

WORKING PAPER **285**

# Associations and the Exercise of Citizenship in New Democracies: Evidence from São Paulo and Mexico City

Peter P. Houtzager, Arnab Acharya and Adrián Gurza Lavalle  
May 2007



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## Associations and the Exercise of Citizenship in New Democracies Evidence from São Paulo and Mexico City

Peter P. Houtzager, Arnab Acharya and Adrián Gurza Lavalle

### Summary

A well-established body of democratic theory suggests that associations are the schools of democracy and, because they produce civic and active citizens, are vital to the quality of democracy. In this paper we find that this may not be the case in newer democracies with authoritarian legacies. Survey research in the large urban centers of São Paulo and Mexico City reveals that citizens who participate in associations are more likely to actively pursue a range of rights and entitlements, but this participation does *not* improve the quality of their relations with government. Participation in associations does not make it more likely that an individual has the type of *direct relations* to government that approximate the democratic ideal, and that suggests that public officials treat citizens as legal equals and carriers of rights and entitlements. Instead, associations are as likely to reinforce the *detached*, *brokered*, or *contentious* relations to government that are common in newer democracies and vary in their distance from the democratic ideal. Rather than focus on voting behaviour or partisan activities, we explore the civil component of active citizenship that operates when citizens' seek access to the public goods necessary for enjoyment of the rights and entitlements constitutive of contemporary citizenship.

**Keywords:** associations; citizenship; citizens; democratic theory; inequality; rule of law; political participation

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# 1 Introduction

A well-established strand of democratic theory argues that individual citizens who actively exercise their rights and entitlements, by voting, making demands on public officials, or engaging in the public life of the community, help transform political institutions into democratic ones. Associations, the argument continues, are the schools of democracy and play a critical role in producing these civic and active citizens. Associations in this way make an important contribution to the quality of democracy. This strong society-centric argument is, for example, at the heart of the civic engagement debate. It has received consistent support from the substantial body of survey research conducted in affluent western democracy since the 1960s.<sup>1</sup>

This paper presents evidence from newer, and less affluent, democracies that point towards a different conclusion. The findings from citizen surveys conducted in São Paulo (N=1,234) and Mexico City (N=1,292), two large urban centers in newer democracies that have strong authoritarian and clientelist legacies, reveal that similar to what occurs in older affluent democracies, associations help make citizens more active but they do *not* improve or otherwise alter the quality of their relations to government. Instead, citizens with an associational life are as likely as the general population to have relations to government that fall short of the democratic ideal of citizenship – that is, direct relations to government officials who treat citizens as legal equals and as carriers of rights and entitlements. Seen through the more ‘polity-centric’ lens of the literature on comparative democratisation, the findings suggests that the quality of citizens’ relationship to government is more likely to be shaped by medium-to-long term processes involving political actors and institutions than by the associational experience of individual citizens. Contrary to what the civic engagement literature suggests, in these cities it is the polity that appears to shape the type of citizenship citizens’ enjoy rather than vice versa.

The relationship between associations and active citizenship is an important one for democratic theory, but as far as we are aware there are no systematic comparative studies of this relationship in the larger and more diverse set of newer democracies. One of the fundamental presuppositions of the literature on democracy – that associations enhance the exercise of citizenship, and thereby the quality of democracy – remains largely untested and unquestioned outside of a relatively small set of affluent western democracies.<sup>2</sup>

In this paper we begin the process of exploring the effects associations have on active citizenship outside this small set of democracies. Our data comes from a citizen survey we conducted in 2002/03 in the municipality of São Paulo and the federal district of Mexico City. The choice of sub-national units, in countries where

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1 Cf. Almond and Verba (1963) and Verba, Nie and Kim (1978), and Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1995). More recent studies include Dalton (2006) and, focusing on Africa, Bratton (2006).

2 Outside of the affluent western democracies research has consisted predominantly of case studies or single country surveys.

the authority of national government is uneven across national territory and where authoritarian enclaves persist, makes possible a more detailed and nuanced exploration of the causal effects of participation in associations than aggregate national-level analyses. The cities are located in important and large new democracies – Brazil and Mexico. They represent ‘most likely cases,’ where the literature suggests that vigorous nature of the associational sphere and the relatively high degree of government presence favours associational effects on citizenship. There is nonetheless substantial variation between the two cities, both in terms of their role in national political life and of their respective countries’ democratic trajectory, providing a further test for any generalisation.

The active exercise of citizenship has been conceived in both very broad terms as any form of voluntary public activity and in far narrower terms as political participation in electoral-partisan activity. Our conception falls between these two poles, and reflects concerns that are particularly salient in newer democracies which carry powerful authoritarian legacies. In many new democracies citizens enjoy relatively free and equal exercise of their political rights, including that of the vote, but experience gross inequalities in access to public goods which are necessary to the enjoyment of many other (non-political) rights and entitlements that constitute contemporary citizenship.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, a share of citizens routinely suffers abusive treatment from public officials when they seek access to these goods. As Guillermo O’Donnell (2004, 2005) and other authors have pointed out recently, some of the most severe and endemic democratic failures in these polities occur in these types of civil (rather than political) relations between citizens and government.

We therefore explore the level *and* the quality of the exercise of one particular dimension of citizenship, that involving civil relations between citizens and government. In particular, our concern is the impact of associational participation on citizens’ capacity to hold public bureaucracy accountable for providing access to public goods to which they are entitled by virtue of their citizenship. This accountability is exercised not by mobilising elected representatives or judicial institutions, but by making demands or petitioning public officials such as street level bureaucrats and their managers directly.

We share a methodological approach with studies of civic engagement, using survey research to identify associations’ impact on the behaviour of individuals, but our interpretive lens is different. Civic engagement’s strong society-centric lens presupposes that the polity itself does not shape the kind of active citizenship exercised by citizens or erect obstacles to citizens’ access to government; it presupposed public bureaucracies that are accountable to elected officials, and public officials who treat members of the public equally and in a manner that is respectful of their legal status as rights carriers.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, work in comparative democratisation is more ‘polity-centric’ and recent studies are developing a more robust conception of the processes of democratisation and the quality of democracy,

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3 Cf. Méndes, O’Donnell, and Pinheiro (1999), O’Donnell (2004) and (2005), and Diamond and Morlino (2005).

4 Exceptions include the essays in Skocpol and Fiorina (1999).

moving away from an earlier minimalist definition of democracy (Tilly 1999, 2000, 2004; O'Donnell 1993, 2004, 2005). This more recent work suggests a notion of *civil* citizenship that allows us to come to terms with two of the most significant twentieth century developments in citizenship. One is the breathtaking array of new rights and entitlements that have accompanied the growth of the administrative state, and the related expansion in the breadth of civil relations that link citizens and government. In the last two decades surprisingly few efforts to reduce the role and size of government have in fact reversed this growth in rights and public bureaucracy. The second, concomitant, development is the expansion in participatory and civil rights that sanction novel forms of societal accountability over public bureaucracy. These new civil and participatory rights seek to ensure government meets its affirmative duty to act, rather than (as classic civil liberties do) to constrain government action. This societal accountability sits alongside that provided by electoral, intra-governmental, and judicial mechanisms (Smulovitz and Peruzzotti 2002; Peruzzotti and Smulovitz 2006). Among new civil rights we find that in many democracies, including the ones studied here, citizens have acquired a broad 'right of review' of administrative decisions and action, and an accompanying right to information.

We examine active citizens' day-to-day interactions with government as they seek access to public goods necessary for the enjoyment of full citizenship. These interactions can vary in qualitatively important ways, depending on the degree of equality citizens enjoy with public officials. *Direct relations* to government come closest to the ideal of civil citizenship – that is, individual citizens can knock on the door of public bureaucracies to appeal decisions, demand better treatment, or petition for improvements in services. *Direct relations* are most likely when citizens have sufficient legal and effective equality in their interactions with public officials. *Detached relations* lie at the opposite end of the spectrum, suggesting such high levels of inequality that access is not a reasonable possibility or so costly that citizens opt instead to organise and collectively self-provision goods such as public order (security) and basic urban infrastructure. Between these two poles we find *brokered* civil relations, where active citizens seek the intervention of powerful third parties to obtain a response from public agencies, and *contentious* civil relations that involve disruptive forms of collective action to pressure public agencies. Only in the case of *direct relations* can we claim that a form of societal accountability is realised.

Empirically grounded research has generally treated formal membership in association as one of several forms of political participation or civic engagement, and therefore as something to be explained. Our concern is different. We want to know to what extent participation in associations may enhance active citizenship. We focus on participation rather than the status of formal membership because the hypothesised associational effects on citizenship flow from the face-to-face interaction that make possible the acquisition of Tocquevillian 'knowledge of how to combine' and from other social network effects, rather than membership status (Putnam 2000: 58; Skocpol 1999: 498–504). Furthermore, research on the associational sphere in São Paulo, Mexico City, and Delhi suggests in many, and quite distinct, democratic contexts formal membership is far less common than other forms of associational relations (Gurza Lavallo, Houtzager, and Acharya 2005a: 954; Harriss 2005).

We find that in both cities participation in associational life substantially enhances active citizenship. Whether citizens pursue their rights and entitlements through direct, brokered, contentious, or detached relations with government, however, varies between the cities and is unaffected by associational participation. In São Paulo associational participation reinforces a single and well-institutionalised *direct relation* to government. In Mexico City it reinforces citizens' tendency to have either *detached relations* – citizens abandon government to collectively self-provision solutions – or a *mixed* set of relations that combine *detached, direct, brokered, or contentious relations* in different ways. *Mixed* relations reflect an indeterminacy of citizen-government relations, as citizens' are forced to experiment with an array of activities to obtain access to public goods. Contrary to what the literature on Latin American politics leads one to expect, only a small share of the population has *brokered* relations, through a powerful third party, with government. *Contentious* relations are in fact more common.

These findings *do not* suggest that associations do not make a contribution to democratic rule, but that this contribution does not appear to come from their impact on individual citizens who participate in their activities.<sup>5</sup> There is an ample body of work that shows that associations, as *collective actors* who represent the interests of their members or their public, have had a critical role in the construction of democracy under particular historical conditions, including as a political force behind the expansion of rights or behind the provisioning of public goods that make the realisation of rights possible. What we find is that individual citizens do not, as a result of their associational participation, develop relations with government that come closer to the ideal under the democratic rule of law than citizens who have no associational participation.

A secondary set of findings suggest that, similar to what Verba, Scholzman and Brady (1995) found in the United States, associations in the two cities counter the most important source of socio-economic inequality in active citizenship – that produced by differences in education. Differences in active citizenship by educational attainment are particularly severe in São Paulo. The positive associational effect on the exercise of citizenship, however, is limited because, participation in associations in the two cities has a strong class and gender bias, as it does in affluent democracies. The people who are least likely to be active citizens (those with little education) are also least likely to participate in the activities of associations and therefore to capture the counteracting effect.

In order to identify the causal relation between associational participation and active citizenship we combine analysis of descriptive and inferential statistics. The US literature on political participation has shown that using inferential models to identify associational effects is vulnerable to dual causality and that individuals who participate in associations may also have a greater proclivity to engage in public affairs independent of any associational relationship. We therefore take particular care with the specification of our statistical models. To rule out dual causality and selection biases we run a variety of statistical tests.

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5 See for example, Gurza Lavalle, Houtzager and Castello (2006a and 2006b).

The first part of the paper spells out our approach, defines core concepts, and situates our work in relation to the literatures on civic engagement and on comparative democratisation. A short methods section highlights the advantages of the comparative and sub-national research design. The third section provides a descriptive portrait of associational participation, active citizenship, and civil relations in the two cities. It shows how these vary across positions on three forms of social stratification – that based on education, gender, and labour market insertion. The fourth section uses inferential statistics to identify the causal importance of associational participation for active citizenship and the four types of civil relations. Combined variables are used to see whether this causal importance varies by the position one occupies in the three forms of stratification. The specifications of our multivariate models are given in Appendix B. We conclude by examining some of the implications of our findings for positive democratic theory.

## 2 Active citizens, associations and the civil-dimension of citizenship

The diverse literature on democracy suggests that the contribution of associations to the political and legal construction of citizens as democratic agents is manifold, but occur at two basic analytic levels. In the literature on civic engagement (or political participation) this contribution sits at the micro-foundations of democracy and in the literature on comparative democratisation at its macro-foundations. This paper's focus on citizens' day-to-day relations to government and the methodology is micro-level. The interpretation, however, cuts transversally across the civic engagement and democratisation literatures. This section argues that the presuppositions of civic engagement do not travel well and that its concepts and meta-framework should be applied only with great care to newer democracies. Here we present an alternative approach based on a notion of citizen-government relations which is embedded in a broad approach of the democratic rule of law that is emerging in research on comparative democratisation.

Our focus is on the behaviour of the individual citizen, but our analytic approach differs substantially from that found in the civic engagement literature that has shaped most survey-based research in this area. Civic engagement rests on two strong suppositions that are not tenable in many new democracies.<sup>6</sup> It presupposes that the polity itself does not erect obstacles to political participation, or shapes participation in significant ways, and that there is a professional public bureaucracy (a state apparatus) that, through effective organisational hierarchies, is accountable and responsive to elected officials, and treats citizens respectfully and in an equal

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6 See for example Durand Ponte (2004) on Mexico, Bratton (2006) on Africa, and Booth and Seligson (2006) on Latin America.

manner according to law.<sup>7</sup> These presuppositions underpin civic engagement's emphatic society-centered focus. The focus on the civic values (or motivation) and resources needed to voice interests presupposes, first, that the determinants of political participation are social rather than political. In the sophisticated civic engagement model developed by Verba *et al.* (1995: 3) engagement depends on the possession of a combination of time, money, and civic skills which are acquired in the family, school, the workplace, church, and/or voluntary association.

