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**Shifting Interest Regimes of the Working Classes in Latin America**

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## Shifting Interest Regimes of the Working Classes in Latin America

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The transition from state-led to marketizing economic models implemented throughout Latin America in the last two decades has restructured labor markets and induced fundamental changes in the world of work.<sup>1</sup> The resultant dislocation has hit the lower classes particularly hard, as evinced by widening inequality and the stubbornness of poverty levels despite some renewed growth following the “lost decade” of stagnation in the 1980s. The transition has also profoundly altered the infrastructure of popular-sector<sup>2</sup> political representation, the institutions through which the working classes participate in politics and by which their interests are represented and intermediated. In a region in which the issue of popular representation has been historically problematic, the ability of the lower classes to find redress through the political system has risen to the top of the research agenda for many analysts, as indicated by a growing literature theorizing the “quality” of Latin American democracies. This line of inquiry requires an analysis of change within the institutions of popular representation, one that can provide a framework for assessing variation among new institutional configurations and contrast them with their predecessors.

Focusing on the urban working classes in the more industrialized Latin American countries, this paper examines this shift in the “popular interest regime,” or the non-electoral institutional structures of mass representation. The shift is from an interest regime with a union-party hub to an associational interest regime. The earlier interest

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<sup>2</sup> This heterogeneous popular sector, or the lower and lower-middle working classes, comprises the majority in the more industrialized Latin American countries under investigation. It represents an aggregation of different strata that loosely share a common set of socioeconomic characteristics. As a class category, it is best understood in a Weberian rather than Marxian sense, in terms of relation to the market rather than production.

regime centered on labor unions and was based in the formal working class. Though the emphasis is on the non-electoral structures of interest representation, this earlier interest regime is labeled the union-party hub to reflect the fact that unions were often organizationally integrated into—and penetrated by—political parties. The new interest regime centers on urban associationalism and is based in a more diverse popular sector, including the growing informal working class, which now constitutes about half of the urban labor force in Latin America. While labor unions used to be the principal vehicle for popular representation, they are now only one of a large array of organizations in the emergent associational interest regime. The present analysis of the new interest regime primarily examines this broader set of urban organizations, which will be called “popular associations” to refer to non-union organizations by, of, or for the popular sector, or lower classes.<sup>3</sup>

The interest regime is constituted by “political” organizations, understood in a particular sense. The literature on interest groups has tended to limit its purview to those organizations that interact with, petition, and make claims on the state to influence policy (see, e.g., Schlozman 2001). The present approach is different, taking as its point of departure the changing boundary of the political. Changes in the role of the state have redrawn the public-private boundary, shifting the arena in which people seek to pursue collective interests or solve collective social problems. With important economic and social policies no longer under state coordination, people unable to find solutions privately in the market can seek them collectively through cooperation and the pooling of effort and resources. Associations have, as Verba et al. put it, “functional overlap” with public institutions in that they address collective problems that “are also undertaken by governments [in Latin America] and abroad.” It is in that sense that they are political--or potentially or post-political.

The analysis is limited to organizations which primarily address material concerns: unions, for the earlier interest regime and (despite unions’ continuing though debilitated presence) non-union urban associations in the emergent regime, such as neighborhood associations, communal kitchens, rotating credit associations, “NGOs” providing social services to popular sector constituencies or organizational support to other associations, organizations of street vendors, and many others. Though some analysts emphasize the rise of “post-materialist” values (Inglehart 1997; Kitschelt 1994), material issues remain at the core of popular concerns outside of the advanced economies. Associations oriented toward non-material issues primarily draw participants from the middle class, organizing around issues generally associated with “new social movements” such as women’s rights, broad environmental issues, gay rights, and human rights. The preponderance of popular-sector associations is oriented toward a focus on material issues, especially as democratic transitions grow more distant while the region’s macroeconomic crises continue and as growth, when it occurs, accrues mostly to the wealthy and does little to alleviate poverty. Of course, popular associations oriented toward material issues may also pursue rights-based agendas. For instance, many

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<sup>3</sup> The universe of associations under consideration thus does not extend to associations geared toward the public interest at large rather than the popular sectors in particular, such as watchdog groups aiming to generally improve government accountability (Peruzzotti and Smulovitz 2000).

materially-oriented popular associations, such as neighborhood associations, participated in the anti-authoritarian mobilizations of the third wave.

The analysis lays out four dimensions on which to compare the union-LBP hub and the associational interest regime and assess variation in the latter: (a) ease of *formation* of base organizations in the interest regime, (b) propensity and nature of *scaling* within the interest regime, or the vertical and horizontal coordination of base organizations, (c) *autonomy* of popular organizations—both base-level associations or higher-level organizations that coordinate their action—from other actors, and (d) *access* to national policy making of popular organizations.

To explore these four dimensions, the paper develops a framework of analysis based on two sets of factors. The first is *base organization characteristics*, the traits of unions and popular associations respectively. The second is *external actor characteristics*, specifically traits of the state and political parties. Both sets of factors shape the ease of formation and scaling. The second set of factors is particularly important for autonomy and access.

After a brief overview of the shift in interest regime, the paper first examines the logic of collective action underlying unions and popular associations, laying out a set of base organization traits and state characteristics that facilitate or hinder formation (primary collective action) and scaling (secondary collective action). The analysis draws a general contrast between unions and associations: unions tend to have difficulties with formation but success in scaling, while associations form easily but face difficulties in scaling. This contrast points to a major difference between the union-LBP hub and the associational interest regime. The analysis then examines autonomy and access, focusing on the influence of states and parties. Due to extensive state regulation and institutionalized party affiliation, unions faced substantial limits on autonomy under the union-LBP hub, but were often able to gain a degree of access to national policy making. Less regulated by the state and not so closely tied to parties, associations do not face such a steep trade off between access and autonomy. However, even in the absence of regulation, the state may more subtly shape the agenda and behavior of many associations, especially those that participate in government programs. The framework developed here is useful not only for drawing this broad contrast between the two interest regimes, but also for exploring variation within the associational interest regime.

Finally, the paper considers some implications of these tendencies within the new interest regime, suggesting that associations often have some success at distributive claim-making and/or collective self-provisioning at the local level but rarely find the institutional spaces or political access through which they can exert influence on national policy. Nevertheless, some interesting exceptions to these more general patterns can be found in different national contexts.

### **The Shift from the Union-Party Hub to the Associational Interest Regime**

The popular interest regime that characterized the middle-income countries of Latin America throughout much of the last century had at its institutional core a union-party hub. This interest regime had its roots in the early stages of industrialization, when a new proletarian class was formed, indeed "made," socially, ideologically, and

organizationally (Thompson 1963; Bartolini and Mair 1990; Katznelson 1986; Collier and Collier 1991). The growth of the proletariat gave rise to two new socio-political technologies: the labor union and the union-affiliated or labor-based political party (LBP). In Western Europe, the two emerged in tandem as part of the organizational drive of the socialist movement. Unions with links to socialist and communist parties were also established in Latin America. However, in a large subset of countries, unions were legalized under conditions that displaced these communist and socialist parties in favor of multi-class populist LBPs, founded by “middle-sector” interests, often under the leadership of office-holding incumbents, rather than by societal forces “from below” (Collier and Collier 1991). In either case, during most of the 20th century popular-sector interest regimes in Latin America centered on unions and political parties—either populist or leftist—which had important links to labor constituencies and the union movement.

Of course, only a small part of the lower classes participated in unions. Among wage earners, or proletarians, union density varied substantially, by country and sector. Further, peasants were rarely included, although Mexico and Venezuela were exceptions. More importantly for present purposes, unions did not include the urban informal working class, which grew, particularly starting in the 1950s, with rapid urbanization and the failure of late industrialization to absorb labor at rates comparable to early developers. In the cities, various types of popular associations, most notably neighborhood associations, began to proliferate, particularly in the newly settled squatter areas. Some of these neighborhood associations even became important bases of popular support for national political leaders (Collier 1976).

