The Evolution of Cooperation and Co-Optation: How the Masses Lose Power and Influence in Highly Democratic, Activist Organizations and Social Movements

The Micro Informs the Macro

If a democratic government and a democratic society are mutually reinforcing and reflective,[1] then what conclusions can be drawn from how society practices democracy with how that society practices government? Social scientists commonly agree that a democratic government and its society reflect one another and reinforce one another. Theda Skocpol's research on American Federalism, political development, and the growth and development of national organizations demonstrate how social organizations mirror the United States system of government.[2] Theories of social capital are founded on the idea that participation in social organizations is necessary for citizens to develop the skills and ideology necessary to support a strong democratic government.[3] Robert Dahl's work on pluralism, polyarchy, and democracy are strongly based on how different types of social institutions and government strongly reflect one another.[4] In a more critical vein of democracy in the United States, the application of an elitist model points out how elitism plays out at different levels of government and society.[5]

[1] Robert Alan Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven,: Yale University Press, 1971); Charles Edward Lindblom, *Politics and Markets: The World's Political Economic Systems* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000) De Tocqueville's analysis of the relationship between a state's democratic character and society's democratic character did not leave out the inherent democratic contradictions of slavery or the treatment of the indigenous population; Alexis de Tocqueville and Phillips Bradley, *Democracy in America*, *The American Past : An Informal Series* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1980).

[2] Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992); Theda Skocpol et al., "Patriotic Partnerships: Why Great Wars Nourished American Civic Voluntarism," in *Shaped by War and Trade: International Influences on American Political Development*, ed. Ira Katznelson and Martin Shefter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

[3] John A. Garcia, "Does Social Capital Work for Latinos and Their Political Participation?" (paper presented at the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, California, 2001); Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*.

[4] Robert Alan Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*.

[5] Thomas R. Dye, *Who's Running America?: The Clinton Years*, 6th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1995); John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980).

Comparative research using network theory argues that in the United States, Germany, and Japan a "blurring" occurs between state and society relations in broad policy-making domains.[6]

I address three macro points in this paper. First, how individuals organize and govern themselves in small organizations. Second, how these organizations reflect society and government; and, finally, how society relates to government. In essence, this paper explores the implications of how social organizations in the United States practice democracy with how the federal system of U.S. government practices democracy.

The macro concerns of this paper emerged from initial micro observations of how organizational leaders communicated information to their followers in both large bureaucratic organizations and very small organizations practicing participatory democracy. I noticed a recurring pattern, in which, organizational leaders selectively presented organizational members, which included and excluded information and available options. In studying the history of social movements and unions, both leaders and the rank-and-file of organizations pointed to personal experiences with similar occurrences.[7] Consequently, I argue that organizational leaders rise to power and stay in power by controlling communication and information flows, which creates an environment conducive for co-optation to occur.

The following paper focused on a small, Mexican American, employee organization located in a large metropolitan region of a midwestern state. While this paper focuses on a Mexican American employee organization, the experiences shared by members of this organization are not limited to Mexican Americans or employees. The paper focused on how the control of communication and information flows influence organizations, their members, and their leaders. The Communication Cadre Theory identified this influence as leaders rising to

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[6] David Knoke, *Comparing Policy Networks: Labor Politics in the U.S., Germany, and Japan*, *Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[7] Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1988); Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002); Rodney E. Hero, *Latinos and the U.S. Political System: Two-Tiered Pluralism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992); Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977); Robert Charles Smith, *We Have No Leaders: African-Americans in the Post-Civil Rights Era*, *Suny Series in Afro-American Studies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996); Hanes Walton, *When the Marching Stopped: The Politics of Civil Rights Regulatory Agencies*, *Suny Series in Afro-American Studies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988).

power and staying in power by controlling communication and information flows, which created an organizational environment conducive for co-optation to occur.

By focusing on the control of communication and information within organizations, a broad basis for comparison between different populations and organizational types was created. After all, all organizations and their members must deal with communication and information needs, needs, which transcend race, ethnicity, gender, or class. Readers may also find common experiences based on ethnicity, class, or gender. In sum, individuals, specific communities, and organizations may share similar experiences, but possess different backgrounds based on race, ethnicity, class, or gender.[8]

The Communication Cadre Theory

The Communication Cadre Theory theorizes that leaders rise to power and stay in power by controlling communication and information flows, which creates an environment conducive for co-optation to occur. I refer to the leader(s) who control organizational communication and information flows as a communication cadre (CC).

Let's assume that as a Group A develops and communicates or engages in pact-making with other groups, a small circle of individuals develops within Group A that gains control over Group A by controlling internal and external communication and information networks. I call this small circle of individuals the *communication cadre* and they comprise the most influential leaders in Group A. The communication cadre entrenches itself by maintaining control of communication and information networks. The communication cadre may or may not be the official leadership of elected or appointed leaders, because their power is derived from the control of communication and information *and not* an election or appointment. Consequently, the communication cadre's identity may or may not be known or realized by Group A's members or official leadership.

The development of a communication cadre results in a favorable environment for Group A to be co-opted by a given Group B, if Group B desires to co-opt Group A and possesses the resources to use patronage or force to co-opt Group A's communication cadre. Group B seeks to

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[8] John A. Garcia, "Latino Studies and Political Science: Politics and Power Perspective for Latino Communities and Its Impact on the Discipline," (East Lansing, Michigan: The Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University, 1997); Harry Pachon and Louis DeSipio, *New Americans by Choice: Political Perspectives of Latino Immigrants* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

co-opt Group A's communication cadre when Group A can potentially, or in reality, opposes Group B's policies. A favorable environment for co-optation exists, because Group A's communication cadre are the only people who need to be co-opted, because they control Group A through their control of communication and information.

The communication cadre exerts there greatest influence on Group A by controlling what information members receive and what is communicated to and from outside groups. Group A's communication cadre may be co-opted by Group B, if Group B can offers more resources than Group A to Group A's leaders. For example, the resources Group B might offer include jobs, higher wages, insurance benefits, capital, security, or social standing. A favorable environment for co-optation exists, because Group A's communication cadre is positioned to accept patronage without Group A's members finding out. Consequently, the communication cadre decreases their accountability to Group A's members, because they may prevent or limit the information that Group A's members receive.

The following section outlines the close relationship between the communication cadre's control of communication and information with an environment that is conducive for co-optation. I then operationalize co-optation and begin to conceptually separate the concepts of co-optation and cooperation. Finally, I present the case study.

Defining The Problem

The control of communication and information is a problem for several reasons. The case study in this paper demonstrate entrenched leadership, which will later be related to the communication cadre concept, relies heavily on its control of communication and information. Furthermore, this control yields an organization increasingly dependent on the communication cadre for information the organization's members need to make informed decisions. The control of communication and information forms the basis for political power within an organization and provides a resource and mechanism for organizational leaders to become entrenched. The result of these several points is a decrease in a leader's accountability and representation, and the creation of an environment that is less conducive for democracy.

