SUBNATIONAL STATE CAPACITY AND CIVIC AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN MEXICO

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Abstract

State capacity is the extent to which states can design policies and elicit the necessary consensus and involvement to ensure policy implementation. This study inquires whether different dimensions of state capacity at the subnational level in Mexico have a relation with different manifestations of political and civic participation. Two general hypotheses are tested. The first one proposes that strong subnational states (i.e., can effectively rally bureaucratic capabilities, exert control within their territories and collect taxes from their populations) provide incentives and conditions favorable for conventional forms of political participation and reduce the likelihood of political protest. The second hypothesis suggests that where subnational state capacities are weak, people turn away from politics and instead turn to protest participation. The empirical analysis uses survey data from Mexican citizens in all 32 Mexican states in 2013. Our main findings are that there is a significant portion of variance in participation due to variations across states in Mexico. Also, we found that different dimensions of state capacities are related to the likelihood of different forms of political and civic participation.

INTRODUCTION

During the last decades, a participatory governance model that stresses collaboration with non-governmental actors and citizens' participation has gained importance, both in theory and among professional communities (Bassoli 2010). Citizens' engagement in political and public issues is considered central for "making democracy work", and for fostering a better design and easier implementation of public policy. Although there is quite some literature—particularly in the social movements and agenda-setting research—that has examined the effects of political participation on government responsiveness and policy, only few studies have focused on the other side of the relationship; namely, on *how state capacities create favorable environments for participation* and, hence, facilitate or constrain citizens' engagement in political and civic life.

State capacity is the extent to which states can design policies and elicit the necessary consensus and involvement to ensure policy implementation (Soifer 2012; Giraudy 2012). Stronger states are those that can effectively achieve order in a territory, mobilize policy stakeholders, collect taxes, and provide public goods and services to its citizens. Hence, state capacity is associated with a number of important social and political phenomena, ranging from economic development to democratic normalcy (Carbone and Memoli 2015). Although state capacity has been studied by and large at the national level (Back and Hadenius; Soifer 2012; Kurtz and Schrank 2012), it can also be observed at the subnational level. In many countries, such as federations, there is an explicit transference and balance of powers among federated states and a central (federal) government. Therefore, stronger or weaker *subnational* state capacities may also have relevant political and social consequences at the local level.

In the present study, we inquire whether different dimensions of state capacity at the subnational level in Mexico have a relation with manifestations of political and civic participation. Based on a motivational theory of different modes of participation, we test two general hypotheses. The first one proposes that strong (subnational) states (states that are capable of designing and implementing public policy) provide incentives and conditions favorable for conventional forms of political participation such as communication with representatives and voting, whereas reduce the likelihood of political protest. The second hypothesis suggests that where subnational state capacities are weak, people expect poor or null performance of local governments, and therefore turn away from politics towards other types of engagement (e.g., protest or community retrenchment). To test these hypotheses, we use survey data from Mexican citizens in all 32 Mexican states in 2013. Mexico is an interesting case for testing our hypotheses not only because of its institutional features (large federation), but also because of important asymmetries across regions (Cejudo 2008). In addition, differences in terms of political engagement across the country have been suggested in previous research. Mexico is a developing middle-income country, with a history of institutional weakness, and recent democratization. Insights from this case could inform and serve for comparison with similar cases such as Brazil and Argentina.

Using logistic multilevel modelling, we test whether individuals' propensity to engage in different forms of participation (conventional political participation, political protest, or civic participation) are affected by differences in subnational state capacities. We find significant residual variation (not explained by differences between individuals) across Mexican states regarding different forms of political participation, ranging from 17% in the case of conventional forms of participation to 35% for political protest. Further, we find that subnational state capacities do affect the likelihood of different forms of participation

but not necessarily in the hypothesized ways, thus revealing a more complex set of relations than originally assumed. Also, we find that political protest is largely unexplained by subnational state capacity, but that civic and conventional participation hold an important relation with different dimensions of subnational state capacity in the Mexican case.

This study makes three concrete contributions to extant research on state capacity, governance, and political participation. First, by investigating state capacities at the subnational level, we complement previous research and extend it in order to understand consequences of strong or weak capacities at this level of analysis. This contribution is important in that it adds a new layer of complexity to the problem of if and how state capacity affects political outcomes. Second, we empirically study different manifestations of participation: both political and civic. This allows for a more fine-tuned analysis of individual level consequences of subnational state capacities. In particular, it admits a comparison of citizens' responses to differences in the local political and institutional context in which they live. Third, we empirically test our arguments using cross-sectional data from a large sample of 11,000 Mexican citizens, as well as independently collected data on state capacity at the subnational level in Mexico.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. The first section discusses subnational state capacity and its theoretical relation to participation. Next, we present our research design and methods, followed by results. The last section discuses and concludes.

THEORY

Studies on "stateness", state capacity, or state strength usually derive from the Weberian notion of a state as a territorial entity with the monopoly on the legitimate use of force (1978: 54). Although there is no conceptual consensus, many authors (Fortin-Ritteberger

2014; Giraudy 2012; Soifer 2012) agree on the idea that state capacity refers to the extent to which states can design policies and elicit the necessary consensus to ensure implementation. For instance, Mann has argued that "state strength" or state capacity is "the institutional capacity of a central state, despotic or not, to penetrate its territories and logistically implement decisions" (1986: 113).