While these associations were certainly a part of the post-war interest regime, they were nevertheless peripheral, as the popular-sector interest regime centered on the union-LBP hub. Unionized workers became the most politically privileged, relevant, and mobilized popular-sector actor, benefiting from state attention and relatively favorable social policy, despite the fact that a restrictive labor code established a pattern of state corporatism, through which the state controlled the formation, structure, and activities of unions, and despite the fact that links to populist parties also constrained unions (Collier and Collier 1979). Although unions leveraged their political strength for particularistic gains for members, they also won broader concessions, such as subsidies on food and other basic consumption goods that had benefits across society but were particularly important to the popular sectors as a whole.

Since approximately the 1980s, the centrality of the union-LBP hub has declined, as unionization rates have fallen and the links between unions and LBPs have weakened. At the same time, associations, which had been peripheral, have proliferated and have become more central as structures through which the popular sector articulates interests and solves collective problems. The heterogeneity of types of associations is reflected in the number of labels used to refer to them: e.g., civil society organizations, social movement organizations, community organizations, grass-roots organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and advocacy groups.<sup>4</sup>

With these changes—the proliferation of popular associations, combined with the relative weakening of unions and the change in the nature of LBP linkages to unions—

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<sup>4</sup> The term “popular associations” used here embraces this associational diversity, delimiting the category not by organizational characteristics but by socio-economic constituency.

many analysts have posited a change from a system of popular interest representation in which unions were privileged to one based on associations, whether they are seen as the basis for “neopluralism,” “associative networks,” or (potentially) “polycentric development coalitions” (Oxhorn 1998; Chalmers et al. 1997; Korzeniewicz and Smith 2000). Two explanations for this change in the interest regime correspond to the two great macrosocial processes of the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the global third wave democratization and the change in the international economy. We may briefly explore the form these took in Latin America and their effects on the shift in interest regime.

In middle-income countries in Latin America, the third wave of democratization primarily took the form of transitions from military, “bureaucratic authoritarian” rule. In the large body of “transitions” analysis of the region, a recurring theme was that the mode of transition shaped the nature of post-authoritarian regimes. The resultant outcomes under investigation varied, with successor regime characteristics such as stability, military prerogatives, and an array of democratic deficits receiving particular attention. One may inquire, however, about the impact of the transitions on the interest regime, specifically on the decline of the union-LBP hub and the rise of associationalism.

The bureaucratic authoritarian regimes of Latin America were established with a primary goal of eliminating the political power of unions and LBPs, which bore the brunt of the harsh repression. The literature largely converged on a view of the transitions process as one in which authoritarian incumbents and moderate pro-democratic opposition leaders explicitly or implicitly reached understandings that protected the core interests of the incumbents: not only military immunity and prerogatives, but also a continuation of the restrictions on the power of—or even the continued exclusion of—the labor movement and left parties. The pro-democracy moderates were understood as willing to negotiate bargains at the expense of unions in order to convince the authoritarians to step down. These, then, were elite-led transitions, in which labor and LBPs were seen as playing only a minimal role.<sup>5</sup> While unions were acknowledged as often participating in an upsurge of anti-regime protest and opposition, that wave was seen as brief and followed by the “decline of the people” in transition politics.

Though widely accepted in the literature, this elite-centric conceptualization of the transition missed the significant influence of labor movements in the regime changes (Collier 1999), an influence that undercuts the argument that the mode of transition can account for the decline of the union-LBP hub. Not marginalized in the transitions, in most cases the labor movement emerged from repression to assume a key role, and in general its active involvement was more prolonged and consequential than the elite transitions framework suggests. Labor participation in the transitions had the crucial impact of expanding the scope of contestation in the successor regimes by derailing the intentions of the military incumbents to exclude any future participation of left and populist LBPs. Further, the decline of the union-LBP hub in Latin American countries that did not experience bureaucratic authoritarian regimes or experience similar transitions suggests the weakness of this explanation.

While the mode of democratic transition did not significantly weaken the union-LBP hub, democratization did have a role in stimulating the proliferation of associations. Human rights groups were often early organizers in the anti-authoritarian struggle, and

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<sup>5</sup> The seminal work, which led to a large literature following the same basic structure of argumentation, was O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986).

these often included groups organized in popular neighborhoods, especially since the lower classes often bore the brunt of the military repression. While this type of rights-based activism diminished after the transition, it was an important part of the more general upsurge in associationalism (Foweraker 2001), supported both by transnational advocacy groups and official sources of foreign aid (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

Nevertheless, a more important explanation for the shift in interest regime can be found in the way changes in the international economy reverberated in Latin America. Specifically, the region undertook a dramatic change in economic model from import substitution (ISI) to neoliberalism, that is, from a protected, state-led economy to an internationally open, market-oriented economy. The new model has fundamentally changed the social structural base of politics, challenged unions, encouraged other kinds of popular sector organizing, and affected party linkages to society.

Widespread privatization of state firms, the restructuring of private firms, and state reform have resulted in large layoffs of the formally employed. The relative growth of formal wage earners that marked the ISI era has thereby been followed by their relative decline or stagnation. Portes and Hoffman (2003: 49) report that whereas between 1950 and 1980 the public sector had accounted for 15 percent of total job growth across Latin America, more recently it has actually shrunk; and whereas large and medium firms in the modern sector had contributed an additional 45 percent of total job growth, that sector's share of employment creation has been reduced to 20 percent.<sup>6</sup> The effects of these changes in formal employment have hit unions especially hard. By the mid-1990s, union density had dropped almost everywhere, often precipitously, especially in those sectors where unionism had been especially strong: state firms and key manufacturing sectors. In Argentina, historically the region's most unionized economy, membership fell from 45 to 23 percent, while in Peru membership plummeted from 23 to 6 percent of the workforce. Only Brazil, which experienced a slight uptick, saw a trend in the opposite direction.<sup>7</sup> The informal economy has picked up the slack in employment generation: figures from the ILO indicate that relative informal employment increased in the 1990s (often after considerable growth in the 1980s) by roughly 6 percentage points in Argentina, 6 in Brazil, 4 in Mexico, 8 in Peru, and 12 in Venezuela.<sup>8</sup> This rise in the informal sector has provided the structural basis for an alternative form of organizing around neighborhoods and consumption.

The change in economic model as it was adopted in Latin America stimulated the rise of popular-sector associationalism in other ways as well. The neoliberal era has been crisis prone, and many countries have experienced periods of declining real wages as well as increasing poverty, or at best a halt to its downward trend. Popular-sector organizing around "subsistence" issues, which received an initial impetus from the debt crisis of the 1980s, has been sustained as a way of coping in the face of on-going hardship, and various types of survival associations, such as those providing food, have proliferated in popular neighborhoods. In addition, neoliberal social policies adopted in some countries have relied on associational partners in civil society as a mechanism for implementation. The reduced role of the state has also been a factor in that many associations have been

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<sup>6</sup> Portes and Hoffman (2003: 55) show Argentina as an exception, but the data pre-date the 2001 crisis

<sup>7</sup> In Chile, the 1990s saw some recovery from an earlier steep decline. These figures are taken from a database compiled by Kenneth Roberts, who used data from the ILO and other sources.

<sup>8</sup> ILO *Key Indicators of the Labor Market, 2001-2002*. Differences in informal employment reflect changes from either 1990-1997 or 1990-1998, depending on when data was last available.



formed as self-help or self-provisioning groups to supply goods and services in areas where the state has withdrawn or will not commit sufficient resources.

Parallel changes have occurred in the party arena in response to the new economic environment. As has been widely noted, many governing LBPs have adopted—indeed, initiated—neoliberal policies that contravene the interests of unionized workers. This programmatic reorientation has been accompanied by coalitional adjustment as LBPs have ceased to rely on unions as their core base of support and have restructured their constituencies, turning increasingly away from unionized workers and toward informal workers (Collier 1992; Levitsky 2003; Levitsky and Burgess 2003). The day of the classic mass party that drew its core support and mobilizing strategy from union organization has been eclipsed.

### **Formation and Scaling: Comparative Logics of Collective Action**

This paper makes some preliminary steps toward theorizing the political and representational implications of this shift in the popular interest regime. The associational world is both heterogeneous and still emergent, posing a steep challenge for description and theorizing. The diversity of organizations makes it difficult to conceptualize popular associations as an organizational category and the associational interest regime as a coherent “system” of interest representation. Moreover, dynamics within the associational world are sensitive to economic policy and the level of political decentralization which may be in flux in some countries. Bearing in mind these heterogeneous and emergent qualities, it is nevertheless possible to lay out an analytic framework for both drawing some key contrasts between the emergent interest regime and its predecessor and assessing variation within the associational world.

