

Evading the Patronage Trap:  
Organizational Capacity and Demand-Making in Mexico

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## Abstract

When do organizations represent the interests of broad population groups and when do they narrowly represent the interests of the members? This article investigates how agricultural and small-business organizations in Mexico filter their members' interests into demands for programmatic or distributive policies. Contrary to class-based explanations, I show that the source of *organizational capacity* shapes demand-making strategies. Organizations that generate selective benefits internally are able to engage in programmatic policies that shape sectoral competitiveness while organizations that fail to solve membership challenges internally are vulnerable to *the patronage trap*, a self-reproducing cycle wherein they become specialized for distributive demand-making. I generate this argument through process tracing of three case studies of interest organizations in Mexico. Analysis of an original survey of economic interest organizations provides broader evidence that organizational capacity is a better predictor of policy demands than social class.

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## Introduction

The Central Campesina Cardenista and RedCCAM are two large “dissident” peasant organizations in the Mexican state of Michoacán. At their founding in the 1990s, these two organizations shared similar core principles: opposition to the liberalization of agricultural policy, which they viewed as privileging large-scale farmers; and a rejection of the dominant party’s top-down control of rural organizing. Despite these initial similarities, these two organizations’ paths diverged markedly in the early 2000s, when Michoacán experienced party turnover for the first time since the 1910 Mexican Revolution. The Central Campesina Cardenista (CCC) downplayed its efforts to effect change in agricultural policy and formed an alliance with the new ruling party—organizing campaign events, endorsing candidates in the media, and posting its own leaders for public office. In return, the CCC receives privileged access to state agricultural subsidies, which the leader allocates discretionarily to reward the most loyal members. In contrast, RedCCAM has eschewed party alignment—and the corresponding handouts—deploying its resources instead to push for state agricultural policies that favor small-scale grain farmers, such as crop insurance programs, investments in storage and shipping infrastructure, and accessible credit programs. Why does one organization focus its efforts on maximizing its share of short-term *distributive benefits* while the other seeks to influence *programmatic policies* that shape long-term sectoral competitiveness?

In this paper, I analyze organizations that that were founded to represent two sizable non-elite economic sectors in Mexico—small-scale agriculture and small businesses—to explain variations in these organizations’ demand-making strategies. Within each of these sectors, there are some organizations that fulfill their initial mandate by making *programmatic* demands that respond to the interests of their sector and others that strive instead to maximize *distributive* benefits for members. I argue that the source of *organizational*

*capacity*—the ability to recruit, retain, and mobilize members—shapes organizations’ demands. Those organizations that generate this capacity internally—typically by offering services that function as selective benefits—enjoy the autonomy to pursue programmatic policies (e.g., regulatory policy, infrastructure, non-discretionary subsidies) on behalf of the sectors that they represent. Organizations that do not generate such capacity internally often opt to enter into dependent linkages with state or party actors and limit their demands to bargaining for discretionary distributive benefits.

Scholars of party-voter linkages address a similar puzzle, interrogating when competition between parties is driven by particularistic exchange or by programmatic alignment (Dixit and Londregan, 1996; Keefer, 2007; Kitschelt, 2000; Shefter, 1994). To explain linkage outcomes, this literature typically turns to regime-level factors that shape the supply side of patronage, such as bureaucratic professionalization, economic shocks, or democratic immaturity. To the extent that scholars address the demand side, they focus on *social class*, arguing that the poor are prone to clientelist vote buying because they enjoy a higher marginal utility from particularistic goods than do upper-income groups (Calvo and Murillo 2004, pp. 743-745; Dixit and Londregan 1996, p. 1144; Stokes 2005, p. 315). However, it is unclear that the same factors that drive individual citizens’ policy demands work equally as well for collective actors—and class-based explanations fail to explain variation in demand-making strategies among organizations that represent the same social groups, as illustrated in the two cases above. In the present analysis, I test this “class hypothesis” alongside my explanation based on organizational capacity.

I define organizational capacity as the ability of mass-membership interest organizations to solve their most fundamental objective: maintaining an active membership. In the words of Wilson (1995, p. 10), “(w)hatever else organizations seek, they seek to survive. To survive, they must somehow convince their members that membership is worthwhile.” I observe two traits of organizations to detect whether they generate such capacity internally: *resource independence* and the *services* that they offer to incentivize participation. Partially in line

with the party-linkage literature, I find that generating organizational capacity internally is more difficult for organizations with a lower-class membership base. Crucially, however, organizations representing even the poorest of economic actors find ways to generate financial resources and member services internally. These are the exceptional cases that merit scholarly attention, as well as the relatively affluent groups that fail to do so.

Internally generated organizational capacity positions organizations to engage in forms of mobilization suited to influencing programmatic policies: autonomous consultation and lobbying with politicians of all parties and pressure tactics, such as protest and media campaigns. However, organizations that rely on resources extracted through dependent state linkages for recruitment and mobilization are often limited to a narrow range of demand-making strategies, centered on electoral mobilization in exchange for targeted distributive benefits. This mode of demand-making is self-reproducing through an equilibrium state that I refer to as *the patronage trap*. The narrow pursuit of distributive demands breeds changes in organizational traits, causing the organization to specialize as an intermediary for state programs. In the extreme case, an allied party requires that the organization limit its mobilization to the electoral realm, restricting the ability of the organization to engage in pressure politics. The organization leader becomes coopted by the party, assuming the role of clientelist broker. And as the organization attains a reputation as a source of state handouts, recruitment targets a self-selecting population eager to access such benefits.

The ability of economic interest organizations to represent their *sectors* broadly, rather than their *membership* more narrowly has importance for the quality of representation and political accountability. Scholarship on mature democracies has long been concerned with class-based imbalance in representation in economic policy. An early pluralism scholarship (Dahl, 1961; Truman, 1951), which described the interest arena as a faithful reflection of societal interests was impugned by influential research showing that disparities in collective-action capacity and political access often cause elite interests to prevail in policymaking (Lindblom, 1977; Schattschneider, 1960; Verba, Scholzman and Brady, 1995). We might ex-

pect class distortions in representation to be particularly acute in transitional democracies, which are known for being “hierarchical” and “predatory” (Schneider, 2013; Markus, 2015). And while scholars of clientelist machines (Auyero, 2000; Gay, 1999) and non-state welfare provision (Auerbach, 2016; Cammett, 2014; Thachil, 2011) have observed that patronage politics often delivers sorely-needed public goods and services to vulnerable communities, such informal patronage networks are ill-equipped to represent the interests of squatters, peasants, or other popular-sector populations in important policy battles. In contrast, economic interest organizations—such as those studied here—are founded with the mandate of representing sectoral interests. A narrowing of their demands to distributive policies causes such interests to be excluded from the venues where structural elements of political economic governance are debated.

The programmatic orientation of non-elite interest organizations is also crucial for holding politicians accountable to policy objectives and good governance, as observed by scholars of development policy (Evans 1996; Fukuyama 2001; Mansuri and Rao 2012; Rodrik 2000; Woolcock and Narayan 2000; World Bank 2003). Organizations consult on policy to help tailor interventions to societal needs, disseminate information to generate societal buy-in, and monitor government spending and denounce corruption or waste through the media or protest. As observers of civil societies in the developing world can attest, however, organizations that are founded with these lofty goals often abandon them in pursuit of clientelist handouts or to further the political careers of their leaders. Clearly the mere existence of interest organizations is not sufficient to generate social accountability. But so far we lack a theory to explain why organizations sometimes serve this democracy-enhancing role and other times are complicit in the misappropriation of development funds for partisan objectives.

I build my argument through process tracing of three interest organizations in Mexico using original field research evidence. First, using a “most-similar” approach, I compare two peasant organizations with quite similar founding trajectories, showing how the abil-

ity to generate organizational capacity internally sent one down the programmatic path, while the failure to do so routed the other into the patronage trap. A third case study of a small-business organization illustrates the generalizability of the causal relationship, as this organization represents a quite different constituency yet fell into the same pattern of patronage politics due to a failure to generate organizational capacity internally.<sup>1</sup> I then test the argument using data from an original nationwide survey of 99 state and local economic interest organizations belonging to four national confederations. These two sectors offer three advantages for testing theories about organizational demand-making: (1) They provide a controlled institutional framework, as each sector includes numerous national confederations made up of state and local affiliates. (2) They offer variation on social class between the lower-class peasants and middle-class small-business owners that make up the organizations. (3) Confederations in these two sectors espouse programmatic goals, and prominently engaged in mobilization over core elements of national economic policy during Mexico's neoliberal transition.

