SAD. The BJP did not attend the sessions of the Assembly when the resolution was passed. The hurried passing of the Bills also galvanized the Opposition, and Congress drafted a model law to allow non-BJP-ruled states to bypass the Central Laws (Gill 2022).

Such was the political opportunity structure for the farmers' mobilization. Moreover, throughout the protest, the farmers' unions did not associate with any political party. This dissociation enabled them to enlist the support of trade unions, intellectuals, artists, NGOs, and other social organizations. They also benefited from the support of commission agents, urban shopkeepers, transporters, and college students.

Furthermore, the focus of the unions on mobilizing people in the village was an important factor in building the movement (Gill 2022). The farmers' unions approached the village people and organized Khap panchayats[17] in Punjab, Haryana, and UP, as well as in some other states. Sections of the village population began to support the movement with the slogan "No Farmers, No Food". This had a cascading effect on urban areas as well, where large numbers of workers and middle-class employees came out to support the movement.

In addition, the changing economic realities of urban and rural life created a set of circumstances that aided the emergence of rural-urban political solidarities. The overwhelming majority of India's workers are informally employed in insecure, poorly paid jobs (Lerche 2021) that lack social protection. For these precarious urban workers, the rural areas are an important livelihood support. For instance in Uttar Pradesh, the generation of upward-mobile Jats are unable to meet minimal living conditions and lead a respectful life in the city (Kumar 2021).

[17] The Khap panchayat is the union of a few villages mainly in north India ("What is Khap Panchanyats", India Times, October 11, 2012).

They continue to depend on their holdings in the village. Many rural people are increasingly recognizing the impossibility of earning a decent living from agriculture. They are supplementing their income with waged work, including circular or seasonal migration to urban areas (Shah and Sandwell 2023). These factors account for the rural-urban solidarity in the Farmers' movement.

CHAPTER 6

FRAMING

Framing is a necessary and sufficient condition for the emergence of a social movement because it creates a common frame through the process of frame alignment. It creates the two conditions that are necessary and sufficient for participation in collective behavior: (1) common interests; and, (2) selective incentives in the form of non-monetary incentives, such as solidary and purposive incentives. It does so through agents actively engaged in the "politics of signification" (Hall 1982), along with the media, state governments, and national government. As explained in Chapter 1, the 2020-21 Farmers' Movement had a more diverse participation than the movements in the 1980s and 1990s in India. I argue that the leadership of the SKM and BKU consciously reached beyond the better-off farmer capitalists that are part of this movement. The SKM and BKU are the "signifying agents" (Snow and Benford 1988) who actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning that brought an alliance among different farmers who belong to historically different social groups, between farmers and laborers, and between urban-based individuals and civil society groups, workers and students.

Moreover, I find that the difference in framing between the Khaps which played an important role alongside farmers' unions in Haryana, and the BKU-Ugrahan in Punjab, explains the variation in the FDEs between Haryana and Punjab. I argue that the anti-corporatization framing of the SKM and BKU "our stomachs are filled by farming" (Shah and Sandwell 2023:11) created shared interests and a solidary incentive to join the movement. In the process, it created an identity that goes beyond farmers, caste, and class. It is an identity for the common man who knows that "our stomachs are filled by farming".

6.1. THE SKM

The SKM, whose leadership has been claimed as vital to the success of the movement (Sethi 2022), includes among its constituents the AIKSCC which was formed as part of small farmers' mobilization in west and central India in 2017. The objective of the SKM and AIKSCC was to include as many farmers who do not presently benefit from the MSP because there is little procurement and few regulated markets in their states. One of the requests of the Farmers' movement is to expand procurement markets across India and legalize the MSP for the 23 agricultural produce that it covers (Lerche 2021). The Farmers' Movement also encapsulated protests against other social and economic challenges, such as land acquisition projects, inflation, and crop damage (Reuters November 19, 2021).

Furthermore, the SKM sought alliances with unions representing mainly the urban workers and supported their claims against the anti-labor laws (Shah and Sandwell 2023). As they explain, rural areas are a vital base of support for precarious urban workers, often an emergency cushion against unemployment or a source of provisions that supplement meager incomes. Hence, the framing of the protest was anti-corporatization; it "recognized that greater corporate control over agriculture would lead to increased exploitation and expropriation of food producers, undermine the rural support networks of urban workers, and allow the manipulation of food prices at the cost of vulnerable urban populations" (Shah and Sandwell 2023:11).

Moreover, the SKM integrated with relative success, rural laborers, and Dalit organizations in the movement. For instance, the Bhim army, a radical Dalit activist group from western UP, supported Rakesh Tikait, the leader of the BKU, when he was facing arrest in Uttar Pradesh in January 2021 (The New Indian Express, January 29, 2021).

6.2. FORMATION OF THE COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAME

What unites this movement is the struggle against big capital (corporates) reshaping Indian agriculture, and the struggle against the potential collapse of the public distribution system that could follow if the Farm Laws were to stay. This is the collective action frame that inspired and legitimated the activities of the Farmers' movement. I explore the constructivist character of the movement's framing processes. I focus on the two sets of characteristic features that Snow and Benford (1988) identify: (1) the "core framing tasks" which have an action-oriented function; and (2) the interactive, discursive processes that attend to these core framing tasks and are thus, generative of the collective action frame. I make a comparison between Haryana and Punjab which employed different methods of mobilization in the 2020-21 Farmers' movement. In Punjab, much of the organization for the protest has been done by farmers' unions, while in Haryana it has been run by Khaps who are majorly dominated by Jats.