A first task in comparing the union-LBP hub and the associational interest regime and assessing variation within the latter is to understand the ease of organizational formation and the extent of organizational scaling. The ease of formation of base organizations gives some sense of the potential density of popular organizations, although, of course, in fact variation across cases is substantial. An examination of scaling offers insights into how and whether popular sector collective actors are able to leverage their greatest asset, their numbers, and coordinate their actions. Traits of both base organizations and external actors can facilitate or hinder formation and scaling.

For the purposes of theorizing these dynamics, it is useful to adopt the idea of logics of collective action underlying the behavior of different groups. Olson’s original formulation of collective action problems included an analysis of unions (Olson 1965). Subsequent research has drawn a distinction between those organizational challenges faced by capitalists and those faced by the working class in industrial societies. In this vein, scholars have stressed both the more onerous problems of collective action faced by labor compared to capital (Offe and Wiesenthal 1980) and the further asymmetry that the market mechanism provides a degree of coordination that mitigates the need for concerted collective action among capitalists, especially regarding the application of sanctions (Lindblom 1982).

Scholars have since further disaggregated the capitalist side of this dichotomy, positing that differences in sector (Streeck 1990; Bowman 1989) and size of enterprise

(Shadlen 2003) lead to distinct logics of collective action. Analyses have also pointed to the relative strengths or weaknesses of working-class groups, differentiating them according to their structural and associational power (Wright 2000, p. 962; see also Silver 2003: p. 13), for example, size of plant, isolated enclaves, competitive v. non-competitive sectors, skill levels, craft v. industrial organizations.

These analyses, rooted primarily in the experiences of early developers, are oriented toward wage-earners and do not consider what in Latin America is now the larger group among the working classes: informal workers, who are more likely to pursue “class” or material interests through consumptionist rather than productionist organizations. It is this distinction, between unions and non-union associations, that provides the first cut in the present attempt to systematically differentiate the logic of collective action underlying the earlier and emergent interest regime. On this basis, we can better compare the interest regimes themselves, although it should be reiterated that the goal is not just to draw a general contrast, but also, in specifying the variables underlying this comparison, to establish a framework for assessing variation among the base units within each regime.

Two types of collective action problems may be distinguished, corresponding to the two interest regime dimensions analyzed here. The first is collective action among individuals to form base-level organizations, termed here *primary collective action*. The second is collective action among organizations with compatible interests and agendas, which can be called *secondary collective action*.<sup>9</sup> How do interest associations scale or act in concert in terms of either the routinized horizontal coordination of activities or the vertical formation of superordinate con/federations, fronts, or coordinating structures? The distinction between primary and secondary collective action is similar to a distinction between collective action by individuals and that by organizations, a distinction also utilized by Schneider (2004). It is especially important to this discussion because it bears directly on a central difference between labor unions and popular associations: labor unions tend to have significant difficulty with organizational formation but substantial ability to coordinate and scale. In contrast, the opposite usually pertains for popular associations.

This contrast rests on two sets of factors that combine to shape the logic of collective action of unions and popular associations. First are three organizational characteristics: (a) resources: constituency participation and finances, (b) ideational cohesion: shared interests and collective identity within and between base organizations, and (c) the nature of demands: the degree to which they are fulfillable in the near term and their disaggregability. Second are three general dimensions of the state that may facilitate or hinder primary and secondary collective action: (a) regulatory factors, (b) the ambit of state policy, and (c) the level of decentralization. While organizational characteristics and state variables are to some degree interrelated, separating the two and assessing each in turn allows for greater analytic clarity.

In drawing a contrast between unions and associations and therein positing an associational logic of collective action for each, the argument necessarily “lumps” heterogeneous organizations under the same rubric. However, these variables can also be used to better understand differences among associations, especially regarding patterns of

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<sup>9</sup> This distinction has not been drawn in much of the literature on collective action. For instance, while Offe and Wiesenthal discuss both the formation and growth of individual unions, they do not distinguish the latter from the problem of coordination and scaling among unions.

success and failure at secondary collective action. Perhaps more importantly, this lumping fails to explicitly recognize the advantage that heterogeneity may constitute, at least to some extent, a beneficial division of labor that may help solve secondary collective action problems. For example, some associations may fund others, some may serve primarily as coordinators and information distributors, and some may be primarily involved with their own day-to-day activities but reap the advantages of these relationships.

The following argument does not claim a universal logic of collective action for popular associations across all nations. Rather, it should be understood to apply to democratic countries that allow for substantially free formation of associations and exhibit certain social-structural characteristics—high levels of inequality, informality, and poverty—common but not exclusive to Latin America. In this context, the constituency of popular associations is resource-poor groups desiring to advance discrete material demands or to serve material needs.

**Table 1: Organizational Differences and Implications for Collective Action**

Variables		Unions	Associations	Advantages in:	
				Formation (Primary)	Scaling (Secondary)
Resources	Constituency Participation	Legally sanctioned formal membership	Varies, but generally not formal membership	Unions: - Assoc: +	Unions: + Assoc: -
	Finances	Significant; future level of resources relatively clear; self-funded	Varies, but rarely <i>both</i> significant and self-funded	Unions: - Assoc: +	Unions: + Assoc: -
Ideational Cohesion	Shared Interests	Varies but generally moderate within, significant across unions	Significant within associations, low across	Unions: - Assoc: +	Unions: + Assoc: -
	Collective Identity	Significant within and across unions	Varies within, low across associations	Unions: + Assoc: ?	Unions: + Assoc: -
Nature of Demands	Disaggregability of Policy Areas	Varies, but often non-disaggregable	Generally disaggregable	Unions: - Assoc: +	Unions: + Assoc: -
	Feasibility	Generally feasible, concrete, material demands despite some historic orientation toward socialism	Generally feasible, concrete, material demands	Unions: + Assoc: +	Unions: +/- Assoc: -

*Organizational Resources*

Labor unions and popular associations are quite distinct types of organizations in terms of the resources at their command. Two differences are the type of constituency participation and the type of financing of base-level organizations. Labor unions and popular associations differ significantly in the relationships they have to constituents. Unions have formal members, usually drawn from a delimited group of individuals who are employed in similar circumstances. Membership is strictly defined, and the rights and responsibilities of members are clearly delineated. In many instances, the government legally mandates that this membership be compulsory for all employees in a given workplace; such labor code regulations historically have been among the most salient inducements offered to the labor movement by the state.

Popular associations exhibit considerably more variation than unions in the nature of constituency participation, but rarely do they have formal members. Exceptions of course exist, such as some associations of street vendors (Roever 2005). In most cases, however, it is probably a misnomer to speak of membership at all. Rather, these associations have participants, whose involvement is voluntary and often intermittent. Finally, for many associations in Latin America, particularly NGOs that provide services, the participants are primarily staff, who are quite distinct from constituents, who are clients or beneficiaries.

Formal membership, with its attendant participation and financial commitments, generally hinders the formation of new unions, or primary collective action. In contrast, the more flexible models of participation that characterize most popular associations tend to facilitate associational formation. Attracting participants is easier if demands on them are not so clearly defined or can be tailored to fit their level of enthusiasm. The inverse relationship holds regarding the way this organizational characteristic affects the ability of organizations to scale, or secondary collective action. Formal membership facilitates cooperation and scaling among unions, as leaders are able to pursue long-term strategic goals that may impose short-term costs without fear of defection. Popular associations that rely on constituent participation tend to find scaling more difficult. The long term planning and investments of time and resources necessary for collective action among associations may cause individual participants with more immediate goals to lose interest.

Partly as a result of their formal memberships, unions also tend to have larger and more predictable resource pools at their disposal than associations, although significant variation can again be found among associations. Union dues provide predictable funding for day-to-day operations, professional staff, and long-term budgetary and strategic planning. Associations are less likely to have ample resource pools and the ability to make long-term budgetary forecasts. Grass-roots or community associations tend to have less capacity to extract resources from what are usually poorer participants. Although most associations (68 percent in the CIRELA survey) are at least partially self-funded, many also rely on outside sources of funding, such as the state (30 percent), other domestic associations (17 percent), international associations (12 percent) and religious organizations (8 percent).<sup>10</sup> This grant-based funding can vary greatly along multiple

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<sup>10</sup> Comparative Infrastructure of Representation in Latin America (CIRELA) is a comparative research project examining patterns of political participation and representation in Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Venezuela. Findings reported here are based on the survey of popular associations in eight popular districts of the capital city in each

dimensions, including the overall level of funding and the degree to which funding is secured in advance. Some popular associations may be amply funded and enter into medium- to long-term funding relationships with a given donor; but even then the necessity of renewing the grant puts some limit on associations' capacity to make plans well into the future. Much more commonly, popular associations struggle, or may even compete, to ensure funding in advance or find funding at all.