Although state capacity has been studied, by and large, at the national level, we argue that it can also be observed at the subnational level. In many countries, such as federations, there is an explicit transference and balance of powers among federated states and a central (federal) government. Therefore, stronger or weaker *subnational* state capacities may also have relevant political and social consequences for citizens living in the same country but in different subnational units.The great majority of work on state capacity has to do with its origins, conceptualization, and effects at the national level (Kurtz 2013, Kurtz and Schrank 2012, Soifer 2012). Regarding the origins of state capacity, neoclassical economic theory presumes sufficient institutions to sustain a market economy and tax citizens in order to provide public goods. Similarly, positive analysis in Political Economy assumes that the power to tax or regulate is chosen in a political equilibrium with collective choice. These standard approaches in Economics contrast with the perspective on the origins of the state held by some historians, who see the evolution of state capacity in taxation and market-supporting institutions as a central fact that needs to be explained (instead of an assumption of the analysis). According to Tilly (1990) state capacity evolved historically over centuries in response to requirements of war. War placed a premium on bases of taxation and created incentives for governments to invest in institutions for the maintenance of trade and property rights (Besley and Persson 2009; 2010).

A second group of studies have to do with how to conceptualize different components of state capacity. Although scholars tend to disagree as to how to articulate best the concept, some agreement does exist about core dimensions or criteria for state capacity:

1. Territorial control and bureaucratic capacity (emphasized by Max Weber): the extent to which state officials achieve the necessary cohesiveness, technical skills, and instrumental rationality to formulate and implement policy.
2. Extractive capacity (emphasized by Charles Tilly): the extent to which states succeed in taxing the population in a way that meets revenue needs of the state without penalizing too heavily the competitive sectors of the economy.
3. Extraterritorial links (emphasized by Theda Skokpol): the extent to which states find backing from other actors abroad.
4. Capacity to steer (economic) policy (emphasized by Peter Hall): the extent to which the state is able to steer policy implementation in order to meet any given challenge and to secure fiscal and monetary policy outcomes.

Summarizing many of the points above, Giraudy (2012), based on Soifer and Von Hau (2008), proposes that state capacity is a concept made of three core dimensions: state territorial reach, state autonomy from non-state actors, and bureaucratized/professionalized state institutions.

In this study we focus on state capacities at the subnational level. As mentioned before, little has been theorized and measured about state capacities at the subnational level. We argue that strong subnational states are those that *can effectively rally bureaucratic capabilities and exert control within their territories independently from the national state (i.e., by their own means), collect taxes from their populations while*

obtaining additional resources from the central government, and steer local policy implementation in order to secure policy outcomes. In consequence, subnational state capacity could be associated with a number of important social and local political outcomes, ranging from state economic growth to democratic normalcy. Strong subnational states have the capacity to establish the monopoly on the legitimate use of force in their territory, make citizens comply with law and contracts, and provide regional public goods and services. On the contrary, weak subnational states lack those capacities and have to compete with private local and national actors in the extraction of resources and securing policy outcomes.

Based on the previous, we define five dimensions of subnational state capacity. *Bureaucratic capacity* refers to the existence of an established administrative apparatus of public servants, recruited and retain on the basis of professional merit, and that cannot or will not abuse public office for personal gain. *Extractive capacity* refers to the ability of a given subnational unit to collect taxes form its population independently from national means of taxation. *Extraterritorial recognition* alludes to the recognition of external actors of local sovereignty; in subnational units, this refers to the capacity of local governments to influence national policies or to obtain specific advantages from the central government, such as federal transferences of resources. The assumption here is larger transferences could indicate power of negotiation and influence over federal policy. *Steerage capacity* deals with how states spend resources, deliver public goods and secure that implementation leads to desired policy outcomes. Finally, *territorial control* refers to the capacity of local governments to retain control over their jurisdiction by means of prosecution and punishment of crimes.

Subnational state capacity and democratic governance

There are many studies that have used state capacity as an independent variable to account for patterns of political stability and change, or to examine its consequences for various phenomena ranging from economic growth and delivery of public services. For instance, Dincecco and Katz (2012) found that performance of states with modern extractive and productive capabilities have significant and positive effects on overall economic performance. Fjelde and De Soysa (2009) revisited the relationship between state capacity and civil peace through different pathways by which states manage threats of violence: coercion, co-optation and cooperation. They found that social and state forces favor civil peace. Moon and Dixon (1985) also looked for a potential effect of state capacity on the delivery of public goods. Their study showed that the size of (national) government affects the provision of basic needs even when controlling for aggregate social wealth. As Roberts and Sherlock (1999) have argued at length, strong states must be able to provide essential public goods for the smooth functioning of society.

A number of scholars have claimed also that state capacity is a fundamental pre-condition for optimal democratic governance (Linz and Stepan 1996; O'Donnell 1993; Back and Hadenius 2008). Without capable state institutions, citizens' civil, political, and social rights cannot be realized.

There are an increasing number of studies that link "strong states" to democratic institutions (Bunce 2000; Fukuyama 2004; Kaufman et al 1999; Huber, Rueschemeyer and Stephens 1999; Przeworski 1995). As Linz and Stepan (1996) argued, an effective state is essential to support the building blocks of democratic consolidation (also, see Rotberg 2014). In the debate about the relationship between what they termed "stateness" and democracy, they emphasized two key aspects. First, the existence of a sovereign state

holding a monopoly on the use of force within the territory must exist to provide a safe space for public deliberation. Second, the various groups in society must reach an agreement about who has the right to citizenship. State capacity is, thus, conceptualized as a prerequisite for democracy (and democratic participation). Indeed, state capacity constitutes a necessary, but often unacknowledged, condition for successful democratization. While democracy requires that citizens participate in the political process and, thus, accept the legitimacy of the democratic rules, it also requires that citizens acknowledge the authority of the state and the capacity of elected and non-elected officials to implement decisions.