Leaders of organizations rise to power and stay in power by controlling communication and information flows, which result in an environment conducive for co-optation. The Communication Cadre Theory highlights several consequences resulting from the control of

communication and information flows. The consequences resulting from the control of

communication and information flows are:

1. The options available for an organization's members to choose from may be reduced,
2. The reduced options available for members to decide between limits their free choice (results in limited free choice),
3. The limits on free choice reduces the power of an organization's members, because an individual's free will to decide cannot make up for a lack of free choice,
4. Limited free choice limits democracy and democratic action,
5. An organizational elite that takes over the organizational function of controlling communication and information flows,
6. Creates an environment conducive for the entrenchment of organizational leaders (oligarchy),
7. Creates an environment conducive for co-optation to occur, and
8. Undermines the political power of the organization's members.

The options available for an organization's members to choose from may be reduced.

Olson wrote in The Logic of Collective Action that the great are often exploited by the weak in

referencing the Free Rider Problem faced by all organizations.[9] While this occurrence is well

documented, leaders who control communication and information flows are strategically placed

to be less than forthcoming with their organization's members **without** those members knowing.

For example, a person who controls communication and information flows may know that the

organization has options 1, 2, 3, and 4, but only tell the broader organization that options 1, 2,

and 3 exist. The censorship in the preceding example limits the free choice of organizational

members. The reduction of free choice then reduces the power of an organization's members,

because an individual's free will to decide cannot make-up for the lack of free choice. Limited

free choice limits democracy and democratic action.

Organizational needs pressure an organization to appoint or elect someone(s) to oversee

or manage communication and information flows within the organization and with external

organizations. An organizational elite forms that takes over this organizational function of

controlling communication and information flows. *Control* over communication and

information flows (or those who manage communication and information) are the necessary

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[9] Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, *Harvard Economic Studies, V. 124* (Cambridge, Mass.,: Harvard University Press, 1971) p.35.

condition to both hold and use power. Controllers of communication and information flows are strategically positioned to become entrenched leaders within their organizations, because they exercise considerable control over the information organizational members possess when they decide who they want to lead their organization. Furthermore, when communication and information flows are controlled, an environment conducive for the organization or organizational leader(s) to be co-opted exists. In the previous example of organizational members believing they have 3 choices, when in fact they have four choices, an Organization B opposed to the withheld fourth option only needs to convince the person(s) who controls their organization's communication and information to withhold option #4 for his/her personal interests over the organization's interest. If this is the case, organizational members are structurally hampered from discovering this and their political power is undermined.

The Communication Cadre Theory provides insight into other theories on organizations, bureaucracies, social movements, interest groups, political participation, political development, democracy, representation, and legitimacy. The Communication Cadre Theory provides answers to how and why leaders become entrenched in organizations, bureaucracies, and social movements. The arguments advanced in this paper aid to increase the clarity of such central concepts in Political Science as democracy, representation, and legitimacy. The role the control of communication and information flows played in determining the political development of organizations, communities, institutions, and government in the United States provides an alternative to understanding political struggle.

The Communication Cadre Theory is important to study for normative reasons. Primarily free will and free choice. The corner stone of democratic theory and participation are rooted in the concepts of free will and free choice. The later two concepts subsequently rely on access to communication and information to be realized. Consequently, people cannot make informed choices or form opinions about individual issues, strategies, or leaders without receiving the information that they need to make an informed decision.

The control of communication and information is not restricted to elected and known leaders, but also appointed and unknown leaders. Similarly, The communication cadre may encompass known and unknown leaders or elected and unelected leaders. For example, unknown or non-elected leaders may encompass secretaries, technocrats, bureaucrats, or a political entrepreneur within the group or organization. The ability of bureaucrats to achieve

administrative autonomy in the Department of Agriculture during the Progressive Era stands,

stand as a case in point.[10] In another example, Registered Nurses working in hospitals are

seldom considered to have much political power by outsiders, but it is common knowledge

among medical professionals working in hospitals that Registered Nurses "run" hospitals,

because they are at the nexus of communication and information networks for patient care. The

result is an environment that increases the probability that a communication cadre will use the

control of communication and information for personal gain.

The Communication Cadre Theory described in this paper highlights the important distinction

between official and unofficial leaders. The difference between elected and appointed leaders is

one of elected leaders possessing greater legitimacy and a greater likelihood of representing their

constituencies, because of their need to be re-elected. Conversely, appointed officials, such as

bureaucrats or technocrats, possess less legitimacy and a decreased likelihood of representing a

constituency, because they are insulated from the mechanism of public elections.[11] The

distinction between these different types of leaders clarifies the influence, power, and legitimacy

of official and unofficial leaders. Consequently, researchers can more accurately distinguish

different types of political participation and representation, as well as the difference between co-

optation, cooperation, and compromise.

Communication Cadres, Elected and Non-Elected Leaders

A communication cadre always forms an organization's leadership. The communication

cadre may or may not be the official leaders of an organization because their power is strongly

derived from their control of communication and information and not just holding an elected or

appointed position.

One way of determining the official and unofficial leadership of an organization is to

look at formal, official, and public relationships both inside that organization and between that

organization and other organizations to determine who forms the public leadership of an

organization. One then must map the official relationship between the public leaders to an

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[10] Daniel C. Carpenter, *Forging Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputation, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862-1928* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[11] Stephen L. Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacity, 1877-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It* (New York: Basic Books, 1989).

organization. The official relationship is then used as a starting point for determining if an informal relationship exists between or within organizations. If both formal and informal relationships exist then the two types of relationships must be compared to determine which relationship holds dominance and under what conditions that relationship holds dominance.

The Communication Cadre Theory helps to explain what organizations do, how organizations do it, and the results of organizational actions. Social, economic, and political variables shape the Communication Cadre Theory. How social, economic, and political variables shape the Communication Cadre Theory is important to explore. In this paper, I study the Communication Cadre Theory by focusing on how it is created by communication and information flows, organizational needs, politics, and society, as well as how it is influenced by these variables. I also focus on how and why the Communication Cadre Theory impacts what organizations do and how organizations do it.

Economies of scale increase the probability of the Communication Cadre Theory being present and that a communication cadre exists. The political and social implications of the Communication Cadre Theory increase as we move from smaller to larger organizations and institutions.

Conceptualizing Co-Optation

Co-optation is a normative property that occurs when a group's leaders move away from their founding ideology or the membership's ideology and towards an opponent's ideology or goals *for personal gain*. Co-optation occurs when these leaders remain in power and shift their organization's focus. In this scenario, a policy shift for the organization may not be a political compromise reached by leaders, it may be co-optation. The group's leaders act in their personal interests and not in the organization's interests. An environment conducive to co-optation exists in organizations, because an entrenched communication cadre controls communication and information, which reduces their political accountability to Group A's members.

As previously stated, co-optation is used to decrease the threat a Group A poses to a given Group B's policies by bringing Group A under Group B's influence. Group B seeks to co-opt Group A's leaders when Group A can potentially, or in reality, opposes Group B's policies. Group A's leaders are the only people who need to be co-opted, because they control the organization. In this scenario, Group A's leaders may be co-opted, if Group B can offer more than Group A to Group A's communication cadre.