The Mexican context is informative because it presents conditions that are particularly threatening to interest organization autonomy. During the greater part of the twentieth century, Mexican politics were dominated by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which controlled organizational activity through top-down corporatist ties with labor, business, the peasantry and other economic sectors (Greene, 2007; Magaloni, 2006). The past three decades have witnessed a transition to multi-party competition between the PRI, the right-wing National Action Party (PAN) and the left-wing Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). Competition between national parties in Mexico took on greater programmatic content once the PAN assumed the presidency in 2000 and instituted policies to curtail patronage politics (Hagopian, forthcoming). However, this shift has certainly not extirpated the discretionary allocation of state benefits for electoral purposes. Patronage politics remains particularly rampant on the state and municipal levels, which have lagged

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<sup>1</sup>These cases are representative of the range of variation observed during 18 months of field research in three Mexican states, including case studies of 18 organizations.

in adopting rule-based policymaking norms and today control larger budgets due to decentralization (Hernandez-Trillo and Jarillo-Rabling, 2008). In this context, local organizations face constant temptations to prioritize patronage-based party linkages over programmatic representation of base interests.

## Organizational Determinants of Demand-Making

Interest organizations sort into two broad categories: those that limit their demands to distributive benefits for members; and those that make demands on behalf of a broader scope of beneficiaries, such as producers belonging to an economic sector. I argue that these two outcomes are elements of distinct equilibria, which are largely driven by internal organizational traits. Those organizations that generate organizational capacity internally enter into a self-reinforcing cycle featuring a mobilized membership, autonomous multifaceted state engagement, and programmatic representation of their sector. Organizations that depend on an external actor to generate organizational capacity are routed into a distinct equilibrium, which I dub “the patronage trap,” in which the organization specializes as an intermediary of state programs for members and loses interest or capacity to make demands for sector-wide policy.

### *Conceptualizing Organizations’ Demands*

Classic literatures on labor unions, social movements, and political parties have similarly addressed why these organizations at times pursue broad transformative goals and other times narrowly promote the interests of members, or even more narrowly, of leadership. Research on organized labor interrogates why some unions make demands on behalf of unionized workers (business unionism) and others on behalf of the working class or in pursuit of non-productionist demands (social unionism) (Ahlquist and Levi, 2013; Iversen, 1999; Mares, 2004). Social movement analysts have been concerned with the displacement of “transformative” goals for demands that further organizational survival—a fate that they attribute to oligarchy and bureaucratization (Katsiaficas, 2006; Piven and Cloward, 1979; Staggen-

borg, 1988). The distinction between programmatic and clientelistic ties in the party-voter linkage literature turns on whether the voter supports a candidate in exchange for “selective material incentives” or in response to “packages of policies” whose consequences benefit the voter only indirectly (Kitschelt, 2000, pp. 849–850).

In the present analysis, I classify policy demands into two categories—distributive and programmatic. Distributive demands are disaggregable material benefits that stand to benefit only the organization itself or its members. For example, distributive demands on behalf of a business chamber might include state grants to fund a convention or for member participation in training workshops. All non-elite organizations have an interest in pursuing distributive demands, as these policies generate benefits that can be used to fund organizational activities or incentivize members to join and participate. In fact, all organizations observed in this study actually do pursue such policies to some degree. However some organizations are limited to distributive demands, while others devote resources to programmatic demands

Programmatic demands concern public goods, regulations, or policies that benefit populations that extend beyond the organization. Such populations may be quite limited, such as the community within which the organization operates, or quite large, such as all firms in a given sector. Programmatic demands by a business chamber might include that the local government crack down on informal commerce, invest in public transportation to improve customer access, or negotiate with foreign governments for higher tariffs on manufactured imports. In line with Stokes et al. (2013, pp. 6–18) I classify demands regarding *non-discretionary* distributive programs as programmatic, such as when an organization demands that a larger share of benefits be allocated to industrial rather than commercial firms.

### *Organizational Capacity and Demand-Making*

To explain this variation, I interrogate the internal logic of organizations. In contrast to elite interests, which wield power through their control of capital or political connections,

non-elite organizations wield power in numbers. Organizational capacity—the ability to recruit, retain, and mobilize members—enables mobilization, both in electoral campaigns and protest. Such capacity furthers both the interests of the leader, whose stature increases with membership size, and the base, which derives benefits from the policy clout that a large membership affords. The *source* of this capacity shapes demand-making. When an organization is able to maintain an active membership autonomously—typically by offering services that incentivize participation—it may turn its attention to external goals, such as influencing programmatic policies. However, organizations that are unable to achieve collective action autonomously are prone to prioritize demands for discretionary distributive programs, which the leader can repurpose as selective benefits to incentivize member participation.

The source of organizational capacity is reflected in two traits. First, organizations achieve collective action by offering “selective benefits,” which provide members with individual incentive to participate (Clark and Wilson, 1961; Olson, 1968). However, not all selective benefits are equivalent. Some organizations generate these benefits internally by offering services such as training programs, legal support, and networking opportunities. These organizations can be said to generate organizational capacity internally. For other organizations, selective benefits are externally provided. Most commonly, a state or party patron provides access to disaggregable benefits that leaders allocate selectively to incentivize participation. Second, organizations require financial resources to cover basic expenses, such as hiring staff, renting headquarters, and hosting activities. While self-financing through member dues is one way that organizations generate capacity internally, this option is often off the table for organizations representing the poor. Alternatively, organizations may secure diverse sources of financial resources—including multiple donors or generating revenue from the sale of services or goods—therein reducing vulnerability to withdrawal of any particular source (Cress and Snow, 2000; McCarthy and Zald, 1977).

The focus on organizational capacity does not suggest that social class, a variable that has been deployed to explain *individuals’* programmatic and distributive demands, is irrelevant to

*organizations'* demands. Class may establish resource and membership conditions that shape an organization's options for generating capacity. Organizations that represent the poor are vulnerable to budget constraints and demobilization owing to their potential members' inability to contribute financially and disinclination to civic participation (Holzner, 2010; Kurtz, 2004; Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995). The poor are also be more likely to join an organization in pursuit of handouts than middle-class citizens, who may be drawn to the social networks or prestige that the organization offers (Wilson, 1995, pp. 56–77). However, organizations are not simply passive aggregators of members' self interest, and may socialize members to pursue broader goals. Thus, in contrast to the implication in the party-linkage literature that class determines demand type, I argue that class is but one of several traits that shape the options that organizations have for generating organizational capacity, which is the key factor that sets them on programmatic or distributive paths. Organizations representing lower-class populations can evade a distributive orientation and levy programmatic demands if they generate organizational capacity internally; and middle-class organizations that fail to do so may restrict their demands to the distributive realm.

I additionally consider three alternative explanations that may be hypothesized to affect organizational behavior: leadership, member homogeneity, and political context. Through process tracing and controlled comparisons, I show that the former two factors are in large part endogenous to the source of organizational capacity. First, I argue that leadership practices are better explained as a consequence than a cause of the organization's mode of demand-making.<sup>2</sup> When organizations narrow demands to distributive policies, leaders convert into brokers capable of coercing members to participate, therein reversing the organizational ideal in which members hold leaders accountable to policy goals. Preference homogeneity among members has also been identified as a factor increasing organizations' ability to mobilize behind collective goals (Moe, 1981; Offe and Wiesenthal, 1980; Olson, 1968). Again, I show that this organizational trait fails to independently account for differences in

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<sup>2</sup>On endogenous leadership, see Ahlquist and Levi 2011, pp. 14-15.

demand-making, for two reasons. First, the membership pool drawn to an organization is shaped by the incentives offered. For instance, an organization offering productive benefits, such as training in crop production methods, attracts a more homogenous membership of producers of those crops, while organizations that mediate state handouts attract a more diverse—and thus more difficult to coordinate—membership. Second, once inside an organization, member preferences are induced by organizational norms (Moe, 1981, pp. 537–538).

A third alternative explanation for demand-making is the political context in which the organization operates. We may expect that the degree of electoral competition or the presence of an ally in government drives demand-making choices, particularly in a context such as Mexico’s, emerging from one-party dominance. Here I distinguish between demand-making and policy access, asserting that partisanship and party system traits are influential for the latter, as illustrated in the literature on programmatic and clientelist party systems (Hagopian, forthcoming; Kitschelt, 2000; Shefter, 1977). The link between political context and organizations’ demands is less certain, however. Examples abound of organizations that levy programmatic demands both in highly adverse circumstances where politicians have little incentive to respond as well as in favorable circumstances, where the presence of electoral allies in office increases the temptation to abandon programmatic goals for patronage. In my statistical analysis, I include variables for ruling party and vote margins, finding no consistent relationship with organizations’ mobilization strategies or types of demands.