Participation

At the subnational level, little is known about the relation between state capacity and democratic governance. In particular, it is uncertain whether stronger subnational state capacities affect citizens' democratic participation. This is particularly interesting to the extent that subnational states are arguably "closer" to citizens, and thus, one might expect that the potential effects of subnational state capacity on participation could be more immediate, and may also affect participation in both local and national politics.

According to rational actor models of collective action, it makes little sense to take part in politics (or any other form of collective action). The logic is that since governmental policies are collective goods—affecting citizens whether or not they are active in promoting or opposing them—the rational, self-interested individual has no incentive to invest scarce resources of time, money, or effort in political participation. Because the efforts of any single individual are unlikely to have a significant effect on whether the desired policy outcome is achieved, the rational individual will hitch a free ride on the activity of others

and, thus reap the benefits of the preferred policy without spending resources on its attainment. The results of these calculations by self-interested individuals are that all will refrain from joint activity on behalf of a collective goal—even one that is widely shared and intensely preferred.

Partly in reaction to this argument, several political scientists have identified a number of different accounts of what motivates or might motivate participation (Parry 1972; 1974; Hardin 1982). Classical studies of political participation in liberal democracies adopt (often implicitly) an instrumentalist position (Verba and Nie 1972; Barnes et al. 1979). This approach assumes that participation is intended to promote or defend participants' goals with the minimum of costs and maximum effect. These goals may be altruistic (such as collecting money for development projects), more narrowly self-interested, or, more likely, a mixture of the two. Therefore, in this view, it is assumed that the main reason why some people decide to participate, whereas others do not, is that participants consider that action is likely to bring them benefits in excess of any costs borne.

Downs (1957) provided an early version of this approach. He regarded participation as a direct, rationally calculated response to a given situation. His model stresses the context in which people act, the issues that confront them, the interests at stake, and the opportunities available for political involvement. Accordingly, the explanation of why people participate has to do with the context of issues, needs, and interests of individuals and groups. Different contexts and needs will tend to push one's participatory activity in certain directions rather than others. The result is a diverse range of different groupings active over different issues.

Further developments in the instrumentalist approach on participation have conceptualized the decision to participate as the result of a number of social cues affecting the general outlook people have on political life. In particular, new approaches (influenced by developments in Social Psychology and Cognitive Sociology) emphasize cues that affect individuals' confidence about any action they might undertake (Lindenberg 2006; Parry et al. 1992). It suggests that, given certain contexts, certain people develop "civic attitudes" which prompt them to participate. These attitudes include an interest and knowledge of politics, a sense of effectiveness, and also a feeling that there is a normative obligation to participate in the (co-)production of social goods. Following this argument, one would expect that the higher the sense of political efficacy, the more an individual is likely to participate. Also, the more individual thinks that her participation can make a difference (political efficacy), the more she will involve herself in collective issues. Conversely, a feeling of political inefficacy or cynicism can lead to political apathy and alienation. On this, Di Palma (1970) argued that there is an important difference between disaffection and dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction means simply a general dislike for anything that falls short of one's wishes; it may be manageable and temporary. Disaffection is an alienation of feelings and involves remoteness and estrangement; it can be permanent. One may be dissatisfied with the politics of one's state, despairing of the government's ability to improve things, without necessarily experiencing remoteness and estrangement. Although disaffection may imply dissatisfaction, it is the former that is detrimental to participation (Di Palma, 1970).

Finally, the resource theory developed by Schlozmann, Verba, and Brady (1995) proposes that participation is primarily a function of the resources a citizen has to undertake political activity. From this perspective, time, money, education, and civic skills are the

keys to understand participation—perhaps with the exception of voting, which happens to be a low-cost activity. Higher income, better education, and certain types of socialization (such as participatory church practices or high levels of associationism) are seen as means of lowering marginal costs of engaging in political activity.

From the above, it is clear that participation is not merely a matter of a rational calculation in the classical economic sense of it. Personal determinants of participation. such as attitudes and a sense of self-efficacy, interact or act together with broader social and institutional cues. Potential participants conceive their situation in a way that they believe can be modified through their involvement in the public sphere. People are more likely to act if they believe their participation can make a difference. Such consciousness is normally a social rather than an individual experience, affected by interaction with others in similar situations and often developed within the context provided by pressure groups, political parties, public policy, political institutions (Thaler and Sunstein 2008), and by logical extension, state capacities. Thus, a subjective political sense of efficacy and trust towards others is possibly fostered and reinforced by the availability of institutional channels for expressing demands (Prewitt 1968). In explaining the decision to participate or not to participate, one must take into account not only the individual calculation of costs and benefits (Downs 1957; Olson 1965), but also the ways in which the social and institutional context can come to affect people's perceptions of their interests. This likely includes the institutional and political characteristics of local governments and their policies (Parry et al 1992).

Beyond the question of what motivates individuals to participate and whether their resources enable them to do so, another issue refers to the kind of participation. That is, if it is true that cognitive, social and political cues induce or reduce participation and that

individuals live in different environments and have differed resource endowments, then it may be the case that involvement in different forms of participation are also different. Here we distinguish two general modes of participation: political and civic participation.

a) Political participation

There is a broad consensus that "citizen participation is at the heart of democracy". (Sidney Verba, et al.1995, 1). Indeed, democracy is unthinkable without the ability of citizens to participate freely in the governing process. Through their activity, citizens in a democracy seek to control who will hold public office and to influence what the government does. However, there are many different definitions of political participation. Here, we define political participation as the behavior that manifestly influences or attempts to influence the distribution of public goods, governmental decisions and policy outcomes.