The means by which unions extract resources and budget can hinder primary collective action but aid in secondary collective action among labor organizations. Conversely, the negligible cost of participating tends to facilitate associational formation but the scant resources and inability to make stable budget forecasts of many associations tend to hinder scaling and cooperation.

### *Ideational Cohesion*

While differences in organizational resources can provide substantial leverage concerning the logics of collective action of labor unions and popular associations, ideational factors must also be considered. Both primary and secondary collective action tend to be facilitated when actors have common goals and beliefs. While these ideational factors, particularly more formally stated ideologies or "isms" (including not only Marxism and Communism but also peronismo and chavismo), are at least in part externally generated, it is useful to analyze them as characteristics of the base-units that shape the logic of collective action. An important point made by Offe and Wiesenthal in their discussion of collective action among workers and capital can be used to frame the discussion of these ideational variables. In their exposition of the classic labor-capital dichotomy, they posit that labor faces a problem of interest heterogeneity greater than that of capital, which, following Olson, they attribute primarily to the greater number of individual participants. Offe and Wiesenthal's answer is that a collective identity must be constructed to overcome the interest heterogeneity among workers, a somewhat paradoxical dynamic in which "interests can only be met to the extent that they are partly redefined" (Offe and Wiesenthal 1980: 81). It thus may be useful to consider interest heterogeneity and the strength of collective identity as two dimensions of ideational cohesion.

Individual associations tend to exhibit less interest heterogeneity among members than individual unions, but the aggregated associational world covers a more heterogeneous set of interests than unions. Consequently, interest heterogeneity tends to pose more of a problem for primary collective action by unions, but is more of a hurdle for secondary collective action by associations. Associations attract participants who have specific interests in common—e.g., neighbors may participate in neighborhood associations for specific infrastructural projects, or vendors may cooperate to secure

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country.. Since conducting a random sample of popular associations was not possible, a chain-referral sampling technique was employed in a way that yielded three snowballs samples in each district, or about 240 associations in the sample in each capital. While one must interpret descriptive statistics based on such a sample with caution, the survey represents some the broadest large-N research to date on popular associations. Reliance on participant contributions in a recent survey ranged from 74 percent in Chile to 70 percent in Argentina to 65 percent in Peru to 62 percent in Venezuela. The survey found that 40 percent of associations in Argentina received some kind of state funding, 33 percent in Chile, 27 percent in Venezuela, and 19 percent in Peru.

space on the streets when its use is threatened. Further, this commonality of interest within associations is reinforced by the fact that participation is voluntary and membership not institutionalized, so that barriers to exit are low, and dissidents or participants with divergent views can simply leave the organization. These traits tend to facilitate primary collective action of a given association.

Interest heterogeneity is likely to be somewhat greater within labor unions since union membership is either legally or contractually compulsory and there are usually no easy exit options. As a result, unions tend to be more difficult to form and/or some participants will be disgruntled or at odds with the direction or strategy of the organization. Of course, union organization itself serves an important homogenizing function. In a free labor market, workers compete against one another, driving wages down and making interest heterogeneity endemic to proletarian existence. Unions partially solve this problem of inter-worker competition, and to some extent homogenize the interests of members. But this effect ameliorates a problem that associations do not have to begin with. On the whole then, greater interest heterogeneity within individual unions creates more significant problems of primary collective action when compared to associations.<sup>11</sup>

By contrast, interest heterogeneity is likely to be greater across associations than across unions, making secondary collective action more difficult for associations. The union movement embraces a restricted subgroup of the popular sector, while the set of associations is potentially all-encompassing. The work situations of participants in associations vary widely. While most are in the informal sector, others are formal workers or are openly unemployed, having been laid off from formal work. Further, even informal workers are a diverse category, sometimes explicitly defined as including wage earners, microentrepreneurs who hire them, domestic workers, and the self-employed. These participants do not share a common target of work-related grievances like members of labor unions. Indeed, most associations have nothing to do with relations of production at all, but focus on a great variety of consumptionist issues. Interest heterogeneity among unions, particularly among those within a given economic sector, is not likely to be so great. Even across sectors, unions tend to have common interests in many macro-level policies, such as those that protect jobs, set minimum wages as a benchmark, and regulate individual contracts and collective rights. And even when union interests differ by sector, the most important of these sectoral unions are generally large and cohesive enough to scale and often to win bargaining rights at the national-level.

The second aspect of ideational cohesion is group identity among participants, which, as Offe and Wiesenthal note, may mitigate problems of interest heterogeneity. Unions might be seen as drawing on two sources of identity. The first is the highly elaborated ideology of the Marxist or quasi-Marxist, which has a long history in unionism in Latin America and which, at least to some degree, has historically imparted a class identity among unionized workers. In addition, the affiliation of unions to LBPs, through institutionalized organizational links, interlocking leadership, or a history of collaboration, has often given unionized workers a common partisan identity. Moreover, until the current period political parties could be arrayed on a left-right programmatic continuum,

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<sup>11</sup> In highlighting the union-association contrast, the present analysis overlooks substantial variation within each category. The greater homogeneity of interests of some workers and its facilitation of union formation, such as those in isolated enclaves (as in mining), has been a well-recognized example.

and political battles occurred along that materialist cleavage. Hence, ideology and party identification reinforced or constructed an ideational commonality across base-level unions. Overall, this relative cohesion across labor organizations facilitates secondary collective action of scaling and cooperation.

While it is difficult to generalize about collective identity within associations, across them collective identity is generally weak, hindering secondary collective action. Many observers have seen in the associational world a common discourse of rights and grassroots, participatory democracy. A substantive tenet is an aversion to hierarchy and bureaucracy, making certain kinds of institutionalized vertical arrangements for collective action among associations less likely. Nor does a vague, even if salient, ideological mooring amount to a strong and cohesive collective identity. While Offe and Wiesensthal offer an important insight by noting that collective identity can help overcome the problem of interest heterogeneity, such an identity may not be readily available when interests are as fragmented as they are in the associational world. The concept of the popular sector denotes a group that shares a relative position in the market, but which aggregates a range of lower socio-economic strata and positions regarding employment. The informal sector, popular sector, and the working classes are not just concepts that bedevil social scientists, but also lived realities, experiential fuzzy sets. If scholars have so much trouble determining who is in and who is out, then it is no wonder that a sense of commonality may be difficult to construct on the ground (Peattie 1987).

#### *Nature of Demands*

A final factor shaping the logic of collective action is the nature of demands central to each type of organization. Most urban popular associations and unions advance concrete, material demands that are quite different from the transformative, virtually unbounded, post-material demands typical of the “new social movements.” Though the latter do make more specific “deliverable” demands, dominating their larger agenda is usually a much broader demand that is ultimately unfeasible within any reasonable time frame. Even a responsive government can only partially “satisfy” demands for peace, environmental protection, equality, or the end of nuclear proliferation. This fact can be a powerful inducement for continued organization and mobilization; indeed, responsiveness on the part of the government may be as likely to energize as demobilize such movements and sustain them over time. Such transformative and long-term orientations also provide a common, salient goal that subsumes the many immediate, concrete demands made by individual associations, thereby uniting the larger network and facilitating secondary collective action. The opposite dynamic is more likely to hold for unions and, especially, for popular associations. While the prevailing orientation of unions has been economism, with a focus on demands, such as wage increases, that are immediate and feasible in principle (even when not politically), some unions have had a long-term socialist or redistributive vision, that may to some degree offer a continuing incentive for secondary collective action. For popular associations, most demands are immediate and fulfillable, such as food subsidies, works programs, urban services, infrastructure investments, or land titles. Evidence among popular neighborhood associations suggests that having these demands fulfilled is more likely to demobilize than energize associations (Dosh 2004).

