

REORGANIZING  
POPULAR POLITICS



PARTICIPATION  
*and the*  
NEW INTEREST REGIME  
*in*  
LATIN AMERICA

*edited by*  
*Ruth Berins Collier*  
*and*  
*Samuel Handlin*

## Reorganizing Popular Politics

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*Participation and the New Interest Regime in Latin America*

Edited by Ruth Berins Collier and Samuel Handlin

The Pennsylvania State University Press  
University Park, Pennsylvania

Library of Congress  
Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Reorganizing popular politics : participation and the new interest regime in Latin America / edited  
by Ruth Berins Collier and Samuel Handlin.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Summary: "A comparative analysis of lower-class interest politics in Argentina, Chile, Peru, and  
Venezuela. Examines the proliferation of associations in Latin America's popular-sector  
neighborhoods, in the context of the historic problem of popular-sector voice and political  
representation in the region"—Provided by publisher.

ISBN 978-0-271-03560-4 (cloth : alk. paper)

ISBN 978-0-271-03561-1 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Working class—Latin America—Political activity.
2. Social movements—Latin America.
3. Pressure groups—Latin America.
4. Political participation—Latin America.

I. Collier, Ruth Berins.

II. Handlin, Samuel. JL966.R387 2009

322.4098—dc22 2009017035

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Printed in the United States of America

Published by

The Pennsylvania State University Press,  
University Park, PA 16802-1003

The Pennsylvania State University Press  
is a member of the  
Association of American University Presses.

It is the policy of The Pennsylvania State University Press to use acid-free paper. Publications on  
uncoated stock satisfy the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information  
Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Material, ANSI Z39.48-1992.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project is collaborative in the deepest sense. Unlike most edited volumes, which are bound more loosely by a common topic and perhaps some common guidelines, this volume, which had its genesis in a Berkeley graduate seminar, was conceived from the beginning as a unified whole. In the argot that developed among the collaborators, we came to call the project CIRELA, an acronym for Comparative Infrastructure of Representation in Latin America, and the participants cirelistas. Although the chapters are associated with specific authors, they are based empirically on data from the same questionnaires, written collaboratively by the original cirelista team, which consisted of Ruth Berins Collier, Diana Kapiszewski, and Jason Seawright, in addition to Christopher Cardona, Sebastián Mazzuca, and Sally Roever. All the authors thank the last three for the way they gave tirelessly to this endeavor, not only joining the others in endless hours into the night over untold numbers of pizzas (even in the Berkeley gourmet ghetto, excellent pizza can get tiresome), but also participating in the survey administration in the field. The cirelistas are grateful to Laura Stoker, who in her inimitable way discussed issues of sampling and survey design with unparalleled clarity and enthusiasm. We also acknowledge Peter Houtzager, John Harriss, and Adrián Gurza Lavalle, who contributed to the survey construction.

The empirical analysis is based on data from two surveys, a survey of individuals, dubbed the Qaire, and a survey of associations, or the Agram. Each was administered in four capital cities in Latin America: Buenos Aires, Argentina; Santiago, Chile; Lima, Peru; and Caracas, Venezuela. We have relied on the help of many people in each country, without whom the data collection would not have been possible. The Qaire was administered by a professional survey firm in each country: TNS Gallup of Argentina, Statcom in Chile, APOYO in Peru, and COMO in Venezuela. The Agram was administered by a cirelista country coordinator (see [appendix B](#)) along with local researchers, who were indispensable in sharing their expertise in

general and in helping to select and oversee a local team of interviewers. We want to thank the association leaders who devoted time to answering the survey questions and were usually enthusiastic about sharing their activities, organizational goals, and plights with our research team.

In Argentina, we benefited greatly from the generosity of the Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad, CEDES, in Buenos Aires, which provided space, access to their information, and continual support for the implementation of the project. We especially thank Inés González Bombal and Mario Roitter for their generous support and advice as well as CEDES's director, Silvina Ramos. Several sociologists at the Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento also provided advice and support, especially Maristella Svampa and Pablo Bonaldi. Several people participated in the implementation of the survey of association leaders and in the collection of secondary data. Among the interviewers, we would like to acknowledge the outstanding work provided by Gabriela Alach, Liliana Alegre, Arturo A. Fernández, María Gioaninni, Julieta Grimberg, Carolina Kostenbaum, Mónica A. Marra, Ulises Pallares, and Juan Ignacio Vallejos. A team of interviewers trained at the Universidad de General Sarmiento, composed of Mariana Barattini, Lorena Bottaro, Lucía Canel, Marina García, and Fabiana Leoni, provided outstanding work and was key in implementing the survey of association leaders in half of the focus districts. Gabriela Alach worked as assistant field coordinator during the first part of the implementation of the survey of association leaders. Alejandro Bonvecchi provided help coordinating the data entry. Juan Ignacio Vallejos and Julieta Grimberg provided research assistance and collected all the secondary data gathered for the project.

In Chile, the field coordinator for the Agram was Professor Marco A. Fernández (Instituto de Ciencia Política de la Universidad Católica de Chile), and the field assistant was Francisco Javier Carreras Vicuña (who was, at the time, pursuing an MA at the Universidad Alberto Hurtado). The members of the team of student interviewers who administered the Agram were Alejandro Maureira Matta, Carlos Vásquez Bustos, Carolina Bascuñán Escobar, Carolina Muenya Moyano, Carolina Olsen Hernández, Claudia Casal Cordero, Esteban Ferreira Urrea, Felipe Andrés Padilla Poblete, Francisca Laguardia Sotomayor, Gloria Alejandra de la Fuente González, Javier Durbalin Estrada, Jazmín Voigth Vallejos, Karen Contreras



Orellana, Luz Cecilia Soto Mendoza, Mauricio Leone Araya, and Patricio Orlando Ibarra Cifuentes. We gratefully acknowledge Paulina Valenzuela and the entire staff of Statcom Estadísticas Consultores Ltda. who did an excellent job administering the Qaire, and doing data input and database construction for both the Qaire and the Agram. Katty Kauffman provided generous hospitality, encouragement, and expertise on Chile. Professor Gabriel Davidovics (Centro de Estudios de Opinión Pública, Universidad de Chile) kindly gave patient assistance. Finally, we would like to thank the staff of various municipalities, including Cerro Navia, Estación Central, Huechuraba, La Pintana, Peñalolén, and San Ramón, who were helpful in various ways as we conducted our research in their areas.

The Peru research team received guidance from Julio Calderón, as local adviser, and Luis Vicuña Muñoz, who served as field coordinator. We thank them both for their help across many aspects of the fieldwork. Two Berkeley undergraduates were very helpful in the field, Azrael Guevara and Camilo Romero. We also acknowledge the contributions made by the Agram interviewers: Masha Vásquez Luque, Yerson M. Guarníz Aranda, Dania Franco Vaisman, María del Rosario Castro Bernardini, Félix Lossio, Juan Alberto Rocha, Saúl Vicuña Montañez, Verónica Boggio. Finally, a number of individuals from the survey firm Apoyo S.A. deserve special thanks for their valuable role in helping to pretest the Qaire in Lima: Sandra Manrique Becerra, Jorge Morales, Luis Caceda Zavala, Silvia Raquel Durand, Silvia Mas Lozada, Agustín Asenjo Valdivia, and Patricia Esther Quiróz Ruíz.

In Venezuela, the field coordinator for the Agram was Mailet Carolina Alen Fajardo, of the Departamento de Ciencia Política de la Universidad Simón Bolívar. We thank her and also extend our appreciation to Olga María Avilés Arjona, Viviana González, Anais Colmenares, David Gil, and Wilmer Jordán Flores Arévalo for their work on the Agram. Alfredo Torres Uribe and the entire staff of Como S.A. carried out the enormous task of administering, doing data input, and completing database construction for the Qaire. Professor Adolfo Vargas of the Universidad Simón Bolívar offered invaluable assistance, including access to collateral data sets. Gustavo Mata, then an undergraduate student of political science at Berkeley, provided both hospitality and extensive research assistance. Finally, we would like to thank the staff of the Instituto Nacional de

Estadística in Venezuela, who provided several maps and demographic data sets that made the completion of this project possible, as well as the local governments of various municipalities and parishes within the Caracas area, including Petare, San Agustín, La Vega, La Candelaria, 23 de Enero, and Sucre, which were helpful in various ways as we conducted our research in their areas.