A successful co-optation relies on Group B's ability to use force or to selectively distribute resources to Group A's communication cadre and on Group A's communication cadre's ability to selectively distribute force or resources to their organization's members.

As Van de Walle and North have noted,

"The person or group in a position to hand out rewards for service or punishment for disobedience will control the political landscape. When [elites] suppress labor demonstrations with force and provide... subsidies for unions that follow the party's platform [patronage is involved]."[12]

And,

"[Organizations] are perfectly analogous to the rules of the game in a competitive team sport… They consist of formal written rules as well as typically unwritten codes of conduct that underlie and supplement formal rules… the rules and informal codes are sometimes violated and punishments are enacted. Therefore, *an essential part of the functioning of institutions is the costliness of ascertaining violations and the severity of punishment.*"[13]

Selectively distributing patronage is an attractive political option, because it is relatively cheap. For example, in an employee union which advocates for employees who exist in a less powerful position *vis a vis* their employer, the union requires compulsory membership and selectively distributes benefits to their members, in order to overcome the dominant position an employer holds over an employee.[14] Olson's work acknowledges that the selective distribution of benefits (i.e. patronage) affects an individual's actions. The Communication Cadre Theory's focus on co-optation extends Olson's argument of selective benefits by operationalizing co-optation as an efficient method for affecting an oppositional organization, through the selective distribution of benefits. The argument for operationalizing co-optation as a useful analytical tool acknowledges that a more powerful organization might use co-optation of a competing organization's leaders as an efficient method for affecting the actions of the competing

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[12] Nicolas Van de Walle, *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis, 1979-1999* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001) Van de Walle focused on bureaucratic patronage in Africa, but his description applies to the United States.

[13] Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*, *The Political Economy of Institutions and Decisions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) p.4. North focuses on rule violations and punishment, while Van de Walle focuses **on both** rewards and punishment, emphasis mine.

[14] {Olson, 1971, see Chapter 3.}

organization. In exchange for buying-off a handful of leaders, the communication cadre, the actions of an opposition group can be affected. I contend that the presence or absence of patronage and co-optation *must be* accounted for when:

1. A power differential exists between two or more players and one player changes their opinions or actions, or
2. An organizational leader or communication cadre member changes their opinion or actions, which shifts an organization's action

I also contend that the presence or absence of patronage and co-optation *should be* accounted for when a relatively little power differential exists between two or more players and one player changes their opinions or actions. Patronage and co-optation are political tools and every person possesses resources that are of potential interest to another person.

Patronage and co-optation involve a stronger Group B selectively distributing benefits to a weaker Group A's representatives, so long as they support Group B's policies. The representatives then control the distribution of resources to the members of their group who support them. In a society experiencing shortages and where Group B controls the distribution of benefits unavailable to the general public, access to resources becomes tantamount and increases the likelihood of patronage and co-optation increases. When an individual, organization, or society is not experiencing shortages, the likelihood of patronage and co-optation decreases.

Once a leader is co-opted by a stronger Group B, the weaker Group A is controlled through the selective distribution of resources or force. Through patronage, a stronger Group B can selectively distribute limited resources to members of the communication cadre who do not create dissension with Group B's policies. The communication cadre can then distribute the limited resources to their supporters. Group B can also punish opponents in Group A by not distributing limited resources to them, or, Group B can use force to neutralize opponents. A relatively efficient method for buying-off the masses can then be institutionalized, because the cadre is positioned to enter the chain of patronage. An examination of literature on the underclass indicates how elite groups selectively distribute benefits to supporters of their policies or use force to eliminate opposition.[15] For these reasons, the presence of patronage indicates a favorable environment for co-optation.

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[15] Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos;* Amy Bridges, *A City in the Republic: Antebellum New York*

Operationalizing Co-Optation

Why should we be concerned with co-optation as a political concept and tool? Ideologically, co-optation is a powerful word, which is commonly used to describe organizations or individuals placing another party's interests over their constituency's interests. In contrast, the 10th edition of Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, the definition of co-opt is: 1a) to choose as a member, 1b) to appoint as a colleague or assistant, 2a) to take into a group, 2b) take over, appropriate. The basic definition of co-opt and how the term is commonly used have resulted in co-optation being confused with cooperation and representation. I make co-optation a useful tool for analyzing how two groups or individuals relate by eliminating the confusion and overlap of co-optation with other concepts, such as cooperation and representation.

The following conceptualization of co-optation expands Philip Selznick's model of co-optation in TVA and The Grass Roots.[16] His work represented the conceptual development of co-optation and, to date, no one has improved upon his model to make it a more useful analytical tool for looking at how individuals and organizations relate to one another. The most recent work on the topic, by Robert C. Smith, uses Selznick's same definition and model of co-optation.[17]

Selznick's model of co-optation was limited to two types: formal and informal co-optation.[18] His categorization of co-optation was based on the power to make decisions and responsibility for the decisions made.[19] According to Selznick's model, co-optation occurred

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and the Origins of Machine Politics (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981); Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991); Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley;* V. O. Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, [1st] ed. (New York,: A. A. Knopf, 1949); David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987); Piven and Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail;* Philip Selznick, *TVA and the Grass Roots: A Study in the Sociology of Formal Organization*, New Preface to the Torchbook edition by the Author ed. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966).

[16] Selznick, *TVA and the Grass Roots: A Study in the Sociology of Formal Organization.*

[17] Smith, *We Have No Leaders: African-Americans in the Post-Civil Rights Era.*

[18] Selznick, *TVA and the Grass Roots: A Study in the Sociology of Formal Organization* pp.13-16.

[8] Selznick originally operationalized power as the "capability" to make decisions.

when one organization absorbed new elements [i.e. new organizations] into its leadership or policy-making structure to avert threats against its stability or existence. His conceptualization of co-optation defined two types of co-optation: formal and informal. Formal co-optation indicated that an absorbed organization lacked power (i.e. it was not part of the central decision-making process), but it was still held responsible for the decisions made by the absorbing organization. Informal co-optation indicated that an organization possessed power (i.e. it was part of the central decision-making process), but was not held responsible for decisions made. By conceptualizing co-optation in this manner, his model resulted in a duality where only a single actor can possess power and no responsibility, while the other actor must possess no power and bear all of the responsibility (see Table A).

TABLE A
SELZNICK'S MODEL OF CO-OPTATION

FORMAL CO-OPTATION	INFORMAL CO- OPTATION
No Power & Responsibility For Actions	Power & No Responsibility For Actions

Selznick argued that cooperation between organizations influenced all of the parties involved and that power differences between organizations affected how those groups cooperated. Selznick used the term co-optation to account for how organizations absorbed or were absorbed by other organizations and the dynamics this created. Namely, whether an organization gained power in the relationship or was saddled with responsibility for decisions they did not make. Unfortunately, he did not account for the different combinations of power and responsibility, or how relationships between organizations could be affected by public and official relationships or by private and unofficial relationships.

If researchers use Selznick's definition of co-optation, they face severe limitations. Selznick's definition of co-optation does not account for five important factors:

1) The many ways that power and responsibility can combine,
2) The role that publicized, official, and institutionalized rules for inter-organizational relations play,
3) The role that non-publicized and unofficial rules for inter-organizational relations play,
4) How co-optation differs from cooperation and representation, and
5) Individuals and organizations changing their ideology.