A related point concerns whether demands are directed toward policies that are easy or difficult to disaggregate in terms of constituencies, or the degree to which demands are for targetable or excludable goods. The above examples of associational demands can be disaggregated, in the sense that a government response can be targeted to one association and withheld from another. Lowi (1964) insightfully argued that policies that lend themselves to disaggregation display different patterns of group contestation and are played out in different political arenas, or through different policy processes, than those not easily subdivided. A fundamental observation was that different types of actors are the “primary political units” in each policy arena—peak associations weigh in on redistributive issues, coalitions of more discrete interest groups tend to contest regulatory policy, and individuals, firms, or small interest groups operate in the distributive arena of disaggregable policy. This “fit” between interest groups and policy type helps us understand the differing logic of collective action of unions and popular associations.

While unions and associations may have multifaceted agendas and make a variety of demands that differ in their ease of disaggregation, it is possible to draw some general distinctions and posit some basic implications. Generally, while much union activism occurs at the plant level, key political demands of organized labor have traditionally been directed toward redistributive or regulatory policy areas that are not easily disaggregated—for example, labor market regulation, legal provisions that regulate unions and their activities, policies toward the public sector and heavily unionized private firms, and macroeconomic policy. This non-disaggregability may provide slight discouragement for primary collective action but greatly increases incentives for secondary collective action.

By contrast, the disaggregability of the distributive policies typical of associational demand making provides an incentive to primary collective action by associations, since success is more likely when the response is cheap (as it is when targeted), and would-be participants are more likely to join an effort that promises to reap quick rewards. However, the piecemeal, even discretionary response to these demands—a sidewalk here, a health clinic there—is conducive to clientelism and cooptation and discourages the establishment of on-going, institutionalized relations of cooperation among associations that are crucial to secondary collective action. Some associations may, of course, have a larger—and national—political agenda, for example, health and education policies, active labor market policies, poverty relief, and tax and redistributive policies. However, most associations focus on disaggregable demands, and the fact that core demands can be satisfied individually lowers the incentives for cooperation and scaling. Precisely because it is cheaper and hence more easily fulfillable, associations may have an incentive to demand a particular subsidy or distribution for just one neighborhood, than to present the demand as a form of “entitlement” for all similar neighborhoods.

### *Impact of the State*

Characteristics of the state provide complex sets of incentives and obstacles for various forms of collective action, shaping the propensity of base organizations to form and scale. Looking at these state characteristics is important for fleshing out the logic of collective action of unions and popular associations and for better contrasting the union-LBP hub and the associational interest regime, since they developed alongside very



different types of state structures. The union-LBP hub generally emerged in tandem with an interventionist state fostering industrialization through policies of import substitution, while the associational interest regime has emerged alongside a leaner neoliberal state that has retreated from many policy areas, ceding control to private actors. Three state dimensions may be distinguished and analyzed regarding their effects on the collective action of popular organizations: state regulation of popular organizations, the ambit of state policy making, and the level of decentralization of the state.

The ISI and neoliberal states took very different approaches to regulating popular organizations, with the former generally producing a substantial body of labor law to regulate the activities of unions and the latter adopting a “pluralist” approach to associations, often marked only by minimal registration opportunities. Accordingly, a general contrast between the union-LBP hub and the associational interest regime can be drawn in terms of the effects of regulation on both primary and secondary collective action.

**Table 2: Effects of States on Primary and Secondary Collective Action**

Variables		ISI State	Effect on Unions	Neoliberal State	Effect on Associations
<b>Regulations on Popular Organizations</b>		High	Formation: +/- Scaling: +	Low	Formation: 0 Scaling: 0
<b>State Reform</b>	<b>Ambit of State Policy</b>	Broad	Formation: + Scaling: +	Narrow	Formation: + Scaling: -
	<b>Decentralization</b>	Centralized	Formation: 0 Scaling: +	Decentralized	Formation: + Scaling: -

During the ISI period, Latin American states extensively regulated unions in a pattern widely analyzed as state corporatism (Schmitter 1971, 1974; Erickson 1977; Stepan 1978; Collier and Collier 1979). State regulation had contradictory effects on primary collective action among unions. Regulations such as minimum membership requirements or monopoly representation often made the formation of opposition unions difficult by presenting barriers to entry. However, in some instances regulatory provisions that amounted to a form of compulsory membership had the effect of virtually mandating the formation of unions in specific sectors. Taken together, these contradictory effects often created situations in which regulation induced or allowed the formation of a group of unions that were legally recognized and hence legitimized as political actors, but subsequent union formation, especially of dissident or alternative unions competing for the same members, was highly restricted, a restriction that was, however, a

benefit to the institutionalization of existing unions. Regulations affecting scaling varied across countries and over time, with Chile, for instance, historically allowing only plant-level bargaining except for the Allende period. More typically, however, Latin American countries granted official recognition and bargaining rights to federations at the national level.

In comparison, the neoliberal state does little to regulate associations, creating a pluralist environment that does not impede organizational formation but does not provide strong incentives for scaling. Registration with the state for the purposes of legal recognition is fairly common among popular associations, although often voluntary. It may be required for associations participating in or serving in the implementation of government social programs, as may additional forms of regulation. Overall, however, and in comparison with unions, the associational world seems to be relatively free of regulation. State-based barriers to entry are therefore low, but regulations that might facilitate scaling are also generally absent.

Most Latin American states have undergone extensive state reform over the last twenty years, two important aspects of which are the contraction of the state's ambit of policy making as it retreats from areas in which it previously intervened and the decentralization of authority over many policy areas from national to local levels. Both have important consequences for primary and secondary collective action by popular organizations.

The union-LBP hub predominated under a particular state-led economic model, import substitution (ISI), one that in its broad ambit of centralized policy making had important implications for the formation and scaling of unions. ISI was characterized by a large public sector (including state-owned firms as well as a state bureaucracy that were important sources of employment), the promotion of national industry, and a kind of Fordist regulation of the economy (Lipietz 1987) that both promoted production on the supply side and undertook policies that sustained aggregate demand. The demand-side logic of this inward growth model made room for the state to adopt national level policies that would help solve collective action problems of both workers and employers and reduce competition between as well as within those classes. Pro-union and pro-worker policies—rigidities in the labor market, minimum wages and rising wages in line with productivity gains, subsidies on basic consumption items, and health care and pensions—increased aggregate demand for national producers in settings where small markets were often limiting. The degree to which these policies were put in place varied according to the configuration of political coalitions, their institutionalization in party systems, and the resulting political dynamics. Nevertheless, they constituted an extremely broad ambit of state policy, which was centralized at the national level, in which workers had a direct interest, and which provided a salient target for demand making. In this manner, as well as in the way ISI provided the leeway for certain relatively pro-union policies and a certain degree of class compromise, the ISI state provided incentives for union formation and scaling.

Under the neoliberal economic model, Latin American states have retreated from many areas of policy intervention, leaving more to market mechanisms. State withdrawal from policy areas, through the privatization of state firms and pension systems or the elimination of subsidies, can depoliticize them, removing them from the arena of political contestation and shifting them to the arena of market competition and provision. Kurtz

(2004) has demonstrated how the change of economic model has depoliticized and disorganized the rural popular sector in this fashion. Overall, however, the urban sector has not been as dramatically affected. While the state has withdrawn from many production-oriented policy areas, it remains heavily involved in distributive policies relevant to popular sector constituencies in urban areas, such as the provision of certain consumption goods and social services for the informal sector. Further, the state has increasingly embraced partnerships with private associations for the implementation of these services. Thus, while the narrowing of state policy to some extent discourages political organization, this effect has been counteracted among the urban popular sector, first by the ongoing presence of the state in policies of great importance to the informal sector, and second by the substantial incentives for association formation provided by the proliferation of the public-private partnership model. The change in the nature of state policies does not encourage scaling to the same extent.

In the last twenty years, most Latin American states have also undergone a process of decentralization, as governments have devolved programmatic initiatives and budgetary control of various policies to lower levels. The devolution of social and neighborhood services, around which popular associations are most likely to make demands, has been especially prevalent. The result has often been greater responsiveness to grass-roots demands, providing incentives for the formation of popular associations, although experiments with “deepening democracy” have varied substantially.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, with greater attention focused at lower levels of government regarding immediate demands, incentives for scaling and national coordination are usually reduced. Some major distributional programs do remain centralized at the national level, which may provide some incentive to scaling, however, only in exceptional cases, such as that of the Argentine *piqueteros*, does it appear that effective scaling around these programs beyond the municipal level has occurred.