This project would not have been possible without funding from a number of sources. We greatly appreciate the generous support of Mick Moore and the Center for the Future State of the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. The Berkeley Institute for Research on Labor and Employment provided a welcome home during much of this project in addition to financial support. We also benefited from funding from the Berkeley Center for Latin American Studies and a grant from the Committee on Research as well as the University of California Institute for Labor and Employment.

In the period after the data collection, a number of Berkeley's talented graduate students helped in many ways, from data management and research assistance to insightful comments on the analysis. Taylor Boas, Maiah Jaskoski, and Lindsay Mayka gave invaluable assistance at various stages. We also would like to acknowledge Mauricio Benítez, Tasha Fairfield, Bea Gurwitz, and Wendy Sinek. We also express our thanks to two undergraduates, Maritza Trejo and Daniel Katz, who tirelessly provided computer and technical support. In addition, we thank Margaret Keck, who commented on earlier drafts of several chapters.

An earlier version of parts of [chapters 2](#) and [3](#) were published as part of "Democratization and the Popular Interest Regime in Latin America," in *The Diversity of Democracy: Corporatism, Social Order, and Political Conflict*, ed. Colin Crouch and Wolfgang Streeck (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2006).

# Part I

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## Interest Politics and the Popular Sectors

## Introduction: Popular Representation in the Interest Arena

*Ruth Berins Collier and Samuel Handlin*

Latin America has experienced a historical discontinuity in the last quarter century in the context of two global macrosocial processes—international economic restructuring, often referred to under the rubric of globalization, and the third wave of democratization. Democracy became pervasive in the region, with virtually all countries having competitive electoral regimes after a period of widespread military rule. The regime transitions opened new possibilities for societal demand making and new expectations for the accountability of state officials, holding out the promise of more inclusive and integrative polities in countries that throughout the twentieth century had been marked by exclusionary political dynamics, difficulties incorporating the working classes into mass politics, and trouble sustaining democratic regimes in the face of popular demands. In this context, new associations were founded, creating a more vibrant civil society than had previously existed in the region, including a proliferation of organizations around lower-class interests. Yet the adoption of market-oriented economic models entailed profound socioeconomic change that in many ways made this democratic victory a problematic one for the working or lower classes. These groups constitute the majority of the population, who were presumably empowered by the new democracies, yet remained losers under the economic reforms, as inequality and often even poverty increased. By the turn of the twenty-first century, a reaction began that in

some countries saw the election of “leftist” presidents of various stripes, who in office began to follow through on their campaign promises with expanded social programs to reach the lower classes, who had been largely excluded from the benefits of economic growth. This initial unresponsiveness and the new attention to the plight of the lower classes underline the question of popular political representation as a pivotal issue in Latin America’s new democracies.

Central to exploring this question is the fact that the dramatic changes in economic models and political regimes have been accompanied by a major shift in the *urban popular interest regime* in the region, the organizations through which the urban popular sectors, or the lower and lower middle classes, have sought to pursue their interests.<sup>1</sup> Through the twentieth century, the most important organizations through which the urban lower classes framed and attempted to promote their interests were labor unions. They were not the only popular-sector organizations, but they were politically privileged both by their own resources and capacity to undertake collective action and typically by their affiliation to political parties (notwithstanding the often double-edged implications of that affiliation). The new economic models have challenged this privileged position of unions. The shift from state-led to market-oriented economic models has produced significant changes in both the state and the world of work. Changes in the role of the state have redrawn the public-private boundary, shifting the arena in which people seek solutions to social problems. Changes in labor markets and labor processes have made work-related solidarities and collective action more difficult to construct and maintain. The move to labor market flexibility and the relative rise of informal workers have challenged the position of unions and put them on the defensive. With the new economic model, unions have become a problematic support base for governing parties that oversee policies of economic reform. As the position of unions has been challenged, a new interest regime has emerged with the proliferation and activation of a broad array of urban popular associations, including community-based associations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

We refer to this shift in interest regime as one from the <sub>UP</sub>-Hub (unionparty hub) to the A-Net (associational networks). The labels

emphasize three main points of contrast. First, the two interest regimes are constituted by the predominant role of different primary organizations as “base units”—unions in the <sub>UP</sub>-Hub, as opposed to a diverse array of urban popular associations in the A-Net. Second, the role of parties differs. Parties were central in the <sub>UP</sub>-Hub, as unions were typically affiliated to and constituted the core support base of different forms of labor-based parties (<sub>LBPS</sub>), either populist or Marxist inspired. Parties play a much less central role in the A-Net, as associations typically have more distant, intermittent, instrumental relations to parties, if they have any at all. Third is a contrast between the structure or internal order of the two interest regimes. The <sub>UP</sub>-Hub was constituted by the central, privileged, and dominant role of unions as organizations of interest intermediation, although nonunion organizations of course also existed. Furthermore, the union hub was structured hierarchically into federations and national peak confederations. In contrast, the A-Net does not have a privileged, clearly defined organizational hub, nor is it hierarchically structured in the same way, although it includes many organizations that are oriented to coordinating others. Instead, its structural form is the network, an ordering that is more horizontal and fluid, and in which no particular type of organization is privileged.

While the present analysis focuses explicitly on contemporary patterns, a cross-temporal comparison, based on the idea of the shift from the <sub>UP</sub>-Hub to the A-Net, underlies the book analytically and is explicitly addressed in [chapters 2 and 3](#). The emergence of a <sub>UP</sub>-Hub in the first half of the twentieth century and its subsequent decline and replacement by the A-Net toward the end of the century reflects a more general historical transition that is not limited to Latin America. The <sub>UP</sub>-Hub was constituted by a set of institutions that arose, albeit in quite different forms, in many regions of the world among countries undergoing early industrialization. It emerged from political contestation over the incorporation of the urban working class into mass politics, and was sustained by a world economy whose dynamism was based on leading economies oriented primarily toward industrial production for the domestic market. The transition to more market-oriented economies, which has corresponded to closer integration of the international economy, has generally challenged the <sub>UP</sub>-Hub, though the extent of its decline has varied across world regions and countries. The rise of urban associationalism is likewise a more general pattern, widely noted in many

other developing countries, and the phenomenon has some similarities with the rise of the new social movements in the advanced industrial countries (Touraine 1981; Melucci 1980; Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Kriesi et al. 1995; Habermas 1996).<sup>2</sup>

Within Latin America, where the  $_{UP}$ -Hub has been severely challenged, the fundamental changes we are witnessing may constitute a “new critical juncture.” In an earlier critical juncture of “labor incorporation” in the first half of the twentieth century, the challenge of popular participation and the transition to mass politics led to the legalization of the labor movement as a legitimate political actor and to its partisan affiliation (Collier and Collier 1991). These party-affiliated unions, even in those countries where they never came to encompass a large percent of the working classes, thereby became the major structures of interest articulation and interest intermediation of the popular sectors, constituting the  $_{UP}$ -Hub as the first popular interest regime. The present analysis looks at a potential new critical juncture in the contemporary period in which these structures have been challenged, and new patterns of participation and new structures of representation are emerging. These structures potentially encompass a greater segment of the popular sectors: if the  $_{UP}$ -Hub privileged the newly created formal working class, the A-Net is more inclusive of the informal sectors, groups likely to be especially relevant in contemporary Latin American politics given the dramatic expansion of the informal sector in the past twenty-five years. However, the extent to which these structures of representation attract the participation of the popular sectors is a crucial empirical question for examination, as are how they represent the popular sectors and how their activities intersect with the electoral/partisan arena.