Khaps hold a special power at the local level in Haryana; people follow and listen to Khap leaders more than they listen to legislators (Kajal 2021). Although farmers' organizations in Haryana were active from the beginning to the end of the protest, Khaps shared a dialectic relationship with the forces and sections in the farmers' movement. In many places in Haryana, Khap leaders were also office-bearers of various factions of the BKU. Hence, Khaps played an important role in the Farmers' movement. I find that Haryana had a much less anti-BJP frame than Punjabi which I attribute to the leadership of Khaps in the movement. I argue that this may account for the large disparity in FDEs between Punjab and Haryana; Punjab has 1.7 times more FDEs than Haryana.

The institution of Khap exists primarily among the Jats in Haryana, and also in other states like western Uttar Pradesh, parts of Rajasthan, and in the rural belt of Delhi. There are almost 120 Khaps in Haryana, spread across the nine districts that make up the state's Jat belt (The Print, February 10, 2021). Like the Jats in western UP, the Jats in Haryana are a quintessential "dominant caste" based on their social, economic, and political strength. They represent about 25 percent of Haryana's population and carry a significant weight in about 40 percent of the legislative constituencies (Kumar 2010:21). Since the formation of Haryana in 1966 from the predominantly Hindi-speaking areas of Indian Punjab, Jats have formed a substantial proportion of the state's political leadership and have occupied the post of chief minister in the vast majority of governments. The Jats have used the Khap as to keep their sociopolitical base consolidated over decades (Kumar 2012), a fact recognized by the BJP. In 2014, during a political rally, Modi started his speech with,

"I bow to this land which is headed by Khap panchayats" (The Print February 10, 2021).

The people of Haryana, especially the Jats, are ultra-nationalists (Kajal 2021 citing Rohtas Nagura a political analyst). Haryana contributes the most to the Indian Army and Navy in terms of manpower. Referring to the Jat community, Nagura also adds "The farm is their temple, farmers their gods, and physical strength is their spirituality" (Kajal 2021). The Jats believe that the BJP has gone against the interests of farmers with the Farm Laws, and has used them by "instigating fake nationalism" (Kajal 2021). This explains their participation in the protest.

However, the initial response of the peasantry in Haryana to a series of protest calls that had been made by farmers' organizations in June 2020 against the Farm Bills, had been one of indifference. However, when the farmers from Punjab started the Delhi Chalo movement on

November 25, 2020, they were joined by farmers from Haryana who were mostly associated with farmers' organizations. This led to increasing support from rural Haryana for the protesters, and villagers came up with an organized way to provide food supplies to the protesters. Since the Khaps' overwhelming constituency is landowning peasantry, they came under pressure to support the agitation (Singh 2022). Repeatedly questioned by the local media, the heads of the Khaps felt compelled to extend support to the protesters. They provided food and other essentials at the borders. However, this was more an act of brotherhood towards the Punjab farmers than opposition to the Farm Laws (Singh 2022). Singh (2022) explains that the indifference of the Jats to the protests is a consequence of the Jat reservation agitation that took place in February 2016, and that had ended in large-scale rioting, loss of property, and lives, and many youths facing trials and imprisonment.

It was only after the incident at the Delhi-Ghazipur border on January 28, 2021, when the Jat leader Rakesh Tikait from Uttar Pradesh broke into tears and refused to leave even under the threat of arrest, that the Jats from Haryana joined in the action of the movement. The more active role and involvement of the Khaps helped to mobilize the large crowds in mahapanchayats. These grassroots protests played an important role in creating political pressure on the ruling alliance - the BJP and Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) - in Haryana. Several Khaps announced the social boycott of various BJP and JJP leaders. A social boycott is an important tool used by the Khaps to shame and humiliate those who defy Khap diktats. The Khaps banned the entry of BJP-JJP leaders in several villages in Haryana (Hindustan Times December 05, 2020).

However, the motivational frame of the Khaps in the movement was to further the consolidation of the Jats in the sociopolitical domain. During the Farmers' movement, there were

attempts by the Khaps to weaken the unity of the movement by inciting caste and community divides (Singh 2022). Dr. Rakesh Kuma, assistant professor at the Lakhanmajra Government College in Rothak, Haryana points out that: “It is about the farmers' agitation, but also the Khap pride. Khaps have come to the rescue of the agitation, while it has brought them together. The Khaps are collaborating to mobilize crowds, organize material, and delegate duties because this is a common cause.” (The Print February 20, 2021).

Indeed, in Haryana, one did not see the type of caste-class solidarity that was seen in Punjab where protests were organized by farm unions to demand homestead plots, pensions, and waiving off of electricity and water bills for the rural wage laborers, the Dalits. The protest had a single-dimensional focus, which was the Farm Laws in Haryana. As the head of one prominent Khap says,

“It is not about which political party one is with. This is a fight for the rights of the farmers and I am supporting all the resolutions passed by the mahapanchayat.” (The Print, February 10, 2021).

The Khaps’ leadership in the Farmers’ movement came with a reliance on Jats at the cost of other castes.