By neglecting these five crucial features, Selznick's definition of co-optation provides little more than a blunt tool to categorize if one group holds all of the decision making power and no responsibility for the decisions made, while the other group must possess no power and bear all the responsibility.

To overcome the flaws in Selznick's model, I define co-optation and develop methods for distinguishing between co-optation and cooperation or representation. Co-optation is a normative property that occurs when a group's leader(s) moves away from the group's founding ideology (or the position of the membership) and towards another individual's or organization's ideology or position for personal gain. For example, Group A's leader acts in his/her personal interests to accept a political compromise with another Group B. In this scenario, the leader of Groups A's actions are not a political compromise reached between two organizations, it is co-optation, because Group A's leader acts on behalf of his/her personal interests and not in the interests of the organization or its membership. In my model of co-optation, I distinguish between co-optation and cooperation based on power in the decision making process, responsibility for decisions made, the presence of public, official, and /or institutionalized relations between organizations, and individuals placing their interests above the group for personal gain.

The presence or absence of power in the decision making process and responsibility for decisions made is important for establishing what occurs when two actors interact with one another and the consequences of that interaction. Identifying the basis of power, who holds it, how they use it, and the consequences of how power is used or not used is central to the study of politics. Responsibility establishes what the stakes are in political interactions by identifying who gains or looses from the exercise of power. How power and responsibility are defined and used establish what the concepts of co-optation, cooperation and representation mean. By defining power as the ability to make and enforce decisions and defining responsibility as the actor who bears responsibility for the decisions made and enforced, the foundation is established for distinguishing between co-optation, cooperation, and representation (see Table B).

In my model, **formal co-optation** represents co-optation in the context of publicized, official, and/or institutionalized relations between organizations. **Informal co-optation**, however, represents co-optation in the context of the lack of public, official, and institutionalized relations between organizations. The need for two types of co-optation is to contrast events and

relationships that are both public and private, to help distinguish between an illusion and reality.

By conceptualizing co-optation in this manner, it is possible to have a relationship between

actors categorized under both a formal and informal relationship that may or may not be the

same. For example, a formal relationship where power is shared between actors and an informal

relationship where power is not shared. My model of co-optation in **Diagram A** accounts for

this possibility. Please note all of my models of co-optation model the relationship between a

Group A and a **Group B**.

METHOD FOR INDENTIFYING FORMAL AND INFORMAL CO-OPTATION
1. There may be a formal relationship that is illusionary and an informal relationship that captures the real relationship between organizations.
2. Start by looking for a formal relationship between organizations.
3. Map the formal relationship.
4. Use the formal relationship as a place to begin looking for an informal relationship between organizations.
5. If a formal and an informal relationship between organizations are found, then the two types of relationships need to be compared to determine which relationship has the greatest effect.

TABLE B[20]
MY TABLE MODEL OF COOPTATION

FORMAL CO-OPTATION

No Power & Responsibility For Actions	Power & Responsibility For Actions
No Power & No Responsibility For Actions	Power & No Responsibility For Actions

INFORMAL CO-OPTATION

No Power & Responsibility For Actions	Power & Responsibility For Actions
No Power & No Responsibility For Actions	Power & No Responsibility For Actions

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[20] Please note all of my models of co-optation model the relationship between a **Group A** and a **Group B**.

DIAGRAM A
MY CO-OPTATION DIAGRAM MODEL
X = Responsibility for Decisions Made,
Y = Power in the Decision-Making Process,
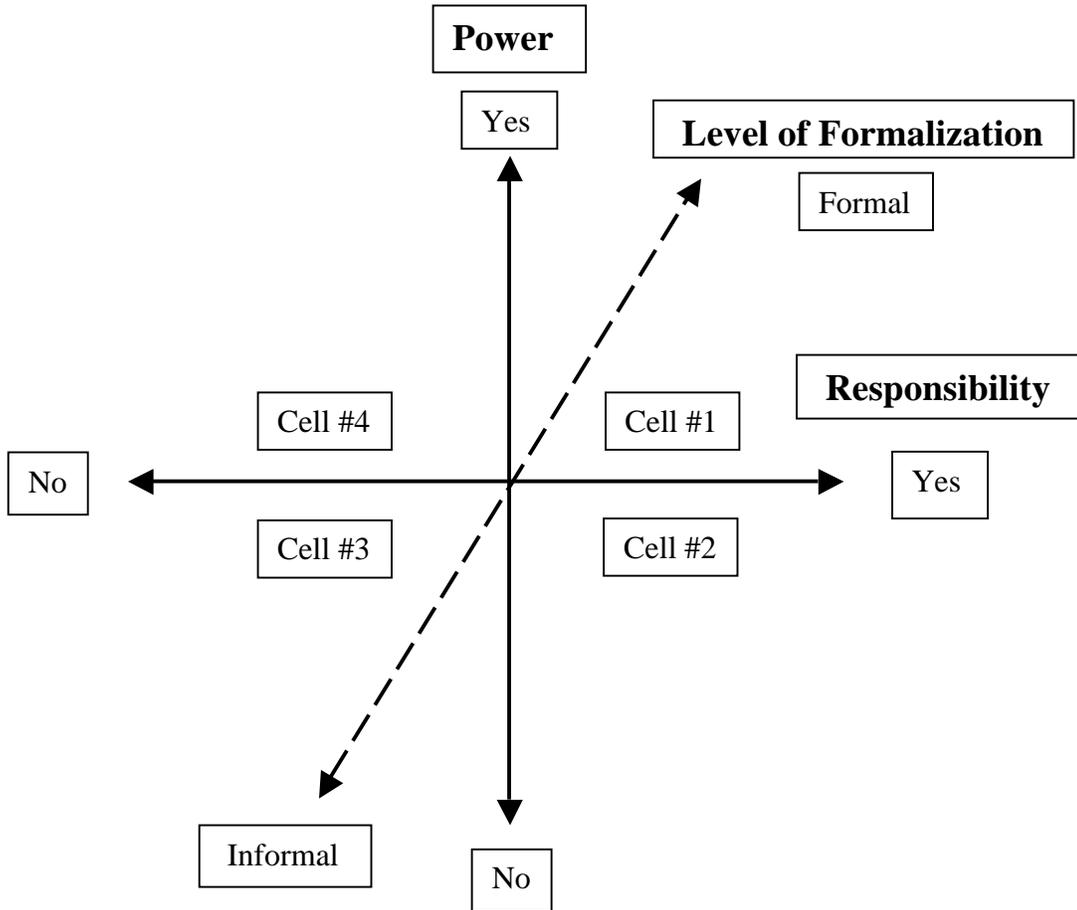Z = Formal and Informal Relationship (height)

Power

Yes

Level of Formalization

Formal

Responsibility

Cell #4   Cell #1

No   Yes

Cell #3   Cell #2

Informal

No

TABLE C[21]
DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN CO-OPTATION and COOPERATION
IN GROUP A's RELATIONSHIP TO GROUP B