Analysts disagree about the implications of the new pattern for popular representation. Some have seen in the new urban associationalism new forms of citizenship, the emergence of new actors, and new sources of citizen activation and participatory processes that, compared to hierarchical, bureaucratized party-affiliated unions or clientelistic patterns, have more potential for authentic representation and accountability. Others have seen instead a crisis of popular representation: resource-poor, fragmented associations that have limited reach or political influence and that may be limited and ineffective in their capacity to represent popular interests. Of

course, still others have sought to find a middle ground between these contrasting images.<sup>3</sup> Our goal is to explore this middle ground further. Beyond noting that reality falls between extremes, we seek to examine traits and patterns characterizing that middle ground along a series of dimensions and to undertake a comparative analysis that indicates where countries fall within that multidimensional space. What do these patterns suggest about channels for the expression of popular voice? To what extent does the new interest regime provide a potentially effective organizational infrastructure for expressing popular interests? To what extent do associations provide an effective channel either in advancing popular demands in the interest arena or in connecting with political parties?

Existing literature provides insufficient empirical evidence for addressing these questions. Several studies explore individual participation in the interest arena, looking at associational participation or other kinds of problem-solving strategies among the poor.<sup>4</sup> Others have examined the activities of associations, looking at specific neighborhood associations, NGOs, or social movement organizations.<sup>5</sup> Still others have examined novel forms of policy-making institutions in which citizens and associations have an influential role, most notably “participatory budgeting” institutions.<sup>6</sup> However, these studies are generally limited to a single country—indeed sometimes to one or two neighborhoods—making broader generalization difficult and providing a limited basis for explaining variation. Despite the new attention that civil society, social and human capital, social movements, and participatory governance have received in the comparative politics literature and in policy debates in multilateral organizations, no cross-national studies bring systematic evidence to bear on the set of questions on which this project focuses.

This book attempts to map and explore these issues by undertaking a systematic analysis of the metropolitan areas of the capital cities of four South American countries—Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Venezuela. These four countries display substantial variation in terms of socioeconomic level, timing and conditions of economic reform, historic strength and political mobilization of the urban working classes, traditional union-party relations, and party system stability. The analysis is based on data from the CIRELA



project (Comparative Infrastructure of Representation in Latin America) generated from two original surveys conducted in the capital cities of each country, primate cities containing 15 to 30 percent of the national population. A survey of individuals ( $n = 5,600$ ) employed a random sample of the entire population in each capital city, as well as an oversample within eight popular-sector focus districts selected to produce variation in terms of income level and history of <sub>LBP</sub> or leftist voting among the focus districts. A survey of associations ( $n = 960$ ) was also conducted within the same focus districts of each capital city, employing a chain-referral technique and using associational leaders as respondents.<sup>7</sup>

The rest of this chapter accomplishes four tasks. First, it introduces the concepts of the interest arena and of “the political,” particularly as it pertains to activity within the interest arena. Second, it raises the question of how to approach the concept of representation in the interest arena, an issue that has not received much attention, since most discussions of representation concern the electoral arena. Third, given the focus on representation of and participation by the lower classes, the chapter discusses the concept of the popular sectors as a socioeconomic category or “class” group defined with reference to a materialist dimension. This issue arises in the context of recent strands in the literature that problematize class and emphasize the rise of postmaterialist issues. Finally, the analysis is situated in the political science literature on political participation and interest groups.

## Political Activity in the Interest Arena

Approaches to exploring representation and participation may focus on two different sites in the democratic polity. The first is the electoral arena, in which recruitment to state office is contested. In this arena, participation through the ballot box and representative relationships between elected officials and constituencies are structured by a set of constitutionally specified institutions, formal electoral laws, and rules regulating political parties, the main organizational actors in this arena. Though participation in the electoral arena may be related to the goals of affecting policy and pursuing interests, it has been recognized as a blunt mechanism for

signaling policy preferences or pursuing specific interests (Lowi 1964; Verba, Nie, and Kim, 1978). A second site of participation and representation is the interest arena, the considerably more informal locus of specific interest articulation and problem solving, in which both individuals and organizations are important actors. The two arenas do not operate in isolation from each other—parties and politicians with an electoral calculus in mind operate in the interest arena, and interest groups may attempt to shape electoral competition—but they are constituted by different activities and sets of institutions, and the distinction between the two arenas has traditionally proven to be useful for analyzing different processes of representation or attempts of citizens to solve problems politically. The primary focus of this study is the interest arena.

The interest arena is the site in which specific interests are articulated and pursued by individuals and organizations—activities that are conceptualized in this study as forms of political problem solving. In exploring patterns of problem-solving activity, we take two complementary approaches that focus respectively on the actions of individuals and on the operation of interest organizations. First, then, we focus on the pattern of individual participation: who participates, how do they do so, and toward what ends? A second focus is the popular interest regime, or the organizations that represent the popular sectors in the interest arena and their pattern of relations, both among themselves and with states and parties. What kinds of organizations exist for advancing popular-sector interests and what strategies do they pursue? Further, what are the salient aggregate traits of the interest regime? Of particular concern are its scope, level of scaling, access—or the degree to which associations seem able to engage in activities in which they seek to access the state in order to present claims—and autonomy. This final trait, which has become central in many discussions of structures of state-society intermediation, is fraught with difficulties in terms of both conceptual clarity and observation or measurement. In the present analysis, therefore, we approach the issue of autonomy primarily through the lens of associational dependence on the state, which *may* challenge autonomy (see [chapter 3](#)).

Whether undertaken by individuals or organizations, we define political action in the interest arena in terms of a wide, but delimited, range of activities. We extend the rubric to cover state-targeted problem solving as

well as some but not all forms of society-targeted activity. Excluded are problem-solving activities pursued through the market, through family connections, or through “private” patron-client relationships—that is, through influential people outside the state who directly solve problems rather than serving as intermediaries between individuals and the state. As such, we do not exclude a prevalent and politically important form: clientelistic or patronage-based relationships, which involve government actors or patrons whose power derives from their access to state resources and largesse.

What, then, do we include as political activity in the interest arena? Many studies of individual participation (e.g., Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995) have tended to limit the purview of political activities to those that involve interacting with, petitioning, and otherwise making claims on the state to influence policy. However, participation studies have often resorted to an ad hoc list when operationalizing political action in the interest arena, and one that is not consistent with the restrictive definition of the political as state-targeted acts. For instance, the influential studies by Verba and his colleagues (1978:46; 1995:38) adopt a state-targeted definition of the political, but then include activities through which participants act cooperatively to “deal with some social issue” (Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978:54) or “work with others on [a] local problem” or participate in a “community problem-solving organization” (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995:72). Dietz (1998:7) “solves” the inconsistency by adopting a broader definition of the political in which he includes both what he labels “formal” and “informal” political participation. The former consists of attempts to influence the selection and/or policy decisions of state personnel, while the latter is defined as “individual or collective efforts to supply oneself and neighbors with public goods, sometimes but not always through attempts to obtain a favorable distribution of government resources.” Thus, informal participation may consist of communal problem solving. Although Rosenstone and Hansen use a more restricted operationalization in their study, they adopt a similar, broad definition of political participation: “political participation is action directed explicitly toward influencing the distribution of social goods and social values” (1993:4).

The present study adopts a similarly expansive approach to political participation in the interest arena. In addition to directly engaging in activities that target the state, an individual may participate in associations, which in turn may be oriented to either state-targeted claim making or the society-targeted provision of benefits.

At the level of interest organizations, conceptions of the political have varied considerably. The mainstream literature on interest groups, parallel to the literature on political participation, also tends to adopt a conception of the political that is restricted to state-targeted activities. A related literature on civil society, on the other hand, sometimes takes a very broad, inclusive approach, adopting a conception of voluntary associations as inherently political. Brysk (2000:153), for instance, defines civil society as “public and political association outside the state . . . [whose] political role is not just to aggregate, represent, and articulate interests, but also to create citizens, to shape consciousness, and to help define what is public and political.”