Punjab, unlike Haryana, adopted right from the start of the movement, the diagnostic frame of ‘corporatization’, instead of the contentious Farm Laws. The BKU-Ugrahan, an “outlier” farmers’ union that played a prominent role in the Farmers’ movement in Punjab, had a broad-based agenda, and its leaders asserted that the organization would stand with different democratic movements in the country. It is an outlier union because it decided to retain its independence by not joining the other farmers' unions but by coordinating with them (The Print December 16, 2020). The BKU-Ugrahan had joined several mobilizations by Dalits and landless

agricultural workers in Punjab in recent years, and the capital that it had built through such participation facilitated to a large extent the cross-caste and cross-class Farmers' movement in 2020-21. Unlike the Khaps which blamed the Farm Laws for the protest, the BKU-Ugrahan laid the blame on the "authoritarian" Central government led by Prime Minister Modi:

"We are confronting a prime minister who is behaving like an exploitative king." (The president of the BKU-Ugrahan, The Wire December 11, 2020).

This was substantiated by the deputy president of the BKU-Ugrahan, who explained:

"Most of the protests over the last few years – be it in Shaheen Bagh (against the CAA-NRC), or against removing Article 370 – happened because the government didn't bother to consult those who would be impacted because of these measures. The same happened with the farm laws. Only a few who have more than 5,000 acres of land, and corporates, were kept in loop. The farm laws are against 85% of Indian farmers who own very little land. And now the government is trying to whitewash its sins by giving false assurances to us. it is time that all democratic movements come together to expose the government. Their intention is not right." (The Wire December 11, 2020).

Despite the ideological differences between the organizations leading the protests in Punjab, the prognostic frame was one:

"We want the farm laws to go, and at the same time want the Public Distribution Scheme to have a greater reach." (The deputy president, BKU-Ugrahan, The Wire, December 11, 2020).

There was an anti-BJP frame in many of the Leftist unions, including the BKU-Ugrahan, and they highlighted the issue of incarceration of political prisoners in Punjab. These political prisoners were activists who had been demanding democratic rights. Other unions strategically

stayed away from bringing up this issue, fearing that doing so may dilute the primary issue of the Farm Laws, though they endorsed the view that the Modi government was an "authoritarian" government.

The Trolley Times, a newsletter drafted by volunteers in Punjab to counter mainstream media that was effectively becoming propaganda for the BJP (Behl 2022), provides a discursive motivational frame as a model for an ideal Indian society via its visions and practices, including a strong sense of trans-regional and trans-ideological solidarity and an emphasis on unity and secularism in opposition to the BJP's divisive agenda. Secularism in this context refers to the equality of all religions and the right of practice to practice one's faith rather than a strict separation of state and religion (Bhargava 2002). It is inextricably linked to the unity in the popular nationalist slogans of the early independence days of India: "Unity in diversity" (Titzmann 2022).

Moreover, the Trolley Times puts forth anti-BJP discourses calling the Modi government's ideology "a gross corporatist communal and fascist ideology", and calling the Modi government "a dogmatic government" and a government that "prioritizes Hindutva over economic agenda". In a direct refutation of the BJP's Hindutva vision and the subordination of all others, the movement in Punjab which started with Jat Sikh farmers and laborers, evolved to become multi-religious (Dubal and Gill 2022). Hindus and Muslims from other parts of India joined in. Although ideologically the BJP claims that Sikhs are part of the Hindu fold, the Sikhs have consistently rejected the Hindutva politics and have engaged in collective action in direct affront to the politics of the BJP. The motivational frame of the Jat Sikhs is to bring forefront the Sikh principles of radical equality. At the protest sites, farmers and laborers were consistently

together confronting the state, in defiance of conventional Hindu social hierarchy. The main slogan of the protest was “Kisan-Mazdoor Ekta Zindabad”, which means “Long live Farmer-Laborer Unity”.

The movement in Punjab was anti-BJP in its framing. This accounts for the much higher FDEs in Punjab than in Haryana. The struggle against corporatization was a political one, even though farmers’ unions, including the BKU-Ugrahan, claimed that they are apolitical organizations with no affiliations to political parties. This is a major difference with the leadership in Haryana where the Khaps led. While the Khaps focused on the repeal of the Farm Laws, the BKU-Ugrahan was struggling against corporatization:

“… we will support and seek support from all democratic groups opposed to such policies which will hurt the poor”. (Deputy president, BKU-Ugrahan, The Wire, December 11, 2020).

This anti-corporatization frame created shared interests around the narrative that “our stomachs are filled by farming” (Shan and Sandwell 2023), and created solidary and purposive incentives (Clark and Wilson 1961) to join the movement. It created an identity that goes beyond caste and class; it is an identity for the common man, the one with a stomach “filled by farming”.

CONCLUSION

The cause of the 2020-21 Farmers' Movement was essentially economic grievances. Farmers feared a potential worsening of their conditions as the Farm Laws would have allowed private buyers to purchase agricultural produce directly from farmers outside the MSP system. They feared an erosion of state subsidies and the eventual phasing out of the MSP system. Farmers from Punjab and Haryana would have been most affected compared to other farmers because they receive the highest monthly average value from MSP operations compared to other states that also benefit from the MSP operations. This may explain why the two states are outliers on the higher bound in terms of FDEs.