Second, the societal focus presupposes that government responds to interests, once voiced, in a relatively unproblematic manner. Association, in this view, enhances political participation because it (i) socialises individuals into core civic values – i.e. deliberation, tolerance, trust, reciprocity, and working collectively towards common goals – and (ii) provides the civic skills and resources necessary to pursue these values in the public sphere (Putnam 2000: 338–9; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993: 12–16; Verba *et al.* 1995: 15–16, 528–9). Such a society-centered perspective precludes one from exploring questions about the (democratic) quality of citizens' relations to government and the vertical power relations that shape these relations.

Comparative democratisation, and work on new middle or low-income democracies in particular, takes a different view.<sup>8</sup> Democracy depends not on individuals and their values and resources, but on political processes driven by collective actors and political institutions involved in interest intermediation. The nature and responsiveness of government to demands emanating from society is not assumed but believed to be contingent. Responsiveness is explained by the power resources of collective actors and the institutional formations through which they negotiate relations.<sup>9</sup> Whereas civic engagement is especially concerned with individual citizens' unequal endowment of motivation, skills and resources, comparative democratisation is concerned with inequality in relations between large classes of citizens and government, and the substantive content of citizenship.<sup>10</sup> Associations in

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7 The central question for democracy in the civic engagement literature is how cooperative behaviour for a collective (or common) good can emerge in a world that is fundamentally individualistic and defined by the pursuit of narrow interests. In this literature it is the individual citizen who must take responsibility for deciding who holds public office and for generating the pressure on government to respond to their interests and values (Verba *et al.* 1995: 1). Civic engagement is consequently defined as any voluntary (non-paid) activity to influence government, or any other voluntary collective endeavour, such as participation in associational life or in the community, or indeed in bowling (Putnam 1993, 2000; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba *et al.* 1995).

8 This research agenda includes the work on democratic transitions (Schmitter, O'Donnell and Whitehead 1986), democratic consolidation (Linz and Stepan 1996; Mainwaring and Scully 1995), measuring democracy (Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub, and Limongi 2000), and the quality of democracy (Diamond and Morlino 2005; O'Donnell 1993 and 2005).

9 Increasingly, the nature and responsiveness of government is seen as contingent on its relation to different sectors of society, a relation constructed in an iterative process over extended periods of time (Skocpol 1992; Evans 1995 and 1996; Houtzager 2003; Whitehead and Gray-Molina 2003).

10 See for example Yashar's (1999: 77 and 2005) discussion of corporatist and neoliberal 'citizenship regimes.' Yashar combines the substantive content of citizenship (types of rights) and forms of interest mediation. See also Friedman and Hochstetler (2002).



this case are collective actors whose contribution to democracy is the (i) aggregation and representation of interests, (ii) the definition of the political identities and interests of less powerful social groups; and/or (iii) counter-balancing state power.<sup>11</sup>

Tilly and O'Donnell are, in distinct but complementary ways, developing the most insightful analysis of comparative democratisation that combines the political and civil dimensions of citizen-government relations. Their notion of democracy, when defined at a high level of abstraction, is richer than that found in the procedural minimum definition, yet does not trespass into areas of substantive outcomes.<sup>12</sup> They highlight the importance of the equality in citizen-government relations, both in the political and civil components of citizenship, and the link between this equality and what O'Donnell calls the democratic rule of law. Tilly (2004: 13–14) suggests that the expansion of government, and therefore points of contact between citizens and government, is an important part of democratisation *when* it occurs alongside increases in 'protected binding consultation' of citizens with respect to government personnel and policies – that is, the political component of citizenship – and in breadth and in the equality of relations between citizens and agents of government, the civil component.<sup>13</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986: 7) help specify the last, civil, part of Tilly's definition by suggesting that democratic citizenship involves '...the obligation of those implementing such choices to be equally accountable and accessible to all members of the polity.' Tilly's idea of 'breadth' suggests, on the one hand, an array of issues around which citizens enjoy rights and entitlements, and on the other the physical presence of government across national territory to meet these rights and entitlements. O'Donnell's focus on accountability and access embeds this component into a notion of the democratic rule of law

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- 11 Cf. Schmitter (1974), Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens (1992), Diamond (1999), Linz and Stepan (1996). As a standard concept of democracy the procedural minimum definition does have analytic advantages as it facilitates comparison across regions and quantitative analysis using large data-sets. See for example Przeworski *et al.* (2000) and recent work that constructs indices of democracy reflects this view (Munck and Verkuilen 2002; Bowman, Lehoucq and Mahoney 2005). In the minimalist definition, however, the political component of citizenship is compressed into competitive elections with broad franchise and the civil component into protection of an important but sparse set of civil liberties. The most influential statements in positive democratic theory are of course Joseph Schumpeter's (1947) and Robert A. Dahl's (1971). See also Przeworski (1999) and for an insightful analysis of different procedural minimal definitions of democracy, Collier and Levitsky (1997). Rawls (1971) shows the limitation of a minimal concept of democracy and argues for an extensive set of role for governments in a pluralist society.
- 12 A number of other recent studies of democratisation have also expanded their focus on binding consultation to include either direct citizen participation and/or representation of particular publics by civil society organisations. On citizens participation in low and middle income countries, see Chaudhuri and Heller (2002); Fung and Wright (2003); Dagnino (2002); Avritzer (2003 and 2004); Santos (1998 and 2002); Baiocchi (2001 and 2005). There are few studies on political representation undertaken by civil society organisations in these new institutional spheres, but see Gurza Lavalle *et al.* (2005a, 2006a and b) and Houtzager, Gurza Lavalle, and Castello (2005).
- 13 By leaving the institutional mechanisms for binding consultation unspecified, the door is open to new 'participatory rights' alongside those of representative democracy, such as rights to direct citizen participation or of group representation and societal control over policy processes by collective actors such as associations.

that is broader than the liberal notion of civil liberties – it entails not only political rights or civil liberties, but a broader answerability of all legally constituted actors (citizens, collective actors, and government) to the law in what constitutes a ‘closed’ circle of legal accountability – everyone is answerable to someone.<sup>14</sup> Democratisation for O’Donnell and Tilly therefore involves increases in the degree of equality between citizens and agents of government, as well as the expansion of civil liberties and government’s equal treatment of citizens irrespective of their socio-economic positions.

Democracy is a political process that continually produces new rights, however, and Tilly and O’Donnell’s work on civil relations does not yet come to terms with two of the twentieth century’s most important developments in the legal and political content of citizenship, leaving these under-explored and under-theorised. Tilly’s vast sweep through 500 years of comparative democratisation focuses in particular on the (classic) political dimension of citizenship. In O’Donnell’s democratic rule of law, equal (vertical societal) accountability of government is conceived relatively narrowly through the judiciary. In both cases civil rights appear restricted to civil liberties.

The tremendous expansion of government, with the rise of the administrative state (or its bewilderingly complex incarnations as the welfare or developmental state), has been accompanied firstly by the creation of a wide array social, cultural, environmental and other rights, and many more lesser entitlements, that represent new government obligations or ‘duties to act.’<sup>15</sup> These duties range from broad social rights that obligate government to provision healthcare or education, to lesser legal entitlements such as basic urban infrastructure such as roads or sewerage and urban services such as garbage collection. There has been a proliferation of civil relations as the public bureaucracy charged with the duty to ensure these rights and entitlements has grown in size and in its impact on people’s lives. This proliferation of relations has come with an increase in the discretion of public officials and concomitant decline in democratic accountability.

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14 Under the democratic rule of law, O’Donnell argues (2004: 9), citizens are a legally constituted agents and carriers of a bundle of rights whose treatment ‘must be based on the application of laws and regulations that are clear, knowable by citizens, and enacted in ways that accord with democratic procedures.’ Government submits not only to vertical electoral accountability, but also to vertical societal accountability – that exercised by individual citizens or collective actors – and to horizontal governmental accountability. Political, civil, and social rights are protected because no one is above the law, and because these rights themselves are the product of a legally regulated process. On the conceptualisation of accountability and forms of ‘horizontal accountability,’ see in particular Schedler, Diamond, and Plattner (1999), and Mainwaring and Welna (2003).

15 In middle and low income democracies, this process has been crystallised in the new wave of citizen constitutions, such as those of Brazil (1988), the Philippines (1987), and South Africa (1996) that guarantee not only a broader set of political rights (right to participation) but also a wider range of social, ‘post-material,’ and cultural rights. It is also evident in the wide range of lesser legal entitlements public authorities at different levels of government have produced as they expanded government’s role in provisioning (directly or indirectly) public goods such as urban infrastructure or services for specific populations.

There has been, secondly, an accompanying expansion in civil and participatory rights that sanctions new forms of societal accountability of public bureaucracy.<sup>16</sup> These include prominently the right of review of administrative decisions and services,<sup>17</sup> the right to information, and participatory rights of citizens and organisations representing groups affected by public policy. These novel forms of vertical accountability are not only, or even primarily, to control the lawfulness of government's actions in regards to civil liberties, but particularly the lawfulness of 'unequal action' or inaction in meeting its duty to fulfill the array of social rights and lesser legal entitlements.<sup>18</sup> Legislatures across regions of the world have delegated authority to new institutional sites, situated alongside legislative bodies and the courts, for citizen exercise of societal accountability. These sites can be located directly within government agencies, as in the case of Brazil's *ouvidorias* (agency or administrative unit-level ombudsmen) or administrative tribunals, or in hybrid bodies composed by both government and collective actors representing segments of the population, such as tripartite deliberative councils.<sup>19</sup>

There is no doubt that judicial review remains critical for challenging the *lawfulness* of a government action but for many types of remedies it is only legally available after exhausting all review procedures internal to public agencies. Furthermore, the weakness of the judiciary *vis-à-vis* the executive, the cumbersome and costly nature of judicial procedures, and the slow reversal of unfavourable legal precedents, has meant that this is the path less often traveled. Individual citizens overwhelmingly seek review of the action of public bureaucracies by directly petitioning these, rather than through judicial institutions or by greater activism at the political level.

These substantial changes in citizen-government relations lead us to extend O'Donnell's notion of the democratic rule of law. The nature of civil relations to government, our dependent variable, is embedded in a notion of the democratic rule of law under which citizens have a broader set of civil rights and lesser legal entitlements, and vertical accountability includes forms of societal accountability

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16 On societal accountability in Latin America, see Smulovitz and Peruzzotti (2002) and Isonza (2006), and some of essays in Mainwaring and Welna (2003), Peruzzotti and Smulovitz (2006). On OECD countries, see the collection of essays in Cain, Dalton and Scarrow (2003), and chapters by Ansell and Gingrich in particular. For a particularly prescient exploration of these trends in the United States, see Stewart (1975). On the expansion of civil and participatory rights in South Africa, see Govender (2003), Currie and de Waal (2004, chapter 29), and proceedings of the conference on 'The Constitutional Right to Access to Information' in Burns (2000). On the right to information and other forms of societal accountability in India, see Goetz and Jenkins (2005).

17 On Brazil, see Soares (1997).

18 This has of course occurred in distinct ways across different systems of administrative law and there are significant differences in Latin America with a civil law tradition from that in common law countries.

19 Legal changes have been accompanied by shifts in public administration as a field, which in different contexts has come to emphasise greater citizens' control and responsiveness. Recently these have had to compete with new public management prescriptions.

over public bureaucracy.<sup>20</sup> The civil dimension of citizenship that our paper explores is focused on government's duty to act, rather than on civil liberties meant to protect citizens from undesirable government action. Our work therefore differs from but complements studies of violations of the rule of law by police and other government agents, and those on violence, corruption, and impunity in particular.<sup>21</sup>

To operationalise this notion of civil relations under the democratic rule of law we need to create a set of intermediate concepts. Active citizenship is the first of these concepts. We adopt a definition that falls between the expansive one in the civic engagement literature and the more restrictive procedural minimal definition used in studies of comparative democratisation. *Active citizens* are citizens who undertake activities, individually or collectively, that seek public solutions to a relative lack of access to the goods necessary to enjoyment of citizenship rights and lesser legal entitlements. Such activities include ones that attempt to hold public bureaucracy directly accountable for meeting legal obligations to provision public goods, but it also includes efforts to collectively self-provision such goods without any government involvement. It does not, however, include activities that constitute private solutions, such as individual market-based or self-provisioning solutions. For example, an individual who on his own purchases a gun or the services of a security guard, or fashions a sharp object, to increase personal security is not included. In contrast, an individual who is part of a group that organises a neighbourhood watch, or raises money to hire a security firm to patrol the neighbourhood, is considered an active citizen. That individual, we argue, has entered the public realm to address a concern over public order, a constitutive component of citizenship and a precondition for the fulfillment of other rights. *Active citizens*, the example illustrates, can rely on qualitatively different types of relations to government to obtain public solutions. The quality of these relations – that is, the degree to which it approximates the ideal under the democratic rule of law – depends on the extent to which citizens (a) are treated by public officials as legal equals and as agents with a set of legal rights and entitlements (rather than as subjects) and (b) are able to exercise the right to review administrative decisions, protest ill treatment, and petition for better quality of services. These two features, we believe, are in large measure contingent on the degree of legal and social equality between citizens and public officials. We define four types of citizen-government relations that, we argue, reflect in part differences in the degree of equality citizens enjoy with agents of government and, related, their degree of access to government. The four types are not normatively driven, they are rather positive analytic distinctions drawn in the process of interpreting the survey data.