Figure 1 lays out the causal model leading to organizations’ demand types. First, the source of organizational capacity shapes organizations’ options for state engagement. When organizations generate organizational capacity internally by offering desirable services and securing diverse resource flows they are free to engage the state through *autonomous mobilization*. Since they are not beholden to any particular party or faction, these organizations are positioned to lobby a broad spectrum of political actors and to select mobilization strategies that are appropriate to further their policy goals. Such organizations may combine

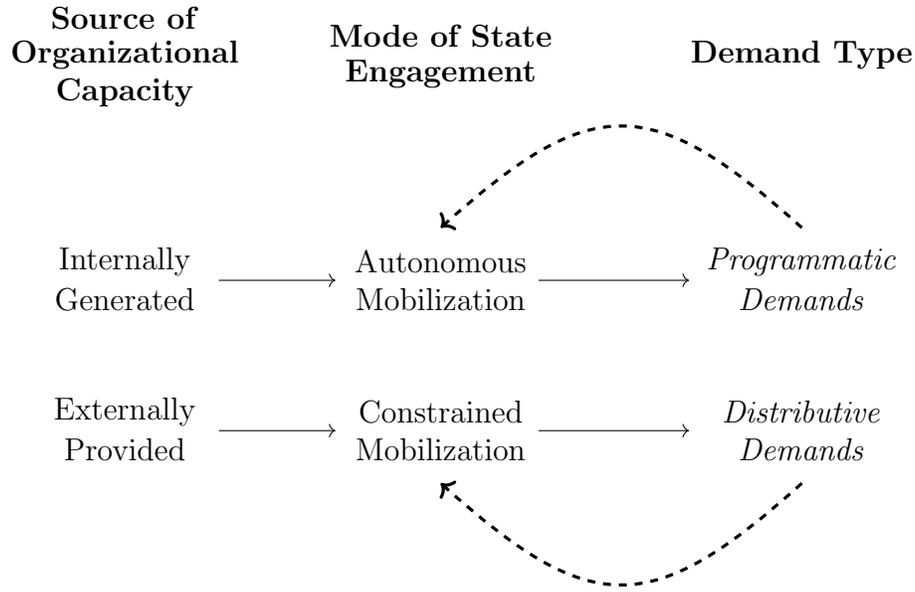


Figure 1: Model of Organizational Demands

participation in consultative institutions, direct contact with bureaucrats and politicians of all parties, and pressure tactics such as protest and media campaigns.

In contrast, when organizations depend on a state or party actor to generate capacity, they engage the state through *constrained mobilization*. Patronage benefits can be very effective for achieving collective action and patronage-based linkages with political parties are likely to be available for organizations that are minimally operational. Party actors, seeking to distribute benefits to groups that demonstrate “coordinating capacity,” are eager to co-opt organizations’ networks for electoral mobilization, employing leaders as brokers (Gottlieb and Larreguy, 2016). Over time, this brokerage role spurs a growth in membership and can produce a thriving organization. Dependence on an external actor for resources, however, comes at the price of ceding power to that actor (Emerson, 1962; Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003). It follows that when an organization depends on a political party for financing and selective benefits the party patron can leverage the threat of withdrawing these benefits to exercise control over the organization’s structure and activities. Thus, when organizational capacity is externally provided, organizations often limit their political engagement to electoral cam-

paigns on behalf of the affiliated party, either at party leaders' behest or because mobilizing electorally displaces other modes of participation.

Second, these modes of state engagement influence the types of policy demands that the organization is able to levy. Autonomous mobilization positions organizations to engage in consultation and demand-making at different stages in the policy process, combining insider and outsider strategies and contact with politicians of multiple political parties to secure long-term access to the *programmatic* policy arena. In contrast, constrained mobilization limits the types of demands an organization can levy. Opposition-party politicians are unreceptive to appeals and the allied party often favors the organization in discretionary allocation of distributive benefits rather than granting access to the contested programmatic arena. Thus, as the organization becomes specialized as an electoral vehicle, its demand-making capacity is limited to pressing for a greater share of discretionary *distributive* rewards.

The arrows looping backwards represent the self-reinforcing nature of this process, which occurs through both leadership and membership mechanisms. The lower portion of Figure 1 depicts the *patronage trap*, in which organizations are “trapped” into an equilibrium state of distributive demand-making.<sup>3</sup> This is a trap because the narrow pursuit of distributive demands is self-reinforcing: once organizations limit their demands to distributive policies, the position of the leader and member-recruitment strategies become tailored to patronage politics, making the organization ill suited for programmatic demand-making. First, exclusive party linkages foment oligarchic leadership in which leaders prioritize their own goals and the survival of the organization over the programmatic interests of the base, typically by assuming a brokerage role. Second, as the organization establishes a reputation as a mediator of government benefits, future recruitment is self selecting for patronage-seeking members.

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<sup>3</sup>Hagopian (forthcoming) describes a distinct “patronage trap,” in which incumbent parties with control over state resources and well-developed electoral machines sustain patronage institutions to undermine programmatic challengers.

The upper portion of Figure 1 depicts a parallel equilibrium—a virtuous cycle of programmatic participation—that is perhaps less “sticky” than the patronage trap. This equilibrium is also self-reinforcing through both membership and leadership mechanisms. Through participation in programmatic demand-making, organization members become socialized to broader policy issues and perceive broader population groups (e.g. the peasantry or small-business owners) as their “communities of fate” (Levi and Olson, 2000). The organization’s reputation spurs future recruitment of civic-minded members. Furthermore, oligarchic leadership is less likely in programmatic organizations, as members develop democratic norms through cooperation in joint service provision and collective demand-making and hold leaders accountable to pursuing programmatic goals.

Three main empirical implications flow from the patronage trap model: (1) The ability to produce organizational capacity internally by offering member services and securing diverse resource flows explains the degree to which organizations engage in programmatic demand-making. (2) This relationship is mediated by organizations’ modes of state engagement; internally generated organizational capacity produces programmatic demand-making by allowing organizations to engage in broader, and particularly in non-electoral, forms of mobilization. (3) Alternative explanations for programmatic demand-making—social class, leadership, interest homogeneity, and political context—are less effective at independently explaining variation in demand-making. The case studies and survey analysis to follow provide evidence in line with these predictions.

## **Case Studies of Interest Organizations in Mexico**

Case studies of three organizations in the Mexican state of Michoacán rule out alternative explanations and illustrate the causal process through which the source of organizational capacity shapes demand-making. Case selection employs both “most-similar” and “diverse” criteria (Gerring, 2008) to (1) reveal putative causes for different outcomes in cases that are otherwise similar; and (2) eliminate necessary causes (i.e. social class), while illustrating

the generalizability of the key causal relationship. First, I compare two peasant organizations with quite similar founding trajectories, showing how the adoption of a sustainable member-service model by RedCCAM was the key factor that sent it down the programmatic path, while the CCC failed to sustain a strategy for generating organizational capacity internally, and was therefore routed into the patronage trap. A third case study of a business organization (CANACINTRA) illustrates that a quite distinct organization—representing a middle-class constituency—can fall into the same pattern of patronage politics when it fails to sustain organizational capacity internally.

Within-case process tracing allows me to establish the “causal chain” variables and detect feedback effects pertaining to the programmatic and patronage equilibria (George and Bennett, 2005, pp. 205–232). In particular, I analyze organizational development over time to refute alternative explanations for organizational demands having to do with leadership, member homogeneity, and partisan alignment. While autonomous organizational capacity can generate from several processes in organizational development, these cases demonstrate that the presence of an enterprising leader or a homogeneous membership base is not sufficient to produce this organizational trait. Rather, oligarchic leadership and a heterogeneous membership base emerged *after* adopting a brokerage model in the case of the CCC. And CANACINTRA never exhibited these traits to a greater degree than programmatic business chambers. Finally, the presence of an ally in government fails to explain variation in demands, as both RedCCAM and the CCC were ideologically aligned with the PRD, which governed Michoacán from 2002 to 2012, yet display contrasting demand-making models.

Evidence is drawn from semi-structured interviews with organization leaders and non-participant observation of routine organization meetings, campaign events, and interactions with state and party figures.<sup>4</sup> I visited each organization several times between 2011 and

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<sup>4</sup>Upon publication an online appendix will be made available on the author’s website, including the interview questionnaire for leaders of interest organizations, case-selection strategy, and protocol for non-participant observation.

2013 as part of a broader 18-month field research undertaking that involved approximately 500 hours of qualitative data gathering.

### *Small-Scale Agricultural Organizations*

The two rural organizations include one in the patronage trap—the Cardenista Peasant Central (CCC)—and another in the programmatic equilibrium—the Network of Rural Commercializing Firms of Michoacán (RedCCAM). These both belong to confederations of “dissident” peasant organizations, founded in the late 1980s and early 1990s, made up of farmers who had broken off from the dominant party’s rural corporatist structure in rejection of the turn to a market-based development model (de Grammont and Mackinlay, 2009). At their founding, both organizations offered valuable services to members—aiding in land tenure claims in the case of the CCC and commercializing grains in the case of RedCCAM. Both organizations were also active in programmatic demand-making, as evidenced by their participation in *El Campo no Aguanta Más* (The Countryside Can’t Take it Anymore), a 2002 national protest movement pressing for greater state supports for small-scale farmers (Bartra, 2007).<sup>5</sup> When this cycle of protest declined, however, the onus was placed on the individual organizations to devise strategies for sustaining organizational capacity among an economically precarious and atomized population (Kurtz, 2004). RedCCAM remained on the programmatic path as it sustained organizational capacity internally by operating a grain cooperative that served as an inducement for members and a source of organizational revenue. In contrast, the CCC’s ability to generate organizational capacity internally eroded, leading it to follow a common path for peasant organizations: forming a patronage-based alliance with a political party and narrowing its demands to the distributive realm.