Two contradicting trends can be identified in the 2020-21 Farmers' Movement: one, states that voted for the BJP were protesting against its economic reform policies, and two, social forces that are generally opposed to each other in a society that is marked by caste hierarchies and social polarization showed broad unity in the Movement. The BJP had a landslide victory in both the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections and even expanded its support enormously in rural India despite visible signs of farm and rural distress among farmers in the Hindi-speaking states in north India. This success has been attributed to its narratives on nationalism, which became even more powerful after the Pulwama and Balakot events. Farmers' issues became secondary to the narratives on nationalism. The discontentment at the level of farmers, farmers' unions, and opposition parties provided the political opportunity structure for the mobilization.

Furthermore, under the leadership of the SKM, the movement adopted an anti-corporatization frame that recognizes that allowing big capital into the agricultural sector would lead to increased exploitation of food producers, and undermine the rural support networks of

urban workers and the Public Distribution System. Thus, the movement built a narrative of shared interests that "our stomachs are filled by farming" which appealed to the self-interests of the numerous individuals who benefit from the Public Distribution System. This narrative mobilized wide support for the protest across diverse agrarian caste and class identities. The SKM consciously reached beyond better-off farmer capitalists and actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning that brought an alliance between historically different social groups, creating unity within the movement in its struggle against big capital and the potential collapse of the Public Distribution System. By emphasizing collective needs over individualistic demands, beliefs, and the Hindutva identity, the caste-class alliance took place.

The motivational frame of Haryana was to further the consolidation of the Jats in the sociopolitical domain, while that of Punjab was to struggle against corporatization. This variation in the framing of the two states accounts for the variation in the FDEs. The struggle in Punjab against corporatization is a political one, and I find evidence of anti-BJP framing. I argue that this is why Punjab has much higher FDEs than Haryana.

The 2020-21 Farmers' Movement provides evidence that social movements are the consequence of economic grievances and the potential for mobilization which is affected by the political opportunity structure. It also provides evidence that frame alignment accounts for the mobilization of individuals from different social groups and ethnicities. The process of frame alignment creates common interests and non-monetary selective incentives like solidary and purposive incentives are two necessary and sufficient conditions for individuals to participate in collective action. Thus, economic grievances and political opportunity structure are two

necessary conditions for the emergence of social movements, but framing is a necessary and sufficient condition for the participation of individuals in social movements.

The main limitation of the case study is that being a single case study I cannot reliably speak of its external validity. However, the findings provide grounds for further research.

Bibliography

Aditya K. S. , Subash S. P., Praveen K. V., Nityashree M. L., Bhuvana N., Sharma A. (2017). Awareness about minimum support price and its impact on diversification decision of farmers in India. Asia & the Pacific policy studies. Volume 4 Issue 3. September 2017 pp.514-526.

Almeida, P. and Martín, A.P. (2022) Collective Resistance to Neoliberalism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Elements in Contentious Politics).

Arora V. (2001). Politics of Class(ness) in the Farmers' Movement in India: Validity of the New Social Movement Paradigm. Sociological Bulletin , March 2001, Vol. 50, No. 1 (March 2001), pp. 84-121

Banerji and Meenakshi 2004. Buyer Collusion and Efficiency of Government Intervention in Wheat Markets in Northern India: An Asymmetric Structural Auctions Analysis. American Journal of Agricultural Economics, Feb., 2004, Vol. 86, No. 1 (Feb., 2004), pp. 236-253.

Bardhan, K. (1977) "Rural Employment, Wages and Labour Markets in India: A Survey of Research", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XIII, Nos 26, 27, 28; 25 June, 2 and 9 July.

Behl N. (2022). India's Farmers' Protest: An inclusive vision of Indian Democracy. American Political Science Review (2022) 116, 3, 1141–1146

Benford, R.D. and Hunt, S.A. (1992), Dramaturgy and Social Movements: The Social Construction and Communication of Power. Sociological Inquiry, 62: 36-55.

Benford, R. D., and Snow D. A. (2000). "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment." Annual Review of Sociology 26 (2000): 611–39.

Bergstrand, K. (2014). The Mobilizing Power of Grievances: Applying Loss Aversion and Omission Bias to Social Movements. Mobilization: An International Quarterly 19(2): 123-142.

Bernstein, H. (2007). Capital and Labour From Centre to Margins. Keynote address at living on the margins: vulnerability, exclusion and the state in the informal economy conference, Isandla Institute, Cape Town, 26–28 March

Button JW. (1978). Black Violence. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press

Chakravarti, A. (2001): Social Power and Every day Class Relations: Agrarian Transformation in North Bihar, New Delhi: Sage

Chandrasekhar, C. P. (2016). Finance Capital and the Nature of Capitalism in India Today. Macroscan, November 25..

Chirot, D. and Ragin C. (1975). The Market, Tradition and Peasant Rebellion: The Case of Romania in 1907. American Sociological Review 40:428-44

Chong, D. (1996). Collective action and the civil rights movement. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

Clark, P. B., and J. Q. Wilson. Incentive Systems: A Theory of Organizations. Administrative Science Quarterly6, no. 2 (1961): 129–66. https://doi.org/ 10.2307/2390752.