Individuals who petition, complain, or make direct demands on government officials, or use of the courts, have a *direct* relation to government through normal

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20 The interactions that constitute civil relations between citizens and government are those related to government duties to provision the goods necessary for enjoyment of the *rights* and lesser entitlements, or citizens obligations towards the political community, including those that make it possible for public bureaucracies to function and meet their duties to citizens. Some of the interactions our survey documents in São Paulo and Mexico City involve citizens' negotiating their obligations to government, but the large majority fall in the former category – that is, citizens' efforts to hold public bureaucracy accountable.

21 Cf. the essays in Mendéz *et al.* in *The (Un)Rule of Law* (1999).

institutionalised channels. They are engaged in a form of societal accountability of public bureaucracy. This type of direct relation reflects a relatively high degree of equality between citizens and government agents and comes closest to notion of the democratic rule of law in democratic theory.

Individuals who seek out political parties and influential persons to intercede on their behalf with government agents have a *brokered* relation with government. Brokerage may represent forms of clientelism or of constituency services. In either case brokerage suggests that citizens have difficulty accessing public bureaucracies or obtaining some form of response on their own and require the intervention of a well positioned and more powerful third party.

When citizens organise and engage in collective activities such as demonstrations or signing-petitions to apply public pressure on government, they have a *contentious relation*. The types of activities that constitute contentious relations are more costly to individuals than ones involved in *direct relations* – that is, they involve substantial coordination problems, require larger numbers of people, and lack some of the legal protections of more formal and institutionalised processes. We believe that in the two Latin American cities *contentious relations* reflect some understanding of citizenship rights, on the one hand, and a lack of access to government around particular set of concerns, on the other.

Finally, individuals who are either in profoundly unequal relations with government, or believe government will not respond to their demands for other reasons, can organise with friends, family or community members in local publics to collectively self-provision basic goods, such as sewerage, housing, or security. Collective self-provisioning in this case reflects citizens' *detached relations* from government. Self-provisioning does *not* represent a form of civic engagement as defined in the North American literature, but rather a form of active citizenship to fulfill basic rights by acquiring access to public goods. In the case of *contentious* and *detached* relations, we specify that individuals must engage in collective activities, but *direct* and *brokered* relations can involve either individual or collective actions.

### 3 One survey in two large urban centres

The citizen survey conducted in São Paulo and Mexico City explores the relationship between citizens, associations, and government. The questionnaire and sampling method used in cities was the same, with minor adjustments to account for local specificities. The random stratified samples are of the adult population (18 years of age or older) within municipal boundaries of São Paulo and Mexico City (the Federal District). The cities have populations of 10.7 and 8.5 million respectively.<sup>22</sup>

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22 The population of the cities metropolitan regions is over 20 million. But while these continue to grow, the population of the two municipalities have stabilised or decreased slightly since the 1980s, as growth has moved outward to surrounding municipalities (Villa and Rodríguez 1996: 39). The municipal regions had their spurt of growth during the 1940–1970 period.

In large countries, where sharp regional variation in government presence and political practices are common, important causal relations can be masked in statistical analyses conducted with national-level data, as these average high variations in the values of important explanatory variables. This is a particularly significant concern in countries where enclaves of the authoritarian clientelism associated with 'low intensity democracy' coexists with regions where government does far better at enforcing civil or political rights and producing public goods for their realisation (O'Donnell 1993; Fox 1994; Foweraker and Landman 1997). Sub-national units such as large urban centers constitute a universe with a higher degree of internal homogeneity than national units and reduce this heterogeneity problem (Snyder 2001). In the particular cases of Brazil and Mexico, the vigorous and pluralist associational sphere that is hypothesised to influence citizenship, and the background condition of a relatively effective government presence, are distributed in a highly uneven manner across national territory, and in particular in rural areas. Hence the selection of the two cities where these two factors are strongly present is more appropriate than the selection of national units.

São Paulo and Mexico City are most likely cases, if the generalisations based on the experience of affluent democracies do not hold in these cases they will be powerfully undermined (George and Bennett 2005: 120–1). The cities have the kind of substantial government presence that is considered a virtual prerequisite for the possibility of high quality citizenship and vigorous associational sphere (Linz and Stepan 1996: 37; O'Donnell 1993; Diamond 1999). For example, coverage of municipal water supply and sanitation is close to 98 per cent of households. And the associational sphere is considered vibrant and substantial in both cities. On the other hand, Brazil and Mexico are middle-income countries which differ substantially from the affluent industrial democracies in which most existing research has been conducted. As important urban centers in these countries, São Paulo and Mexico City therefore provide a good test for the generalisations based on this research, exactly because they represent a different type of context. The two countries are recent democracies, share long legacies of authoritarian rule and social relations, and have associational spheres that until recently were dominated by corporatist associations under high levels of state control. Furthermore, the cases are located in countries that over the past three decades have seen the gradual emergence of competitive democratic institutions and pluralist associational spheres.

The political institutions and associational spheres in the two cities do, however, vary in important ways. The cities have different political histories and have played distinct roles in the national political life of their respective countries. At the time of the survey, Brazil and Mexico were also at different moments in their respective democratic trajectories: in the former democratisation involved a transition from military rule, and a profound reform of the its historically weak and fragmented party system (1979), the writing of a new constitution (1988), and the first post-military direct election of president in 1989; in the latter, democratisation involved a move from a one-party dominant regime to a multiparty regime, in which two opposition parties became significant political contenders and, with reforms of the electoral system, won political power at the national level in 2000 for the first time. The variation democratic trajectory and timing between the countries, and in the role of the respective cities, provides a further test of any generalisations about associations' citizenship effects.

São Paulo is Brazil's longstanding financial and manufacturing center and an important autonomous political pole within a highly decentralised federal system. Mexico City, the national government's seat of power and (still) an important manufacturing center, lost its autonomy after the Mexican Revolution early in the twentieth century, and within the context of a highly centralised state, only began to regain this autonomy in 1994.<sup>23</sup> In São Paulo, and in Brazil more generally, significant parts of political life have always run outside of the historically weak and fragmented party system. The city is considered to have one of the most dynamic and well organised civil societies in Latin America, and with the democratic transition during the 1980s powerful corporatist labour institutions were eroded with an important renewal of the labour movement. In contrast, Mexico City's associational sphere for most of the twentieth century was incorporated into the most fully developed system of corporatist institutions in Latin America, built through the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI), the state party. Despite important challenges to their hegemony as the economy was liberalised and democratic reforms accelerated, the PRI and its corporatist institutions survived through the 1990s. The type of labour movement renewal that was seen in Brazil did not take place. If the PRI in Mexico City lost support in the late 1980s, political life nonetheless runs foremost through the party system and the influence of the associational sphere on municipal and national political affairs remains limited. Perhaps not surprisingly then, other research finds that São Paulo's associations and other civil organisations are more densely networked, well resourced, and influential in a number of municipal and national policy arenas, than their counterparts in Mexico City (Gurza Lavallo *et al.* 2005b).

## 4 Patterns of associational participation and active citizenship

In this section we describe the patterns of associational participation, active citizenship, and civil relations in the two cities. We also address the extent to which these differ across social strata defined by education, gender, and labour market insertion. We first define each of the variables and then provide descriptive statistics to define the patterns that characterise the cities' populations.

### 4.1 Associational participation

How one defines associations and associational participation, and for what time period the question is asked, has a significant impact on the results obtained during survey research. We therefore begin this section by making explicit the logic behind our choice of definitions.

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23 The city's elected *Asamblea de Representantes*, created in 1988, only acquired legislative functions in 1994, when the Federal District was granted the status similar to that of a federal unit, similar to that of states. Its first elected mayor (*jefe de gobierno*) was elected in 1997.

Research on the micro-political impact of associations on democracy makes a variety of distinctions between types associations, but only one is relevant here.<sup>24</sup> For both analytic and empirical reasons, the nature of the relationship between individuals and associations – formal membership or active participation – is important. Formal membership is only one of various types of relations people may have to an association that can impact citizenship. Here, the associational effects on citizenship are believed to accrue from face-to-face interaction and other social network effects that make possible the acquisition of civic skills, values, and information, rather than membership status (Putnam 2000: 58; Skocpol 1999: 498–504). However, the convention in survey research conducted in affluent western democracies, and transported to other contexts, has been to use formal membership as a proxy for associational activity. In analytic terms, a person who periodically is active in a civil society association, but is not a member of that association, is more likely to acquire the skills, information and social network benefits that come from associational practices than the individual who has formal membership but only makes an annual financial contribution to an organisation. Counting people whose sole membership activity is making financial contributions as being associational active is to ignore the core elements of associational activity that theorists suggest make it an important component of democracy. Furthermore, empirically, associations in São Paulo and Mexico City are more likely to define such relations in terms of a ‘community’ rather than individual members (Gurza Lavalle *et al.* 2005a: 954).<sup>25</sup>

For these reasons, instead of using membership in associations, we use a simple set of dichotomous variables for participation in the activities of associations.<sup>26</sup> This casts a wider net that fits empirical realities of the region in which the survey was conducted and captures the core analytic dimensions of participation in the literature. There is one exception: we use formal membership in the case of workplace organisations such as trade unions and professional associations.

Most survey research in Latin America asks respondents about their current membership in associations, or fails to specify the time period. We use a five year time window. If an individual has participated in the activities of association in the five years prior to the interview, (s)he is likely to still possess many, if not all, of the benefits that may accrue from participation – information, knowledge, skills, etc.

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24 Distinctions include those between internally democratic and autocratic associations (Putnam 1993; Cohen and Rogers 1995), purposefully political and non-political (Skocpol 1999; Diamond 1999), and formalised forms of bonding or bridging social capital (Putnam 2000; Hill and Matsubayashi 2005). For an overview, see Fung (2003).

25 The same appears to be true in Delhi, India (Harriss 2005). In the particular case of participation in *religious* groups, the standard question – ‘are you a member of a religious group’ – is inadequate for predominantly Catholic countries. Such phrasing is context specific to countries where Protestant churches are most common. The Catholic Church is organised in a way, and around a set of beliefs, that leaves the notion of ‘membership’ without cultural resonance and as a result, active participation in religious groups will be underreported.

26 Studies most often ask a closed question on current membership in a range of associations which are listed one by one. This approach is thought to provide higher response rates than open questions that are later coded. Cf. IBGE (1988 and 1996), SEADE (1998).



As a result of this definition of participation – in activities vs. membership, in the past five years vs. currently – the share of people we report as participating in associations tends to be higher than those found in some other studies.

We first define participation in *secular associations* and in *religious groups*. In this paper we do not explore impact of participation in *religious groups* because cross-tabulations (i.e. bivariate relations) suggest that religious participation has no effect on individual citizens' civil relations to government. The lack of effect of an individual's religious participation in the Latin American cities is in contrast to the strong effects studies have found in the United States. The most convincing explanation for this regional difference lies in the structure of the respective majority religious organisations – Catholic and Protestant. In the case of the Latin American cities a large majority is Catholic, whereas in the United States a majority belongs to Protestant congregations. A number of studies comparing Catholics and Protestants in the US find that the former are less likely to be active citizens as a result of their religious participation. The 'Catholic Puzzle' – high Church involvement, teachings that emphasise participation in community life, but low levels of civic activity – appears related to structural features of their respective churches (Bane 2005). Verba, Scholzman and Brady (1995: 245) argue that, in the United States, the large size of Catholic parishes, limited opportunities for lay participation in liturgical activities, and hierarchical organisation mean that Catholic church-goers have fewer opportunities to acquire public skills than their Protestant counterparts.<sup>27</sup> The structure of the Catholic Church in Latin America is similar, and possibly more hierarchical, and in large cities parishes can be very large.

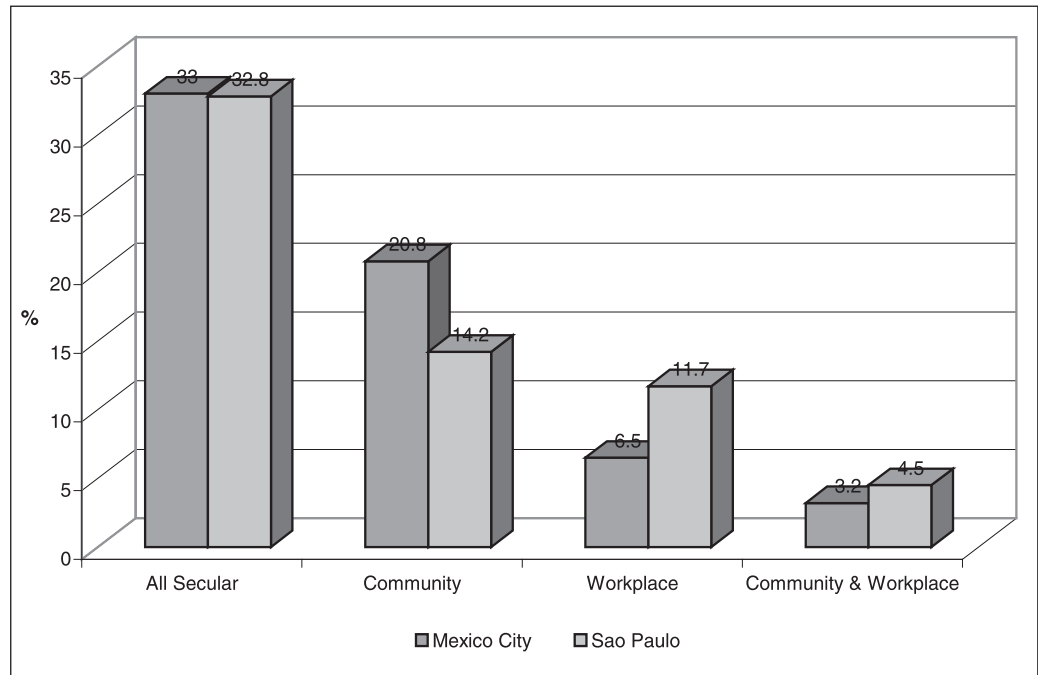
*Secular association* is defined as participation in any association for (i) cultural/sporting activities, (ii) trade union/professional representation, (iii) neighbourhood affairs, (iv) cooperatives, or other less common types of non-religious association, such as ethnic, issue specific or minority organisations. We then make a finer distinction among secular associations, between *workplace associations*, which include trade union, professional societies and informal sector associations, and *community association*. The latter includes cultural/sports, neighbourhood, and a small number of other types such as minority associations. The variable *other* includes kinds of non-work-based cooperatives and other less common associations.