Researchers have identified several distinct modes of political participation: voting, campaign activity, and contacting officials about personal or community problems, among others. Each participation mode differs in the requirements they pose to participants and the nature of the action. Verba and colleagues (1978) classified differences between participation modes according to several criteria: (1) whether the act conveys information about the individual's political preferences and/or applies pressure for compliance; (2) whether the act is directed toward a broad social outcome or a particular interest; (3) the potential degree of conflict involved in the activity; (4) the amount of effort required; and (5) the amount of cooperation with others required by the act. In the case of voting, for instance, it is a high-pressure activity because it determines control for the government, but its policy content is limited because an election involves many issues. Voting also is a reasonably simple act that requires little initiative or cooperation with others. Involvement

in political campaigns makes greater demands on the time and motivation of individuals. Although campaign work occurs within an electoral setting, it can be more policy focused than the simple act of voting (Dalton 1996). Further, some authors have also distinguished when citizen participation goes beyond the limits of conventional politics to include demonstrations, protests, boycotts, political strikes and other forms of unconventional activity, which are now seen as necessary voices of influence within contemporary democracies (Ogris and Westphal 2006).

Studies on political participation generally have focused on individual level covariates (socio-demographic or attitudinal) to account for citizen involvement in political activity; however, we believe that the political and institutional context and its features matters when an individual decides to participate in politics. In particular, we pose that in subnational contexts where state capacities are strong (states can effectively rally bureaucratic capabilities and exert control within their territories independently from the national state, are able to collect taxes from their populations while obtaining additional resources from the central government, and steer local policy implementation), individuals have incentives to involve themselves in conventional forms of political participation such as talking about politics, joining a political party or convincing others to vote for a particular candidate. States with more efficient bureaucracies, with higher taxation and steering capabilities provide a context in which individuals who would like to influence the political process may do so by institutionalized channels of involvement. Further, a strong state could perform better in policy terms, thus citizens may be more satisfied with how government works, less critical, and therefore less likely to be involved in dissentient political activities, especially protest activism. Conversely, weak states provide incentives for individuals who want to influence the political process to turn to political protest.

Hypothesis 1a (Conventional political participation) — Individuals in subnational contexts with stronger state capacities will engage more in conventional political participation.

Hypothesis 1b (*Political protest*) — Individuals in subnational contexts with stronger state capacities will engage less in political protest.

b) Civic participation

Civic participation refers to activities by ordinary citizens that are intended to influence circumstances in society that are relevant to others, outside the own family and close friends (Adler and Goggin 2005, 241). In their proposed typology, Ekman and Amna (2012, 292) define civic participation as activities that are not necessarily intended to influence political outcomes by targeting relevant political elites or the political process itself. This activities could affect political outcomes, but are not necessarily aimed to do so. As such, civic participation might be considered "proto-political" but not "political". Community participation, such as the sending letters to an editor, donating blood or posting relevant information on social media, as well as voluntary community work are examples of civic participation.

Civic participation seems closer to the individual in terms of both the issues at stake and the potential for conflict with others in the community. Nevertheless, as in the case of political participation, we propose that together beyond individual determinants, institutional and political contexts can affect the occurrence of civic participation. Specifically, we pose that this form of participation can be affects in two ways by weak or

strong subnational state capacities. On the one hand, strong states can provide a safe and nurturing environment for individuals to develop networks and civic activities; thus, states with a better territorial control and infrastructure could potentiate civic participation. On the other, in weak states people expect poor or null performance of governments. This in turn offers incentives for individuals to turn away from politics and instead invest resources and time in community participation and civil society organization (Somuano and Ortega 2010). That is, civic participation and grass roots organization can become a substitute in the absence of a strong state, particularly in contexts were states lack an effective bureaucratic apparatus and are incapable of extracting resources to provide public goods and services. All in all, two hypotheses can be tested for the case of civic participation:

> *Hypothesis 2a (Civic participation as complement)* — Individuals in subnational contexts with better territorial control and steerage capacity will engage more in civic participation.

> *Hypothesis 2b* (*Civic participation as substitute*) — Individuals in subnational contexts with lower bureaucratic capacity and extractive capacity will engage more in civic participation.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Data

In order to test the hypotheses above, we used cross-sectional individual level data from the *National Report on the Quality of Citizenship in Mexico* (*Informe país sobre la calidad de la ciudadanía en México*, www.ine.mx), as well as independently collected state level data

on the five dimensions of subnational state capacity. The complete dataset includes information from a large National representative sample of Mexican citizens (18 or older). Individual level data were collected in 2013 in all 32 Mexican states[i] through personal interviews at respondents' homes using a standardized questionnaire (INE 2014). State level data were collected from a number of official sources as detailed below.

Measurements

Dependent variable: Participation

We used measurements of conventional political participation, political protest and civic participation. All measurements of participation are dichotomous.

To measure *conventional political participation*, respondents were asked whether they voted in the 2012 general election, got in contact with political representatives, posted political information on social media, asked a political party for support or sponsorship, talked about politics with family and friends, convinced others of voting for a candidate, participated in a political party rally, attended a meeting of the municipal council, or became member of a political party. If a respondent reportedly did one or more of these activities in the last 12 months, her answer was coded 1 (0, otherwise).

Political protest was measured similarly by asking respondents whether they had written complains to authorities, signed formal petitions or pleas, placed banners or posters as form of protest, signed public manifestos, attended political demonstrations, participated in the blocking of public spaces or in a collective boycott. Response was coded 1 if a respondent reported participating in one or more of these activities (0, otherwise).

Civic participation was measured by asking respondents whether they had sent letters to an newspaper editor, called a radio show to express an opinion, posted general

information on social media, donated blood, donated money to the Red Cross or a charity, volunteered or joined community work, organized a collection of food or medicines to help victims of a disaster or in need, participated in the activities of an NGO. As before, response was coded dichotomously.