### **CCC-Michoacán: A Patronage-Oriented Rural Organization**

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<sup>5</sup>This movement listed a set of demands oriented to secure the economic sustainability of small-scale farming, including a moratorium on the agricultural terms of NAFTA, the construction of a new state rural financial institution, and an increase in the percent of the federal budget allocated to production supports.

As is commonplace for organizations representing the rural poor, the CCC's policy demands are limited almost exclusively to maximizing distributive benefits for its members. The organization leader devotes his energies to *gestionar programas* (negotiating for government programs) such as subsidies for agricultural inputs, housing, or small-business capital. This leader—Carlos González, Secretary General of CCC—monopolizes the *gestión* process, as well as the discretion to determine which members receive state benefits mediated by the organization. This authority serves as his main tool to recruit and mobilize members, as he makes clear that active participation in organization activities—including electoral rallies for the affiliated party—will be rewarded with such benefits. In interviews, González mentions broader policy concerns on behalf of the rural poor, but these demands are unspecific—“greater redistribution” or “more spending in the countryside”—and the organization rarely mobilizes behind these demands.

#### *Post-Transition Decline and Organizational Revival as Patronage Machine*

While threatening to the sustainability of smallholder agriculture, the 1990s transition to a liberalized rural development model temporarily presented conditions propitious to the CCC's autonomous programmatic mobilization. The organization recruited members by aiding in navigating a federal government program to regularize individual land claims,<sup>6</sup> and mobilized these members in large-scale protests against the withdrawal of state support for small-scale farmers and Mexico's 1994 entry into NAFTA. By the mid-2000s, however, the CCC faced declining organizational capacity as land claims dwindled, as did the willingness of members to sacrifice time and energy in contentious mobilization with uncertain rewards. To revive the organization, González adopted a fund-raising and recruitment strategy oriented

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<sup>6</sup>This program, PROCEDE, allowed residents of communal landholdings (ejidos) to gain title to their individual plots of land beginning in 1992. A panel survey of ejido farmers conducted in 1990 and 1994 (two years before and after the reform) shows that the share of farmers who sought to resolve land issues through ejido unions decreased from 10.8 percent to 0.8 percent over this period and that 83.8 percent of farmers reported obtaining only purely economic benefits through rural organizations in 1994 (de Janvry, Gordillo and Sadoulet, 1997, pp. 115–121).

around the brokerage of state subsidies, prioritizing numerical growth over autonomy or goal alignment among members. While bylaws for the larger confederation to which the CCC belongs state that voluntary dues should be the only source of revenue, Gonzalez also implemented a policy that the CCC would retain a percentage of each subsidy mediated for members. These commissions represent the organization's main source of income.<sup>7</sup>

While many patronage-oriented organizations are small, precarious, and struggle to draw members to meetings or activities, the CCC is large, institutionalized, and capable of mobilizing in large numbers in both electoral and contentious movements. With a membership of approximately six thousand, CCC has pursued an effective strategy of recruitment based on the promise of organization-mediated subsidies. González estimated that between one-fourth and one-third of members apply to some type of government program with the organization's support each year and proceeds from these subsidies were approximately 12 million pesos (almost one million U.S. dollars) in 2011. The CCC has grown by expanding beyond its initial peasant base, incorporating semi-urban populations, many of whom are service workers, microentrepreneurs, or wage laborers and thus are not united by a concern for rural development policy. An estimated sixty percent of members were once ejido farmers, but the majority of these lease their land to others or do not produce according to data reported by the organization in 2012.<sup>8</sup> Members find the organization through word of mouth, as others have joined and gained title to land, funding from a rural housing program, or subsidized agricultural inputs. Since these types of benefits are one-off and of broad appeal, the membership is heterogeneous and large, with new members joining frequently, but many members inactive after extracting the benefit that the organization has to offer.

### *State Engagement Defined by Partisan Alliance*

The CCC is a very successful example of a PRD-affiliated patronage organization, of which there are many in Michoacán, one of this party's strongholds. While from its founding

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<sup>7</sup>Author interview with Carlos González, Secretary-General, CCC-Michoacán, December 14, 2011.

<sup>8</sup>COCOCAM, Fichas Informativas, p. 122.

the CCC objected to PRI administrations' practices of favoring organizational allies in the allocation of rural development funds, they sought the same treatment once the PRD was in office and PRD ties began to yield significant benefits in the distributive arena once this party won the governorship in 2001. Leonel Godoy, PRD governor of Michoacán from 2008 to 2012 instituted a practice known as the "carrousel," where leaders of more than two dozen leftist peasant groups were granted yearly meetings with heads of state ministries that control distributive programs to present lists of member applicants.<sup>9</sup> As the largest of these dissident rural organizations, the CCC commands the most attention from the state government. Thus González has frequent contact with members of state development ministries that control funding for application-based subsidies for agricultural inputs, economic ventures (proyectos productivos), or social programs.<sup>10</sup>

The CCC secures access to these benefits by mobilizing its members in campaigns on behalf of PRD candidates. With base organizations in over a dozen municipalities, the CCC is well-placed to organize campaign rallies, mobilizing both members and the broader community. Local CCC leaders typically receive a nomination for mayor in a handful of these municipalities, further aligning electoral incentives between the organization and the party ally. As a result of a negotiation with the PRD's 2011 candidate for governor, the CCC was granted the additional inducement of an ultimately unsuccessful candidacy for González for the state legislature. He claimed that occupying a seat in congress would formalize the process by which he negotiated for benefits with PRD representatives.

In contrast to this partnership with the PRD, other parties in the state do not even respond to the CCC's infrequent requests for meeting, and González has all but given up

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<sup>9</sup>Author interviews with Primitivo Ávalos, Coordinator of El Surco-Michoacán, November 8, 2012; Valerio Celaya, Adviser for Productive Projects for UGOCM-Jacinto López-Michoacán, August 16, 2012; Vicente Estrada Torres, Secretary of Political Operations for CNC-Michoacán, January 26, 2012; Carlos González, Secretary-General of CCC-Michoacán, December 14, 2011.

<sup>10</sup>Author interview with Héctor Rojas Romero, Director of Agriculture, Michoacán Ministry of Rural Development, July 4, 2013.

trying to lobby with them. An interviewed legislator from the PAN confirmed this disinterest in receiving representatives of dissident peasant organizations: “These organizations belong to a system where social programs exist to feed clients that are beholden to the party in government (the PRD). We are looking for a different type of arrangement.”<sup>11</sup> This close association with a single party contrasts markedly with the CCC’s founding mandate as an autonomous, non-partisan group, which promised to break the mold of the PRI’s corporatism.

Another transformation in the CCC’s state engagement has been a reduction in protest. If 2002 was a high water mark for peasant protest in Mexico, large-scale movements all but disappeared in Michoacán in the following years. Viewing the PRD governors as their allies, the CCC and other dissident organizations abstain from movements that might threaten governability or cause friction with their patrons, despite ongoing dissatisfaction with the lack of structural change in rural development policy. The times that the CCC has mobilized in contentious action in recent years have been one-day occupations (*plantones*) of state government ministries to pressure the government to follow through on promised housing subsidies or small-business projects (*proyectos productivos*) for members. According to González, even this extra-electoral mobilization served to strengthen the CCC’s hand in the party linkage by demonstrating the organization’s mobilizing capacity and hence its value to the party in campaigns.

### *Reproduction of Dependent Linkage and Distributive Demands*

In choosing to formalize an electoral alliance with the PRD, the CCC ultimately gained access to valuable state benefits, while sacrificing options for mobilizing outside of the alliance. Narrow party ties have foreclosed contact with other parties and introduced disincentives to engage in contentious politics. The preferences of both members and the leader

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<sup>11</sup>Author interview with Héctor Gómez Trujillo, President of PAN-Michoacán, February 1, 2012.

have transformed to accommodate these options, as González has converted into an electoral broker, providing benefits to members in exchange for their support of the party patron.

Importantly, the CCC did not begin as an organization that exhibited the traits typically associated with the decline of programmatic demand-making—leadership entrenchment and interest divergence among members. Both of these traits emerged once the organization adopted the brokerage model for generating organizational capacity. CCC modified its own statutes to allow for reelection in 2007, upon realizing that González was indispensable given his strong ties to the party and state government. This rule change solidified González’s power over members through his control of subsidies. And it was only in 2008 that the CCC in Michoacán pursued a growth strategy based on the recruitment of non-farming rural and non-rural populations. As an intermediary for a variety of state programs offering funding for housing, small businesses, or family income, the CCC became attractive to a much broader membership base, and bringing these groups into the organization strengthens González’s hand, as they amplify his electoral clout.

Cristóbal Ariás, a PRD founder from Michoacán bemoaned the failure of dissident peasant organizations to sustain demand-making on behalf of small-scale farmers: “They preferred to hold onto their little groups, their clienteles and the deals that they were able to make with rural government agencies than form a single larger force, capable of confronting the rural situation.”<sup>12</sup> The case of the CCC demonstrates that it was not so much a lack of initial interest in transforming Mexico’s rural development model as it was the challenge to sustain an active membership base that pushed the organization to prioritize the intermediation of state benefits over programmatic representation of small-scale farmers.