A substantial share of the population – roughly a third – participated in secular associations in the two cities. The most significant difference between the cities, Figure 4.1 shows, is the higher level of membership in workplace organisations in São Paulo. This difference is remarkable because Mexico City has historically had high levels of union membership and today still has a far larger public sector workforce than São Paulo. On the other hand, participation in community organisations is higher in Mexico City, likely reflecting that city's longstanding tradition of community solidarity, dating back to pre-colonial period and reinforced under both colonial rule and the PRI regime in the twentieth century (Houtzager *et al.* 2005).

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27 Their survey suggests that there is only a small difference between the exposure of Catholics and Protestants to political messages or requests for political activity (Verba *et al.* 1995: 381). The differences in skill development therefore stand out as the most likely explanatory factor.

**Figure 4.1 Percentage of population that participated in secular associations**



Q: 'Have you participated in any \_\_\_\_\_ during the last five years?' [Multiple responses]

Note 1: São Paulo n= 1,292; Mexico City n=1,284

Note 2: Territorial organisations include neighbourhood associations, cultural and sports clubs and minority groups; Workplace organisations include labour unions and other types of professional associations.

## 4.2 Two patterns of civil relations

We test our hypothesis that associational participation influences the nature of the civil relation between citizens and government using a small set of dependent variables. We operationalise *active citizens* as those individuals who, in the last five years, have undertaken any activities to improve, in a public fashion, access to public goods necessary to enjoying citizenship rights and lesser legal entitlements in the five issue domains described in Table 4.1, or in comparable domains. The types of activities that *active citizens* engage in are then used to construct the four types of relations defined above: *direct*, *detached*, *brokered* and *contentious*. Individuals can have more than one type of relation to government. For these individuals we create the variable *mixed relations*.

In the multivariate analysis in the next section we cannot use *direct* relations in the case of Mexico City due to its low frequency, and we therefore created one final variable – *mobilise government* – which includes any individual who sought to access government, whether through *direct*, *brokered* or *contentious* relations, and excludes only those who only had *detached* relations.

In both cities a substantial share of the population has sought to effectuate some aspect of their citizenship by undertaking activities in the public sphere to address concerns, individual or collectively, in the last five years. In Mexico City, *active citizens*

represent 59 per cent of the city's population and in São Paulo 37 per cent. This significant difference may reflect the substantial differences in the levels of social stratification and capacity for community collective action in the two cities. These are discussed further below.

Individuals in Mexico City and São Paulo, we report elsewhere, have similar levels of problem salience in the five issue domains specified in Table 4.1 and, in both cities, large majorities attribute to government the primary responsibility for these issue domains (Houtzager *et al.* 2005). Most of the population in the cities holds government as the primary agent responsible in all issue domains, notwithstanding two decades of extensive market-oriented reforms.<sup>28</sup>

**Table 4.1 Issue domains<sup>29</sup>**

	<b>Domains</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Public order	A constitutive element of citizenship and foundational attribution of the state
2	Air pollution	A 'post-material' issue that has not historically been one of the state's responsibilities, but recently has become politically salient.
3	Health care	A constitutionally guaranteed social right in both countries since the 1980s
4	Basic urban infrastructure and services	Longstanding public goods provided by the government, the legislation for which creates a set of lesser legal entitlements
5	Basic needs, such as food, clothing, and housing	Perhaps most contested of the social rights – the right to assistance and social security. These rights and entitlements vary considerable across the countries.

The overwhelming majority of acts in the two cities sought to address issues related to housing, primary urban services (such as drainage, garbage collection, or electricity), secondary urban services (such as public leisure areas), public order, and to a lesser extent payment/collections of utility bills. We do not report any results by the issue domain here because these have no statistically significant effect on civil relations and the domains do not vary substantially across cities.

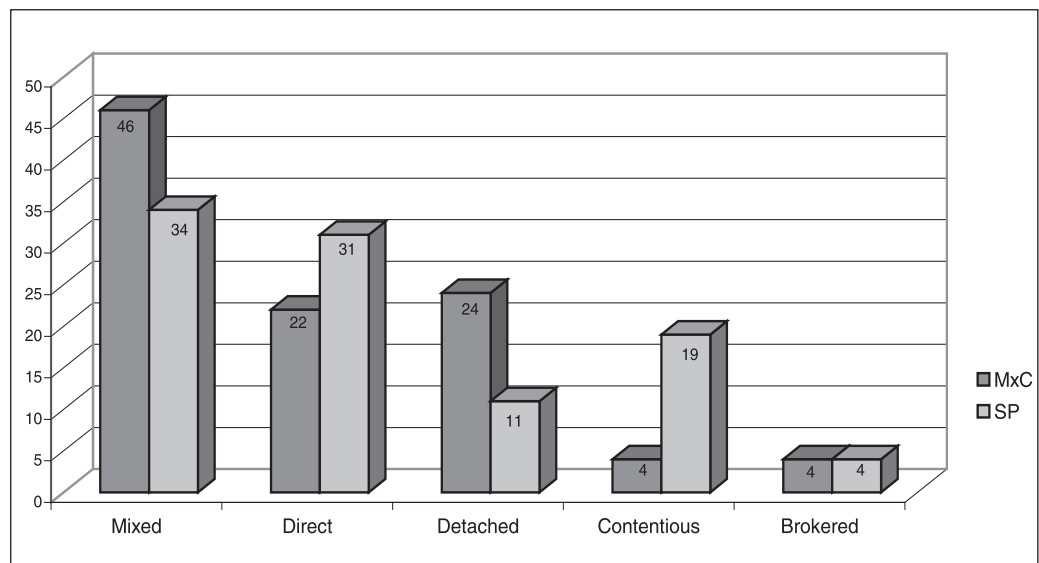
28 The one domain where there are significant differences between the cities is Basic Needs, where 78 per cent of the São Paulo sample but only 48 per cent of the Mexico City sample said government had primary responsibility for helping meet basic needs such as food, clothing and housing.

29 In Brazil and Mexico the rights to personal security, health, basic subsistence, and a clean living environment are constitutionally guaranteed and have enacting legislation. The universal right to health was established by the Brazilian 1988 Constitution and in Mexico by the 'right to health protection,' added to the Constitution in February 1983 – addition and amendment to Article 4.

It is striking that, from this base-line of common problem salience and attribution of responsibility, citizens in the two cities have quite different patterns of civil relations. Differences in the share of active citizens and relations reveal important differences in the nature of citizenship in each city, and in particular different degrees of equality with government agents. São Paulo has a clear single pattern of citizens-government relations – that is, individuals are most likely to have *direct* relations to government. A third of active citizens in the city have *direct* relations. Furthermore, a fifth, or 20 per cent, of active citizens have *contentious* relations. In contrast, the high level of *detached* relations (a quarter of the population) and of mixed relations (almost half of the total) suggests that active citizens in Mexico City enjoy, relative to São Paulo, less equality. That individuals in Mexico City, the seat of national government, are more likely to have *detached* than *direct* relations is remarkable and suggests that a substantial share of its residents have difficulty mobilising government action, or have given-up on mobilising government altogether.

There is also a strong contrast in the share, and composition, of *mixed relations*. In São Paulo *mixed* relations represent 34 per cent of the total, and most include *direct* as one of the relations. In the Mexican capital almost half the population have *mixed* relations to government (46 per cent), the large majority of which include *detached*. This suggests that the civil dimension of citizenship is poorly institutionalised in Mexico City, particularly when compared to São Paulo. Citizens are forced to combine multiple types of relations to address their concerns. Even citizens who have direct relations to government tend to combine these with one or more of the other three types of relations. Again, Mexico City residents attribute primary responsibility to government for issues such as urban services, public order, and health care, in much the same way as São Paulo residents, and have no ideological or normative preference for community action.

**Figure 4.2 Percentage of active citizens, by type of civil relations to government**



Note: Percentage of Active Citizens – São Paulo n=464; Mexico City n=733

The share of the population with *brokered relations* is similar in the two cities and surprisingly low given the characterisation of politics found in most of the literature on Latin America. We believe that for reasons of local political culture and difficulties in operationalisation there is some under-reporting of such relations. A part of the discrepancies between our findings and accounts in the literature may also be explained by our choice of cases – the countries' two largest urban centers. The literature has tended to focus on either national level political dynamics and/or to generalise about countries' entire political systems based on national dynamics. Our data highlight important analytic gains that can be achieved with a focus on sub-national regimes in countries with considerable regional variation.

Summarising, São Paulo has less active citizens than Mexico City, on the one hand, suggesting that social stratification in the former city has a greater impact on active citizenship. On the other hand, those individuals who are active citizens in São Paulo, have greater equality with public officials than in Mexico City, and their civil relations are relatively speaking more institutionalised. They enjoy the type of civil relations to government that is closer to the rule of law in democratic theory. Citizens in Mexico City, in contrast, have far lower levels of equality and access to government and have therefore either 'detached' from the government – to engage in local, community-based self-provisioning – or have combined a range of different types of relations to mobilise government action. Civil relations are consequently less institutionalised than in São Paulo. Social stratification, however, has far less of an impact on the exercise of citizenship than in São Paulo.

### 4.3 Socio-economic stratification of associations and citizenship

In this section we compare participation in associations and citizenship activity across three of the most important forms of socio-economic stratification in Latin America – education, gender, and labour market insertion. For each we again use dichotomous variables. In order to provide a simple and clear description of how these forms of stratification relate to our intermediate and dependent variables, we do not address here the issue of co-variation and multivariate effects, which are examined in the next part of the paper.

Overall, almost all forms of stratification are considerably higher in São Paulo than in Mexico City, and associational participation is more stratified than civil relations (in both cities). The stratification of associational participation is particularly severe and occurs along all education, gender, and labour market insertion in both cities. Civil relations, in contrast, show no gender inequality, but they do show inequalities by education and labour market status. In São Paulo, almost a quarter of the population, those without only some primary education and/or who are outside of the labour market, are virtually inactive and have no civil relations to government. This substantial minority are closer to denizens than citizens.

Remarkably, the type of relations tends not to vary significantly across class, defined by education/income and labour market insertion, or by gender. Men and women, the well and poorly educated, and workers and non-workers all have similar relations to government.

**Education:** We generally use educational attainment, rather than income, because studies consistently show that political engagement, of diverse forms, and in both

affluent Western democracies and middle or low-income democracies, is particularly sensitive to education (Krishna 2003; Chaudhuri and Heller 2002; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba *et al.* 1995). Furthermore, reliable income data is difficult to collect, particularly at the household level (Deaton 1997). Nonetheless, we have tested for income-related effects and found that household income and education have some correlation in the cities, and particularly in São Paulo. Our definitions of the education variables are slightly different in the two cities. In São Paulo we distinguish between people with some level of *Higher Education* and those with *Primary Education or Less*. In Mexico City there is no statistically significant variation across primary and secondary education for active citizenship and we therefore use *Higher Education* and *Not Higher Education*.

We find that, of all the variables, education has the strongest correlation with both associational participation and citizenship activity, and that differences in education appear to be the single most important source of inequality in both (see Appendix A).<sup>30</sup> The education gap in citizen activity and associational participation is particularly severe in São Paulo. In this city, individuals who have higher education are active citizens at twice the rate of those who have primary education or less. This difference increases to thrice the rate in the case of having *direct* relations to government. In addition, the share of individuals who have higher education and who participate in associations is three and-a-quarter times greater than that of individuals with only primary education or less. This gap is in large measure driven by education-based inequality in participation in workplace-based organisations. The gap in Mexico City for active citizens and associational participation is less extreme than in São Paulo, but it is nonetheless evident. The share of individuals with higher education who have direct relations to government, and those with association participation, for example, is around twice that of those with less than higher education.