Cell #1 No Power-Responsibility **"Group A The Co-opted"** **Co-optation** because Group A does not have power in the decision-making process and bears responsibility for decisions Group A did not make. **Not Cooperation** because power is not shared in the decision-making process between Group A and Group B.	**Cell #2 Power-Responsibility** **"Group A The Co-opter?"** **Co-optation** because Group A has taken all of Group B's decision making power and accepted all of the responsibility for decisions made. **Cooperation** because Group A and Group B share decision-making power and responsibility for the decisions made. **No Relationship** between Group A and Group B, each group is autonomous.
Cell #3 No Power-No Responsibility **"Group A The Co-opted?"** **Co-optation** Group A has been co-opted out of existence or barely exists. **Not Cooperation** because power and responsibility are not shared. **No Relationship** between Group A and B.	**Cell #4 Power-No Responsibility** **"Group A The Co-opter"** **Co-optation** because Group A has decision-making power and Group B is forced to accept responsibility. **Not Cooperation** because responsibility is not shared for decisions made, Group B is forced to accept responsibility for the decisions made.

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[21] Please note all of my models of co-optation model the relationship between **Group A** to **Group B**.

One of the main critiques leveled against the use of co-optation is that it does not adequately address how it differs from cooperation. Selznick's definition of co-optation, also, suffers from the same critique. By not distinguishing between cooperation and co-optation, researchers rely too heavily on their own biases to determine which term they use.

Differentiating between co-optation and cooperation is difficult, but the following method aids the scholar to untangle the two concepts. First, we must acknowledge that the two terms will encompass aspects of one another. Second, we must acknowledge that co-optation and cooperation possess normative properties. Third, we need to define how co-optation differs from cooperation. What aspects are unique to co-optation and cooperation? Co-optation is more likely when there is a power differential between groups or individuals interacting with one another and the likelihood of co-optation increases as the power difference between the groups increase. We can further hypothesize that when an individual, organization, or society experiences shortages a more favorable environment for co-optation occurs.

Co-optation differs significantly from compromise. **Table C** models how to distinguish between co-optation and cooperation by using the presence of power and responsibility. In **TABLE C**, **Power** represents power in the decision-making process, while **Responsibility** represents responsibility for the decisions made. When two groups interact:

1. Cooperation *can only* occur in **Cell #2** (power and responsibility) in **TABLE C,** where both groups share in making decisions and responsibility for those decisions.
2. Co-optation can occur in any of the **Cells** in **TABLE C**.
   A. Co-optation is more likely to occur in **Cell #1** (no power-responsibility) and **Cell #3** (no power-no responsibility), both of which represent where **Group A** is cop-opted by **Group B**.
   B. Co-optation can, also, occur in **Cell #2** (power and responsibility) and **Cell #4** (power and no responsibility), both of which represent where **Group A** co-opts **Group B.**

While more conceptual work needs to be done to distinguish "co-optation" from "cooperation," in this section, I have outlined a method that begins to do this.

The communication cadre theory is based on the iron law of oligarchy and social network theory. In this section I briefly review these two theoretical bases before explaining the communication and information components of the communication cadre theory and how they create an environment conducive for co-optation to occur.

Theoretical Foundations

The Iron Law of Oligarchy

I draw upon two theories to develop the communication cadre theory, the iron law of oligarchy and social network theory. In his book, Political Parties, Michels states that the roots of oligarchy exist in the necessity of organizations to delegate responsibility to a cadre of leaders. The cadre then becomes the entrenched leadership of the organization,[22] because the oligarchic tendencies of organizations result from, 1) the nature of human individuals, 2) the nature of the political struggle, and 3) the nature of organization.[23] According to Michels, organizations give their leaders a near monopoly of power due to the leaders: 1) superior knowledge, 2) control over the formal means of communication within the organization, and 3) skill in the political arts.[24] Over time, leaders use this power to become entrenched through a sense of tradition, cartel forming, and political influence. Leaders are then in a position to manipulate or ignore the opinions of the group's members.[25] Michels, also, identifies several key tendencies of organizations, among these are: the autocratic and conservative tendencies of leaders, organizational co-optation by elites, the struggles between the leaders and the masses and among the leaders themselves, and the reasons for bureaucracies to centralize and decentralize.[26]

While Michels' book, Political Parties, is descriptive it does not provide a theory for how oligarchy occurs. Furthermore, the polemical nature of the iron law of oligarchy limits its application and use. By coupling social network theory's emphasis on social networks with the role of communication and information networks, a mechanism for oligarchy to occur that is theoretical, instead of polemical, provides a more useful and less dogmatic analytical tool.

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[22] Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy* (New York,: Free Press, 1962) p.364.

[23] Ibid. p.6.

[24] Ibid. p.16.

[25] Ibid. pp.123-26.

[26] Ibid. Part 2, Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7.

Social Network Theory

Network theory is the second basis for the development of the communication cadre theory. Network theory argues that social, political, and economic relationships manifest themselves through networks.[27] According to this theory, social networks determine key political paths and points of power between actors and groups.[28] Social networks are important, because they structure the political landscape. In the communication cadre theory, communication and information networks operate like social networks.

A group becomes dependent on a communication cadre (which controls communication between and within groups), because the cadre knows and has access to the social and political structure.[29] Therefore, the cadre is positioned to strongly influence a group's political direction by controlling the flow and content of communication and information. Consequently, as the members of different groups interact less often, they rely more on communication cadres to manage their communication and information needs.

Why Communication and Information?

The rise and entrenchment of group leaders depends on the control of communication and information for one important reason: whoever controls the flow and content of communication and information shapes opinions within the group they represent and the groups they interact with. The communication cadre may provide full, incomplete, or false information to their organization and influence the decisions individuals and the group make. The communication cadre is also in a position to portray themselves as indispensable communicators with other groups or within their organization. Due to their control of communication, the cadre can blame other groups for personal failures or errors in deals between groups. Furthermore, the communication cadre's importance increases as group members interact less often with other groups.

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[27] Bridges, *A City in the Republic: Antebellum New York and the Origins of Machine Politics;* David Knoke, *Political Networks: The Structural Perspective*, *Structural Analysis in the Social Sciences, 4* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); John F. Padgett and Christopher K. Ansell, "Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400-1434," *American Journal of Sociology* 98, no. 6 (1993).

[28] Marsden, 1982, p.201

[29] Bridges, *A City in the Republic: Antebellum New York and the Origins of Machine Politics;* Padgett and Ansell, "Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400-1434."

In organizations, the communication cadre always forms the group's leadership. The communication cadre and the group's leaders are the same, because organizational leaders provide the greatest influence on the actions of their membership. The communication cadre, however, may or may not be the official organizational leadership of elected or appointed leaders, because the cadre's power is derived from the control of communication and information *and not* an election or appointment.[30] The researcher must determine if the communication cadre represents the official or unofficial leadership. Consequently, the communication cadre's identity may or may not be known or realized by Group A's members or official leadership. It is highly likely, though, that the communication cadre comprises their organization's official leadership, because the organization usually entrusts their organization's leaders, through organizational rules, to engage in pact making and coalitions with other groups. By controlling communication between their group and other groups, the communication cadre establishes relationships with other groups. Over time, the cadre will see themselves as part of another group they communicate with, if that group is more privileged than their own, and begin to associate more with that group.[31] Roberto Michels argues that this results from people's psychological need to feel important and to belong to a higher socio-economic standing (e.g. a cadre from a union identifies more with their employers).[32] When two groups are equal, though, the cadre's members choose to associate and work for the group that can provide them with the most benefits or privileges.