Individual level predictors

We included a number of individual level predictors of participation in our analysis, including *gender*, *age* and *educational attainment* of each individual. *Religiosity* was measured with the question "How often do you attend religious services?". Response was coded 0: never, 1: rarely, 2: only in special occasions, 3: twice a month; 4: once a week, and 5: more than once a week.

We included three measurements of trust. *Generalized trust* was measured with the question "Would you say that you can trust most people?" Response was coded 0 if cannot be trusted or 1 if yes. Institutional trust was divided into *trust in governmental institutions* and *trust in nongovernmental institutions*. To measure the first one individuals were asked to what extend they trusted in a series of institutions (public school teachers, judges, the police, the federal government, the army, political parties, the members of the House, the National Electoral Institute, their state government, and their municipal government). Response was recorded in a 4-point Likert scale (0: not at all – 3: very much). Similarly, to measure the second form of institutional trust, respondents were asked to what extent they trusted in private companies, NGOs, churches, the media and humanitarian or support organizations. We computed additive scores for both variables. In both cases, adding scores are reliable (for trust in governmental institutions alfa equals 0.87; for nongovernmental institutions, equals 0.76).

We also included as predictor a measurement of *party identification* (whether individuals identified with any of the political parties; response was coded 0: if did not identify with any party, 1 otherwise). *Associationism* was measured by asking respondents whether they had been or were members of a union, student association, professional association, religious organization, sports club, cultural organization, parents' association, humanitarian organization, human right activism organization, environmentalist organization, or a neighbors' association. If they were we coded 1, 0 otherwise for each category. We then computed an additive score (alfa = 0.77). Finally, political *self-efficacy* was measured with the question "To what extent do you agree with the statement 'People like me have influence over the government'". Response was coded in a 5-item Likert scale ranging from 0: Strongly disagree to 4: Strongly agree. Table 1 provides a descriptive summary of all individual level predictors.

-- Table 1 about here --

State capacity (level 2)

Independent variables at the state level were taken from official sources such as the Ministry of Finance and the National Bureau of Statistics (INEGI, by its name in Spanish), as indicated below.

Bureaucratic capacity was measured with three items. We recorded whether a state had a *meritocratic civil service* protected by law. States that had such an institution were coded 1, 0 otherwise. We included the number of state public servants per capita (based on state populations for 2013) as an indication of the size of the state administrative apparatus.

Finally, we included the incidence of corruption cases per hundred inhabitants as registered in the National Survey of Governmental Quality and Impact (INEGI 2013).

Extractive capacity was measured using income tax revenue collected directly by states per capita. Similarly, *extraterritorial recognition* was measured with net federal transfers to each state per capita. Figures were obtained from the Ministry of Finance.

Steering capacity was measured with three items: public spending per capita, and two measurements of installed capacity: state road density per capita, and number of state-owned hospitals per capita. All three were obtain from INEGI state and municipal census.

Finally, *territorial control* was measured with number of common law crimes per capita (Spanish: "fuero común"), and the proportion of unreported crimes per state (Spanish: "cifra negra") (National Victimization Survey, INEGI 2013). We also included the number of state attorney offices per capita as a proxy for prosecutor reach, based on the administrative census of INEGI. Table 2 summarizes state level variables.

-- Table 2 about here --

Method

The data used in this study are characterized by a hierarchic two-level structure, with respondents nested in 32 states. To investigate the relationship between state capacity and different forms of participation, we performed multilevel regression analyses using the *nlme* package (https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/nlme/nlme.pdf). After ruling out random slopes for all state level predictors, we fitted a series of logistic multilevel models allowing for random intercept using penalized quasi-likelihood estimation (Wolfinger and

O'Connell, 1993). We proceeded according to standards and recommendations by Finch, Bolin and Kelley (2014), and by Snijders and Bosker (1999).

RESULTS

The three panels in figure 1 show the residual variance per each type of participation per state with 95% confidence intervals obtained from the null model. Caterpillar plots show that for a substantial number of states, the 95% confidence interval does not overlap the horizontal line at zero, indicating that participation is above or below average as compared to other states. In all cases, there is important variation across states (in log-odds scale) for all three forms of participation: approx. 26% for civic participation, 17% for conventional political participation, and 35% for political protest. In other words, there is evidence of differences in the sample of nested individuals that might be accounted for by state capacities.

-- Figure 1 about here --

Table 3 presents the results of three random intercept multilevel logistic models, one per each dependent variable. *Civic participation* (model1) was on average more common for individuals with higher educational attainment and who attended religious events more often. Trust in nongovernmental institutions and higher associationism increased the likelihood of civic participation in our sample. In terms of state level predictors, we find evidence of contextual effects. First, higher state tax revenue and a wider reach of state prosecutor reduce the likelihood of civic participation. This is evidence against hypothesis 2b which claimed that individuals in subnational contexts with lower bureaucratic capacity

and extractive capacity will engage more in civic participation. Individuals in states with more crime also engage less in civic participation, and individuals living in states with higher spending tend to participate more. This supports hypothesis 2a which claimed that individuals in states with better territorial control and steerage capacity will engage more in civic participation. Hence, we have evidence in favor of the idea of civic participation resulting from a nurturing environment provided by strong state capacities.

Conventional political participation (model 2) was, in the sample, on average more common among older individuals, those with higher educational attainment, those who attended religious services more often, had higher levels of institutional trust (both governmental and nongovernmental), identified themselves with a political party, and showed higher levels of political self-efficacy and associationism. In this case, we also found evidence of contextual significant effects. First, in terms of bureaucratic capacity, individuals in states with larger bureaucracies and more corruption tend to participate more in conventional political activities. Individuals in states that manage to obtain larger federal transferences also tend to participate more. Finally, weaker territorial control as in higher crime rate per capita and unrecorded crime reduce the likelihood of conventional political participation. This mix of results seem to support hypothesis 1a in that stronger subnational state capacities should be related to more conventional participation. An interesting exception to the previous is the positive effect on the log-odds of conventional participation from the incidence of corruption. This result might indicate that corruption is considered part of normal (or conventional) politics in some subnational settings in Mexico.