**Gender:** There is a considerable gender gap in associational participation, on the one hand, and virtually no gap in active citizens or civil relations, on the other. If men and women are as likely to be active citizens, and have direct relations with government, women are far less likely to participate in the activities of association. In São Paulo 41 per cent of men but only 24 per cent of women participated in associations,

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30 Similar to what census data indicate, our survey found that the distribution of education in the two cities differs only at the higher end. Few people in either city have no education – around 3 per cent. A quarter has primary education or less. But while a majority of the population in São Paulo has secondary education and only a small share higher education (14 per cent), in Mexico City secondary and some form of higher education are distributed equally, at about 29 per cent each. Income distribution has the opposite pattern. In Mexico City this distribution is more polarised. Using the nationally defined minimum wage as a rough guide, we find that in São Paulo the poor make up 19 per cent of the population, low income 56 per cent, middle income 19 per cent and the affluent 6 per cent. In Mexico City, in contrast, the poor make up 57 per cent per cent of the population, low income 24 per cent per cent, middle income 15 per cent, and affluent 3 per cent. The categories for São Paulo are: Poor – 2 minimum salaries or less (R\$160), Low – more than 2 and up to 7, Middle – 7 to 15, Affluent – more than 15. For Mexico City they are (MxPeso\$1,210): Poor – less than 3 minimum wages, Low – 3 to 7, Middle – 7 to 10, Affluent – over 10. Minimum wage values are for 2002/03.

and in Mexico City the proportion is 39 per cent to 25 per cent (Figure A.2, Appendix A). Surprisingly, the gendering of associations in both cases is driven not only by workplace-based organisations, but also by community organisations.

**Labour Market:** Scholars of the region believe that outsourcing and/or the informalisation of labour relations have led to a decline in union size and power, and to a more general fall of political engagement or rise of new populisms (Roberts 2002; Kurtz 2004; O'Donnell 1994). Labour market status can be explored in a range of ways. The distinctions we emphasise are two: between people inside and outside of the labour market, and between workers with formal and informal work relations. We define the variables for people who are *In the labour market*, either working or unemployed but looking for work, and those who are *Outside of the labour market*, such as many homemakers, students, and retirees. Definitions of the formal and informal vary substantially and we avoid the concept 'informal economy' in recognition that formal and informal labour relations can co-exist in the same workplace and particularly in the same economic sector. We use a juridical definition according to the type of labour relations that exists: *Formal work relations* (in private sector) involve legal contracts, *Informal work relations* exist in the absence of such contracts, and *Public sector work relations* are those in which the contractor is government.<sup>31</sup>

Labour market insertion appears to have a very different relationship to associational participation and citizenship in the two cities. In São Paulo the relationship is strong – individuals *In the labour market* have two and-a-half times the level of associational participation and almost twice the rate of *active citizenship* (and even more for *direct relations*) compared to those *Outside of the labour market*. In Mexico City this gap is far smaller – roughly 22 per cent for active citizenship and 8 per cent for direct relations.<sup>32</sup> Because the labour market is strongly gendered in Mexico City, there is considerable overlap between the category *Outside of labour market* and *Woman*. This overlap is small in São Paulo.<sup>33</sup>

Workers in the formal, informal, and public sectors also vary.<sup>34</sup> Associational participation is more common among workers who have formal rather than

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31 People who work for remuneration are 'informal' if: (i) they are employees and do not have a formal contract; (ii) are independents who work without employment relations and do not contribute to national social insurance (hence are not liberal professionals); or (iii) have micro-enterprises with five or less employees, and do not have formal contracts with any of these employees. This definition is similar to that used by CEPAL and the ILO, except that ours is slightly more restrictive (see Comin 2003).

32 There is a strong correlation between being outside of the labour market and being a woman. In Mexico City, the percentages are 37 per cent to 29 per cent for associational participation and 61 per cent to 56 per cent for active citizenship.

33 In São Paulo, where 66 per cent of the general population is in the labour market (formal or informal), 54 per cent of women are in the labour market. In Mexico City, 52 per cent of the general population is in the labour market (formal and informal), but only 29 per cent of women are in the labour market.

34 These differences reflect, on the one hand, the different patterns of structural adjustment during the late 1980s and 1990s – São Paulo tended to shed jobs whereas Mexico City to repress wages – and the far larger share of women in the labour market in São Paulo than in Mexico City.

informal relations, and public sector workers have the highest participation rates. The consequences of this distribution are starker for São Paulo, which has both a larger share of workers in informal employment and a smaller public sector).<sup>35</sup>

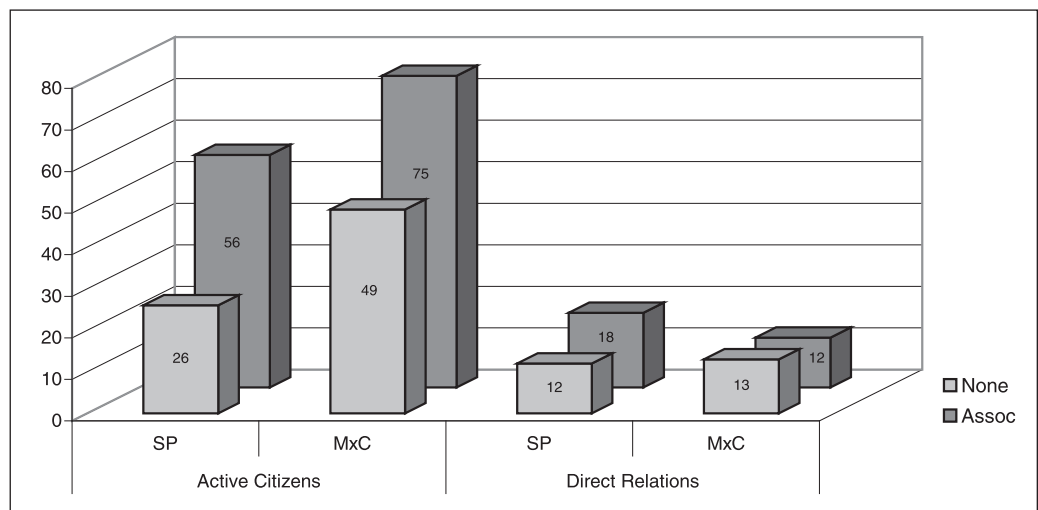
Summarising, associational participation is far more stratified than citizenship activity. Direct relations to government are, in turn, considerably more stratified than other forms of civil relations to government. The sharp stratification of associational participation suggests that any citizenship gains from participation in associations will be distributed unevenly across the population.

#### 4.4 Associational participation and citizenship

Is there a correlation between participation in associations and active citizenship, and to the desirable direct civil relations to government in particular? To answer in purely descriptive terms we leave aside for now concerns about the direction of causality and possible selection biases (addressed below). The share of the population in the two cities that participate in associations *and* are active citizens is 17 per cent in São Paulo and 24.4 per cent in Mexico City. Because about a third of the population in both cities participates in associations, the higher percentage in Mexico City reflects the larger share of the population that is active in that city.

We find that individuals who participate in associations are more likely to be active citizens than their counterparts without such participation. In São Paulo, an individual who participates in the activities of associations is twice as likely to be an active citizen as those who do not, whereas in Mexico City the likelihood increases by 50 per cent. The correlation between associational participation and civil relations is therefore particularly strong in São Paulo. It is nonetheless substantial in Mexico City as well.

**Figure 4.3 Percentage of population that are active citizenship, with associational participation and with none**



35 The share in informal employment is far higher in São Paulo (50 per cent) than in Mexico City (37 per cent), while the public sector is far smaller (4 per cent of workers) than in Mexico City (19 per cent), and almost half of all workers have formal private sector employment in the two cities (around 45 per cent).



Associational participation, however, correlates with different types of citizen-government relations in the two cities and appears to reinforce the types of relations prevalent in the general population. In São Paulo there is strong correlation with *direct* relations and a far weaker one with *detached* relations (Figure 4.3). In Mexico City, in contrast, there is a small negative correlation with *direct* relations (statistically insignificant), and a relatively strong one with *detached* relations (not shown in Figure 4.3).

From this initial analysis it appears therefore that associational activity in São Paulo may enhance relations to government, and *direct* relations in particular, yet in Mexico City it may lead people away from the government, enhancing *detached* relations. This suggests that in both cities associations reinforce the existing patterns of civil relations. It does not appear to increase relations to government that approximate those under the democratic rule of law, except where such relations are already the dominant type, e.g. São Paulo. It is statistically significant that the propensity to participate is higher for individuals with associational participation. However, the difference between those with associational participation and those without is not as pronounced as it is for the overall category of active citizenship. We are led to believe that the enhancement of equality that citizens enjoy in their relations with public officials, brought about through associational participation, is limited in São Paulo.

## 5 Associational effects on citizenship: multivariate analysis

The descriptive statistics show that participation in associations is likely to increase what we call the civil component of active citizenship in both São Paulo and Mexico City. It does not appear, however, that associational participation has any relation to the type of civil relations that citizens use to address their concerns. In particular, associational participation does not appear to increase *direct* relations to government. The picture that emerges from the descriptive statistics is that associations may enhance the share of the population that is active, but that it reinforces rather than alters the prevailing type of civil relations citizens have to government. This suggests that associations may not increase the ability of citizens to hold public bureaucracy accountable for delivering those goods necessary for the enjoyment of full citizenship rights and entitlements.

The multivariate analysis in this section allows us to verify the strength of the statistical links suggested in the descriptive portrait by controlling for the effects of explanatory factors other than associations. If we can establish, contrary to what the descriptive portrait suggests, that associational participation is likely to contribute in a causally significant way to *direct* civil relations in São Paulo *and* in Mexico City, then we can reasonably make the generalisation that associations not only increases levels of citizenship activity but also improve the quality of citizens relations to government in large urban centers such as these.

We first use probit models to separate out the causal effect associations may have, holding constant the effects of other variables such as education and labour market

status.<sup>36</sup> The models we find for *active citizenship, mobilising government* (any combination of direct, contentious, or brokered relations), and the *direct* relations are parsimonious and yet are the ones with highest explanatory power (Appendix B, tables B.1 and B.2). The models for São Paulo are generally stronger than the ones for Mexico City and allow us to make stronger claims for the former city regarding the factors that affect the three dependent variables. Although a substantial number of citizens in São Paulo have *direct* relations with the government, we can only define a weak model to explain this relation. In Mexico City the number of citizens with *direct* relations is small and no model could be defined. There is therefore an asymmetry in the presentation of the models. For different reasons in each city, discussed below, it was also not possible to define models for *detached* relations.

It is difficult to interpret the coefficients of models corrected for endogeneity and selection biases. Furthermore, we can rule out these problems in our specifications. We therefore interpret only the probit models. The models themselves, their specifications, and how we address possible problems of endogeneity and selection biases are discussed in Annex B.<sup>37</sup>

## 5.1 Explaining active citizenship and civil relations: basic models

The probit models reveal that three explanatory factors are consistently highly significant for *active citizenship, mobilising government*, and in São Paulo *direct* civil relations (Appendix B, Tables B.1 and B.2). These factors are associational participation, education, and some aspects of labour market status. A few other variables, which do not add much explanatory power are included in the models because they are widely believed to influence citizenship activity and provide the bases for clear hypotheses. The religion variables, for example, are only weakly significant for *active citizenship* in São Paulo, yet they test the hypothesis that particular religious groups contribute to making their participants active citizens. In this case we find that religious participation is not an important determinant of *active citizenship* or of any other dependent variables.

In Mexico City *detached* civil relations are numerous but we do not find a meaningful multivariate model to explain the prevalence of these relations. Our inability to specify a model for *detached* in Mexico City suggests that such relations are randomly distributed across the population for the variables we consider. *Detached*

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36 A probit model is used rather than a logit model because the residual of estimates reported below were roughly normal.

37 The problem of endogeneity arises in our model due to the possibility that individuals who participate in associations do so in order to exercise some aspect of their citizenship. Thus there can be dual causality, as one of the explanatory variables is not determined exogenous of the dependent variable.

Selection bias may occur because there may be some unobservable factors among individuals that are highly correlated with participation in association and seeking out active citizenship. Individuals who decide to be active and to participate in associations therefore stem from the presence of the same factor, and which we have not taken account, possibly because we could not observe this factor.

relations are not explained by factors such as education or labour market insertion, which help explain other types of relations to government. The descriptive statistics do provide evidence, however, that associational participation is strongly associated with *detached* relations.

The multivariate analysis confirms that there is high probability that the relationship between associational participation and *active citizenship* in the two urban centers is strong and suggests that the causal link flows from associations to active citizenship. It also confirms that associations enhance different types of civil relations in the two cities. Associational participation is an important explanatory factor for *direct* civil relations in the case of São Paulo, but not in the case of Mexico City, where it appears to reduce *direct* relations (Tables B.1 and B.2, Appendix B). Participation in Mexico City does contribute to some extent to *mobilising government*, the variable that combines direct, brokerage, and contentious relations (and combinations thereof), but to a lesser extent than it does to active citizenship in general.

Educational achievement is also highly significant in the models and very likely to make a substantial contribution to being an *active citizen*. In São Paulo we observe that those who have only primary education or less were much less likely to be active than others, while those with some higher education are significantly more likely to be active (than people with secondary education or less). The result in Mexico is similar, showing a positive effect of higher education. In contrast to São Paulo however, having only primary education does not appear to reduce the likelihood of being an active citizen.<sup>38</sup>

In the case of labour market status, different aspects are significant in the two cities. In São Paulo, whether a person is *inside the labour market* is an important explanatory factor. In Mexico City it is the type of labour relation that matters: *formal employment* has a negative influence and *owning a business* has a positive one. The gender variable is not significant in the models and women and men in both cities have the same proclivity to be active. There is a correlation between being a woman and *being outside of the labour market* in Mexico City.<sup>39</sup> However, being *outside of the labour market* is not significant in our models for Mexico City, and the labour status variables therefore do not appear to disguise a gender effect on active citizenship.<sup>40</sup>

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38 Inclusion of income categories do not have an influential effect; only when income categories are categorised into two groups – low and high – is the low income group weakly significant, with a negative impact. There is, however, some correlation between income and educational categories. When the income categories are used without education variables, the income categories show weaker relations to *active citizenship* than educational categories.