The communication cadre theory integrates the iron law of oligarchy and social network theory. Network theory's reliance on social networks, to explain political structures and who group leaders are, provides the mechanism for explaining why oligarchy develops. The paper now moves on to discuss the creation and evolution of the communication cadre.

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[30] Knoke, *Comparing Policy Networks: Labor Politics in the U.S., Germany, and Japan* p.3. Knoke uses a network theory approach that identifies an actor's position and role in a network to determine their political power, rather than relying on an official or formal position or appointment to determine an actor's political power. He uses this analysis at the state and society level, while I use a similar approach at the organizational level. The application of this approach at the macro level of the state and society level in his study, as well as at the micro level of the organization in this paper reflect the themes of how the state and society reflect and reinforce one another.

[31] Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy* p.17.

[32] Ibid.

The Communication Cadre

The communication cadre emerges over time and changes in response to four factors: 1) the organization's size and age, 2) increased relations between groups, 3) successive rounds of negotiations between groups, and 4) internal group conflict. As it will be shown in the next paragraph, the four factors affect the communication cadre's size and change its composition. Furthermore, the four factors influence each other.

For example, as an organization grows in size, the communication cadre may increase, remain the same, or decrease in size. As the organization ages, however, the size of the communication cadre should decrease. As it will be shown, the decrease results from the influence of increased relations between groups, successive rounds of negotiations, and internal group conflict. While internal group conflict may yield an increase in the amount of communication cadre members, the increase will be temporary as one communication cadre replaces another or an individual displaces and replaces a communication cadre member. Increased relations and negotiations between groups influence the communication cadre's size and composition. The cadre decreases because official meetings and relations between two groups are simplified when fewer people are involved (i.e., transaction costs are decreased). Two reasons account for this phenomenon. First, a group might develop bureaucratically to where increased specialization decreases the communication cadre, or other groups may insist on a decrease in the communication cadre to facilitate inter-group meetings.

Internal group conflict, also, accounts for the communication cadre's change in size and composition. Internal group conflict occurs between group leaders with their group members and other group leaders.[33] The conflict between group members and leaders occurs because the group can use their collective strength to dismiss leaders who do not represent their interests. The conflict of interests usually centers on the leaders being more conservative than the group. Very rarely, though, the conflict of interests may rest on the leaders being more radical than the group. While intra-group conflict may temporarily increase the communication cadre's size, due to conflict negotiation and resolution, the long-term result is a decrease in the cadre's size as both factions struggle to control the organization.

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[33] Ibid. Part 2, Chapters 5 and 7.

The conflict among leaders begins during the foundation of an organization, when leaders struggle to gain and retain control of the organization. As an organization becomes established, the communication cadre is developed and oligarchy is established. The struggle at this stage occurs between entrenched leaders and new, aspiring leaders. It is through intra-group conflict that the group's members exert their greatest influence. The struggle between entrenched and aspiring leaders forces them to meet the needs of the masses, in order to gain political power and support. True representation will not be realized, however, because the structure and conditions that gave rise to the prior cadre's misrepresentation continues to exist. An environment conducive for co-optation and manipulation, as outlined in the next subsection, continues to exist and threatens representation.

Methodology

Critical Case Studies

The critical case study method was chosen to rigorously test the communication cadre theory. By choosing a case study that logically contradicted the theory's assumptions and critical components, if the data supported the theory, then a strong argument existed that the theory applies in other cases. Once the theory passed or failed the critical tests, further theoretical testing using other methods may be used to test the theory's validity.

The testing method required determining the theory's assumptions and critical components, in order to decide which case studies posed critical tests. The theory argued that a cadre controlled communication and information flows. Consequently, organizations that claimed no cadres controlled communication and information flows posed an initial critical test. Organizations without hierarchical structures posed another critical challenge. Without elected or appointed positions responsible for running the organizations or managing communication and information, no corresponding cadres can exist. Organizations with small, highly active members, should limit the free rider problem and the "exploitation of the strong by the weak."[34] The case study came from the Midwest, a region commonly considered to be less corrupt than other regions of the country.[35]

Consequently, the case studies selected fit the following criteria:

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[34] Olson, 1971, p35

[35] Chicago was eliminated from the areas of study. Consequently, Illinois was eliminated.

1. Organizations where no individual(s) controlled communication and information within the organization,
2. Organizations with no hierarchical structures,
3. Organizations dedicated to participatory democracy,
4. Small organizations with less than 20 members,
5. Highly active member participation, and
6. Located in a midwestern state where politics are commonly perceived to be less corrupt than other regions of the country.

The Mexican American Employee Organization (MAO) provided an excellent critical test of the Communication Cadre Theory. Located in a large metropolitan region of a midwestern state, the organization was small with only 16 members. MAO had no elected or appointed leaders and practiced participatory democracy. Members claimed that no individual or groups controlled internal or external communication and information flows. The members actively participated in organizational affairs. The preceding factors critically tested the theoretical foundation of the relationship between the control of communication, information, leaders, and co-optation.

Additional factors increased the case study's rigor. Mao's members were politically aware and experienced individuals who consciously strived to create an organization that prevented leader(s) from controlling the organization. The majority of group members were active in the Chicano Movement and/or in community politics. Second, members structured MAO to foster open and easy information and communication access for all members. Third, the group was politically informed and committed to increasing Mexican American opportunities and decreasing discrimination at their company, called Urban Inc. Urban Inc. was a state-owned, urban, utility service provider. Fourth, members readily remarked on newspaper and television reports about the status of Mexican Americans and Latinos in the United States and the Midwest. Fifth, the organization existed off-and-on for 20 years and members believed they avoided the problem of entrenched leadership. I expected MAO's members, who were politically experienced, committed to a cause, and dedicated to creating a non-hierarchical organization to be less likely to allow the development of entrenched leaders and an environment conducive for co-optation. Finally, the following events took place in the Midwest, a region whose politics are generally viewed as being less corrupt than other regions of the United States. Consequently, oligarchy and co-optation should be less prevalent in the Midwest than in other regions, because oligarchy and co-optation are corrupt forms of politics.

I initially gained access to the Mexican American Employee Organization (MAO) through a friend who knew members of the group. He arranged for me to meet with an active member of the organization. Access to other group members was gained through each successive interviewee providing me with new contacts. I interviewed eleven of the sixteen group members (69% of the members). The five members who were not interviewed either declined to be interviewed or did not respond to interview requests. Finally, I interviewed a lawyer who was working on behalf of the organization.