The present approach to delimiting political organizations lies between these extremes. Organizations considered political are not so broadly defined as to include those that empower citizens or promote skill acquisition virtually by their very existence; nor, parallel to the above discussion of individual political participation, do we limit the definition of political organizations to those engaged in state-targeted action. Rather, the present analysis includes organizations through which popular-sector groups seek to solve collective problems through society-targeted strategies of provisioning (distributing goods, services, and information to the community and organizing community events) as well as capacity building (financing and creating other organizations or training leaders). These strategies of solving collective problems without necessarily going to the state are parallel, for example, to the collective bargaining role of unions vis-à-vis employers, which has traditionally referred to activities within the interest regime, quite apart from demands unions target at the state.

Thus, at the level of both individual participation and organizational activity, the present analysis adopts an approach that does not restrict the political to state-targeted activity but also includes certain forms of society-targeted activity that attend to areas of social need that the state might address but, for a variety of reasons, does not (or not sufficiently). The

present conceptualization of the political is thus not held hostage to the set of policies that at any particular moment or place define the limits of state action. This conception includes group or organizational activity with the goal of collective solutions to public or shared problems that, as Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995:41) put it, “are also undertaken by governments [in Latin America] and abroad”; it is a conception that is drawn with reference to “functional overlap with public institutions.” It is particularly relevant to Latin America, where, with the recent retreat of the state, important areas of economic and social policy are no longer under state coordination, leaving people to seek solutions collectively through cooperation and the pooling of effort and resources. Examples might include a neighborhood watch organization formed to increase public security because this service is poorly provided by the state, or an NGO formed to provide information on public health or AIDS awareness to low-income communities.

In sum, various types of activities in the interest arena will be considered as political in the present study. Individuals can try to solve particularistic problems through state institutions (courts, for example, presenting claims before a state agency or office) or appealing to a political actor—that is, a party or elected official. Individuals can also get involved in presenting claims for collective or social issues, through petitions, protest, or through participation in associations that engage in claim-making strategies. Associations for their part may engage not only in these state-targeted activities of claim making, but also in society-targeted activities of distributing social goods or services.

## Political Representation in the Interest Arena

Underlying the analysis in this volume is a concern with political representation in the interest arena, a subject not often tackled by political theorists pursuing the issue of representation, who have tended to focus instead on the electoral arena. Electoral politics is the site in which citizens participate in the recruitment and selection of authoritative policy makers, yet it is not an arena where precise, unambiguous, or even identifiable interests or preferences are communicated. As Riker (1982:xviii) stated,

“outcomes of voting are, or may be, inaccurate or meaningless amalgamations [so that] what the people want cannot be known.” The interest arena, by contrast, is the site in which specific interests are articulated and pursued by individuals and organizations—activities that are conceptualized in this study as forms of problem solving. How, then, might one think about representation in relation to the interest arena?

This question has often been a central analytic and normative issue in empirical studies of the interest arena. The literature reveals a persistent tension. Although the interest arena allows for more refined and specific “inputs” into the decision-making organs of the state, it is an arena of representation that is often understood as endemically biased, at the level of both individual participation and the infrastructure of interest organizations in the aggregate. At the individual level, studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between socioeconomic status and many forms of political participation (Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995). Of particular relevance to the interest regime, Olson (1965) has argued that individuals whose interests are more general and shared with more people will likely be free riders rather than participants in collective action. The implication is that special interests will organize more readily than those with more general interests, a result that has implications for bias, at the systemic level of the interest regime, in favor of smaller, concentrated special interests. Empirically, many studies of American politics have demonstrated a persistent bias toward the interests of big business or capital in general (Lindblom 1977; Cigler and Loomis 1991; Baumgartner and Leech, 1998). As Schattschneider famously said, “the flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent” (1960:35). In the Latin American context, this kind of bias has been much explored in the context of both post–World War II (O’Donnell 1977; P. Evans 1979; B. Schneider 1991) and contemporary politics (Shadlen 2002; Kurtz 2004b). As mentioned above, however, another strain of literature has suggested that the growth of associationalism in Latin America provides the potential that systemic bias, while not disappearing, may be ameliorated.<sup>8</sup>

The question of bias or “equality” in the interest arena has thus been central, but it has been a difficult one to analyze and conceptualize. Despite

its importance, many political theorists of representation pay scant attention to the interest arena and instead focus on the electoral arena and specifically on the act of representing, particularly on the behavior of an elected agent in relation to his or her constituency. The axis of debate within this approach revolves around what Pitkin (1967:144–67) identifies as the classic “Mandate-Independence Controversy” and Mansbridge (2003) as the Mandate-Trustee distinction. Does representation primarily entail fulfilling the mandate of one’s constituents as expressed by their demonstrated preferences, or does it require an agent to make decisions independently in order to further the constituency’s underlying interests? The divergent interpretations of O’Donnell (1994) and Stokes (2001) concerning whether Latin American presidents enacting “neoliberalism by surprise” were representing their constituencies is an example of this debate. These different conceptions are not often presented as such stark alternatives in practice and rarely are portrayed as such by political theorists. In that sense, Pitkin (1967:153) suggests that agents must have the latitude to act independently, but that divergence between constituent preferences and the agent’s actions must be few, far between, and justifiable on the part of the agent. Often unanalyzed in these theoretical discussions, but more routinely recognized in empirical studies, is the central idea that representatives are influenced by the expression of preferences through the interest system.

Mansbridge introduces the idea that the interest system is important for political representation. In delineating types of representation she explicitly draws on the empirical literature, and the type she conceptualizes as “anticipatory representation” makes room for the expression of preferences and interests by organized groups (2003:516–20). Representation of this type is based on two-way communication and “mutual education between legislator and constituents.” In this communicatory approach the interest arena becomes central, along with other channels and structures of communication, as it is a component of the representative-constituency relationship. In this respect, Mansbridge points to the importance of “the entire representative process—including political parties, political challengers, the media, interest groups, hearings, opinion surveys, and all other processes of communication.” This conception of representation is broader than the behavior of the agent, so that the key question is “how well

the entire representative system contributes to ongoing factually accurate and mutually educative communication” (2003:518–19).

For Mansbridge, the notion of equality is not an important component of representation. The problem for—or threat to—this type of representation is not unequal voice among societal interests, but manipulation of information by the representative. The idea of equal access or voice is discussed, but more important in this conception is the quality of deliberation, which does not require equal access and is instead more dependent on communication by the representative in a way that educates the represented rather than obscures the real issues.

The notion of equality, however, underlies another approach to representation: descriptive representation. Descriptive representation and its emphasis on egalitarianism and proportionality is most useful for our present consideration of the interest arena. In everyday language, people often employ a notion of representation that centers on the congruence of characteristics of the representative and the represented. At the center of this conception is the question of whether the composition of the population is mirrored by the composition of government. As Pitkin (1967:60) notes, this approach was deeply rooted in the ideas of many of the founders of the American republic, such as John Adams, who wrote that a representative legislature “should be an exact portrait, in miniature, of the people at large, as it should think, feel, reason, and act like them.” This notion is the one that underlies the idea of a “representative” sample in methodology. Descriptive representation is centrally concerned with the distribution of interests or traits. It is not just that X represents Hispanics or women in the Congress, but that the proportion of those interests or traits in Congress should be roughly that in the population at large, just as PR systems are designed to give roughly proportional legislative representation to interests organized as political parties.