39 In São Paulo we find that 66 per cent of the general population is in the labour market (formal or informal) and 54 per cent of women. In Mexico City 52 per cent of the general population is in the labour market (formal and informal), but only 29 per cent of women. This correlation between being a woman and outside of the labour market therefore plays a role in making gender insignificant in some specifications.

40 Regional variables in São Paulo were occasionally significant, as was race in the case of being black. In Mexico City variables describing family structures play a weak role, as is the case with age and some regional variables. In our sample nuclear and extended families tended to be more active.

## 5.2 Socio-economic stratification of active citizenship

The probit models tell us that associational participation, education, and some aspects of labour market insertion are very likely to influence *active citizenship*, *mobilising government*, and *direct* civil relations. These three factors are of course not distributed randomly across the population in the cities. The socio-economic composition of the population in São Paulo and Mexico City raise two important questions. First, who then is more likely to be an active citizen in each of the cities? And secondly, to what extent is socio-economic stratification reflected in active citizenship? We answer these questions by converting the probit model coefficients into the probability that a citizen with a particular set of characteristics, for example low education and associational participation, will be active or have direct civil relations to government in each of the cities.<sup>41</sup> Tables 5.1 and 5.2 describe the predictions for each city.

In São Paulo the probabilities reveal more clearly the importance of associational participation, as well as the powerful impact socio-economic stratification has on active citizenship. We find that individuals who participate in associations are twice as likely to be active citizens as those without such participation, and that only those with associational participation are statistically likely to have the desirable *direct* civil relations to government (Table 5.1). Individuals without associational participation have such a low likelihood of having direct relations that it is statistically close to zero. Individuals with primary education or less, we estimate, are far less likely to be active citizens than their counterparts with higher education, and very unlikely to have *direct* relations. That is, only 20 per cent of those with primary education or less, a fifth of the city's population, are likely to be active and statistically the likelihood of *direct* relations is almost zero. In contrast, 53 per cent of people with higher education are active and 21 per cent have direct relations. Education therefore is likely to have a particularly large influence on *direct* civil relations.

The picture in Mexico City is different. Associational participation and education also influence the likelihood of *active citizenship*, but not nearly as much as in São Paulo. Table 5.2 shows that in Mexico City 78 per cent of individuals who participate in associations are likely to be active citizens, whereas 46.4 per cent of individuals without participation are active. The gap between those with and without associational participation is therefore proportionally smaller than in São Paulo. We do not have a model for *direct* relations in Mexico City. Table 5.2 also reveals that 72.3 per cent of people with some higher education and 53.1 per cent of those with secondary education or less are active citizens. Again, education-based stratification exists but it is far less than in São Paulo. We noted earlier on that in Mexico City there is no statistically significant difference in active citizenship between people with primary education or less and those with some secondary education.

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41 We average the predictions generated by the models described in Tables B.1 and B.2 over individual's specific characteristics. For example, the proclivity for each individual with associational participation is the predicted probability value; the average is obtained from these values for those with such participation.

As we noted above, there is some correlation between education and income in the cities, and in São Paulo in particular. Hence the stratification of active citizenship also prevails to some extent through income. We can claim with confidence that the 19 per cent of the poor in São Paulo (those with incomes of up to twice the minimum wage)<sup>42</sup> tend to have far lower levels of active citizenship than the rest of the population and virtually no direct civil relations to government.

**Table 5.1 Propensity of being active, mobilising government, and direct relations, given individual characteristics – São Paulo**

Variable	Active Citizens		Mobilising Government		Direct Relations	
	Proclivity	Stdv	Proclivity	Stdv	Proclivity	Stdv
<i>Secular Association</i>						
With Participation (n=404)	0.553	(0.108)	0.508	(0.119)	0.185	(0.075)
Without Participation (n=888)	0.258	(0.099)	0.221	(0.099)	0.087	(0.055)
<i>Education</i>						
Primary (n = 169)	0.201	(0.114)	0.130	(0.087)	0.033	(0.055)
Higher (n = 128)	0.535	(0.143)	0.508	(0.142)	0.208	(0.056)
<i>Labour Market</i>						
In (n=828)	0.418	(0.159)	0.377	(0.161)	0.185	(0.075)
Out (n=464)	0.230	(0.115)	0.193	(0.111)	0.066	(0.044)
<i>Gender</i>						
Women (n=737)			0.300	(0.172)		
Men (n=555)			0.325	(0.166)		

N = 1,292

**Table 5.2 Propensity of being active and mobilising government, given individual characteristics – Mexico City**

Variable	Active Citizens		Mobilising Government	
	Proclivity	Stdv	Proclivity	Stdv
<i>Secular Association</i>				
With participation (n=417)	0.780	(0.085)	0.630	(0.088)
Without participation (n=849)	0.464	(0.114)	0.344	(0.085)
<i>Education</i>				
Secondary or less (n=1,025)	0.531	(0.169)	0.408	(0.146)
Higher education (n=241)	0.723	(0.149)	0.585	(0.067)
<i>Employment</i>				
Formally employed (n=215)	0.522	(0.189)	0.409	(0.16)
No formal employment (n=1051)	0.577	(0.179)	0.449	(0.159)
Own business (n=104)	0.730	(0.137)	0.579	(0.148)
Not in own business (n=1162)	0.535	(0.178)	0.425	(0.155)

N = 1,266

42 R\$160 at the time of the survey.

We observe above that labour market insertion shapes the likelihood of citizens to become active in different ways in the two cities. In São Paulo people who are in the labour market, whether employed or not, are active at a far higher rate than those who are outside. From our sample we can predict that 41.8 per cent of the people in the labour market will be active, whereas only 25.8 per cent of those outside of the labour market will. This discrepancy also exists for *mobilising government* and *direct* civil relations. In Mexico City, we find that people with certain types of employment are active to different degrees. Individuals with their *own businesses* are more active than people with formal or informal employment relations. This citizenship activity appears to occur largely through *detached* relations, as the proclivity of individuals with their own business to be active drops significantly for the variable *mobilising government*.

### 5.3 Do associations reduce the socio-economic stratification of citizenship?

The preceding analysis shows that socio-economic forms of stratification have a substantial impact on citizens' civil relations to government. This is particularly marked in São Paulo, where almost a fifth of the population – that with little education and/or outside of the labour market – has no civil relations of any type. Do associations reduce this form of stratification of citizen-government relations?

The answer to this question involves the interaction of two distinct components. One is the extent to which the associational effect on active citizenship for people who occupy lower positions are greater than those for people who occupy higher positions. The second is the share of people in lower positions that participate in associations and hence obtain this potentially 'greater' effect. The overall effect on reducing the gap in active citizenship therefore depends in part on how severely associational participation is itself stratified.

In the preceding analysis we found that in both cities people who participate are more likely to be active citizens than others with similar socio-economic characteristics but who lack such participation. Tables 5.3 and 5.4 show that people who have less education or have more vulnerable labour market positions acquire far greater increases in active citizenship from their participation in associations than those better positioned. This effect is far stronger in São Paulo than in Mexico City.<sup>43</sup> In São Paulo, the interactive variables in Table 5.3 show that individuals with associational participation and only primary education or less are considerably more likely to be *active* citizens than their educational peers in general, with average propensities of 50.6 per cent and only 20.1 per cent. The group with higher education sees only a small increase with associational participation, from 53.5 per cent to 59.2 per cent. This difference in the strength of the associational effect is

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43 The decline in the gap to be active in São Paulo falls from 33 per cent points to 9 per cent. In Mexico City the gap falls from about 20 per cent points between the low and high education in the general population, to 9 per cent once we consider only those with an associational life. The differences in the definition of the independent variables are not the primary source of this difference between the cities.

even greater when it comes to *direct* relations to government. In Mexico City, *active* citizens are distributed more evenly across the educational hierarchy than in São Paulo. The large majority of the people who have secondary education or less (the variable Not Higher Education) gain more from associational participation than those with higher education. The equalising effect of associations is greater in the case of *mobilising government action*.

At first sight then, the interactive variables in Tables 5.3 and 5.4 appear to show that associations appear to substantially reduce the effect of socio-economic stratification on active citizenship and on specific civil relations.

**Table 5.3 Interdependent relations: propensity for active citizenship, mobilising government and direct relations for individuals with participation in secular associations, and other characteristics – São Paulo**

Variable	Active Citizens		Mobilising Government		Direct Relations	
	Average Proclivity	Std. dev	Average Proclivity	Std. dev	Average Proclivity	Std. dev
Individuals with Secular Association Participation						
Low education (n=184)	0.506	(0.111)	0.453	(0.127)	0.207	(0.059)
High education (n=217)	0.593	(0.089)	0.554	(0.0918)	0.161	(0.084)
Outside labour market (n=83)	0.436	(0.079)	0.386	(0.0862)	0.203	(0.073)
In labour market (n=321)	0.584	(0.093)	0.540	(0.106)	0.121	(0.044)
Women (n=197)	0.542	(0.114)	0.498	(0.110)	0.187	(0.072)
Men (n=207)	0.564	(0.101)	0.519	(0.106)	0.183	(0.079)

**Table 5.4 Interdependent relations: propensity for being active and mobilising government for individuals with participation in secular associations, and other characteristics – Mexico City**

Variable	Active		Mobilising Government	
	Average Proclivity	Std. dev	Average Proclivity	Std. dev
Individuals with Secular Association Participation				
Low education (n=250) <sup>a</sup>	0.753	(0.066)	0.602	(0.067)
High education (n=135) <sup>a</sup>	0.839	(0.089)	0.693	(0.0941)
Formally employed (n=83)	0.727	(0.09)	0.586	(0.0875)
With own business (n= 35)	0.890	(0.057)	0.758	(0.0728)
Women (n=199)	0.771	(0.084)	0.620	(0.084)
Men (n=218)	0.839	(0.089)	0.640	(0.092)

<sup>a</sup> Missing observations

Associational participation, however, is itself highly stratified along socio-economic lines in São Paulo. It is far less so in Mexico City. The descriptive statistics earlier in the paper already suggested that associational participation is highly stratified along socio-economic lines. Here we use multivariate models (probits) for associational participation in São Paulo and Mexico City to calculate the average proclivity of a person, with a particular characteristic, such as low-level education, to participate in associations (Tables B.3 and B.4, Appendix B). For São Paulo we are able to identify robust determinants, but not in the case of Mexico City.

The unequal distribution of associational participation across social strata – based on education, gender, and labour market status – appears to limit the overall reduction in the impact of socio-economic stratification on civil relations in São Paulo. In Mexico City associational participation is likely to be distributed randomly across the factors we have examined – that is, education, gender, labour market insertion, as well as by religion and some regions of the city.

Education-based stratification in associational participation is especially severe in the Brazilian city (Table B.3). The share of the well educated (with some higher education) who participate in associations is three times that of people with little education. On average only 14 per cent of people with little education will participate in associations, while 43 per cent of people with some higher education will participate. There is further a substantial difference by income and by form of labour market participation. Holding education constant, nearly half of the people who are formally employed and of the high income earners have proclivity to participate in association. In contrast, only 28 per cent of people employed in the informal sector and only 20 per cent of those with the lowest level of income will have any associational participation. In Mexico City there is no evidence of education-based stratification (Table B.4).

Taking into account both the larger citizenship effect people with low educational attainment or outside of the labour market obtain from participation, and the stratification of associational participation, how likely are such individuals to be active citizens, to attempt to mobilise government, or to have direct civil relations to government? In São Paulo the share of population that has little education but participates in associations, and are consequently *active citizens* is only 6.8 per cent, the share that *mobilise government* is 6.1 per cent and the share that *direct* civil relations 2.7 per cent (Tables B.3 and B.4). In sharp contrast, the share for the population with some higher education and associational participation who are active, mobilise government and have direct relations is, respectively, 25.3 per cent, 23.6 per cent and 6.8 per cent.<sup>44</sup>

Associational participation appears to produce to a gender gap where none exists in the general population. That is, women and men see a similar increase in active citizenship in the two cities when they participate in associations, but men are far more likely to participate in associations and capture this benefit than women. In

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44 The low-values for *direct* relation reflect the weakness of the multivariate model.



Mexico City men have almost twice the propensity to participate than women (Table B.3). In São Paulo the gap is far smaller (Table B.4).<sup>45</sup>

In São Paulo very few people outside of the labour market participate in associations, but the few who do become are twice as likely to be active than the large majority of those outside of the labour market. In Mexico City there is high degree of active citizenship even without participation in associations by different labour categories.

Summarising the multivariate analyses, there is convincing evidence that associational participation is the factor that most contributes to higher levels of *active citizenship*. Associations enhance different types of civil relations to government in the two cities, however, and do not produce a convergence towards a single ideal of *direct* civil relations. Associations do not significantly improve the nature of the interaction citizens have with public officials and do not, therefore, appear to contribute to the democratic rule of law. In Mexico City there is some evidence that participation in associations actually increases *detached* relations and reduces *direct* relations. The analysis also shows that education is a major contributor to active citizenship, as well as associational participation. Finally, it reveals that associations enhance the level of active citizenship far more for individuals at the bottom of the different forms of socio-economic stratification than those at or near the top. Associational participation itself is highly stratified, however, and few people in the bottom strata capture this potential greater benefit. Hence associations play some role in countering education based stratification of active citizenship in the two cities, but far less than they would if the associational sphere was more egalitarian.