Political protest (model 3) was more common among sampled men and younger individuals. Also, higher levels of institutional trust increased the likelihood of political protest. As with conventional political participation, individuals who identified with a

political party, showed higher levels of political self-efficacy and associationism also protested more (yet, the proportional effect of party identification is weaker in this case than for conventional participation). Further, individuals in states with larger spending and smaller prosecutor reach tend to participate more in political protests. This result partly contradicts hypothesis 1b that claimed that individuals in subnational contexts with stronger capacities engage less in political protest. Yet, it is noteworthy that we found only limited evidence of contextual effects (related to state capacities) for political participation.

DO STATE CAPACITIES MATTER FOR PARTICIPATION?

Citizens' involvement in civic and political issues is fundamental to democratic governance. But achieving higher and sustained levels of engagement requires an enabling institutional and political environment. Participation is not only related to predictable differences among individuals, but also to different and stable patterns of political behavior influenced by local situations. An important role might be played by state capacity. In fact, stronger states have been related to democratic normalcy. In this study, we moved forward and asked whether subnational state capacities could account for variation in participation within a country. Our reasoning is that subnational states that can effectively rally bureaucratic capabilities and exert control within their territories independently from the national state, can collect local taxes while obtaining additional resources from the central government, and steer local policy implementation in order to secure policy outcomes also promote or constrain individuals' involvement in different forms of participation.

We empirically tested two general hypotheses. The first one proposed that strong subnational states provide incentives and conditions favorable for conventional forms of political participation and reduce the likelihood of political protest. The second hypothesis

suggested that the effect of state capacity on civic participation could go either way: stronger subnational states may increase civic participation by providing an enabling environment; whereas in weak subnational states, people expect poor or null performance of local governments, and therefore turn away from politics and instead towards civic participation.

Our statistical analysis of a multilevel sample of Mexican citizens in all 32 Mexican states found mixed evidence. While interpreting and discussing the results of the analysis at least three limitations must be kept in mind. First, the dichotomous measurements of participation lump together different activities into a single indicator; hence, the analysis says little, if anything, of the likelihood of specific forms of political and civic engagement. Future studies could estimate the likelihood of particular forms of engagement, yet one must warn against the potential problems of analyzing relatively infrequent activities in large national samples. Second, given our interest in citizens' involvement, we relied on respondents' retrospective accounts—which is the standard methodological choice (Kam 2012). However, this measurement is potentially subject to social desirability bias, perhaps especially for conventional political participation and civic participation, which in our data occur more than political protest. Whereas this is not an unusual observation (cf. REF), it does call for caution and replication. Third, it can be argued that the operationalization of state capacity is limited and does not capture all possible capacities. However, we argue that our measurements do pinpoint crucial dimensions highlighted in the literature. Future studies, nevertheless, could explore alternative operationalizations that reflect different approximations to subnational state capacity.

Notwithstanding limitations, the empirical analysis of the Mexican sample does show that for any type of political participation, there is a significant portion of variance

that relates to variations across subnational units in Mexico. Also, we found that a number of dimensions of state capacity are indeed related to higher or lower likelihood of different forms of participation. Yet, regarding our hypotheses, we found a more complex scenario than we originally expected. This can be divided into two observations. First, not all indicators of state capacity seem to matter depending on the type of participation. Second, some forms of participation relate with a wider range of indicators than others.

We found, in support of hypothesis 1a, that Mexicans living in states with larger bureaucracies, more federal resources and crime-free environments tend to engage more in conventional political participation. That is, we found evidence in favor of the idea that stronger subnational states favor citizens' participation in activities such as voting or joining a political party. In the case of civic participation, we found that Mexicans living in states with better extractive capacity and wider prosecutor reach are less likely to engage in activities such as doing community work or donating to charities (this is evidence against the hypothesis of civic participation as a substitute). Conversely, we found that civic engagement is more likely in states with better territorial grip and larger public spending, which lends support to the idea that civic participation arises from a safe and nurturing environment provided by stronger states. Finally, we found that political protest remains largely unexplained by state capacities as conceptualized and measured here. Nevertheless, we did find that Mexicans living in states with higher public spending and a narrower prosecutor reach tend to protest more. This is not enough evidence to support hypothesis 1b, but it suggests an interesting possibility; namely, that political protest is particularly likely in local contexts characterized by ample resources. Another possibility is that the likelihood of political participation is independent from state capacities. Indeed, developed regions in Mexico (for instance, Mexico City) and underdeveloped ones (e.g., Chiapas) also

both have a long-standing tradition of public demonstrations and protest (cf. Somuano and Ortega 2014).

Overall, this study shows that the dimensions of subnational state capacity may have an effect on different types of citizens' participation in politics, beyond individual level differences. Future studies in Mexico and elsewhere could confirm these results and, most interestingly, cross-analyze them using additional characteristics of the subnational context, such as the characteristics of the local incumbent, local civic cultures, and the nature of local grass roots organizations.