This conception is based on an implied egalitarianism; hence the consequences for proportional distribution in either the electoral or interest arena. In the electoral arena, this underlying notion of equality is institutionalized in modern representative democracies in the provision for universal suffrage, which establishes the legal equality of all citizens in the electoral arena. Distortions in the way this fundamental equality may be translated into unequal political influence are generally considered



politically and normatively problematic. Bias is most commonly examined in terms of the translation of votes into seats, and institutions such as the electoral law and federal arrangements have received much attention in this respect. Distortions in the relative power of constituencies produce, for example, the “overrepresentation” of rural voters in many Latin American legislatures or the “underrepresentation” of more progressive parties.<sup>9</sup> Some scholars also see distortions in patterns of registration and turnout (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995).<sup>10</sup>

Parallel considerations arise in the interest arena, where an underlying concern of bias runs throughout much literature. This egalitarian conceptualization of representation is implicit in the early pluralist tradition, which largely dismissed concerns of bias, assuming an equilibrium notion in which interest groups would form as needed to present demands and counterdemands. It is also implicit in subsequent research that found and problematized bias in the interest arena, whether focusing on mechanisms at the individual level, such as differential “group” collective action problems or resources (Olson 1965; Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), or elaborating on a more systemic bias (Schattschneider 1960; McConnell 1966; Lindblom 1982; Walker 1991). This kind of bias in descriptive representation was the focus of analysis of Verba, Schlozman, and Brady in their arguments about representational distortion—the differential rates of political participation by richer and poorer groups in associational life as well as in voting.

But an analysis of representational distortion in the interest arena must examine more than the rate of participation by individuals belonging to different social groups: it must of course also take into account the role of organizations in the interest arena. At this level, assessing representational distortion in the interest regime is particularly difficult precisely because of the nature of the “units” represented in the interest regime. The group unit presents two particular difficulties. First, as Baumgartner and Leech (1998:117) have pointed out, no clear baseline or reference point—no uncontested set of “societal groups”—exists from which to observe the existence or magnitude of representational distortion of actual organizations. Second, unlike the formal equality of the vote in the electoral arena, no institutional mechanisms provide a basis for or even the pretence

of equality of organizations in the interest arena (Baumgartner and Leech 1998:34–35). In the electoral arena, the weighting of the vote is clear and transparent, and distortions due to malapportionment, a constitutional “preference” for representing subnational units, or other factors such as the electoral law are easy to discern and even measure. In contrast, groups in the interest arena are assumed to wield greatly divergent influence over state officials and the policies they make. As many scholars have noted, describing relative power may be possible with regard to specific policies, but observing and assessing relative levels of influence by social groups at a systemic level is exceptionally difficult (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1988:727).

The present study deals with this latter problem by putting aside the question of influence (and notions of representation based on responsiveness) and by focusing on descriptive representation, following a more pragmatic approach in line with the advice of Baumgartner and Leech and similar to the approach of Verba, Scholzman, and Brady. Specifically, this project contributes to an analysis of representation in the interest arena through a more limited and tractable focus on (1) patterns of popular participation, comparing that of the popular sectors with that of the middle classes, and on (2) traits of the organizational infrastructure through which the popular sectors attempt to solve collective problems. Participation in the interest arena constitutes a step prior to influence and effectiveness; it is the first stage in the process of representation. The question of whether the popular sectors are capable of affecting meaningful policy decisions is one of the dominant themes of the debate on popular representation in contemporary Latin America. But to begin to explore this question, we must first have a broad empirical picture of the pattern of participation of the popular sectors in politics and the nature and activities of popular organizations that further their interests and intermediate between them and the state.

## The Popular Sectors and the Question of Class Politics

This volume is motivated by the historically problematic nature of popular-sector inclusion in politics in Latin America. Mass political inclusion has

been a source of conflict in the region since the decline of oligarchic dominance. Throughout the twentieth century most countries were unable to make the transition to mass politics successfully. Rather, two dominant patterns emerged: either institutions were founded that effectively controlled and co-opted the political voice of the working classes, or, in the face of what the elite viewed as the political threat of excessive lower-class influence, democracies were overturned in favor of coercive authoritarian regimes that repressed representative structures and eliminated mass participation in politics (Collier and Collier 1991). Given this historical tension between democratic stability and mass representation in the region, the study focuses on the working classes, or the urban popular sectors, exploring and mapping the relatively new patterns and structures through which they participate in politics and pursue their interests.

To inquire about the inclusion of the popular sectors in mass politics is to ask about a socioeconomic category or “class” group defined along a materialist dimension. This section discusses the conceptualization and operationalization of the popular sectors in light of recent orientations of scholarship away from class as a dominant category of analysis and from materialist concerns as the predominant cleavage.

The shift in the predominant organizations of popular interest representation from labor unions, which are prototypically class organizations, to urban associations, with heterogeneous and primarily territorially based constituencies, resonates with the suggestion that the twentieth-century pattern of class politics has been superseded, and post- or nonmaterialist issues and alignments have become salient. While this assertion has been made principally for the advanced countries,<sup>11</sup> some Latin American analyses have suggested a similar pattern (Torcal and Mainwaring 2002; Roberts 2002). To what extent does the new configuration of interest organizations reflect—and advance—this trend? It is the present perspective that while “postmaterialist” issues have become important in Latin America, the current period during which this shift in interest regime is occurring is nevertheless a profoundly materialist one. And the salience of materialist issues justifies a focus on the popular sectors as a group defined in materialist terms, as a heterogeneous fuzzy set located at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy of inequality.

The literature on the rise of postmaterialist issues has its origin primarily in analyses of advanced industrial countries, initially reflecting the emergence of the civil rights, feminist, gay, environmental, and antinuclear movements. These movements have also become a feature of Latin American politics, along with the human rights and pro-democracy movements that became salient toward the end of the authoritarian period in the region. As may be expected from the European analysis, many of these postmaterialist issues have their core base of activists among the Latin American middle and upper class. However, rights and identity issues have also been important among the popular sectors, which have participated particularly in the human rights, pro-democracy, women's, and indigenous rights movements.<sup>12</sup> Particularly relevant for the present project, with its urban focus, are women's activation and participation. Women have assumed new political roles and prominence in the interest arena, mobilizing, along with indigenous movements, previously marginalized groups at least partly on the basis of new identities.

Yet, to a substantial extent, newly activated popular-sector women have mobilized around the distribution of goods and services, such as food, child care, and family provisioning, which are fundamentally materialist concerns. Thus, by giving primacy to a group defined along material lines, we do not dismiss the importance of other issues or other sources of group identity.<sup>13</sup> The point is rather that, overall, materialist issues continue to dominate the political agenda, even when they have been differently framed in terms of gender or indigenous claims. The prominence of material issues can be seen in the way they are privileged in electoral campaigns and the consistently high salience respondents ascribe to material concerns in survey data. In direct relevance to the concerns of this volume, it has also been widely recognized that, despite the importance of postmaterial concerns for some, associationalism among the popular sectors overall has tended to revolve around material demands "as they must deal with the daily hardships caused by poverty and material need" (Foweraker, Landman, and Harvey 2003:150). The current conjuncture in Latin America thus can hardly be conceptualized as postmaterialist.

On the contrary, the current period is widely considered a major turning point precisely in material terms, with a fundamental transformation in the

model of economic accumulation and in basic patterns of wealth generation and distribution. Materialist issues have been of central concern for many social groups. Technocrats, politicians, and business actors have been deeply engaged in the policy-making process of economic reform and restructuring. Of course, material issues are not only salient for elites. Analyses of political economy and market reforms, even those that express medium- to long-term optimism about the effects of these reforms, have widely recognized that the lower classes have not captured much of the benefit of what has generally been a spotty record of economic growth. After a postwar period of steady growth and some progress toward reducing the world's worst income distribution, inequality in Latin America increased in the post-reform period, and the earlier pattern of poverty reduction has become interrupted and erratic. We are thus in a period when materialist concerns remain at the forefront both for those who are reforming or refashioning economic relations and for the majorities that have been economically squeezed.