Information gained through the interviews, established that the people interviewed formed the group's more active members. The eleven interviewed members and lawyer confirmed that I had interviewed the more active members, and that only two of the five non-interviewed members were active in the group. According to the interviewees, the five people not interviewed did not differ significantly from those interviewed in their socio-economic standing or ideologies. The validity of this belief by the interviewees was increased by the information obtained through the interviews. All of the interviews confirmed that two competing factions existed within MAO and all of their supporters held similar views as the non-interviewed members. Therefore, the exclusion of the five non-interviewed members of MAO should not significantly alter the study's findings.

I conducted informal interviews and structured them to ask different sets of questions. To encourage full and truthful answers, all of the people interviewed were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality.[36] The interview questions were designed to solicit information on their work environment, MAO, their organizing tactics, personal and group views, leadership, communication and information flows, and problems they had with their job and MAO.

In summary, this critical case study analyzed the communication and information flows in a small, non-hierarchical, Mexican American Employee Organization (MAO). The case study relied on interviewing MAO's members and a lawyer counseling the group in a civil rights lawsuit. In the following case study, **MAO** corresponded to **Group A** and **Urban Inc.** to the stronger **Group B** of the Communication Cadre Theory.

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[36] Due to the sensitive nature of the issues discussed and the possibility of retaliation against the people interviewed, the people interviewed for this case study were granted anonymity.

The following case study of the Mexican American Employee Organization provides a critical test of the Communication Cadre Theory advanced in this paper. The critical conceptual elements of Political Science center on the concepts of power, political processes, and decision-making.[37] Due to this specific case study's focus on a male ethnic minority (predominantly, Mexican American) organizing in the workplace, the analysis requires the need for the political analysis to be complemented by studies on Latinos, ethnicity, race, class, and gender.

Race, Ethnicity, Class, and Gender

Studies that combine the concepts of race, ethnicity, class, and gender are becoming more common.[38] Racial and ethnic conceptualizations in the social sciences are generally limited to race or ancestry. Political Science appears more limited than other social sciences in using two-dimensional definitions of race and ethnicity, namely, Black or White.[39] Latino American, Asian American, and Native American Studies expanded race and ethnicity conceptually and operationally to include culture(s) as attitudes, values, and practices, in addition to bi-culturalism, social networks, and identity. While the conceptualization and operationalization of race and ethnicity has increased, the inclusion of multiple racial and ethnic groups as units of

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[37] Garcia, "Latino Studies and Political Science: Politics and Power Perspective for Latino Communities and Its Impact on the Discipline."

[38] Teresa Córdova, National Association for Chicano Studies., and University of Texas at Austin. Center for Mexican American Studies., *Chicana Voices: Intersections of Class, Race, and Gender*, 1st ed. (Austin, Tex.: CMAS Publications Center for Mexican American Studies University of Texas at Austin, 1986); Angelo Falcon, "Black and Latino Politics in New York City: Race and Ethnicity in a Changing Context," in *Latinos and the Political System*, ed. F. Chris Garcia (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988); Bryan and M. Preston Jackson, ed., *Race and Ethnic Politics in California* (Berkeley: Califirnia Institute for Government Research, 1991); Gerald David Jaynes, *Immigration and Race: New Challenges for American Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Paula and John A. Garcia McClain, "Expanding Disciplinary Boundaries: Black, Latino and Racial Minority Groups in Political Science," in *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*, ed. Ada W. Finifter (Washington, D.C.: American Political Science Association, 1993); Smith, *We Have No Leaders: African-Americans in the Post-Civil Rights Era;* Raphael Sonenshein, *Politics in Black and White: Race and Power in Los Angeles* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993); Adela de la Torre and Beatriz M. Pesquera, *Building with Our Hands: New Directions in Chicana Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Hanes Walton, *African American Power and Politics: The Political Context Variable*, *Power, Conflict, and Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

[39] Robert Alan Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*, *Yale Studies in Political Science, 4* (New Haven,: Yale University Press, 1961); Michael Parenti, "Ethnic Politics and Persistence of Ethnic Identification," *American Political Science Review* 61, no. 3 (1967); Sonenshein, *Politics in Black and White: Race and Power in Los Angeles;* Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie, *Political Participation in America*, ICPSR ed., *Icpsr Study ; No. 7015* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, 1976); Raymond E. Wolfinger and Steven J. Rosenstone, *Who Votes?*, *A Yale Fastback* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).

analysis or areas of study is still rare. Fortunately, exceptions do exist that expand the common

two-dimensional use of race (i.e. Black and White) to be more inclusive of other racial and

ethnic groups (i.e. Asian, Latino, and Native American).[40] While this case study focuses

specifically on a male, Mexican American, employee organization, two other case studies in my

dissertation focus on a mainly Caucasian organization and an organization that was diverse

across racial, ethnic, and gender groups.

The role of gender is less explored in this paper. The limited use of gender analysis

should not, however, be misconstrued to mean that gender did not exert an influence on the

events that occurred. Indeed, the lack of women's membership in the Mexican American

Employee Organization reflected the lack of women employed in the traditionally male

dominated labor fields at Urban Inc. As Montoya's work pointed out, social roles and structural

relations affect gender.[41] The members of MAO, all male, identified strongly with their ethnicity

(i.e. Mexican), pan-ethnicity (i.e. Latino), and historical working class background, however,

they still reflected the predominant and dominant male environment at Urban Inc.

Considering that Midwest State owned and operated Urban Inc., the state definitely

played a role in defining power relations within a gendered context. As African Americans,

Asian Americans, and women made inroads into Urban Inc.'s workforce, Latinas were not

included among the increasing population of female workers. Through hiring, the role of

culture, race, and ethnicity affected how the state defined gender appropriate labor.[42]

The members of MAO were not free from this bias either; interviews with members of

the Mexican American Employee Organization (MAO) indicated that very few of the people

they recommended for jobs at Urban Inc. were women. The result of these forces combined and

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[40] Falcon, "Black and Latino Politics in New York City: Race and Ethnicity in a Changing Context."; Jackson, ed., *Race and Ethnic Politics in California;* McClain, "Expanding Disciplinary Boundaries: Black, Latino and Racial Minority Groups in Political Science."; Sonenshein, *Politics in Black and White: Race and Power in Los Angeles*.

[41] Lisa Montoya, "Latino Gender Differences in Public Opinion: Results from the Latino National Political Survey," *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 18, no. 2 (1996).

[42] Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill, *Women of Color in U.S. Society*, *Women in the Political Economy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

created multiple obstacles of gender, ethnicity, and class, a "triple oppression," for Latinas at Urban Inc.[43]

John A. Garcia noted that Latino "political mobilization and/or social involvement can be initiated or enhanced by the salience of race/ethnicity, class, and/or gender among Latinos."[44] In the case study of MAO, ethnicity played a crucial role in politically mobilizing the Mexican American population at Urban Inc. MAO's members felt that they were being ethnically discriminated against by Urban Inc. and their representing unions. The perceived discrimination in treatment and wages resulted in a core group of five people who organized and formed the foundation of MAO. The founding five members were then able to recruit almost all of the Mexican employees at Urban Inc. by stressing the need and possibility of overcoming on-the-job discrimination. Initially, MAO organized and formed a loose coalition with African American and Asian American groups to address their collective concerns of racial and ethnic discrimination. As it will be explained in this paper, MAO's members changed their organizing tactics from a loose coalition across racial and ethnic groups, to one of organizing along ethnic lines in order to have their interests and grievances represented and heard. Consequently, MAO's ability to overcome the first order problem of organizing a new group, as well as overcoming the free-rider problem was enhanced by the role of ethnicity.