## **RedCCAM: A Programmatic Rural Organization**

RedCCAM is a rare example of a programmatic agricultural organization. This organization represents small- and medium-sized grain farmers and acts both as a cooperative for commercializing these products as well as an advocate for the interests of its sector in

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<sup>12</sup>Author interview with Cristóbal Ariás, December 15, 2011.

Michoacán. RedCCAM's leaders and members are certainly not disinterested in accessing distributive programs; in fact one of the main services that it offers to members is designing projects for subsidy applications. However, the organization also levies demands for programmatic policies, including state investments in rural infrastructure, state provision of broad-based crop insurance, and transparency in agricultural spending.

*An Innovative Service-Oriented Model Sustains Organizational Capacity*

As RedCCAM's parent confederation was founded in 1995, several years after the land privatization reforms and immediately following Mexico's entry into NAFTA, it developed a member recruitment strategy based on aiding small- and medium-sized farmers to remain competitive in newly liberalized agricultural markets. Over two decades later, the organization continues to serve the same central function as at its founding: operating a cooperative that promises higher prices to participating grain farmers and training to help these farmers increase their production. Farmers typically affiliate to access these economic benefits, but over time members are socialized to the broader experience of small-scale farmers and relevant policy debates.

RedCCAM's recruitment strategy is geared to slow growth, carefully adding members that are committed to the goals of the organization, as opposed to a single-minded push to grow the ranks. Recruitment typically operates through word-of-mouth; leaders of local organizations of grain farmers approach RedCCAM if they are interested in taking part in the network's cooperative and other productive activities.<sup>13</sup> Such organizations typically operate in one or a few municipalities, with anywhere from a dozen to 500 members.<sup>14</sup> At the time of research, 17 base-level associations belonged to RedCCAM, totaling approximately 2,000 members. According to Omar Lando Estañol, General Director of RedCCAM, five founding organizations were expelled within the first five years because they lacked commitment to the social mission of development of an autonomous grain cooperative and were more in-

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<sup>13</sup> Author observation of RedCCAM meetings, December 2011-January 2012, July 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Author interview with Omar Lando Estañol, Morelia, Mexico, December 9, 2011.

terested in extracting subsidies and promoting the political careers of their leaders: “Those five (organizations) were asked to resign because they were uninterested in the productive activities that we were carrying out in the network. They were more interested in their own personal interests—economic and political.”

### *Commitment to Nonpartisanship Permits Broad State Engagement*

While dozens of dissident organizations in the state have forged linkages with the PRD, yielding distributive benefits during this party’s two gubernatorial terms, RedCCAM carefully guards its partisan neutrality. RedCCAM participates in the carrousel, but has refused to provide campaign support to the governor. As a result its meetings with state ministry personnel operated according to official procedures and its requests for subsidies are not given rubber-stamp approval as were those of the governor’s allies. Instead, according to Lando, RedCCAM has been forced to impress the grant-making authorities with the quality of the projects that it develops and the organization’s track record of profitable economic ventures with its members.

RedCCAM’s participation in campaign activities resembles the norm for business chambers more than peasant organizations. In the lead up state and local elections, RedCCAM invites all candidates to speak to its members.<sup>15</sup> Candidates who accept are given the opportunity to sign a document signaling their agreement with a list of RedCCAM’s goals for rural development policy in Michoacán. Non-partisanship does not inhibit its members from pursuing elected office independently: according to Lando, at least five leaders of base-level organizations have run for municipal office since 2004 and have run with each of the three major parties.

RedCCAM’s partisan neutrality was most openly on display when they led the Observatorio Campesino (Peasant Observatory), an effort to monitor agricultural spending in Michoacán. Representatives from Fundar, a Mexico City-based NGO specializing in transparency, offered to hold a training session in Michoacán to help rural organizations make

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<sup>15</sup>Author interview with Omar Lando Estañol, December 9, 2011.

information requests about rural development spending. Of the dozens of organizations that attended the initial training session, RedCCAM was the only one that followed through on the training by actually submitting information requests for data about agricultural subsidies. Interviewed leaders of other organizations reported that they saw little value in using the access-to-information system because they viewed it as unnecessarily contentious and they preferred to use alternative informal communications with politicians and ministry personnel to access information about government programs.

Abstaining from overt partisanship opens doors for RedCCAM representatives to lobby with politicians from all major parties. When the writing was on the wall that the PRD would lose the Michoacán governorship to the PRI in 2011, most dissident rural organizations—the majority of which had aligned with the PRD, like the CCC—were faced with a choice: either they would throw their support behind the PRI’s candidate in a bargain to maintain access to benefits or they would remain loyal to the PRD and be locked out of policymaking on the state level. Having built a reputation for electoral autonomy with the three major parties, RedCCAM was not faced with the same dilemma. Observations of this organizations’ interactions with the PRI administration that entered the state government in 2012 reveal only a minor decrease in the degree of contact.

### *Reproduction of Diverse Participation and Programmatic Demands*

Nonpartisanship affords RedCCAM the freedom to devote itself to productive rather than electoral issues. Where other organizations devote time and resources to participating in campaign events, RedCCAM’s activities are devoted to issues of organization building, productive projects, and advocacy. When the PRI reclaimed the governorship in Michoacán in 2012—after two terms under the PRD—RedCCAM approached the newly elected administration to collaborate on projects with long-term consequences for rural development. For example, RedCCAM representatives have negotiated with the PRI administration to press

for improvements to the state's system of crop insurance for small-scale grain farmers and to earmark a portion of the state agricultural budget for small-producer benefits.<sup>16</sup>

Such engagement in programmatic demand-making reinforces organizational autonomy through both leadership and membership channels. RedCCAM's internal governance promotes broad participation—a new president is elected from among its constituent organizations every three years. Leaders are chosen on the basis of their commitment to the ideals of the organization and their vision for future projects.<sup>17</sup> Benefits from organization services generate member commitment even in periods when the state government is not forthcoming with subsidies. If these members are initially motivated by particular interests, over time they become socialized to take a concern in the fate of rural development in the state.

Ultimately, RedCCAM's ability to sustain collective action autonomously safeguards against the erosion of the organization's democratic norms and programmatic character. At its founding, this organization was very similar to organizations such as the CCC that later fell into the patronage trap. Both of these organizations began with internal rules requiring partisan alternation, restrictions on party alliances, and a recruitment model based on offering services to small-scale farmers. However, RedCCAM was able to sustain a programmatic orientation over the long-term because it retained the ability to generate organizational capacity internally. The cooperative model proved to offer a lasting incentive to members to participate. And this organizational model is what kept RedCCAM's membership narrowed to a homogeneous group of small-scale grain farmers, while also forestalling oligarchization, which occurs when power concentrates in a leader who monopolizes the intermediation of material benefits.

## **CANACINTRA-Morelia: A Distributive-Oriented Business Organization**

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<sup>16</sup>Author observation of RedCCAM meetings with representatives of state Rural Development Ministry, July 2013.

<sup>17</sup>Author interview with José Antonio Valdez Alcanta, July 4, 2013.

The Morelia Chamber of Industry (CANACINTRA) is an example of a distributive-oriented business organization. The chamber has only superficial participation in local economic policy, instead devoting its efforts to applying to subsidy programs managed by the state and federal governments. In contrast to peasant organizations such as the CCC, however, this organization is formally non-partisan, in line with state regulations and chamber bylaws. However, CANACINTRA is dependent on state distributive benefits to recruit and retain members and pursues these benefits to the exclusion of programmatic goals. This organization's narrow pursuit of state benefits is atypical for a business chamber, and is explained by the inability of organization leadership to adopt a service-delivery model in the wake of the revocation of mandatory chamber membership.

#### *Reliance on State Support for Member Recruitment*

Corporatist benefits helped secure organizational capacity for Mexican business chambers for decades. However, these supports subsided in the latter part of the twentieth century. Most damaging was the 1997 removal of the mandatory chamber membership requirement for firms. Today, the main benefit that the federal government offers chambers is the exclusive right to register firms in the Mexican Business Information System (SIEM), a database of firms that Mexican businesses are required to sign up for, at a nominal yearly charge, half of which accrues to the chamber. Interviewed chamber leaders report that the 1997 reform reduced their membership to less than a quarter of what it once was. The compensation in the form of yearly SIEM fees—from 100 to 670 pesos (roughly 6 to 37 US dollars) per business—helps cover basic operating expenses, but not to fund substantial events.

In this context, chambers followed one of two differing strategies for achieving organizational capacity. Chambers that have thrived in the past two decades and sustained their place as key actors in local economic policy have tended to do so by expanding the services that they offer to members. For example, the director of the Morelia Chamber of Commerce commented that they draw members in by operating as a consulting firm, IT support, and

social club wrapped into one.<sup>18</sup> Some chambers, however, like CANACINTRA, have fallen into the patronage trap. This chamber failed to develop the capacity to offer selective benefits internally, and narrows its state engagement to SIEM recruitment to keep the organization afloat.