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NOTES

[i] These are (identification code in brackets): Aguascalientes (AGS), Baja California (BC), Baja California Sur (BCS), Campeche (CAM), Chiapas (CHP), Chihuahua (CHH), Coahuila (COA), Colima (COL), Mexico City (CDMX), Durango (DUR), Estado de México (MEX), Guanajuato (GUA), Guerrero (GRO), Hidalgo (HID), Jalisco (JAL), Michoacán (MIC), Morelos (MOR), Nayarit (NAY), Nuevo León (NL), Oaxaca (OAX), Puebla (PUE), Querétaro (QRO), Quintana Roo (QUI), San Luis Potosí (SLP), Sinaloa (SIN), Sonora (SON), Tabasco (TAB), Tamaulipas (TAM), Tlaxcala (TLX), Veracruz (VER), Yucatán (YUC), and Zacatecas (ZAC).

TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1 *Individual level variables (summary)*

	Valid N	*Min.*	*Max.*	*M*	*SD*
Civic participation	10,712	0	1	0.81	—
Political participation (conventional)	10,413	0	1	0.88	—
Political participation (protest)	10,620	0	1	0.48	—
Woman	11,000	0	1	0.56	—
Age	10,999	18	98	42.72	16.33
Educational attainment	10,975	0	7	3.77	
Religiosity	10,182	0	5	3.19	1.28
Trust (generalized)	10,792	0	1	0.25	—
Inst. trust (governmental)	10,073	0	3	1.04	0.60
Inst. trust (nongovernmental)	9,759	0	3	1.16	0.63
Party identification	10,417	0	1	0.49	—
Associationism	10,698	0	11	1.07	1.54
Self-efficacy	10,744	0	4	0.93	1.17

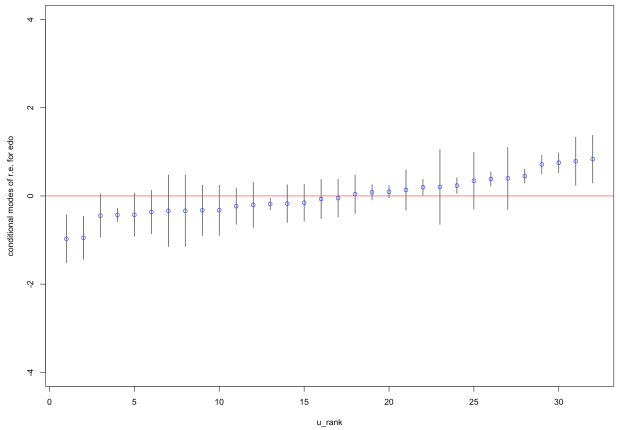
Table 2 *State capacities in Mexico's subnational governments (summary)*

	Bureaucratic capacity			*Extractive cap.*	*Extra-territorial recognition*	*Steerage capacity*			*Territorial control*		
	Meritocratic system	*Corruption*	*Public servants per capita*	*Tax revenue per capita*	*Federal transf. per capita*	*Public spending per capita*	*Road density*	*Hospital density*	*Crimes per capita*	*Unrecorded crime*	*Prosecutor reach*
AGS	1	20.19	25.58	71.13	47.93	16.05	88.35	5.33	1.41	92.10	19.80
BC	0	24.35	16.13	0.03	43.76	12.48	38.30	3.02	2.78	93.20	21.11
BCS	1	31.60	28.32	0.01	60.83	18.48	105.34	15.45	1.67	84.80	81.46
CAM	0	17.46	27.38	97.56	67.71	23.84	254.44	7.78	1.05	84.50	76.67
COA	1	20.35	8.27	70.56	42.79	14.33	109.31	4.40	8.29	85.20	47.38
COL	0	9.23	31.62	76.09	61.77	19.62	158.93	2.81	4.00	91.40	57.67
CHP	1	14.12	25.49	14.97	66.55	18.61	53.66	5.17	0.27	83.50	105.02
CHH	0	36.47	23.82	60.08	44.17	17.77	77.31	5.06	1.24	90.40	32.61
CDMX	1	25.89	26.62	274.25	13.61	19.96	12.22	11.88	0.57	85.40	22.31
DUR	0	23.37	29.74	78.23	59.89	16.93	128.77	10.83	1.01	92.00	70.09
GUA	0	17.26	18.17	63.27	40.28	12.84	173.21	4.44	1.34	89.90	8.20
GRO	0	14.82	33.42	35.66	71.72	16.23	149.73	8.49	1.16	94.30	21.51
HID	0	26.96	29.14	37.61	54.40	13.85	100.07	6.30	1.10	95.50	11.90
JAL	0	22.33	19.84	76.78	37.34	11.52	66.03	1.91	1.35	93.10	36.84
MEX	0	62.16	17.93	102.01	37.19	15.98	33.91	1.36	0.66	93.80	11.06
MIC	1	29.14	10.42	56.35	48.31	13.47	176.05	5.02	1.38	93.40	46.25
MOR	0	29.74	22.34	15.39	45.45	13.76	121.32	5.78	1.14	94.00	33.09
NAY	1	9.88	32.27	24.72	60.12	19.59	139.71	14.39	1.06	93.00	66.05
NL	0	16.29	20.35	106.66	35.11	16.99	75.20	2.54	0.80	90.00	36.33
OAX	0	19.41	8.94	6.50	68.05	16.84	88.96	6.80	1.11	93.20	31.50
PUE	1	28.30	7.47	101.31	45.98	14.06	87.70	2.43	0.96	92.30	16.53
QRO	1	28.91	4.61	112.37	41.38	14.07	93.72	4.42	1.20	92.50	19.63
QUI	1	18.19	16.12	58.06	46.16	19.32	103.20	3.99	1.17	88.80	27.96
SLP	0	15.68	22.97	74.43	52.77	13.89	153.05	7.36	0.86	91.20	72.11
SIN	1	58.23	8.67	0.57	45.60	15.58	105.87	9.44	2.01	93.10	25.96
SON	0	33.26	16.80	39.12	44.18	21.20	104.91	7.37	2.74	93.00	33.68
TAB	0	16.34	36.35	90.48	50.20	18.34	157.41	6.68	0.79	91.60	22.55
TAM	0	10.44	26.01	68.80	46.33	13.77	94.13	5.23	3.06	87.80	47.65
TLX	0	28.71	21.22	29.85	52.71	15.06	168.89	3.93	0.99	92.10	12.57
VER	1	10.46	21.26	16.01	47.22	13.80	80.36	4.19	0.92	90.90	29.58
YUC	0	21.58	23.77	65.67	50.00	14.95	247.50	6.68	0.84	91.80	16.21
ZAC	1	13.25	28.61	101.71	61.22	18.17	188.09	11.40	0.90	89.00	98.16
National avg.	0.41	23.57	21.55	63.32	49.71	16.29	116.74	6.31	1.56	90.84	39.36