Indeed, the ongoing salience of materialist issues in Latin America has been accompanied—and supported—by a shift in social structure that is quite opposite the social-structural shift that is often invoked to explain the rise of postmaterialist issues in the advanced countries. In the latter, a long-term decline in the blue-collar workforce and the growth of white-collar occupational categories has blurred the traditional divisions that formed the basis of class politics (Dalton 1996b). In addition, blue-collar workers generally have come to enjoy substantial prosperity, so that, as Clark and Lipset (2001:107) put it “class is ceasing to be a major determinant of life-chances.” If Western Europe presents a picture in which class polarization has declined, relative income and equality have risen, and material issues in that setting have become less salient, being reduced to just one set among many, Latin America in the last two decades presents the opposite pattern: a similar relative decline in the bluecollar working class has been attended by a burgeoning of the informal sector, increasing polarization of income, and downward mobility of the working classes.

If these changes in economic policy and social structure motivate and justify a focus on the popular sectors, the question remains how one demarcates both popular-sector individuals and popular-sector associations. The popular sectors, as a heterogeneous category in the lower part of the

socioeconomic hierarchy, constitute a large percent of the population in highly unequal countries.<sup>14</sup> Those it embraces are heterogeneous in many ways, as the plural form of the label indicates. The concept does not define a class in Marxian terms, as it is not delimited in terms of a particular position in a mode of production. Indeed, the concept of the popular sectors embraces substantial diversity in this respect. It includes both proletarians who sell labor and the self-employed in the lower strata of the income hierarchy. It also covers both workers in the formal economy and a burgeoning group of earners in the informal economy, now up to about half of the workforce. To the extent the popular sectors can be considered a class category, it would be in terms of a Weberian approach to class, referring to the material position of the popular sectors resulting from their position in multiple markets, not just the labor market.

Pinpointing a line of demarcation that bounds this category is difficult. Pakulski (2005) has suggested the criteria of “distance” and “clustering” as a means for demarcating classes along the socioeconomic hierarchy. In this historically most unequal region of the world, income structures are characterized by what Birdsall, Graham, and Pettinato (2000:10) have referred to as “top-driven inequality.” The data reveal a very sharp distinction between the small upper and upper-middle class, indeed between the top 10 percent, and the rest of the population.<sup>15</sup> However, it is difficult to identify specific cut-points, or specific clusters of individuals, within the remaining 90 percent, which constitutes a very heterogeneous category but is nevertheless characterized by a more equal distribution of income than in the generally more equal, developed countries (Székely and Hilgert 1999:31).

Other aspects of socioeconomic inequality, such as educational attainment, may thus offer an appropriate approach to demarcation within the non-elite 90 percent. This choice has strong theoretical justification. In the United States, for example, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995:20) find that education is a basic component of social status, in that it affects income and occupation (as well as other individual determinants of political participation). Furthermore, education affords substantively defensible lines of demarcation. The high school diploma is an important credentialing mechanism for skill level, job, and social status. Its importance in this

regard is perhaps suggested by its subjective evaluation, as indicated by the fact that the modal value of educational attainment in the CIRELA data corresponds to attaining a high school degree. This study thus primarily employs a dichotomous measure, in which the popular sectors are operationalized as those who have not completed high school. However, to reflect the uncertain boundaries of the popular-sector category, we also employ other operationalizations—at times analyzing two cut-points, at incomplete and complete secondary education, and at times using a continuous measure, allowing a more nuanced assessment of social status, within the popular sectors as well as between that group and those of higher status.

A second question pertains to defining and delimiting “popular” associations from the many other associations in civil society. Popular associations are defined as those that attract primarily popular-sector participants, serve popular-sector constituencies, or have the primary goal of advancing popular-sector interests. Although popular associations are often “by” and “of” the popular sectors, they may also be simply “for” them, as are many NGOs that work on behalf of popular-sector interests.<sup>16</sup> Operationally, we drew a chain-referral sample of associations in eight “focus districts” of each city, chosen to exclude the wealthier districts. In addition, the starting points of each chain were purposively selected for types of associations of particular importance to the popular sectors in each city, such as those distributing food, those addressing problems of unemployment, or neighborhood associations (see [appendix B](#)).

## Political Participation and Interest Organizations

As is clear from the foregoing, the present focus on political activity in the interest arena and its consequences for popular representation reflects a set of concerns common to many currents in political analysis, particularly the two strands of scholarship, which correspond to the activities of individuals and of organizations in the interest arena. The first, the literature on political participation, has been most extensively developed in the context of advanced democracies, especially the United States. The second, a diverse literature on interest organizations, has been explored more extensively

across a broader set of empirical contexts and has a particularly robust tradition in Latin American analysis. Discussing these bodies of scholarship allows us to contextualize the concerns of the current volume.

### *Political Participation*

At the individual level, our focus is on patterns of political participation in the interest arena and the political structures through which individuals pursue their interests and solve problems. Assessing various problem-solving strategies gives us analytic purchase on the microlevel foundations of the popular interest regime. The present approach to delineating these problem-solving strategies has much in common with the analytical tradition that has explored political participation, with some important departures.

Because it is so central to democratic regimes, voting and vote choice has been the subject of an entire subfield of studies on political participation (e.g., Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Campbell et al. 1960; Key 1961; Miller and Shanks 1996). Clearly related to the actual decision at the ballot box is a wider set of activities related to the process of recruitment to elected office, and a broader literature on political participation has correspondingly examined a variety of campaign activities (e.g., Huckfeldt and Sprague 1992; Wielhouwer and Lockerbie 1994). The focus of all these studies is on the constitutionally specified electoral arena of politics as a site of participation. The present study, by contrast, is primarily concerned with participation in the interest arena, although [chapter 5](#) also examines participation in party/electoral activities and its intersection with participation in the interest arena. As indicated above, some studies of political participation have cast a wider net and included various activities within the interest arena as well.

Studies of participation have tended to focus on the social-psychological and resource-based description of what might be called the “participant personality” and seek to explain levels or degrees of participation. Consequently, this approach often relies on a somewhat ad hoc list of participant activities, extracting dimensions of such activities through factor analysis (Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978; Shi 1997) and/or employing an additive index of overall participation (Converse 1972; Verba and Nie 1972;



Hansen 1985; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Explanations are often rooted in motivations (especially different types of benefits), levels of engagement or interest in politics, and resources or capacity, especially, education, psychological resources (efficacy), age or experience, financial resources, social position and networks, and civic skills.

Because of the focus on the participant personality, these studies tend to emphasize individual-level explanatory variables rather than sociotropic ones. Although some scholars have tried to integrate sociotropic explanations, those that emphasize individual traits are dominant. This focus is common to both the literature on vote choice and that on participation more generally. Regarding the former, this approach is evident in the funnel of causality of the social-psychological approach of the Michigan school (Campbell et al. 1960; Klingemann and Wessels 2000), which has sociological (or “structural”) traits at the distal, broad end of the funnel, but tends to emphasize political attitudes at the proximate, narrow end. In the broader political participation literature, the emphasis has also been on personal factors. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) examine three factors, which they label resources, recruitment, and issue engagement. However, they “convert” these last, more macro factors into individual traits, by looking at whether or not individuals have been contacted or have been exposed to attempts at mobilization, rather than traits of, for instance, the political campaigns, parties, or party systems. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993), however, pay more attention to the “other half” of the explanation in their concern to make intertemporal comparisons. Like most studies, they examine what they refer to as personal resources (including social, economic, psychological, and experiential resources) and political engagement or involvement. However, they argue that these factors may help to distinguish among individuals, but are less useful in accounting for change over time, and therefore they add “political” factors, looking at strategic mobilization by politicians, parties, and interests, and the macro logic or incentives in the political system that lead actors to mobilize participation. This orientation points to the importance for comparative analysis of explanations centered in local or national factors that relate to issues such as the party system, the organization of interests, decentralization, and regime differences.