## 6 Some concluding thoughts on democratic theory

The paper's principal findings raise a number of questions for democratic theory. The most important finding – association enhances levels of active citizenship but not quality of civil relations to government, and makes only a limited contribution to the democratic rule of law – supports the idea that we need to conceive of two distinct dimensions of citizen-government relations. Citizenship should be explored along both its political and civil dimensions. Because these dimensions vary independently, the civil dimension should have its own analytic status in democratic theory. The civil dimension includes, alongside civil liberties, civil rights that sanction new forms of accountability of government's duty to act. It is this part of citizenship which ensures citizens are able to secure access to the public goods necessary for

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45 In São Paulo chances of finding an active citizen with associational relation is 15 per cent and 21 per cent respectively for women and men according to our model. The gap is only 6 per cent. The corresponding values for Mexico City are 21 per cent and 33 per cent for women and men, a gap of 12 per cent.

the enjoyment of rights and entitlements constitutive of contemporary citizenship. The tradition in political science has been to focus on political participation, but many of the new democracies fall particularly short on this civil dimension. Furthermore, with the dramatic expansion of both government's duty to act and forms of societal accountability in the short twentieth century, this civil dimension has become increasingly important.

The findings pose a particular challenge to the society-centered focus found in the civic engagement debate. The different types of relations individuals have to government across the two cities, irrespective of their citizens' common belief that government has the primary responsibility for providing access to public goods, points to the fact that the polity itself plays an important role in shaping active citizenship. A society-centered approach cannot explain the difference in patterns between the two cities. And however much associations contribute to the civic values or skills of citizens, individuals who participate and who do not participate in associations have the same types of relations to government – whether it is direct relations in São Paulo or detached or mixed relations in Mexico City.

In our view, creating civil relations that conform more closely to the ideal under the democratic rule of law may depend less on individual citizens' values or behaviour than on that of collective actors such as labour movements, social movements, networks of civil organisations and on the larger political game that plays out in the institutional arena of the party system and institutions of representative democracy. Associational life, through its effect on individual citizens, does not produce a change in the type of civil relations to government. The quality of the polity clearly does *not* improve as a result of the higher levels of active citizenship to which associations contribute.

A number of studies in affluent democracies show that participation in the associational sphere, or civil society, has a strong class bias but in much democratic theory the assumption remains that this sphere is egalitarian and free of obstacles to collective action.<sup>46</sup> Our findings confirm that associational participation is highly stratified outside of affluent western democracies as well. Even in cities such as São Paulo and Mexico City, settings that are more likely to favour relatively equal participation, we find remarkable stratification across education, gender, and labour market status. As a consequence, associations have only a limited, and a differentiated, impact on the stratification of active citizenship, reducing education-based stratification to some extent but potentially increasing others, such as that by gender. The differences in forms and levels of stratification between São Paulo and Mexico City, however, do warn against making *a priori* and simplistic claims about the inherent inegalitarian nature of associational life.

Political parties have historically played a central role in the political and legal construction of citizenship and in mediating citizen-government relations. In this paper we have examined citizens' relations to political parties only in terms of the latter's brokerage role. We do not examine citizens' relations to parties in terms of their political-electoral role, as our concern is the civil dimension of citizenship and

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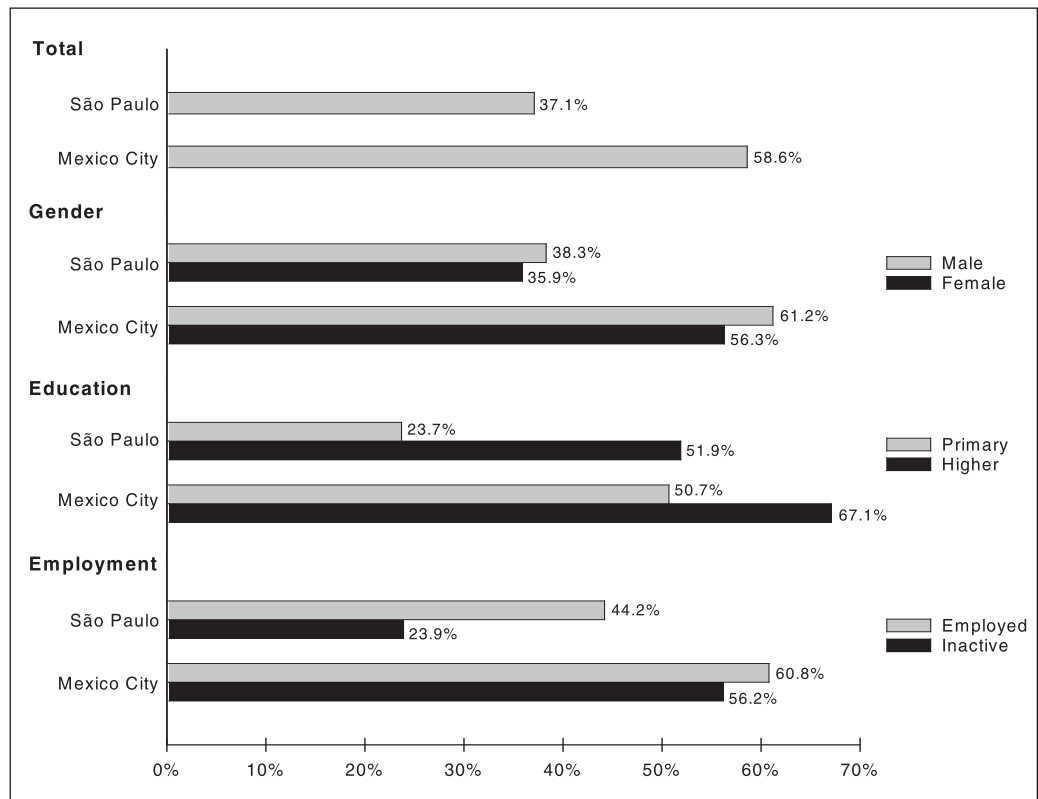
46 Putnam (2000); Verba *et al.* (1995); Rosenstone and Hansen (1993).

not the political. Although not reported here, we have examined whether there is any kind of relation between party identification and active citizenship or the type of citizen-government relation. Notwithstanding significant differences in levels of party identification in the two cities, we have found none.

The survey we conducted, we believe, is the first of its kind and as such suffers from various shortcomings. The most important of these is that it offers a snapshot of citizen-government relations in the two cities, and hence fixes one moment in time. It is not part of a time series. It is possible that the snapshot was taken at a moment that is in some way exceptional, and consequently the respondent's responses might have been different had the survey been conducted at another moment. Responses on political issues or on electoral politics have been shown to be quite sensitive to the timing of surveys – in particular at what stage in the electoral cycle – but the types of issues explored in this paper are far less susceptible to short-term variations. Nonetheless, the analysis would be significantly strengthened if time series data were available. This would allow us to track change over time in citizen-government relations and to confirm stable longer-term patterns. For now, we leave the challenge of creating a time series by applying the survey a second and third time to others who find the current set of findings of interest.

# Appendix A

**Figure A.1 Active citizens by socio-economic characteristics**

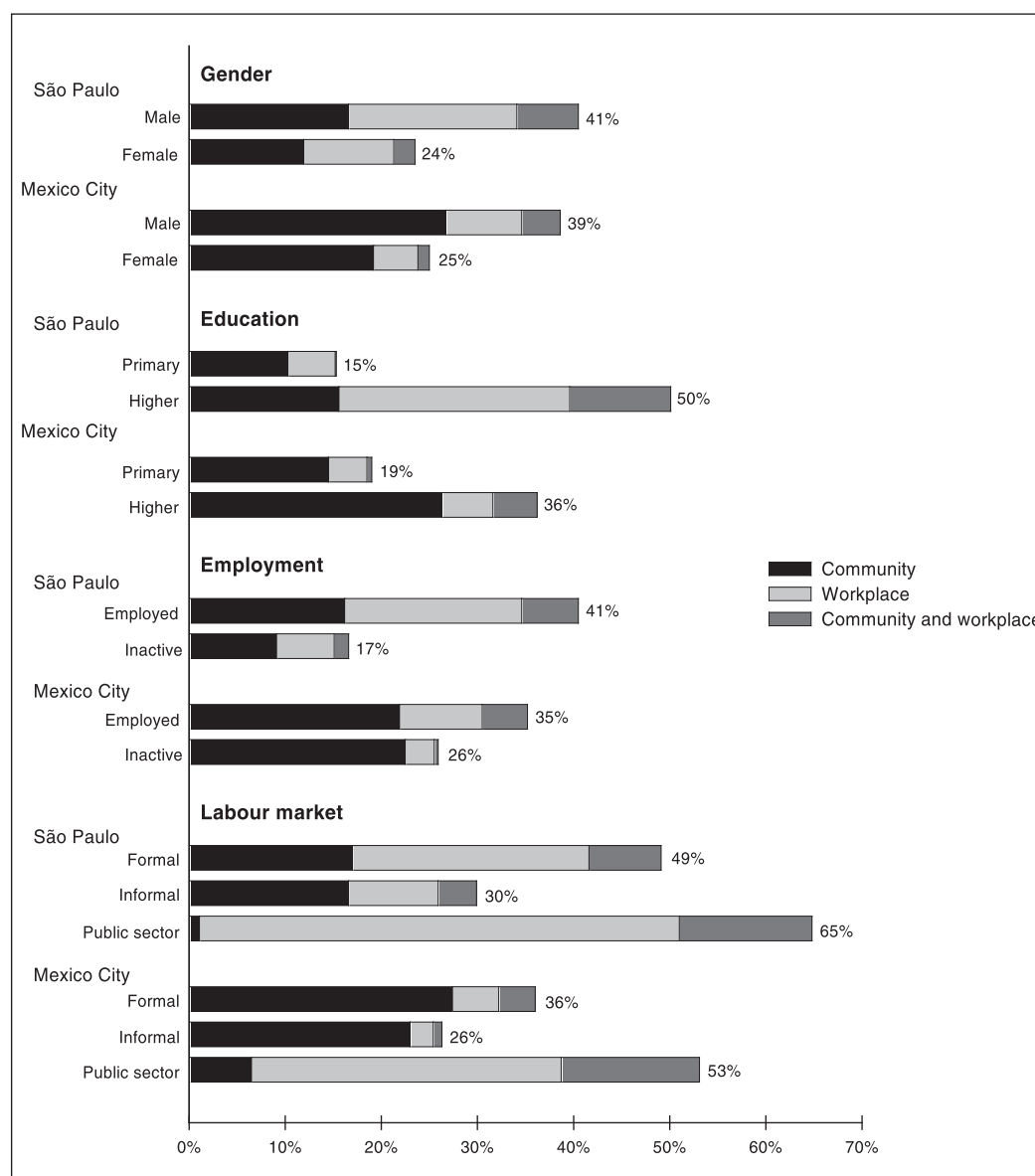


Q: 'In the last five years have you approached \_\_\_\_\_ to try to address any of these problems?'  
 [Multiple responses possible]

\*Note: São Paulo n= 1,292; Mexico City n= 1,284

\*\*Note: Percentage of Active Problem Solvers – São Paulo n=464; Mexico City n=733

**Figure A.2 Percentage of population that participated in associations by gender, education, and labour market status**



Note: Male – São Paulo n=555; Mexico City n=545. Female – São Paulo n=738; Mexico City n=639. Primary – São Paulo n=328; Mexico City n=309. Higher – São Paulo n=158; Mexico City n=360. Employed – São Paulo n=658; Mexico City n=633. Inactive – São Paulo n=464; Mexico City n=603. Formal – São Paulo n=292; Mexico City n=259. Informal – São Paulo n=321; Mexico City n=219. Public Sector – São Paulo n=30; Mexico City n=126.

## Appendix B

We report here the probit models for determining *active citizenship*, *mobilising government*, and *direct civil relations* in São Paulo and Mexico City. Following, we present the probit models for participation in association. After interpreting associational participation we return to the first set of models to discuss the appropriateness of the specifications.

**Table B.1 Probit models for active citizens, mobilising government and direct demands – São Paulo**

Variable	Active Citizens		Mobilising Government		Direct Relations		
	Coefficient	Sign.	Coefficient	Sign.	Coefficient	Sign.	
Labour market – Outside	-0.37	0.000	-0.42	0.000	-0.34	0.004	
Education	Primary	-0.33	0.002	-0.52	0.000	-0.61	0.003
	Higher	0.19	0.034	0.24	0.028	0.13	0.340
Gender – Women			0.11	0.150			
Secular Assoc. Activity	0.64	0.000	0.64	0.000	0.28	0.007	
Religion	Evangelical	-0.22	0.064				
	Catholic	-0.18	0.064				
Territorial Dummies – Grajau	-0.81	0.005	-0.88	0.005	-0.69	0.125	
Income (hh) – Low					-0.24	0.040	
Race – Black					0.41	0.007	
Constant	-0.25	0.000	-0.57	0.000	-1.09	0.000	

Model 1 No. observations : 1292 ; Chi2 : 152.40

Model 2 No. observations : 1292 ; Chi2 : 162.42

Model 3 No. observations : 1292 ; Chi2 : 61.47

*Explaining participation in association:* We explain participation associations through probit models. The model for São Paulo is relatively robust. The model for Mexico City, however, is weak, with limited explanatory power. Nonetheless, the particular variables that are significant in the Mexico City model do allow us to draw some conclusions, such as the strong gendered nature of the city's associational participation, and as in many other national contexts, the high levels of associational participation of public sector workers (through union members). Here we report propensity to participate given different characteristics; these figures are explained to elaborate on inequality relations in civic activities.