Since this reform and the decline of the manufacturing industry in the state of Michoacán (of which Morelia is the capital), this organization has seen its membership decline precipitously, with roughly 1,600 members at the time of the interview.<sup>19</sup> Today, the chamber depends on the SIEM both for financial resources and for membership. The main source of financing for the delegation is the commission that they receive for signing firms up to the SIEM. But at least as important is the opportunity that the SIEM process gives the chamber to pitch CANACINTRA to prospective members. The manager of the CANACINTRA described the process: “The first people that have contact with business owners are the SIEM staff, those who go out in the streets and go door to door. That’s the first contact that a businessperson has with the people from CANACINTRA. They go with their uniforms, with their credentials, they explain to them what the SIEM is and what the chamber is. That’s where we get an influx of members.”

### *Superficial State Engagement*

Compared with programmatically oriented chambers, CANACINTRA has quite little contact with the state government or political processes. Contact with politicians and higher-level cabinet members is isolated to the president, who has irregular informal conversations with the governor and mayor and participates in only three consultative councils of the state government. According to the director of a business consultative council, CANACINTRA was only invited in 2010 and its representative’s engagement was superficial.<sup>20</sup> The Represen-

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<sup>18</sup> Author interview with Agustín Rebollar Cruz, General Director, CANACO-Morelia, July 5, 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Author interview with Delia Cárdenas Pedraza, General Manager, CANACINTRA, January 26, 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Author interview with Juan Carlos Vega Solórzano, Executive Director, Consultative Council for Economic Development of Michoacán, Morelia, Mexico, January 24, 2012.

tatives of CANACINTRA were only able to mention one programmatic policy goal pursued with the state government, a law that would have required that the state government allocate one percent of its budget to research and development, funds that would potentially be mediated through chambers.<sup>21</sup>

CANACINTRA maintains a distance from electoral politics. Chamber leaders do not make a practice of meeting with mayoral and gubernatorial candidates during electoral campaigns, organizing debates, or presenting candidates with proposals. Only once the newly elected governor, Fausto Vallejo, came into office in 2012, CANACINTRA would “invite him to get to know the facilities, to see how we are working, our plans, and how he can help us with the federal government.”<sup>22</sup> Centrally concerned with accessing federal support, from SIEM, Fondo PyME, and other programs, CANACINTRA looks to the governor for help accessing these programs, more than as a political actor with whom to lobby for state policies to benefit industrial firms.

### *Reproduction of State Dependence and Distributive Demand-Making*

Unable to sustain an ample membership base without this support, CANACINTRA devotes much of its resources to the process of recruiting business through the SIEM and intermediating federal programs that provide financial benefits for the organization and its members. Close to half of the delegation’s employees are young men and women who drive to businesses in the region on motorcycle, signing the businesses up for the SIEM, and receiving a commission for each firm enrolled. Having tailored its personnel and its recruitment strategy to access federal government programs, CANACINTRA is unequipped to play a role in programmatic demand-making. While interviewed personnel could cite programmatic goals—greater state investment in research and technology, improvements in education—the chamber delegation took little effort to further these goals in its state.

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<sup>21</sup>See: <https://www.quadratin.com.mx/educativas/Contara-Michoacan-con-nueva-Ley-de-Ciencia-Tecnologia-e-Innovacion/>

<sup>22</sup>Author interview with Delia Cárdenas Pedraza.

Rather, they explain that they rely on the federal CANACINTRA chamber and the CCE to draft and promote policy proposals.

As with patronage-oriented peasant organizations, CANACINTRA has specialized in gestión and since it has established this reputation, firms join with the expectation of receiving these benefits. Staff at the Centro México Emprende help members apply for loans and subsidies through Fondo PyME and to participate in training programs that are highly subsidized by the federal government and bring commissions to the chamber. For instance, members are often encouraged to participate in an online Harvard business administration course. This month-long course has an “official cost” of 5,500 pesos (about US\$400), but CANACINTRA members only have to pay 500 pesos, which accrues to the chamber. Members are drawn to CANACINTRA on the promise to access these types of benefits, and chamber staff struggle to get them to attend routine meetings or events with local politicians.

This case illustrates that the patronage trap is not exclusive to organizations representing popular-sector populations. Even an organization whose membership base is composed of relatively well-off small-business owners can neglect programmatic demand-making when its ability to generate desirable services internally erodes. However, in the case of CANACINTRA, the mechanism that led to a narrow focus on distributive benefits was not leadership entrenchment or a clientelist party linkage. Rather, given a set of state institutions designed to funnel money to chambers and a legal prohibition of chamber partisanship, this organization simply allocated its resources into pursuits that maximize state benefits rather than those that preserve a position for making policy demands.

## **Survey of Mexican Economic Interest Organizations**

In this section, I report findings from an original survey of state-level agricultural and small-business organizations in Mexico. I deploy these data to show that the ability to generate organizational capacity internally is at least as important a correlate of the organi-

zation’s demand type as its class position, the dominant explanation for programmatic and patronage demands in the literature.

The data analyzed here contain responses from 65 business organizations and 34 agricultural organizations, representing all of Mexico’s 31 states (excluding the Federal District). The survey was carried out between September and December 2012 and applied to elected presidents or hired directors of organizations belonging to Mexico’s two largest confederations of business chambers—CONCANACO (Chambers of Commerce) and CANACINTRA (Chambers of Industry)—and two prominent confederations of “dissident” agricultural organizations—CCC and ANEC. The survey for business organizations was implemented online and agricultural organizations were surveyed using a printed questionnaire that I distributed to leaders of these organizations at periodic national meetings.<sup>23</sup> The different modes were implemented to maximize response rates: while business organization leaders frequently use the internet in their day-to-day operations, many leaders of agriculture organizations are less comfortable with this medium.

*Class of Members:* The central measure of class—Percent Micro Members—allows me to observe within-sector variation. This variable is measured as the percent of the organization’s members that belong to the “micro” category for their sector (agricultural producers with less than ten hectares of land and business owners with fewer than ten employees), as reported by the organization leaders that took part in the survey. As the size of landholdings and the number of employees are closely associated with income in these two sectors, organizations with higher percentages of smallholder farmers or micro-entrepreneurs can be said to have lower-class memberships. I also interpret the broader comparison between the small-scale agricultural sector and the small-business sector as a source of class variation, given that

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<sup>23</sup>See Appendix A for more details on the survey, including data on the main sample and the sample excluding all units with incomplete data on organizational traits. Analysis in Appendix D replicates main findings using the latter sample, with consistent findings. Survey instruments, data, and R code used in analysis will be made available on the author’s webpage upon publication.

members of the former tend to be lower class, while small business owners generally belong to the middle class.

Resource Flows and Member Services are two traits of organizations that are determinative of their ability to generate organizational capacity internally.<sup>24</sup> I operationalize these two dimensions with discrete measures that can take the value of any integer between zero and five.

*Resource Flows:* A first indicator of organizational capacity is the diversity of an organization's resource flows. In order to conduct activities or provide services that appeal to members, organizations require financial resources. While it is difficult to establish an objective amount of funding that is sufficient for an organization, the diversity of an organization's funding sources is an observable trait that reflects an organization's financial autonomy. An organization that counts on several funding sources is less vulnerable to the withdrawal of any one. This variable is measured as a count of the number of sources of funds, from a list of five categories: membership fees, donations from the confederation, commissions for mediating subsidies, payments for services, and other lucrative activities.

*Member Services:* A second indicator of organizational capacity is the diversity of services that organizations offer to their members. Organizations typically must offer selective benefits to recruit, retain, and mobilize members. Thus, organizations that offer numerous member services likely enjoy membership autonomy. This variable is measured as a count of the number of different services offered to members, from a list of five categories: consulting or project design, access to credit, helping access government programs, providing economic or political information, and other services.

*Participation and Demand-Making:* Five indices capture different forms of political participation and demand-making for surveyed organizations. The first three indices correspond

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<sup>24</sup>See Appendix B for summary statistics of these variables and other organizational traits. A correlation matrix of organizational traits, also in Appendix B, shows that Resource Flows and Member Services have a relatively low Pearson correlation of 0.12, suggesting that these two measures capture distinct dimensions of organizational capacity. The only two traits with a statistically significant correlation are Member Services and Number of Members.

to different modes of political participation: *Institutional*—contacting bureaucrats or elected officials; *Electoral*—contacting political parties or participating in campaigns; and *Extra-Institutional*—organizing protests or media campaigns. The other two indices correspond to types of demands that organizations levy: *Programmatic*—demands that regard infrastructure investments and regulatory policy, the most common types of state policy that generate non-exclusive benefits for farmers and small-business owners; and *Distributive*—demands that regard subsidies and other distributive programs that generate exclusive benefits. The component measures for these indices are presented in Table 1. (Histograms of these indices are presented in Appendix C.) By including multiple measures, these indices provide a fuller representation of the different modes of policy participation and demand-making than any single indicator would. However, the findings that follow are robust to specifications that isolate individual component measures within the indices, as shown in Appendix D.