Cloward R. A. (1977). Poor People's Movements. New York: Vintage

Costain A. N. 1992. Inviting Women's Rebellion: A Political Process Interpretation of the Women's Movement. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press

Dasgupta, B. Agrarian Change and the New Technology in India, Geneva: UNRISD, 1977, pp 62-64,167.

Datla K. (2020). Farm Laws 2020: Who are they meant to serve. Down to Earth. 2020, December 7.

della Porta, D. (1995) Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics).

Dubal V. and Gill N. (2020). Longer-live farmer-laborer unity: contextualizing the massive resistance going on in India.

https://lpeproject.org/blog/long-live-farmer-laborer- unity-contextualizing-the-massive-resistance-going-on-in-india/

Deshpande, A (2000): "Does Caste Still Define Disparity A Look at Inequality in Kerala, India". American Economic Review, Vol 90, p 322-2

Doowon S.(2001). How Do Political Opportunities Matter for Social Movements?: Political Opportunity, Misframing, Pseudosuccess, and Pseudo failure The Sociological Quarterly , Summer, 2001, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer, 2001), pp. 437-460

Eisinger P. 1973. The conditions of protest behavior in American cities. Am. Polit. Sei. Rev. 81:11-28

Entman, R.M. (1993), Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. Journal of Communication, 43: 51-58. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x

Fetner T. and Smith J. (2007). Structural Approaches in the Sociology of Social Movements, pp. 13-57. In Handbook of Social Movements: Social Movements Across Disciplines Klandermans B. and Roggeband C. editors. New York: Springer.

Frontline. (2020) : Farmers take the country by storm. August 15, 2022.

Gamson, W.A., & Meyer, D.S. (1996). Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Framing political opportunity.

Ghose, A. K. 2016. India Employment Report 2016. Challenges and the Imperative of Manufacturing-Led Growth. New Delhi: Institute for Human Development and Oxford University Press

Gill, S. (2022). Recent farmers' movement in Punjab: organization, stages of mobilization and achievements. Journal of Sikh and Punjab Studies 2022. Center for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, Chandigarh.

Goodwin J. and Jasper J. M. (1999). Caught in a Winding, Snarling Vine: The

Structural Bias of Political Process Theory. Sociological Forum, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1999
Gupta D. (1997). Rivalry and brotherhood: Politics in the life of farmers in Northern India. Oxford University Press
Gupta, P., Khera, R, Narayanan, S. (2021). Minimum Support Prices in India: Distilling the Facts
Hall S. (1982). The rediscovery of ideology: return to the repressed in media studies. In Culture, Society and the Media, ed. M Gurevitch, T Bennett, J Curon, J Woolacott, pp. 56-90. New York: Methuen
Jenkins J. C. 1982. Why do peasants rebel? Structural and historical theories of modern peasant rebellions. American Journal of Sociology. Nov. 1982, Vol. 88 No. 3. pp. 467-514
Jenkins J. C, Klandermans B. 1995. The politics of social protest. In Jenkins, J. C. and Klandermans B., editors. The Politics of Social Protest: Comparative Perspectives on States and Social Movements. NED-New edition, vol. 3, University of Minnesota Press, 1995.
Kajal K. 17 feb 2021. Haryana, UP Jats turn their back on BJP after supporting the party for a decade. The Federal.
Kannan, K. P., and G. Raveendran. 2019. "From Jobless to Job-loss Growth. Gainers and Losers During 2012–18." Economic and Political Weekly 54 (44): 38–44.
Khera, R., and A. Somanchi. 2020. "A Review of the Coverage of PDS." Ideas for India August 19.
Klandermans B. 1984. Mobilization and participation: social-psychological expansions of resource mobilization theory. Am. Soc. Rev. 49:583–600
Kochhar, R. 2021. In the Pandemic, India's Middle Class Shrinks and Poverty Spreads While China Sees Smaller Changes', India's Middle Class Shrinks Amid COVID-19 as China Sees Less Change. Pew Research Center: Washington D.C
Kitschelt HP. 1986. Political opportunity structures and political protest: anti-nuclear movements in four democracies. Br. J. Polit. Sei. 16:57-85
Kriesi H., Koopmans R. (1995). New social movements in Western Europe: A comparative analysis. Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press
Kriesi H. (1996). The organizational structure of new social movements in a political context. See McAdam et al. 1996, pp. 152-84
Koopmans R. 1996. New social movements and changes in political participation in Western Europe. W. Europ. Polit. 19:28-50
Kumar, S. (2020). Verdict 2019: The expanded support base of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Asian Journal of Comparative Politics, 5(1), 6-22.
Kumar S. (2021). Class, caste and agrarian change: the making of farmers' protests, The Journal of Peasant Studies, 48:7, 1371-1379.
Kumar, S. (2022). Rise and Fall of the Bharatiya Kisan Union: The Farmers' Protests of 2020–2021 in the Making of New Rural Politics.