### **Access and Autonomy: Relations to States and Parties**

While formation and scaling reveal patterns in the institutional infrastructure of the interest regime, the dimensions of access and autonomy capture important aspects of how well popular organizations are able to represent their constituencies. Access to policy makers, particularly to national-level officials, is not always desired by popular organizations or necessary for them to be effective representative bodies. Many popular organizations largely operate for the purposes of self-provisioning and do not seek access, while others target claims toward local level officials, who are not engaged in making macro policy. However, variation in the degree to which a popular interest regime has channels of access at the national, as well as local, level is an important characteristic. The disarticulation of the popular sectors from national policy making leaves these constituencies without influence over policy areas central to their well-being. The autonomy of popular interest organizations also affects their representative capacity. Popular organizations can win concessions for their constituents even when coopted or

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<sup>12</sup> See Roberts (1998) and Goldfrank (2002) on the failed cases of Chile and Peru and the more successful cases of Uruguay and especially Brazil, which has been particularly successful in designing local institutions of participatory budgeting that have substantially redirected local spending priorities toward popular neighborhoods.

compromised to a degree, but autonomy is an important dimension for evaluating organizations and the larger interest regime, as it reflects the relative power of grass-roots constituencies and other actors.

States and parties are the most important actors in assessing access and autonomy. Access derives from relations with state policy makers, some of whom are in the public administration but many of whom are elected, partisan actors; and autonomy is affected by traits of the state and parties, particularly the nature of state regulation and the ways in which parties forge a support base. Although the present discussion thus focuses on states and parties, it recognizes that characteristics of base organizations also influence autonomy and access. While the associational world does not exhibit strong ideational cohesion, it does have a widespread commitment to the value of autonomy. Further, because access at the national level is dependent upon scaling, those traits that facilitate or hinder scaling indirectly affect access.

The analysis explores access and autonomy in tandem because they are so often in tension with each other—autonomy tends to wane as access increases. Since state and party actors exercise gate-keeping roles, associations often face a tradeoff between access and autonomy, depending on these actors for access and modifying demands accordingly, or facing marginalization. This tradeoff varies with the level of independent sources of power possessed by popular organizations, which is often related to the capacity for coordinated collective action and mobilization. Given this tradeoff, popular organizations that value autonomy may be reluctant to pay the cost of entering into relationships with state and party actors, while others may opt for the access these relationships afford.

Like the discussion of formation and scaling, this section both draws a general contrast between the union-LBP hub and the associational interest regime and offers a means for assessing variation within and across associational interest regimes. However, rather than presenting a single framework that does “double duty” in this regard, the argument is presented in two parts. First, the union-LBP hub and the associational interest regime are broadly compared in terms of the effects of state and party characteristics on access and autonomy. The second part elaborates the heterogeneity of association-state and association-party relationships and develops some initial frameworks for assessing this variation, exploring ramifications for access and autonomy, and illuminating ways in which the access-autonomy tension is manifested in the associational interest regime.

### *Access and Autonomy: Comparing Interest Regimes*

Under the union-LBP hub, the labor movement was often able to gain institutionalized access to both state and party officials at the national level, but this access was often gained at the well-documented cost of extensive controls on autonomy. The associational interest regime is generally characterized by an inverse dynamic, with less access to policy makers and fewer overt restrictions on autonomy. Although in one form or another the trade-off is thus widespread and common across the two types of interest regimes, both display variation across cases and over time within countries, subject to the ebb and flow of national politics.

Direct regulation is the most important way the state affects the autonomy and access of popular organizations. Relationships between popular organizations and the state

within the union-LBP hub were characterized by a corporatist labor law that regulated unions in great detail through a combination of “inducements and constraints” that not only controlled unions but also provided them with certain benefits (Collier and Collier 1979). Constraints are overt controls regulating the structure of unions and their activities, while inducements are benefits that flow to some unions and legitimate them as actors but are denied to other, often dissident elements of the labor movement. Labor law created a regulated system of industrial relations, involving both a “private” space of policy making of primary importance to workers (collective bargaining) and spaces in state institutions such as conciliation and arbitration boards, labor courts, and sometimes forms of concertation, both more institutionalized and ad hoc. In these spaces of access, rights of representation were granted to recognized unions. As a result, unions had channels of institutionalized access to policy makers, even at the national level, although the institutional configurations that resulted varied across cases. The ability of unions to transform access into influence also varied widely, often dependent upon the political projects of state actors. However, by granting these rights to some unions and withholding them from others (indeed, one of the benefits to the former was monopoly rights), the state obtained substantial restrictions on union autonomy, which was thus limited by the application of both state inducements and constraints.

Relationships with labor-based political parties were often marked by a similar trade-off, with unions gaining a degree of access to policy making at the price of subordination to the party. LBPs often affiliated unions through formal organizational integration, interlocking leadership, or close coordination, though the forms of these relationships varied across countries and their implications were dependent upon the political projects of political leaders and parties.<sup>13</sup> These relationships were grounded in a basic exchange. Unions were important resources in electoral campaigns. Their allegiance helped legitimate LBPs as parties of the larger popular sector and cemented party identification. As volunteer manpower, they served as electoral “shock troops” that could mobilize the vote and provide large-scale demonstrations of public support. Since parties form governments and constitute important policy-making structures, they in turn provided a channel of access and some degree of influence for unions in politics at all levels, from municipal to national. For unions, this exchange often came at the widely analyzed price of subordination to the party. In addition, the cooptation of union leadership was widespread as leaders become more dependent on favors and career opportunities through the party than they were on the rank and file. The trade-off was particularly severe in the case of governing populist parties, but some subordination to party-electoral goals was also a feature of leftist LBPs, like the Socialist party in Chile. Nevertheless, to different degrees, these relationships afforded organized labor a vehicle for representation and offered some degree of input into major policy areas.

Compared to the union-party hub the associational interest regime is characterized by relatively few regulations on popular associations, although relationships between popular associations and states vary widely across and within cases (as will be discussed further below). The more minimal regulatory environment rarely serves to increase the

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<sup>13</sup> A clear example is the different balance of power between the labor movement and the central party organization can be seen in the contrast between what Collier and Collier (1991) call the incorporation and post-incorporation periods, when the political goals and strategies of party leaders were quite different. In the former, unions had substantial clout in the party; in the latter they were often subordinated to party control.

access of some associations to national policy-makers by legitimating them as representative actors operating within official or quasi-official structures of concertation. In some cases, such as Brazil, attempts have been made to incorporate associations into decision making by mandating their participation on policy councils. While this template may be diffusing to other Latin American countries, it is not yet widespread, and its ability to deliver real policy-making access to associations, especially beyond the municipal level, is still uncertain. Because the state rarely specifies—or a priori officially recognizes—some associations for this participation while excluding others, access is less likely to present challenges to autonomy. In addition, this looser system of regulation does little to constrain autonomy, especially that of self-provisioning or purely claim-making organizations that do not participate in government programs.

Relationships with political parties are considerably less central to most associations when compared to unions. Parties are thus a less important source of access and also present a less substantial challenge to autonomy. In the CIRELA survey, only 17 percent of associations reported contact with party representatives as “very important” or “important.”<sup>14</sup> As discussed below, party strategies toward popular associations vary widely. But even for those most oriented toward an associational support base, political parties do not institutionally incorporate associations in a way that is comparable, for example, to the PRI’s labor sector in Mexico, the PJ’s *tercio* in Argentina, or AD’s labor bureaus in Venezuela, in the earlier interest regime. Thus, parties serve less well as a means for associations to gain access to policy making. Nevertheless, as noted below, less institutionalized relationships may lead to some associational dependence on party officials for resources, and parties may try to subordinate or distance associations in their pursuit of strategies of larger support building or of policy making.