The central outcome of this study is reflected in the Programmatic Demands Index and Distributive Demands Index. If an organization is in the patronage trap, I expect it have a high score on the Distributive Demands Index—reflecting frequent participation in demand-making for government handouts—and a low score on the Programmatic Demands Index. An organization that has evaded the patronage trap scores highly on the Programmatic Demands Index, and may or may not engage in frequent distributive demand-making. Regarding state engagement, I expect an organization in the patronage trap to have high scores on Electoral Participation and low scores on Institutional and Extra-Institutional Participation, as such an organization is forced to forgo direct contact with politicians, protest, and media campaigns in favor of campaign mobilization. Finally, if my theory is correct, programmatic demands should be associated with non-electoral forms of participation—the Institutional and Extra-Institutional Participation indices—as I have argued that internally generated organizational capacity leads to programmatic demand-making by enabling broader forms of state engagement.

Table 1: Participation and Demand-Making Indices

Index	Measures Used
Institutional Participation (0-6)	(# of elected politicians contacted in last year) + (# of ministries contacted in the last year)
Electoral Participation (0-6)	<i>Business</i> : (# of political parties contacted in last year) + (# of member candidates for elected office in last 3 years) <i>Agriculture</i> : (ordinal frequency of party contact) + (dummy: formal party affiliation) + (dummy: member candidate for elected office in last 3 years) + (dummy: organization campaign benefits to members)
Extra-Institutional Participation (0-6)	<i>Business</i> : (ordinal frequency of media campaigns in last 5 years—max 5) + (dummy: protest in last 5 years) <i>Agriculture</i> : (ordinal frequency of media campaigns in last 5 years) + (ordinal frequency of protest in last 5 years)
Programmatic Demands (0-3)	(dummy: contacted ministry for programmatic issue in past year) + (dummy: contacted politician for programmatic issue in past year) + (dummy: protest or media campaign for programmatic issue in past year)
Distributive Demands (0-3)	(dummy: contacted ministry for distributive issue in past year) + (dummy: contacted politician for distributive issue in past year) + (dummy: protest or media campaign with distributive demands in past year)

*Note*: Unless denoted as dummy or specified, all component measures were standardized to scales running from zero to three. Electoral participation and extra-institutional participation indices vary between the two sectors to account for the fact that business organizations are barred from formal electoral endorsements and tend to concentrate extra-institutional demand-making in media campaigns.

Figure 2 shows the average scores and standard deviations of organizations surveyed in the agricultural and small-business sectors for each of these indices. Mean scores for agricultural organizations are higher than those for small-business organizations across all indices except Extra-Institutional Participation, but the high degree of dispersion demonstrates that within-sector variation is more substantial than across-sector variation, most notably in the Programmatic Demands Index. The largest cross-sectoral differences occur for the Electoral Participation and Distributive Demands indices, where the mean difference is greater than one point on the six-point scales. Notably, electoral participation and distributive

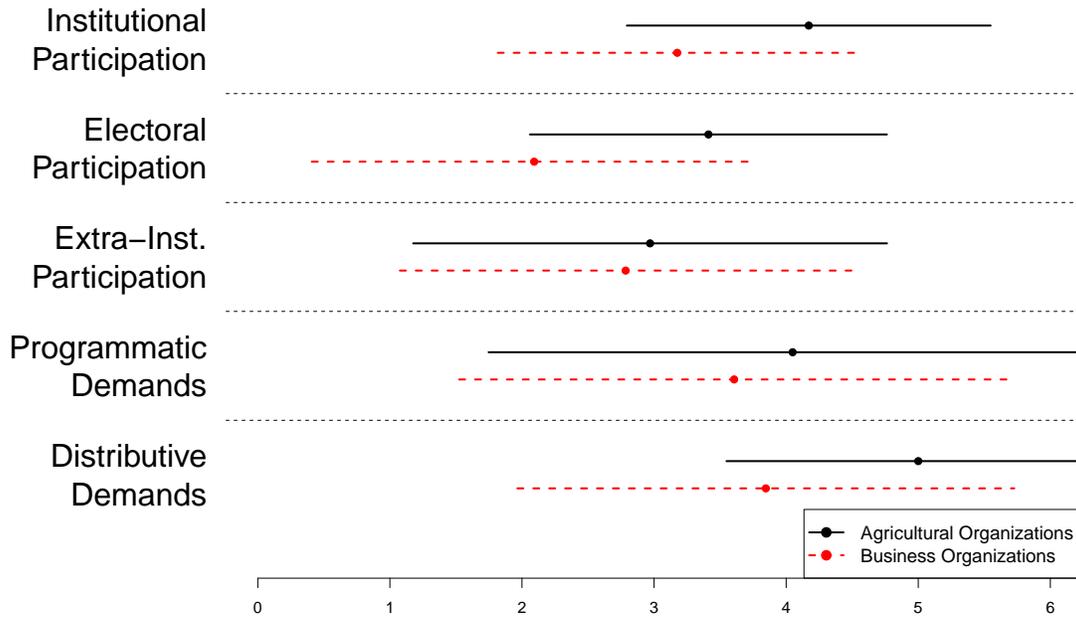


Figure 2: Cross-Sector Comparison of Participation and Demand-Making Indices

*Note:*  $N = 93$ . Programmatic and Distributive Demands indices were standardized to a six-point scale for ease of display.

demand-making are most closely associated with party dependence, suggesting that rural organizations are more vulnerable to the patronage trap than small-business organizations.

I proceed by conducting multivariate regression analyses (OLS), focusing on the relationships between the above-described indices and three organizational traits: Class Composition, Resource Flows, and Member Services. Multivariate models also include logged organization membership size as a control, a dummy variable to differentiate between agricultural and business organizations, and indicators of state-level electoral competition—ruling party and vote margin in the most recent gubernatorial election.

The findings in Table 2 support the assertion that organization capacity lends itself to broader forms of political participation and programmatic demand-making. Recall that institutional participation (direct contact with politicians and bureaucrats) and extra-institutional participation (protest or media campaigns) are the forms of participation predicted to be

conducive to programmatic demand-making. The variables associated with organizational capacity—Resource Flows and Member Services—are positively associated with these two forms of participation. More crucially, both indicators of organizational capacity are also positively associated with programmatic demand-making.<sup>25</sup> Taken together these findings are consistent with the argument that the ability of organizations to generate organizational capacity internally permits them to engage in policymaking processes that extend beyond patronage exchanges in the electoral arena.<sup>26</sup>

Indicators of organizational capacity do not have statistically significant relationships with Electoral Participation or Distributive Demand-Making, the variables associated with patronage-based linkages with political parties. This suggests that membership autonomy does not cause organizations to withdraw from electoral politics or distributive demand-making as much as it enables them to engage in broader forms of political participation and programmatic demand-making. The one covariate that is significantly associated with Distributive Demands is the size of the organization’s membership. Unsurprisingly, larger organizations more frequently lobby the state for handouts. Findings for sector suggest that small-business organizations are less vulnerable to the patronage trap than agricultural organizations as the former engage to a greater degree in non-electoral modes of participation and programmatic demand-making. However, an interaction between Sector and Member Services is negatively associated with Institutional and Extra-Institutional Participation. These self-generated selective benefits appear to be more important for enabling diverse

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<sup>25</sup>The association between Resource Flows and Programmatic Demands is short of statistical significance in this multivariate model. However, in the sensitivity analysis presented in Appendix D this association is positive when Member Services is excluded. Similarly, both Resource Flows and Member Services are significantly associated with Institutional Participation when included in these models in the absence of other organizational traits.

<sup>26</sup>See Appendix D for sensitivity analysis of the Institutional Participation and Programmatic Demands models using component measures of these indices. These findings are largely consistent with results using the indices—all associations between Resource Flows and Member Services and these measures are positive, mostly retaining statistical significance. Appendix D also replicates the models in Table 2 on a sample excluding the roughly 20 units with incomplete data on organizational traits.

Table 2: Multivariate Models of Organizational Participation and Demand-Making

	Institutional Participation	Electoral Participation	Extra-Inst. Participation	Programmatic Demands	Distributive Demands
Resource Flows	0.25* (0.13)	0.08 (0.17)	0.35** (0.16)	0.27 (0.20)	0.02 (0.17)
Member Services	0.90*** (0.25)	0.06 (0.44)	0.78** (0.33)	1.11*** (0.37)	0.08 (0.33)
% Micro Members	-0.54 (0.55)	0.85 (0.79)	0.15 (0.74)	-0.05 (0.88)	0.17 (0.78)
Business Sector	3.15** (1.20)	-1.04 (2.03)	4.37*** (1.53)	2.98* (1.76)	-0.78 (1.56)
log(No. of Members)	0.27** (0.11)	0.26 (0.16)	0.56*** (0.15)	0.34** (0.17)	0.49*** (0.15)
Ruling Party (PRI)	-0.30 (0.28)	-0.20 (0.38)	-0.31 (0.36)	-0.44 (0.44)	0.39 (0.39)
Ruling Party (PRD)	-0.08 (0.43)	-0.34 (0.59)	-1.08* (0.59)	0.58 (0.67)	0.01 (0.59)
Vote Margin	1.68 (1.14)	0.65 (1.59)	-1.41 (1.49)	3.53** (1.77)	0.03 (1.57)
Services:Business	-0.77*** (0.29)	0.10 (0.48)	-0.87** (0.37)	-0.52 (0.43)	0.19 (0.39)
(Intercept)	-2.26* (1.35)	0.28 (2.26)	-5.23*** (1.72)	-4.15** (1.98)	0.42 (1.75)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.37	0.19	0.33	0.32	0.27
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.30	0.10	0.25	0.24	0.18
Num. obs.	89	87	87	89	90

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \* $p < 0.1$

political participation in the more precarious agricultural sector yet predict programmatic demand-making in both sectors.