Sociological Bulletin, 71(4), 551-565.
Lerche, J. 2015. “Regional Patterns of Agrarian Accumulation in India.” In Indian Capitalism in Development, edited by J. Heyer and B. Harriss-White, 46–65. London: Routledge.
Lerche, J. (2021). Jat Power and the Spread of the Farm Protests in Northern India. [online] The India Forum. Available at: https://www.theindiaforum.in/ article/jat-power- and-spread-india-s-farm-protests.
Lichbach, M. I. “What Makes Rational Peasants Revolutionary?: Dilemma, Paradox, and Irony in Peasant Collective Action.” World Politics 46, no. 3 (1994): 383–418.
Lindberg S. (1994). New farmers’ movements in India as structural response and collective identity formation: The cases of the Shetkari Sanghatana and the BKU, The Journal of Peasant Studies, 21:3-4, 95-125
Lijphart, A. (2014). Patterns of Democracy. Cumberland Yale University Press [Ann Arbor, Michigan] [Proquest].
Lipsky M. (1970). Protest in City Politics. Chicago, IL: Rand-McNally
Lyon, G., & Schaffner, B. F. (2021). Labor Unions and Non-member Political Protest Mobilization in the United States. Political Research Quarterly, 74(4), 998-1008. https:// doi.org/10.1177/1065912920950826
Mayer F. W. 2014. Narrative politics: stories and collective action. Oxford University Press.
Marx, K. and Daniel De Leon (2018). The eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte. Singapore: Origami Books.
McAdam D. (1982). Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970. Chicago, IL. Univ. Chicago Press.
McAdam D, McCarthy JD,Zald MN, eds. (1996). Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press
McAdam D. and Tarrow S.. (2019). “The Political Context of Social Movements”. Chapter 1 of Snow et al Wiley Blackwell Companion to Social Movements (available online through UW) Enduring opportunities and changes in opportunities; critiques and extensions.
McCarthy. J. D. 1994. Activists, authorities, and media framing of drunk driving. See Larana et al 1994, pp. 133–67
McCarthy J. D, Zald MN. 1977. Resource mobilization and social movements: a partial theory. Am. J. Sociol. 82:1212-41
Mehta S. (2022). Protest, change, and democracy: locating current farmers’ protest movement in Dube’s construct of “Understanding Change”
Meyer D. S. (1995). Framing national security: elite public discourse on nuclear weapons during the cold war. Polit. Commun. 12:17392
Meyer D. S. (2004). Protest and political opportunities. Annual Review of Sociology , 2004, Vol. 30 (2004), pp. 125-145
Migdal, Joel. 1974. Peasants, Politics and Revolution. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton

University Press.
Moore, B. (1966). Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, Boston: Beacon Press.
Mukherjee M. (Oct. 8, 1988). Peasant Resistance and Peasant Consciousness in Colonial India: Subalterns' and Beyond. Economic and Political Weekly. Vol. 23 No. 41. pp. 2109-2120. Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/4379152
Narula S. (2022). Confronting State violence: Lessons from India's farmers' protests. https://digitalcommons.pace.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2224&context=lawfaculty
Niti Aayog. 2016-17. Annual Report. Government of India.
North D. 1990. Institutions, institutional change and economic performance. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
NSSO (2014): Situation Assessment Survey of Agri cultural Households, 70th Round, National Sample Survey Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, New Delhi.
O'Neill, S. A. (Jan 5 2024), Distribution of the workforce across economic sectors in India 2021. Statista. https://www.statista.com/statistics/271320/distribution-of-the-workforce-across-economic-sectors-in-india/
Olson M. (1965). The Logic of Collective Action. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press
Paige J. (1975). Agrarian Revolution. New York: Free Press.
Pal D. (2022) Dare to win: Lessons from the Indian Farmers Movement. 8 March 2022.
https://www.tni.org/en/article/dare-to-win-lessons-from-the-indian-farmers-movement#:~:text=The%20Farmers%20Movement%20in%20India,to%20repeal%20the%20farm%20bills.
Pattenden J. and Bansal G. (2021). A new class alliance in the Indian countryside? from new farmers' movements to the 2020 protest wave, Economic and Political Weekly 56 (2021).
Pinard, M. Motivational Dimensions in Social Movements and Contentious Collective Action. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011.
Piven F. F. and Cloward. 1977. Poor people's movements. New York: Pantheon.
Pingali, P., Aiyar, A., Abraham, M., & Rahman, A. (2019). Transforming Food Systems for a Rising India. Springer Nature. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-14409-8
Purkayastha, A. (2021, 23 January). Farm laws are only way to push agriculture out of low-income trap.
https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/indian-economy-agriculture-7157891
Rudolph, L. L. and Rudolph, S. H. (1987), In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State. University of Chicago Press.
Rukmini S. 2019. The BJP's electoral arithmetic. In The BJP in power: Indian Democracy and religious nationalism. Ed. Vaishnav M. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
Saha, S., Sinha, C., & Saha, S. (2023). Agricultural Marketing in India: Challenges,