#### *Association-State Relationships: Variation in Autonomy*

Within the associational interest regime, substantial variation can be found regarding the relationships between individual associations and the state. The state has a particular influence on associational autonomy. The postures states adopt toward associations produce different national patterns, and within countries associational heterogeneity can produce wide variation in autonomy. This section provides an initial framework for exploring the ways that autonomy may be compromised. Although these challenges to autonomy are dependent on the individuals involved and other contingent factors, the framework offers a useful point of initial assessment.

At the most minimal level, state policies tend to shape the agenda and activities of many associations. State programs serve to signal the greater “availability” of specific demand-making targets, such as certain agencies and budget lines associated with existing programs. As a consequence, associations may turn away from or give less priority to other substantive goals. For example, the existence of labor programs in Argentina has channeled the energy and demands of both new and existing associations toward a government-initiated program, in a sense “diverting” attention from other approaches to welfare and income support (Garay 2004). Thus, through incentives provided by existing programs, the state can shape the substantive orientation of

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<sup>14</sup> In Argentina, Chile, and Venezuela 19-20 percent of associations reported contact with parties as important or very important, but only 8 percent did so in Peru.

individual associations and even weight or “skew” the larger, aggregated interest regime (see, e.g., Cigler and Loomis 2002).

Somewhat more actively, the state may affect the autonomy of associations that participate in state programs or receive state resources in two further ways. Through the threat of exclusion from a program or denial of funding, the state may implicitly constrain associational behavior, such as a tacit understanding between an association and a bureaucrat that criticisms of the program should be blunted. In addition, the state may also impose controls on autonomy through requirements that associations meet certain criteria for participation in programs. These controls are more regularized, such as a requirement for a soup kitchen to be constituted in a particular way and to distribute resources in a certain fashion.

Different associational activities are more vulnerable to these potential threats to autonomy. In broad strokes, we can distinguish four types of activity, although of course individual associations may engage in more than one. First are self-provisioning activities that generally do not bring associations into contact with the state. Many community support organizations, like rotating credit unions and neighborhood crime watches, primarily engage in these activities. The number of such associations is substantial: in the CIRELA survey 34 percent of associations said they had no contact with state bureaucrats and 36 percent said they had no contact with elected officials.<sup>15</sup> None of the three challenges to autonomy pertain to these organizations.

A second type of activity may be termed advocacy claim making, the pressing of demands on the state with no expectation that any positive response would channel resources specifically to the association. Such activity might take the form of demonstrations against an ongoing or recently implemented state policy, such as an IMF conditionality package, or demands that the state address new or neglected policy areas. To the extent that some of these associations are responding to government policies or programs, their agenda is being shaped. However, these associational activities largely escape the other two challenges.

**Table 3: Associational Activities and Potential Challenges to Autonomy**

<b>Associational Activities</b>	<b>Agenda Shaped by State Policy</b>	<b>Inclusion/Exclusion Dynamic</b>	<b>Formal Program Requirements</b>
<b>Self-Provisioning</b>	No	No	No
<b>Advocacy Claim Making</b>	Sometimes	No	No
<b>Distributive Claim Making</b>	Yes	Yes	Sometimes
<b>Implementers/Service Providers</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes

<sup>15</sup> Again, cross-national variation was very substantial here, ranging from nearly half of associations in Venezuela reporting no contact with elected officials and government agencies to less than a quarter in Chile.

A third type of activity is distributive claim making, petitioning government or participating in government programs with the goal of securing goods or services. Examples might be a neighborhood association making demands for infrastructure improvements or a community kitchen participating in a food distribution program. The agenda and behavior of these associations are often a response to the orientation of state policy. Further, those associations that participate in ongoing state programs face the threat of exclusion and are sometimes constrained by formal program requirements. A final type of associational activity is the implementation of states programs and the provision of state services. NGOs are often the types of associations that carry out these activities, although some community-based associations may do so as well. They face all three threats to autonomy, perhaps even in heightened form.

#### *Variation in Party Orientation Toward Associations*

Many analysts have noted that the roles of political parties have changed in Latin America's neoliberal democracies, particularly in their more distant relationships with constituencies and societal groups, a widely noted dynamic also at work in advanced industrial countries (Katz and Mair 1995) with the decline of mass parties, particularly LBPs. As Roberts (forthcoming: 67,45) has argued for Latin America, the neoliberal critical juncture "has undermined...mass parties and led to a proliferation of individualized linkages to machine, personalist, or professional-electoral parties....A more fragmented, autonomous, and pluralistic civil society ...[now has] fluid and tenuous linkages to party organizations." This change in parties and the way they relate to constituencies has important implications for access and autonomy within the interest regime.

Association-party relationships vary substantially from country to country, and within countries variation is also striking as these linkages are not uniform across geographic areas, across different networks of associations, or, perhaps most importantly, across types of parties. To begin examining these diverse configurations, it is useful to distinguish four types of parties in terms of the appeals they make to mass publics and their orientation toward popular organizations. Audience parties are those that make appeals to mass publics as atomized individuals, unmediated by organizations; they mass-market candidates often through the use of images, celebrity, and personality (Manin 1997). Clientelist parties rely on the distribution of goods and services to key constituencies, often through personal ties to leaders of popular organizations, which thereby become linked to and likely dependent on the party, with a high risk of cooptation. Movementist parties make programmatic appeals to popular sector constituencies and are oriented toward alliances with popular associations; indeed they may be partially founded by such organizations. Finally, classical Latin American populist parties make a mix of programmatic and clientelistic appeals, and establish close ties with loyal popular organizations, fostering their development but also subordinating them.

Of course, any given party will likely be some combination of these types. For instance, the Chilean UDI might be categorized as an audience-clientelist hybrid. Further, parties may change from one type to another over time, as has occurred with the



Argentine PJ. The major labor confederation remains linked to the party, but union-party relations are now more distant, as can be seen both in the founding of a rival non-Peronist labor confederation and the transformation of the PJ from a more classical populist (indeed, one in which labor for many years was dominant in relation to the party) to a clientelist party which appeals to the informal sector as a core support group (Levitsky 2003).

**Table 4: Typology of Parties and Orientations toward Popular Associations**

	<b>Type of Appeals to Popular Sectors</b>	<b>Orientation toward Popular Associations</b>	<b>Implications for Access and Autonomy</b>
<b>Audience</b>	Unmediated, often personalistic, appeals to atomized mass publics	Ignores or attempts to bypass them	Access: 0 Autonomy: 0
<b>Clientelist</b>	Distribution of goods through local networks to key constituencies	May use them for distribution of goods to gain support	Access: +/- Autonomy: -
<b>Movementist</b>	Programmatic appeals to mass publics, within constraints of economic model	Sees them as important parts of base, but associations may be in tension with electoral or coalitional strategies	Access: +/- Autonomy: +/-
<b>Classical Populist</b>	Programmatic and clientelistic appeals to mass publics	More oriented toward unions than popular associations; fosters loyal organizations but also subordinates them	Access: + Autonomy: -

Classical populist parties were relatively prevalent during the post-war era, although clientelist parties were common as well. Over the last two decades, with the change of economic model, populist parties have been forced to either adapt or face decline. Adaptation has typically involved the embrace of a more clientelist model, in which these parties have broadened their linkages with popular organizations, shifting from a concentration on unions to a larger array of associations. Latin America has also witnessed the emergence of audience and movementist parties. Audience parties have taken various forms in Latin America, but they have often been associated with the attempt to combine an agenda of economic reform with an appeal to the popular sectors. Prominent examples, sometimes labeled neopopulist, are those new or proto- parties associated with Collor and Fujimori, as well as the more established UDI under Lavin. Nationally competitive or “relevant” (Sartori 1976) movementist parties are an interesting, relatively new development in Latin America. They too take a number of forms, of which the Brazilian PT, Mexican PRD, and the Venezuelan MVR are variants.

As we’ve seen, classical populist parties often provided unions a degree of access to policy makers at the price of a loss of autonomy, as unions became subordinated and their leadership frequently coopted. Parties in the associational interest regime have diverse effects on access and autonomy. Since audience parties generally seek to bypass popular organizations altogether in the pursuit of unmediated relationships with constituencies, they generally do not have a substantial effect on either. Clientelist

parties pose a threat to autonomy, as popular organizations tend to become coopted. In some cases, linkages with clientelist parties have provided access to popular organizations.