**Table B.2 Mexico City probit models for active citizens and mobilising government**

Variable	Active Citizens		Mobilising Government		
	Coefficient	Sign.	Coefficient	Sign.	
Labour market	Formal Employee	-0.24	0.017	-0.17	0.082
	Own Business	0.45	0.004	0.34	0.017
Education – Higher		0.51	0.000	0.36	0.000
Secular Association		0.89	0.000	0.74	0.000
Territorial Dummies	1, district 2, district	-0.34	0.077	-0.17	0.077
Age – 30–59 yrs old		0.2	0.010	0.23	0.003
Household Structure	Extended	0.11	0.188	0.1	0.246
	Nuclear	0.21	0.035	0.21	0.035
Constant		-0.31	0.000	-0.62	0.000

Model 1 No. observations : 1266; Chi2 : 173.88.

Model 2 No. observations : 1266; Chi2 : 130.21.

**Table B.3 Propensity to participate in secular association, São Paulo**

Variable	Participate	
	Average Proclivity	Std. dev
<i>Employment</i>		
Formal employment (n=215)	0.487	(0.115)
No formal employment (n=924)	0.284	(0.128)
<i>Education</i>		
High education (n=269)	0.427	(0.136)
Primary education only (n=125)	0.135	(0.059)
<i>Income</i>		
Lowest income (control) (n=215)	0.195	(0.195)
Low-middle income (n=634)	0.307	(0.111)
Middle income (n=215)	0.404	(0.137)
Highest income (n=75)	0.585	(0.113)
<i>Gender</i>		
Women (n=648)	0.281	(0.135)
Men (n=441)	0.377	(0.148)

We now discuss whether the above probit specification can be justified. Following the language in the literature we examine: (i) fixed effect due to regional unobserved regional heterogeneity (ii) simultaneous causality or endogeneity (iii) selection biases. We deal with each of these problems below. As we believe results in Tables B.1

**Table B.4 Propensity to participate in secular association, Mexico City**

Variable	Participate	
	Average Proclivity	Std. dev
<i>Employment</i>		
In labour market (n=603)	0.25	(0.032)
Out of labour market (n=663)	0.396	(0.096)
Public sector (n=126)	0.57	(0.05)
Non-public sector (n=1140)	0.302	(0.096)
<i>Gender</i>		
Women (n=727)	0.273	(0.072)
Men (n=539)	0.404	(0.085)

and B.2 are intuitive, we are interested in verifying whether we can use the above results for making conclusions regarding citizen inclination to problem-solve in various ways. The choice of probit model over logit can be easily defended, as the residuals from the equations reported in the text approximate normal distribution. More crucial concerns are the problem of endogeneity and selection biases regarding the impact of associational participation.

*Fixed effect model:* The data set from each city can be thought of as a set of information for a panel of individuals from different regions: districts in the case of Sao Paulo and electoral zones in case of Mexico. These districts could impose unobserved effects in a homogenous way on individual behaviour within a particular region. We tested this by running a fixed effect model on the cities regions. However, a more intuitive way of understanding this is to have regional dummies and determine their significance for the models in Tables B.1 and B.2. In the case of São Paulo (Table B.1), when all regions are included only one region (Grajau) shows significant impact and that is included in the model. Similar findings from Mexico can be reported. We can report no regional effects for both cities.

*Endogeneity:* Another reason for which to question the validity of findings is that there may be simultaneous causality in regards to the main hypotheses of this study – participation in associational participation induces greater proclivity toward problem solving. Yet it could be that agents tend to participate because it is easier to problem solve once there is contact with associations. Thus, the causal relationship flows two ways. The associational participation in Tables B.1 and B.2 is strongly influenced by the dependent variable itself; and the reported impacts in the above tables reflect the dual causal relation. We need instrumental variables that identify associational relation and also are independent of proclivity to problem solve. We do not rely on theoretical justification for the chosen instrumental variables.

Variables which qualify as an instrumental variable (IV) are those that do not show a correlation with demand-making. We show the result below for mobilising the government sector to show that endogeneity is weakly present in São Paulo. Results are similar for active citizens. The results are based on un-weighted probit regressions for the main relation.



**Table B.5 Testing for endogeneity for mobilising government, São Paulo**

Dependent Relation (no weights) Variable	Standard Probit (1)		Standard Probit (2)		Secular Association		IV-Result 1		IV-Result 2	
	Coeff	Sign	Coeff	Sign	Coeff	Sign	Coeff	Sign	Coeff	Sign
Labour Market-Outside			-0.323	0.00	-0.433	0.000			-0.385	0.00
Education										
Primary	-0.322	0.006	-0.280	0.019			-0.384	0.002	-0.36	0.00
Higher	0.355	0.00	0.313	0.006			0.430	0.001	0.45	0.00
Gender – Women	0.148	0.04	0.232	0.004			0.151	0.067	0.22	0.009
Secular Associational Activity	0.65 <sup>1</sup>	0.00	0.60 <sup>2</sup>	0.00			0.70 <sup>1</sup>	0.016	0.185 <sup>2</sup>	0.523
Reg Dummy – Grajau	-0.46	0.00	0.606	0.00			-0.795	0.00	-0.82	0.00
Reg Dummy					-0.919	0.000				
Low Income					-0.911	0.000				
Mid-level Income					-0.66	0.000				
High-level Income					-0.49	0.005				
Public Sector Formal					0.791	0.002				
Race – Others					0.310	0.004				
Race – Others					0.823	0.813				
Constant	-0.745	0.00			0.238	0.133	-0.719	0.00		
Chi-SQ	134		148		105.8					

<sup>1</sup> Similarity in coefficient values cannot be rejected; p-value 0.860

<sup>2</sup> Similarity in coefficient cannot be rejected; p-value 0.138

Standard probit entries in B.5 (columns 2 and 3) differ from each other, as the second specification has an additional variable regarding labour market. The corresponding IV estimates are compared through a seemingly unrelated estimation technique available in STATA-9. This is similar to a Hausman specification test with a variance for the difference in the estimators related to null and alternative hypotheses that is more often well defined (STATA-9 manual-suest command; Johnston and DiNardo 1997). We show that when the variable for non-participation in labour force is included the instrumented variable for associational relation is not significant. On the other hand, we can claim that it cannot be rejected that the coefficients for the instrumented associational relation is similar to the observed association variable in some specifications.

We now turn to the results we observed in Mexico. The results for Mexico are clearer. Exploring the relation between active citizenship and associational participation we can rule out endogeneity. Table B.6 details this result.

**Table B.6 Testing for endogeneity between active citizenship and associational activity in Mexico**

Dependent Relation (no weights) Variable		Standard Probit (I)		Secular Association		IV-Result	
		Coeff	Sign	Coeff	Sign	Coeff	Sign
Labour market	Formal Employee	-0.0189	0.849	0.194	0.00	-0.023	0.817
	Own Business	0.353	0.011			0.355	0.010
	Public Sector			0.70	0.00		
Education – Higher		0.423	0.00			0.416	0.00
Secular Associational Activity		0.704 <sup>1</sup>	0.00			0.648 <sup>1</sup>	0.088
District 1 Dummy		-0.272	0.026			-0.216	0.068
Age 30–49 years old		0.239	0.002			0.237	0.010
Household Structure	Extended	0.0506	0.63			0.016	0.876
	Nuclear	-0.272	0.096			0.122	0.130
Gender				-0.287	0.00		
Unemployment				0.111	0.5		
Constant		-0.285	0.00	-0.39	0.00		
Chi – Square		134.21		58.01			

<sup>1</sup> Similarity in coefficient values cannot be rejected; p-value 0.880

*Selection bias:* Selection bias would stem from the fact that there may be some unobservable characteristics of individuals, perhaps related to associational participation, that induce individuals toward problem solving in different spaces. Thus associational participation would not capture much of the reasons why individuals become active citizens. Selectivity results from characteristics that are present among those who have associational participation that strongly correlate with active citizenship, so as to lead to a false attribution of causality to associational relationship with active citizenship.

To detect selection biases we use a more recent and intuitive method known as propensity score matching.<sup>47</sup> First, we identify the group with associational participation as the treated group and the group that is without associational relation as the controlled group. Suppose that associational participation does not contribute to active citizenship but other characteristics do contribute. Suppose further that these other characteristics, even if unobservable, are correlated with some observable characteristics relevant to associational participation. In that case associational relation is irrelevant to active citizenship. Then, on average, a member from the treated group when compared to a member from the controlled group should behave the same way toward active citizenship, whenever both have these other observable characteristics. To see this more clearly, one can construct two groups by matching characteristics of set of individuals from both the treated and controlled group by some specified method. There are various ways of obtaining these types of matching. Suppose that the two groups, more or less identical in characteristics with the distinction of associational participation, behave the same way toward problem solving. Then, associational relation does not influence problem solving.

Two individuals with matching characteristics should have same propensity to problem solve. What counts as matched pair? Matching individuals by characteristics can be daunting. It can be shown (Rosenbaum and Rubin 1985) that this matching can occur over more summary measures. Matching techniques can differ once these summary measures are found. We have used a one-to-one matching technique, which takes an observation from the treated group and finds an observation from the control group through a score that is similar for describing proclivity toward associational relation. The similarity is defined by nearest neighbour.<sup>48</sup> This proclivity is based on characteristics of individuals and can be the same whether or not an individual exhibited associational relation. When matching is done, the score is similar for the both the observations and obtained through a probit on associational relation. An observation with associational relation is only mapped once with a non-associational observation (Dehejia and Wahba 2002). As the group characteristics are similar, one may conjecture that non-observed factors are similar. Appendix Table B.7 shows the summary characteristic of the two groups

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47 An alternative is to use some technique akin to Heckman correction (Heckman 1990); the qualitative results in our case do not differ from use of a Heckman correction applicable to probit relation.

48 Smallest distances are chosen first. All treated individuals have a distinct match from the control group; some in the control are discarded.

for São Paulo: those with some associational relation (treated) and those without any (control group). The variables are those that were used to generate probability of associational participation. This model differs from those used previously. The means are shown for the two groups first from the data as it is, and then after some observations have been discarded because they could not be matched. The p-values show that after observations are matched, in only the case of one of the variables does the mean income in second category differ statistically. For all other variables the means cannot be distinguished between the treated and control matched groups. A similar table for Mexico was constructed and the results were similar.

**Table B.7 São Paulo – covariates summary before and after matching**

Variable	Sample	Mean		%reduct		t-test	
		Treated	Control	%bias	bias	t	p> t
edband4	Unmatched	0.3125	0.19817	26.4		4.28	0.000
	Matched	0.3125	0.27174	9.4	64.3	1.09	0.276
edband1	Unmatched	0.0462	0.14081	-32.9		-4.81	0.000
	Matched	0.0462	0.05707	-3.8	88.5	-0.60	0.551
gender	Unmatched	0.49728	0.60365	-21.5		-3.40	0.001
	Matched	0.49728	0.4375	12.1	43.8	1.46	0.145
incband1	Unmatched	0.11413	0.22555	-30.0		-4.52	0.000
	Matched	0.11413	0.10326	2.9	90.2	0.42	0.671
incband2	Unmatched	0.52989	0.57106	-8.3		-1.31	0.192
	Matched	0.52989	0.63043	-20.2	-144.2	-2.49	0.013
incband3	Unmatched	0.23641	0.16428	18.1		2.92	0.004
	Matched	0.23641	0.22283	3.4	81.2	0.39	0.695
relig1	Unmatched	0.2663	0.20991	13.3		2.12	0.034
	Matched	0.2663	0.26359	0.6	95.2	0.07	0.940
regdummy_6	Unmatched	0.06793	0.09387	-9.5		-1.46	0.144
	Matched	0.06793	0.08152	-5.0	47.6	-0.63	0.530

If the matched control and treated groups are equally active then associational impact on being active is essentially very small or negligible. We next show that the propensities to be active for the treated and control groups are different. We note that propensity to be active remains different when pairs are matched by similar characteristics. In fact, the difference in being active is widened for the corresponding groups.

**Table B.8 Propensity to be active for those with and without associational participation after groups have been matched, São Paulo and Mexico City**

Outcome Variable	Unmatched		One to one: nearest neighbour		Three nearest neighbour	
	With Associational Participation	Without Associational Participation	With Associational Participation	Without Associational Participation	With Associational Participation	Without Associational Participation
<b>SÃO PAULO</b>						
Active Citizens	0.5597	0.2777	0.559	0.258	0.5601	0.2732
Demand making with Government	0.5	0.2425			0.5	0.2309
<b>MEXICO CITY</b>						
Demand making with Government	0.5683	0.3604			0.5683	0.3908

The columns under the heading *Unmatched* reports the proportions that are active citizens or that have direct relations with government. The difference in proportions that make up active citizens for those with associational participation and those without is significant. This difference remains consistent throughout the matching technique we used. We used two matching techniques: one-to-one matching and *three nearest neighbourhood*. In *three nearest neighbourhood* matching for active citizenship, two observations are dropped from the group with associational participation. In all cases the groups act differently. Thus we can confirm that there are no selection biases in associational participation influencing citizen activities.

*No alternative models:* What has been the result of various tests to substantiate the results reported in Tables B.1 and B.2 and correspondingly Tables 5.1 and 5.2 in the text? We believe the results for the endogeneity test show that the probit models which are easier to interpret are applicable even if only for some specifications endogeneity cannot be ruled out. Our tests do not show that we can rule out selection bias. Hence we do not interpret models other than those reported in Tables B.1 and B.2.

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