Policies and Politics. South Asian Journal of Macroeconomics and Public Finance, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/22779787231209
Saini S. and Chowdhury A. (April 2023). Which Indian farmers benefit from GOI's MSP operations? Findings from NSSO's SAS 2018-19. Arcus Policy Research,
Schenieberg M. and Lounsbury M. January (2008). Sage Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism (pp.648-670). Publisher: SageEditors: R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, S. Sahlin-Andersson & R. Suddaby.
Scott, James C. (1976). The Moral Economy of the Peasant. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.
Sethi A. (2021). One year later. Reflections on the farmers' protest in India. FHAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory 11 (2): 869–876. University of California, Berkeley.
Shah, A. and Sandwell K. (2023), Lessons from the Indian Farmers' Movement: Emerging solidarities in the Kisan Andolan
Singh,R. (2 0 0 1) Social Movements, Old and New: A Post-Modernist Critique (SAGE Publications, 2001).
Sinha, S. (2020). The agrarian crisis in Punjab and the making of the anti-farm law protests. November 27, 2020. The India Forum. https://www.theindiaforum.in/article/agrarian- crisis-punjab-and-making-anti-farm-law-protests
Singh, S. (2022). Khaps in the Making of Farmers' Protests in Haryana: A Study of Role and Fault Lines. Sociological Bulletin, 71(4), 534-550. https://doi.org/10.1177/00380229221116937
Snow D. A. and Benford R. D. (1988). Ideology, frame resonance, and participant mobilization. International Social Movement Research, 1, 197-218.
Snow, D. A. and Corrigall-Brown C. (2005). Falling on Deaf Ears: Confronting the Prospect of Non-Resonant Frames. In Rhyming Hope and History: Activism and Social Movement Scholarship, edited by Croteau D., Hoynes W., and Ryan C., 222–238. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Snow D. A., Soule S. A., and Kriesi H. (2004). The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements. Chapter 17. Framing processes, ideology, and discursive fields. Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
Snow, D. A., Vliegenthart R., and Corrigall-Brown, C. (2007) Framing the French Riots: A Comparative Study of Frame Variation, Social Forces 86385 https:// academic.oup.com/sf/article-pdf/86/2/385/6520942/86-2-385.pdf.
Standing Committee on Agriculture. Agricultural marketing and role of weekly Gramin Haats. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India, New Delhi.
Suthar S. K. and Kumar M. 2022. Sociological Bulletin 71(4) 495–511, 2022. Sage Journals.
Tarrow S. 1989. Democracy and Disorder: Protest and Politics in Italy, 1965-1975. Oxford: Clarendon
Tarrow S. 1994. Power in movement: Social movements, collective action and

politics. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Tarrow, S. 2011, Power in Movement: Social movements and contentious politics. 3rd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press
Ramasechan R. 2017. The messages, mathematics and silences that formed the BJP's UP win. Economic and Political Weekly. Vol. 52, Issue No. 11, 18 Mar, 2017.
Tilly C. 1978. From Mobilization to Revolution. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley x
Tilly, C. 1984. "Social Movements and National Politics," in State making and Social Movements, ed. Carles Bright and Susan Harding (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press): 297-317.
Tilly C. 1995. Popular Contention in Great Britain 1758-1834. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard Univ. Press
Titzmann F-M. 2022. Trolley Times: mediating solidarity in the Indian Farmers' movement March 23, 2022.
Touraine A. (1985) An introduction to the study of social movements,Social Research: An International Quarterly 52(1985)
Varshney, A.,(1995) Democracy, Development, and the Countryside: Urban-Rural Struggles in India, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge University Press, 1995)
Verma S. Oct 14, (2020). Farmers stir due to fear of revenue loss from mandi taxes and fees. The Times of India.
Kumar R. (2019). Why a nationalist rhetoric failed the BJP in Haryana. Economic and Political Weekly (Engage), Vol. 54, Issue No. 51, 28 Dec, 2019. https://www.epw.in/ engage/article/why-nationalist-rhetoric-failed-bjp-haryana
Wolf, E. (1969). Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century. New York: Harper & Row.
Wolfsfed G. (1997). Media and political conflict. Cambridge University Press

Appendix

TIMELINE OF THE 2020-21 PROTEST EVENTS

- **June 5, 2020**: Government of India announces the three Farm Bills, which Modi's cabinet says are aimed at giving farmers the freedom to sell directly to institutional buyers such as big trading houses, large retailers and food processors.
- **September 14, 2020**: Ordinances submitted to Parliament.
- **September 16, 2020**: Farmers stage a protest for the second consecutive day outside the residence of a former Punjab Chief Minister's residence in Muktsar district against the Farm Bills.
- **September 17, 2020**: India' lower house of Parliament passes the orders. India's food processing minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal resigns, calling the legislation "anti-farmer".
- **September 18, 2020**: Farmers stage a protest for the fourth consecutive day outside the residence of a former Punjab Chief Minister in Muktsar district against the Farm Bills. One farmer commits suicide at the protest and dies. Modi defends the new legislation, saying it will "unshackle" millions of farmers and help them get better prices.
- **September 20, 2020**: India's Parliament passes the bills, despite growing protest from opposition parties, who say farmers' bargaining power will be diminished.
- **September 24, 2020**: Farmers from Punjab squat on railway tracks, starting their three-day "rail roko" (block railway tracks).