The present study builds on the extant literature on participation at the same time that it develops certain other themes. We are concerned with looking at political participation not only to understand who participates, but also to build an aggregate picture of patterns and structures of political problem solving. This orientation requires three subtle but important departures from the more traditional participation literature just described. First, rather than focusing overwhelmingly on the question of *why* people participate, we pay equal attention to the issue of *how* they participate. Second, instead of focusing on an aggregated “score” of individual participation that combines several different types, we develop a framework for distinguishing and analyzing diverse forms of participatory activity in the interest arena. Finally, we aggregate individual participation into country-level scores as a basis for macro-comparisons. A further extension would be to employ a comparative analysis not only to uncover similarities and differences across national contexts, but to push further an analysis of macrosocial factors that may illuminate these cross-national patterns.

### *Interest Organizations*

Another set of questions concerns societal organizations in the interest arena. Relevant are both the properties of individual organizations and more systemic traits of the interest regime, or the aggregate nature of these organizations and their interrelations. A brief look at three strands within this literature can help situate the current analysis. Interest organizations and the interest regime were the empirical referents for both postwar pluralistic group theory and analyses of corporatism that proliferated beginning in the 1970s. In addition, under different guises interest organizations have also been the subject of analysis for more recent studies of both social movements and civil society, a diffuse literature grouped here under the rubric of “postcorporatism.” Each of these perspectives examines the features of interest organizations, analyzes their representational role, and discusses other political traits of the aggregated interest regime. The present approach to examining popular associations shares some similarities with all three of these approaches, while also departing in significant respects. Pluralism has often provided a foil for subsequent theorizing but has been revived in the context of new realities. Corporatism is particularly

relevant for the analysis of the UP-Hub, as postcorporatism is for the A-Net. Together these literatures put a set of perspectives on the table for looking at issues such as organizational formation, representational distortion, and relations to the state that are among the central concerns of this volume.

Pluralist theories of interest representation emerged out of post-World War II analyses of interest group behavior in American politics. A central tenet within the literature was a nearly reflexive relationship between societal interests and the formation of claim-making organizations—as Berger (1981) described the pluralist perspective, organizations emerged as “spontaneous emanations of society.” As a result, the formation of and participation within interest organizations was seldom problematized, with the consequence that issues of representational distortion—whether some societal groups organized effectively and others did not—were rarely explored. Instead, the literature tended to assume that any interest demands would produce a supply of effective claim-making organizations.

The relationship between interest groups and the state was left relatively undertheorized, as interest groups were typically defined as organizations integrated into politics as claim makers on the input side, pressing state officials for policy outputs. Indeed this one-way relationship was reflected in the labels typically used: “pressure politics” and “pressure groups.” Bentley (1908, 1935) and Truman (1964), the founding analysts in this tradition, conceived of policy making in terms of a “vector-sum” model in which groups pressed competing demands on the state, and the result was metaphorically seen as the outcome of a parallelogram of forces, a resultant of the direction and intensity of the array of interests pressed upon the state. In this conception, the state was a black box that simply “resolved” the force vectors with a policy output corresponding to a kind of geometric logic.

Pluralism, then, did not problematize the formation of interest organizations, their relationship to the state, or representational distortion or bias in the aggregated interest regime. Subsequent theorizing would raise each of these issues as a response to both empirical and theoretical developments. Empirically, the civil rights and antipoverty movements in the United States highlighted years of weak organization among groups with few resources. Olson (1965) was particularly important in problematizing collective action and theorizing the differential capacities of

diverse groups to form organizations. As attention turned to the ways in which groups were differentially endowed with resources and to how some groups faced greater difficulties overcoming obstacles to collective action, such as the free rider problem, the implications for bias within or representativeness of the interest system were highlighted. In addition to calling into question the representativeness of the interest system at an aggregate level, scholars attentive to Michels's iron law of oligarchy began to highlight the issue of representation within organizations, showing that endemic dynamics between members and leaders tended to have negative consequences for the ability of organizations to represent the interests of constituents (Michels 1915).

Scholars working in other empirical contexts, witnessing very different patterns of state-society relations, began to question the pluralist model even more fundamentally, developing a second literature on interest organizations. Brazil provided a case that led analysts (Schmitter 1974; Erickson 1977; Mericle 1977) to focus on the primacy of class organizations, particularly unions, and to theorize a model of interest politics that, in its state-centric nature, resembled the corporatist arrangements of fascist models. The corporatist model was soon elaborated and broadened to include Western Europe, and two types were distinguished: "state" or "authoritarian" corporatism in Latin America and "societal" or "liberal" corporatism in Western Europe (Schmitter 1974; Lehmbruch 1979).

The corporatist model drew attention to certain features of the interest regime. The predominant groups were class or productionist organizations of labor and capital, which scaled to the national level, forming peak associations. This interest regime was not based on voluntary, fragmented, unstable societal emanations of the pluralist conception, but stable, often bureaucratized or professionalized, hierarchically organized groups in close interaction with the government. Unlike pluralist theories, scholarship on corporatism located the phenomenon historically in a particular political economy that lent itself to the primacy of certain types of organizations, such as labor unions. While scholars of Latin America analyzed the subsequent, post-World War II emergence of other types of popular associations, these were largely seen as playing a peripheral role in the interest system as a whole.

Relations with the state became central in corporatist analysis. Corporatist organizations of labor and capital, while acting in the “private” sphere of industrial relations, were also understood as claim-making organizations interacting with state officials. In a departure from the pluralist model, scholars saw these relationships between organizations and the state as considerably more complex than the simple exertion of pressure on government for a particular policy response. Particularly in the Latin American context, analyses of “state corporatism” stressed the ways in which interest organizations served to intermediate state-society relations, not only representing their constituencies as “input” mechanisms to affect state policy, but also serving as “output” mechanisms through which the state “structured” and controlled interest organizations through laws, regulations, discretionary subsidies, and co-optation (Schmitter 1971, 1974; Erickson 1977; Stepan 1978). The resulting trade-offs were especially salient regarding unions. The corporatist system offered some degree of institutionalized access to politics and legitimated unions as actors within the political arena, but they also served as controls, both through outright constraints and double-edged inducements (Collier and Collier 1979). Autonomy and the representational effectiveness of the union-based interest regime in Latin America thus became important analytical issues.

In sum, corporatist analyses complicated and enriched pluralist analysis by conceptualizing the interest system as an interaction of bottom-up and top-down, or society-centric and state-centric, dynamics, with goals of not only pressure politics but also of exerting state control over societal interests and channeling social conflict. This dual perspective also allowed analysts to theorize the different types of collective action problems confronted by labor compared to capital, and the role of the state in partially solving them. It was further recognized that the hierarchical and bureaucratic nature of unions posed its own difficulties for the representation of constituent interests, as did the privileging of labor unions within the interest system, which led to the relative exclusion of other groups such as the informal sector.

A third approach to the interest system might be called postcorporatist, a rubric covering two strands in the literature that have examined nonunion forms of organization, often lauding them as a welcome corrective to the representational problems of corporatism. The first is the new social

movements (<sub>NSM</sub>) literature that initially responded to the postmaterialist issues that arose in the advanced countries, especially the peace, feminist, civil rights, and gay rights movements, and has since been the basis for theorizing contention and “new” forms of organizing in Latin America during and after third wave transitions. This analytic focus on new social movements has been joined by a related body of literature reinvigorating the concept of civil society, a sphere defined not in terms of an oppositional relation to the state as in the <sub>NSM</sub> literature, but as specifically separate from both the state and the market, implying an autonomy from the state very different from corporatism, particularly in its Latin American form.