Percent Micro Members—a measure of class composition that varies among organizations in each sector—is not significantly associated with any of the indices. This lack of a finding for class holds up in a sensitivity analysis where Institutional Participation and Programmatic Demands indices are regressed on Percent Micro Members in the absence of other organizational traits (Appendix D).

Models also include measures of state-level electoral competition, including Ruling Party and Vote Margin in the most recent gubernatorial election, a measure of electoral compe-

tition. The ruling party appears to have little effect on organizational participation and demands, although organizations use extra-institutional tactics less often in states governed by the leftist PRD. Intriguingly, Vote Margin is positively associated with Programmatic Demand-Making, suggesting organizations make these demands to a lesser degree in states with higher levels of electoral competition.

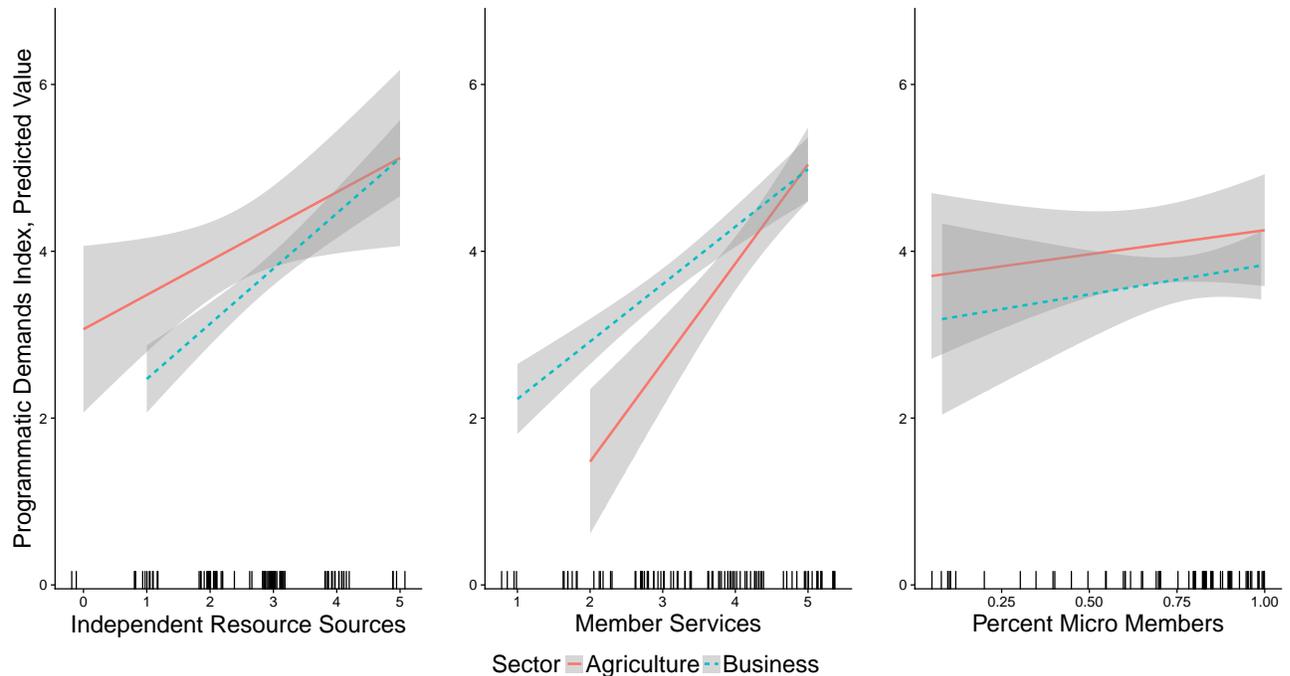


Figure 3: Class Composition and Programmatic Demand-Making, Predicted Values

*Note:*  $N = 89$ . Predicted values on the y-axes are drawn from Model 4 in Table 2. Shaded bands display 95 percent confidence intervals. Marks along the x-axes show distribution of independent variables. Jittering was used in panels 2 and 3 to distinguish scores on discrete variables.

The graphs in Figure 3 plot each of the three organizational traits against predicted values for the programmatic demand-making index, derived from the fourth regression model displayed in Table 2. These graphs are visual representations of the relationships between each trait and programmatic demand-making for each of the two sectors, controlling for the other variables included in the model. As displayed in panel three, organizations’ class composition appears to have no significant relationship with programmatic demand-making. If anything, organizations with lower-class memberships make more programmatic demands.

This finding suggests that the common argument in the party-linkage literature that lower classes are more likely to favor patronage (i.e. distributive benefits) over programmatic benefits does not extend to economic interest organizations in Mexico.

In contrast, panels one and two provide evidence that organizations in both sectors with more diverse resource flows and member services make more programmatic demands. Findings are consistent across the two sectors—agricultural organizations that have diverse resource flows and that offer multiple member services are predicted to participate just as much in programmatic demand-making as small-business organizations with similar organizational traits. Consistent with the findings for the interaction effect between Sector and Member Services in Table 2, these services appear to be particularly important for facilitating programmatic demand making for agricultural organizations. For each additional service that these organizations offer, they are predicted to increase about one point on the Programmatic Demands Index. Given the trenchant obstacles to collective action in the countryside, these self-generated selective benefits are a crucial tool to sustain engagement in the policy areas that shape sectoral competitiveness.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I ask why economic interest organizations sometimes make demands on behalf their sectors and other times focus their efforts on extracting patronage benefits that only accrue to the organization and its members. Similar questions, having to do with a social actor's scope of interests, have been asked in the context of party-voters linkages, labor unions, and social movements. However, until now, we have lacked a theory to explain the types of demands levied by interest organizations.

I construct such a theory, providing a new explanation for observed differences in demand-making based on the strategies that organizations pursue to generate organizational capacity. In the patronage trap equilibrium, failure to recruit and retain members through autonomously generated benefits causes organizations to focus their efforts on the extraction

of state benefits—often by entering into patronage-based linkages with political parties. This decision locks them into a self-reproducing cycle in which they prioritize access to distributive benefits over sectoral policy influence. I then illustrated the causal steps in this model and the parallel virtuous cycle of programmatic participation with case studies of two small-scale agricultural organizations and one business chamber in Mexico. Finally, I fostered evidence from an original survey of economic interest organizations, showing that resource flows and member benefits—indicators of organizations’ ability to generate organizational capacity internally—are associated with broader participation strategies and programmatic demand-making.

Social class, the prominent explanation for distributive and programmatic demands in the party-voter linkage literature, only tells part of the story when it comes to interest organizations. On the one hand, lower-class interest organizations are certainly more vulnerable to patronage pressures than middle-class organizations, both because these organizations suffer from resource and membership deficiencies and because their members demand government handouts. However, I have shown that we must turn our attention to the internal traits of organizations themselves to understand how organizations representing the lower classes can resist pressures to abandon programmatic interests in favor of patronage ties. Furthermore, I showed that other factors often hypothesized to affect organizations’ strategies—including leader entrenchment, interest divergence among members, and the presence of allies in government—do not independently explain demand outcomes. These variables either are not strongly associated with demand-making outcomes or emerge along the causal path only after an organization has adopted an autonomous or dependent mode of generating organizational capacity.

Future research may evaluate how the relationship between organizational capacity and demand-making travels to other types of organizations. The dynamics of the causal process outlined in the present analysis suggest that the source of organizational capacity is centrally important for *mass-membership* organizations that at some point have been involved in

*programmatic demand-making*, thus excluding either elite interests for whom membership is less of a concern or special-interest organizations that have no pretense of representing broad sectoral interests. With these limitations in mind, many cases qualify; scholars have found that service provision for group maintenance is a precondition for effective mobilization in cases as broad as violent insurgencies (Weinstein, 2006). to unemployed workers' movements (Garay, 2007).

Finally, while my goal here was to understand how organizations filter their members interests into policy demands, a separate analysis is required to address the natural follow-up question: *How are these demands translated into influence in the policymaking process?* To address this question, scholars must extend beyond the organization itself to analyze the political context within which it operates. Regardless of the way in which the organization positions itself, state actors have their own preferences regarding the types of policy processes to which they are willing to grant interest organizations access and the specific groups that they prefer to incorporate, preferences likely shaped by the electoral motives of ruling politicians. However, if organizations are not capable of or interested in pursuing demands for programmatic policies that stand to benefit their sectors, the question of whether politicians are amenable to programmatic appeals is moot.

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