- **September 25, 2020**: Farmers across India take to the streets in response to a call by the All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC). Farmers block highways leading to the capital New Delhi with trucks, tractors and combine harvesters.
- **September 27, 2020**: Farm Bills are given Presidential assent and become Farm Laws.
- **November 25, 2020**: After sporadic protests against the Farm Laws, including a nationwide road blockade on November 3, farmers unions in Punjab and Haryana call for a 'Delhi Chalo' movement. The Delhi police reject the request of farmers to march to Delhi because of COVID restrictions.
- **November 26, 2020**: Farmers marching towards Delhi faced water cannons and tear gas as the police try to disperse them from Haryana's Ambala district. Later, the police allow them to enter Delhi for their peaceful protest at Nirankari ground in North-West Delhi.
- **November 27, 2020**: Thousands of farmers from over 30 organizations, including the BKU stage a protest at the Delhi-Ghaziabad border that is between Uttar Pradesh and Delhi.
- **November 28, 2020**: Amit Shah, Home Minister and one of the most powerful leaders of the BJP, offers to hold talks with farmers as soon as they vacate the Delhi borders and move to the designated protest site in Burari, a village near the border between Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. However, farmers reject his offer, demanding to hold the protest at Jantar Mantar near Delhi's Parliament, instead.
- **November 30, 2020**: Modi resists calls to repeal the Farm Laws, dismissing as misplaced fears that the government will eventually abolish the wholesale markets.
- **December 3, 2020**: Talks led by the Agriculture Minister on the government side and farmers' heads of unions, are inconclusive.

- **December 5, 2020**: A second round of talks is held, which also remains inconclusive.
- **December 8, 2020**: Farmers call for "Bharat Bandh" (national strike). Farmers from other states support the call. Leaders of various political parties are confined to their houses, including Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kherjwal of the Aam Aadmi Party, who openly supports the farmers' demand to roll back the Farm Laws. The latter is confined by Delhi police who comes under the direct rule of Modi's government.
- **December 9, 2020**: Farmers' leaders reject the Union government's proposal to amend the Farm Laws and vow to intensify their protests until the Farm Laws are repealed.
- **December 11, 2020**: The BKU makes a case against the Farm Laws at the Supreme Court.
- **December 16, 2020**: A 65-year old Sikh priest commits suicide at one of the protest sites.
- **December 21, 2020**: Farmers' leaders begin a 24-hour relay hunger strike, and report that more than 30 protesters camping out in the open on key national highways have died due to the cold temperature of below 4 degrees celsius.
- **December 30, 2020**: The sixth round talks between government and farmer leaders makes some headway as the Center agrees to exempt farmers from stubble burning penalty and drops changes in the Electricity Amendment Bill 2020.
- **January 4, 2021**:The seventh round of talks between government and farmer leaders remains inconclusive as the Center refuses to repeal the Farm Laws.
- **January 7, 2021**: The Supreme Court agrees to hear the petitions of the BKU challenging the new laws, and those against the protest on January 11.

- **January 12, 2021**: The Supreme Court orders an indefinite stay on the implementation of the Farm Laws, and sets up a four-member committee to make recommendations on the legislations after listening to all the stakeholders.
- **January 26, 2021**: On the Republic day of India, farmers overwhelm police and drive through road blocks and barricades into Delhi's historic Red Fort complex, during a tractor parade called by farmer unions. Police fire tear gas in an unsuccessful attempt to keep the farmers back. One protester is killed and Delhi police report that 86 officers have been injured across the city.
- **January 28, 2021**: Tensions rise at the Delhi-Ghazipur border, after the administration in neighboring Ghaziabad district of Uttar Pradesh issues orders for the protesting farmers to vacate the protest site by night. The police in anti-riot gear start to spread out at the site where the BKU's leader Rakesh Tikait was camping, but protesters refuse to leave.
- **February 2, 2021**: The Indian government slams comments made by "celebrities and others" in support of the farmers' protests, and called them inaccurate and irresponsible.
- **February 6, 2021**: Protesting farmers hold a nationwide "Chakka Jam" (road blockade) for three hours from 12 pm to 3 pm. Several roads in Punjab and Haryana have been blocked during that time, but elsewhere in the country there is a scattered response.
- **February 15, 2021**: Politicians and activists condemn the arrest of Disha Ravi, a 22-year old climate campaigner, accused of helping edit an online document that Greta Thunberg had promoted in support of protesting farmers. She is granted bail a week later, as the court finds there is scanty evidence against her.

- **February 18, 2021**: The SKM, the umbrella body of farmer unions spearheading the protests, calls for a "rail roko" (block railway tracks). Trains are stopped, cancelled or rerouted, but a spokesperson for the national transporter says the blockade has had minimal impact on railway services.
- **March 05, 2021**: The Punjab Vidhan Sabha (State Legislative Assembly) passes a resolution asking for the unconditional withdrawal of the Farm Laws in the interest of the farmers and Punjab, and to continue with the existing MSP-based government system of procurement for foodgrains.
- **April 15, 2021**: Haryana's Deputy Chief Minister, Dushyant Chautala, writes to Prime Minister Modi asking for the resumption of talks with the farmers who are protesting at the Delhi borders.
- **May 27, 2021**: Farmers observe a "black day" to mark six months of the protest, and burn effigies of the government. They reiterate they will only call off the protest when the Farm Laws are repealed.
- **July 22, 2021**: Farmers start sit-in at Jantar Mantar, renewing a push for the repeal of the Farm Laws.
- **August 7, 2021**: Leaders of 14 opposition parties visit a select group of farmers at Jantar Mantar who are holding a farmers' parliament since July 2021 to mark seven months of the protests at Delhi's border points against the Farm Laws.

- **September 5, 2021**: More than 500,000 farmers gather in Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh, the biggest rally in the month-long protests. The farmers announce their plan to campaign against the ruling party in the state.
- **November 19, 2021**: Modi announces that he will repeal the Farm Laws. This puts an end to the protest.