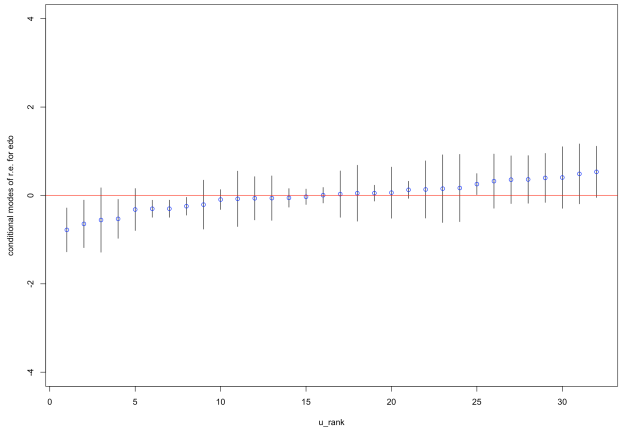
Table 3 *Random intercept logistic models of civic and political participation*

	1. Civic participation		*2. Political participation (conventional)*		*3. Political participation (protest)*	
Individual level predictors						
Intercept	5.85	(4.43)	12.46***	(3.28)	3.00	(4.49)
Woman	–0.06	(0.06)	–0.02	(0.08)	–0.10**	(0.04)
Age	–0.001	(0.002)	0.02***	(0.003)	–0.01***	(0.001)
Educational attainment	0.18***	(0.01)	0.12***	(0.02)	0.01	(0.01)
Religiosity	0.08***	(0.02)	0.05*	(0.03)	0.01	(0.01)
Trust (generalized)	0.09	(0.07)	0.13	(0.09)	0.03	(0.05)
Inst. trust (governmental)	0.02	(0.08)	0.22**	(0.10)	0.23***	(0.06)
Inst. trust (nongovernmental)	0.25***	(0.07)	0.19**	(0.09)	0.16***	(0.05)
Party identification (reversed)	–0.01	(0.06)	–1.83***	(0.10)	–0.13***	(0.04)
Associationism	0.54***	(0.03)	0.22***	(0.03)	0.33***	(0.01)
Self-efficacy	0.03	(0.02)	0.07*	(0.03)	0.05**	(0.02)
State capacities						
Bureaucratic capacity						
Meritocratic system	0.23	(0.20)	0.05	(0.11)	0.34	(0.21)
Corruption	0.01	(0.01)	0.01**	(0.004)	0.01	(0.01)
Pub. servants per capita	–0.004	(0.01)	0.02*	(0.007)	0.02	(0.01)
Extractive capacity						
Tax revenue per capita	–0.005**	(0.002)	0.001	(0.001)	–0.001	(0.002)
Extraterritorial recognition						
Federal transferences per capita	–0.005	(0.01)	0.04***	(0.007)	0.02	(0.01)
Steerage capacity						
Public spending per capita	0.07*	(0.04)	–0.001	(0.02)	0.08*	(0.04)
Road density	–0.002	(0.001)	–0.001	(0.001)	–0.001	(0.001)
Hospital density	0.05	(0.03)	–0.01	(0.02)	–0.03	(0.03)
Territorial control						
Crimes per capita	–0.15**	(0.07)	–0.11*	(0.06)	0.11	(0.07)
Unrecorded crime	–0.07	(0.04)	–0.14***	(0.03)	–0.07	(0.04)
Prosecutor reach	–0.02**	(0.01)	–0.02***	(0.004)	–0.01*	(0.005)
Variance components						
Between groups	0.32		0.0002		0.38	
Within groups	1.01		1.05		0.99	
Groups (states)	32		32		32	
N	7801		7660		7752	

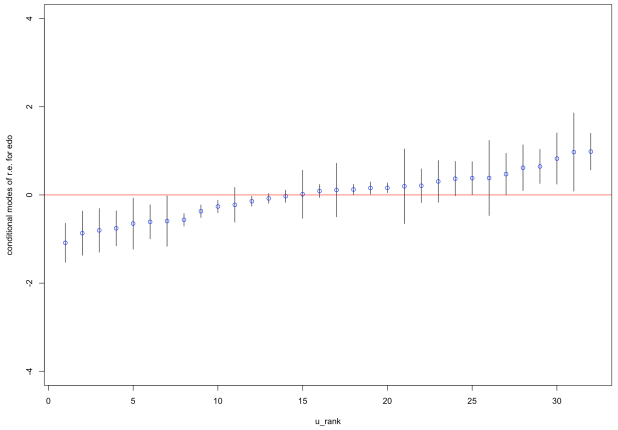
Note:
Standard errors between brackets.
Significance codes: * p < 0.1; ** p < 0.05; ***p<0.01



(a) Civic participation



(b) Pol. participation (conventional)



(c) Pol. participation (protest)

Figure 1 *Variation of civic and political participation across Mexican states (estimated residuals with 95% C.*