The orientation of Argentina's Peronists (PJ) toward popular associations provides an example of both cooptation and the granting of limited access. Relying both on historical partisan identities and extensive clientelistic distributions, local party officials serve as patrons to individual clients and also to a variety of popular associations. While some popular associations remain distant from the PJ, others have close links. As the associations of the unemployed, the *piqueteros*, have grown and gained prominence, some of the most influential of these associations have aligned with President Kirchner's faction of the PJ, receiving some access to policy-making in exchange for their support (Garay 2004). A new institution, the Mesa Coordinadora para un Nuevo Proyecto Nacional, was formed by these more accommodationist *piquetero* groups and the Kirchner faction to coordinate and cement their relations, but the future of this initiative is unclear.

Movementist parties are perhaps most intriguing, because they seem to hold out the promise of some access without concomitant decreases in autonomy. They are often more committed to some form of integration of autonomous associations and to internal democratic procedures and control of party positions from the base, though these commitments vary among parties and can be challenged when the party attains power. Other factors, such as the type of competition faced by movementist parties, as well as whether they are in opposition or ruling, may similarly affect the party's strategy toward providing access for associations. Some examples of movementist parties and movementist hybrids give a sense of this diversity.

The Venezuelan MVR displays many traits of a movementist party, in that it emerged with the backing of popular associations and social movements, and has embraced a rhetoric of participatory democracy and societal autonomy. A major vehicle for mobilization, encouraged by Chávez since 2000, has been the *círculos bolivarianos*, associations which range from a handful to a few hundred members and are primarily involved in neighborhood improvement and service provision (Hansen and Hawkins 2005). The formation of these *círculos* seems to have taken place through some combination of bottom-up and top-down processes, indicating a level of party involvement in fostering popular associations that, in this sense, is reminiscent of the foundational stage of classical populism vis-à-vis unions. By most accounts, the *círculos* do not provide substantial access to policy making, and the question of their autonomy or subordination with respect to the MVR raises the classical tension.

Brazil's PT is perhaps the most salient example of a movementist party, emerging out of a pro-democratic social movement in which a heterogeneous set of popular-sector organizations took part, both new labor unions and popular associations. Reflecting this bottom-up formation, the party has traditionally held a strong ideological commitment to internal participatory and democratic procedures. However, as the party has become more competitive and even won the presidency, tensions with the base have become more acute. At the local level the party has designed and implemented participatory institutions, most notably participatory budgeting, that allow popular associations to assume a larger role in subnational (state and municipal) policy making (Goldfrank 2002). These institutions, which have been viewed as a partisan strategy to mobilize support in the

context of electoral competition among center-left parties, have succeeded in regularizing access to local government for popular associations as well as increased policy responsiveness (Goldfrank and Schneider 2005). These participatory institutions, however, have not been sustainable beyond the municipal level, and PT President da Silva thus far appears reluctant to implement such strategies nationally. In addition, the role of the party in providing associational participation on policy councils, as constitutionally mandated, and the related issue of which associations gain inclusion and which do not await further investigation.

### **Conclusion**

A shift in the popular-sector interest regime, although not labeled as such, has been widely noted. The role of unions has become less central, and a great array of popular organizations, of which unions are now just one type, has become prominent. Initial assessments of these other popular associations were optimistic, lauding the strengthening of civil society in political systems that historically lacked structures capable of making government accountable, of representing the majority, or of sustaining democratic regimes. Particular traits of associations were also seen as beneficial. Unlike unions, associations relate to one another in networks rather than in the hierarchical and bureaucratic structures from which Michels derived his iron law of oligarchy. Conceptualized as internally participatory, they were seen as efficacy-promoting “schools for democracy” and potential building blocks of an inclusionary system of representation responsive to the grass roots. Furthermore, some analysts have been sanguine—or at least hopeful—that associations could move into the representational void being vacated or unfilled by political parties, which are widely seen as becoming socially disembedded catch-all parties which, in Mair’s terms, continue to play a procedural role (recruiting office holders, organizing government, and making policy) but whose representative role, particularly regarding mass publics and the working classes, has atrophied (Mair 2000). After an initial period of enthusiasm, however, many scholars of Latin America have turned markedly more pessimistic, noting the inability of associations to apply pressure to political elites and meaningfully affect macro-political outcomes, seeing not schools for democracy but a crisis of popular representation.

To better explore these changes in the institutional infrastructure of representation and their implications, this paper has analyzed the shift in interest regime along four dimensions. As a result of both characteristics of base organizations and the state, the union-LBP hub was marked by popular organizations which had some difficulties in formation but substantial ability to scale, whereas the associational interest regime, in contrast, is characterized base organization that face relatively easy formation but difficulty in scaling. The interest regimes also display an important contrast on the dimensions of autonomy and access. In the union-LBP hub, popular organizations won a degree of access to national-level policy makers, but at the price of substantial restrictions of their autonomy. Associations in the new interest regime are comparatively free of such controls, although autonomy varies and the state often shapes the associational agenda in other ways, at the same time that access to key policy makers is rare.

**Table 5: Comparison of Popular-Sector Interest Regimes**

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Union-LBP Hub</b>	<b>Associational Interest Regime</b>
<b>Formation</b>	Unions often have difficulties with formation	Associations form readily
<b>Scaling</b>	Unions generally coordinated through national federations and peak confederations	Associations often disarticulated or coordinated in smaller, local networks.
<b>Autonomy</b>	Constraints on union activities through detailed state regulation and party affiliation	Associations more autonomous, but agendas and strategies shaped by state policies and programs
<b>Access</b>	Substantial variation, but unions often gain some access through national con/federations and linkages with LBPs	Associations often have access to local level officials but are rarely able to gain influence at national level, either through con/federations or party ties

The associational interest regime in Latin America is characterized by some representational tensions that may be endemic. Overall, the interest regime tends to be caught in a distributional pattern of local politics. While associations may spur participation, gain access, and win influence in areas of policy at the local level, they are largely unable to influence macropolicy at the national level, a capacity that is central to the issue of political representation. Despite the many controls, dependence, and subordination that derived from their bureaucratic verticalist nature and their relationships with the state and political parties, unions in the union-LBP hub in most of the more industrialized Latin American countries had been able to gain some degree of input on important macroeconomic and regulatory policy issues.

In general, associations have not been able to gain commensurate influence. Organizational characteristics of most associations often hinder scaling, making it difficult for associations to translate the sheer size of their constituencies into political influence. The ability to scale and achieve influence at the national level is also dependent on the economic model and orientation of state policy-making. The fundamentally different roles of the state under import substitution and neoliberalism change what policies seem contestable and the level of the state where contestation takes place. Only rarely have institutional spaces been created within the neoliberal state for associational access to policy-makers and have associational actors been legitimated to operate within these spaces. Further, this institutional innovation abetting the access of associations to policy makers seems more likely to occur in the arena of local distributive politics than at the national level. Nor have political parties generally provided channels for access at the national level as LBPs sometimes did for unions.

Nevertheless, these representational tensions play out in diverse ways in different national settings. In Chile, associations have shown little ability to coordinate and affect major policy areas. Yet across the Andes in Argentina, the *piqueteros* have succeeded in

scaling, displaying enormous mobilizational capacity at the national level, and achieving quasi-institutionalized or at least regularized access to social policy making, albeit in the context of a particular state-initiated program. In a complex and interactive political process, a state works program shaped the nature of the demands of the *piqueteros*, who succeeded in expanding the program tremendously, while the process has crowded out any programmatic alternatives regarding income support or poverty reduction. While an interesting exception to the general pattern of associational exclusion from national policy-making, this pattern is unlikely to be replicated broadly.

Analysis of national interest regimes and their consequences for popular representation is still at a preliminary stage. The key questions remain: how much political clout associations are able to gain, and how associations confront the classical dilemma between political access and influence on the one hand, and autonomy on the other. Garretón (1994: 245) has suggested that moving beyond this tradeoff may involve the role of the state itself in intervening in the “constitution of spaces and institutions within which actors can come forth who are autonomous with regard to the state without being marginal.” The location of these spaces, whether limited to the local distributive arena or extended to the national level of macro policy-making, is also a crucial one. If the tradeoff is indeed resolvable, and in a way that gives associations some degree of political power, the question for analysts becomes the conditions under which the interaction of associational demand making and the projects of state and party actors will create such spaces and how associations can use them as sites of representation or interest intermediation.

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