Although the two perspectives differ in important respects, they share certain conceptions of the interest system. The literature in both traditions has broadened the focus beyond organizations formed around the class cleavage and, when examining Latin America, has returned to more society-centric perspectives. In their approach to organizational formation and participation, each tradition has moved beyond both the “spontaneous emanation” approach of pluralist visions and the highly constrained approach to collective action problems emphasized in the Olsonian tradition. The new social movements framework provided an analytic perspective that emphasized social networks, framing, mobilizing structures, and social benefits in facilitating collective action (McCarthy and Zald 1977; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996a; Tarrow 1998; McAdam 1999). Both literatures have viewed base organizations (social movement organizations or civil society organizations) as participatory, often uninstitutionalized, nonbureaucratic, and hence unstable, and as interrelated in nonhierarchical, shifting, multinodal networks. In the Latin American context, both perspectives have been invoked to interpret the “resurrection” of organizing and the great proliferation of associations targeted toward both the postmaterialist themes of the <sub>NSMS</sub> of the advanced countries as well as materialist concerns, particularly those brought about by economic crisis and adjustment.

Initial analyses of Latin America in the postcorporatist perspective were optimistic that new forms of popular organization would enhance representation in the region, because they did much to include popular groups beyond formal workers and were considered internally participatory and democratic, and were able to escape from bureaucracy, Michelsian

oligarchy, hierarchy, and co-optation. Such optimism was also a product of the times: the initial empirical referent for these literatures was contestation over regime change in Latin America or cooperative strategies to confront economic crisis, rather than problems regarding coordination among associations and everyday relations with state actors in “ordinary times” (Jelin 1997; Hellman 1997; Eckstein 2001b).

In later literature within both traditions, scholars have taken a closer look at the representational capacity of social movements and civil society and at the obstacles interest organizations face in influencing state actors and in creating a critical mass of coordinated organizations. In this context, a more pessimistic approach has become common, with some scholars seeing greater autonomy from corporatist constraints in terms of a trade off in the new interest regime between autonomous, nonbureaucratic, nonhierarchical organizations and lack of influence on or access to the state. The result has been seen as a “neopluralist” pattern (Oxhorn 1998a), a “dilemma of democracy” (Kurtz 2004a), or a situation of “democratization without representation” (Shadlen 2002). Others have remained more optimistic about the potential for popular organizing and the linking of popular organizations through network structures, but have cautioned that the effectiveness of this new model of popular representation was difficult to discern and would depend upon institutional characteristics of the state and the stability of democratic regimes (Chalmers, Martin, and Piester 1997; Korzeniewicz and Smith 2000).

These literatures highlight a number of issues and questions that will be taken up in the present analysis. Many of these have implications for the effectiveness of interest organizations individually and collectively as an organizational infrastructure. Like the corporatist and postcorporatist perspectives, this study problematizes the formation of and participation in associations, examines the organizational and financial resources of associations, and relates these topics to the theme of bias or representational distortion in the interest system. Rather than treating the associational world as largely autonomous from the state, as in the pluralist and to some extent the postcorporatist literature, the analysis instead follows the corporatist tradition of paying attention to ways that states and associations are linked and the potentially double-edged nature of these relationships for popular representation. To what extent are they on the “input” side of politics

(pluralism and social movements), are they independent of the state (civil society), or do they serve an intermediating role (corporatism) which, at least to some extent, relates to the “output” side of participating in policy implementation? Finally, the analysis shares with all three traditions a focus not just on examining the characteristics of associations, but on examining the nature and aggregate traits of the interest regime more generally.

## Goals of Analysis and the Chapters to Follow

This book pursues a number of goals. First, it conceptualizes political activity in the interest arena and the notion of a popular interest regime. Second, it describes a historic shift in the urban popular interest regime and, distinguishing between individual and organizational collective action, it lays out the differing logics of collective action of the new A-Net compared to those of the <sup>UP</sup>-Hub which characterized most of the twentieth century. Third, it analyzes the ways in which citizens participate in the interest arena both to address particularistic grievances and to advance collective interests. Fourth, it examines the nature of the emergent interest regime by describing characteristics of popular associations, the problem-solving strategies they adopt, and the ways they coordinate. Finally, it lays out four analytic dimensions for comparing interest regimes—scope, scaling, access, and autonomy—and compares the four national cases along these dimensions.

As a brief guide, we summarize the ground covered in each of the chapters. Two more introductory chapters immediately follow, which further contextualize the subsequent empirical analysis. [Chapter 2](#), by Ruth Berins Collier and Samuel Handlin, introduces the approach of this volume in more concrete terms; it lays out some key distinctions, concepts, and overarching themes, discusses the four countries in which the surveys were fielded, and provides historical background on the shift in interest regime from the <sup>UP</sup>-Hub to the A-Net. [Chapter 3](#), also by Collier and Handlin, then undertakes a comparison between the two types of interest regimes, exploring differences in the logics of two types of collective action based on two factors: the nature of base organizations (unions in the <sup>UP</sup>-Hub and popular associations in the A-Net) and the orientation of the state (the <sup>ISI</sup>



state that prevailed at the time of the  $_{UP}$ -Hub and the neoliberal state corresponding to the A-Net). It also compares the  $_{UP}$ -Hub and the A-Net along four aggregate traits of the popular interest regime: scope, scaling, access, and autonomy. Against this historical contrast of the A-Net and the  $_{UP}$ -Hub, the rest of the book presents a more empirically grounded analysis of the A-Net.

[Part 2](#) explores patterns of individual participation in the interest arena. [Chapter 4](#), by Thad Dunning, analyzes two types of individual problem solving: direct action, in which citizens themselves make claims to the state, and associational participation, exploring the incidence and correlates of different problem-solving strategies, as well as cross-national differences. It suggests that associational participation is a critical component of the popular problem-solving repertoire, outpacing direct action in three of four countries and especially outpacing the incidence of collective forms of direct action: associationalism appears to be the most important channel for solving problems collectively and pursuing collective or group interests.

In the  $_{UP}$ -Hub, unions played an important role in mobilizing members into partisan politics and affiliating them to labor-based parties. [Chapter 5](#), by Jason Seawright, asks if associations play a similar role in mobilizing participants into electoral politics and if they may thereby counterbalance class bias in the electoral/partisan arena. Relying on a notion of “shared-member linkages,” the chapter finds evidence that the new associationalism may instead provide a mechanism that reinforces and sustains patterns of representational distortion.

[Part 3](#) turns from individuals to popular associations. [Chapter 6](#), by Diana Kapiszewski, examines the repertoire of strategies employed by popular associations. She demonstrates that they tend to engage in both “society-targeted” and “state-targeted” activities and finds an affinity between the use of contentious and institutionalized claim-making activities. The chapter further explores the relationship among the utilization of all these strategies and characteristics such as organizational and financial resources scaling, and state dependence.

[Chapter 7](#), by Handlin and Kapiszewski, pursues the issue of associational scaling in the A-Net. The analysis distinguishes three forms of scaling: inter-associational ties, and the presence of two kinds of coordinating associations, labeled Nodal  $_{NGOS}$  and Flexible Fronts. Both kinds

of coordinating associations appear to play special roles in directing claims to national-level authorities while inter-associational ties may be especially conducive to local-level claim making and protest activity.

[Chapter 8](#), by Candelaria Garay, explores the relations popular associations have with the main actors of the <sup>UP</sup>-Hub, unions and parties. The analysis suggests that, in Argentina and Chile, associations tend to develop links to social movement and public-sector unions, and those with such ties have somewhat distinctive strategic profiles. It also distinguishes types of party linkages and suggests that popular associations generally tend to have more contingent and instrumental relations with political parties than existed under the <sup>UP</sup>-Hub.

In concluding, [chapter 9](#), by Handlin and Collier, emphasizes cross-national variation. It argues that, when interest regimes are analyzed in terms of the four aggregate traits distinguished in [chapter 3](#), distinct national configurations have emerged. The chapter offers a preliminary explanation of these differences, paying particular attention to the timing of the shift in interest regime, the effects of economic crisis, the continuity of party systems, and the projects of elite actors to mobilize associational support. The chapter also emphasizes the fluidity of the A-Net relative to the <sup>UP</sup>-Hub and provides some “updating” about changes in each case, particularly in Venezuela, where the A-Net has been dramatically reconfigured by the *chavista* project.