

Economics
Webinar
Series
2021



SOUTH ASIAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS

Webinar

Who decides Development?
Politics of Land Acquisition and Democratic Activism

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Date: November 16, 2021
(Tuesday), 3.00 pm

Meet id: meet.google.com/nms-azgz-adh

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a theoretical analysis of civil society activism and development. In a one period static model, the Government of a backward region attempts to acquire land for a development project in exchange for compensation to the land owners. Citizen-activists observe a noisy signal about the size of unwilling land losers being evicted forcefully. Ideological activists protest against the violation of democratic rights whenever the number of unwilling land losers exceed their tolerable size. Strategic participation of non-ideological protesters give rise to a coordination problem. We find an increasing role of ideological activism to have a positive welfare effect on raising the compensation for the land losers but a negative effect on the chances of the project's success. These results are strengthened in a broader framework with a general protest function. Politicization of the issue sees campaign only by the Incumbent when dislodging the project by protests is difficult. In our protest model built using Global Games, ideological activism is the sole determinant of development in a noiseless economy.