Historically, Latino studies focused on ethnic and racial identity as a prime area of research.[45] In their interviews, the members of the Mexican American Employee Organization demonstrated the evolution of their ethnic identity. They described the process of developing an individual Chicano/Mexican American ethnic identity and an ethnic group consciousness, then used ethnicity to assess their social and political position and relations.[46] The evolution of their

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[43] Córdova, National Association for Chicano Studies., and University of Texas at Austin. Center for Mexican American Studies., *Chicana Voices: Intersections of Class, Race, and Gender;* Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, 2nd ed. (New York: Kitchen table : Women of Color Press, 1983); Vicki L. Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1987); Torre and Pesquera, *Building with Our Hands: New Directions in Chicana Studies;* Zinn and Dill, *Women of Color in U.S. Society.*

[44] Garcia, "Latino Studies and Political Science: Politics and Power Perspective for Latino Communities and Its Impact on the Discipline," p.2.
[45] John A. Garcia, "Ethnicity and Chicanos: Explogsurement of Ethnic Identification, Identity and Consciousness," *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 4, no. 3 (1982).

[46] John A. Garcia, "Ethnic Identity Research and Public Policy Implications for Mexican-Americans," in *Mexican-American Identity*, ed. M. Bernal and P. Matinelli (Encino, California: Floricanto Press, 1993); Aida and C. Arce

ethnic identity then progressed to a Latino pan-ethnic identity and group consciousness.[47]
MAO's members described the benefits of being Latino as belonging to a larger population
group that shared similar concerns for personal and/or strategic economic, political, and social
reasons. A result consistent with Felix Padilla's research that membership in Latino
organizations aided individuals from different Latin American national origins to consider
themselves Latino.[48]

Ethnicity, however, does not form the only basis for one's identity and this was evident
among MAO's members. The intersection of race, ethnicity, class, and gender played a key role
in determining a person's identity and identities.[49] One's identity or identities may reinforce or
weaken the likelihood of political participation for any person. In the case study of MAO,
ethnicity and class provided additional factors for people to form and continue MAO.

The role class played in the following events was more difficult to discern, because
several members of MAO were in supervisory or managerial roles.[50] Traditional views of class
were further complicated, because one of the unofficial leaders of MAO voluntarily stepped
down from a higher managerial position for reasons related and unrelated to class.

Social Structures

Social structures (i.e. political, economic, and social institutions) shaped and influenced
MAO and Urban Inc. This paper seeks to connect the interactions of the Communication Cadre

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Hurtado, "Mexicans, Chicanos, or Pochos… Que Somos? The Impact of Language and Nativity on Ethnic Labeling," *Atzlan* 17, no. 1 (1987).

[47] John A. Garcia et al., "Ethnicity and National Origin Status: Patterns of Identities among Latinos in the U.S." (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., September 1991); Felix M. Padilla, *Latino Ethnic Consciousness: The Case of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985).

[48] Padilla, *Latino Ethnic Consciousness: The Case of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago*.

[49] Zinn and Dill, *Women of Color in U.S. Society*.

[50] Collier and Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America;* Córdova, National Association for Chicano Studies., and University of Texas at Austin. Center for Mexican American Studies., *Chicana Voices: Intersections of Class, Race, and Gender;* Thomas R. Dye and L. Harmon Zeigler, *The Irony of Democracy: An Uncommon Introduction to American Politics*, 3d ed. (North Scituate, Mass.: Duxbury Press, 1975); Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley;* Juan Gómez-Quiñones, *Mexican American Labor, 1790-1990*, 1st ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994); Hero, *Latinos and the U.S. Political System: Two-Tiered Pluralism;* Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, *Phronesis* (New York: Verso, 2000); Smith, *We Have No Leaders: African-Americans in the Post-Civil Rights Era;* Zinn and Dill, *Women of Color in U.S. Society*.

Theory with decision-making, motivation, and initiative, in order to better understand how democracy operated within social organizations, society, and the federal system of government.[51]

Political Science's analysis of electoral participation provided rich data for studying the United States' electoral systems. An electoral system based on a plurality, winner-take-all system with at-large elections, off-year, and non-partisan elections and multi-member districts, and the difficulty for third political parties to be competitive were structural factors that affected the number of Latino candidates (successful or not) in elections, racially polarized voting and campaigning, representation, and governmental responsiveness.[52] De la Garza, DeSipio, Gunier, Rosenstone, and Wolfinger all argued for methods to address the problems posed by a plurality, winner-take-all electoral system. The methods they argued for included single member districts, cumulative or proportional voting schemes, and community of interest consideration in re-distribution of district plans. Additionally, historical obstacles prevented Americans of Mexican, African, Asian, or indigenous backgrounds from voting or running in the electoral process.[53]

MAO's members were aware of these structural factors and historical obstacles in the United States' electoral system. In the following case study, MAO engaged in a democratic decision-making process that mirrors the country's electoral system.

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[51] Hero, *Latinos and the U.S. Political System: Two-Tiered Pluralism.*

[52] Rodolfo and Louis DeSipio de la Garza, "Saving the Baby, Change the Bath Water, and Scrub the Tub: Latino Electoral Participation after Twenty Years of Voting Rights Coverage," *Texas Law Review* 71 (1993); Rodolfo O. de la Garza, Martha Menchaca, and Louis DeSipio, *Barrio Ballots: Latino Politics in the 1990 Elections* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994); Dye and Zeigler, *The Irony of Democracy: An Uncommon Introduction to American Politics;* F. Chris Garcia, *Latinos and the Political System* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988); Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986;* Michael Parenti, *Democracy for the Few*, 6th ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995); Steven J. Rosenstone, Roy L. Behr, and Edward H. Lazarus, *Third Parties in America: Citizen Response to Major Party Failure* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984); Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*, *New Topics in Politics* (New York: Macmillan Pub. Co : Maxwell Macmillan Canada : Maxwell Macmillan International, 1993).

[53] Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos;* Bridges, *A City in the Republic: Antebellum New York and the Origins of Machine Politics;* Dye and Zeigler, *The Irony of Democracy: An Uncommon Introduction to American Politics;* Juan Gómez-Quiñones, *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940-1990*, 1st ed., *The Calvin P. Horn Lectures in Western History and Culture* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990); Richard Griswold del Castillo, *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: A Legacy of Conflict*, 1st ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990); Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation;* Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986;* Rosenstone and Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America;* Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, *Everyman's Library* (New York: A. Knopf : Distributed by Random House, 1994); Hanes Walton, *Invisible Politics: Black Political Behavior*, *Suny Series in Afro-American Society* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985).

Individual factors that contributed to Latino political participation and power focus primarily on the individual resources Latinos possessed, as evidenced by their SES or their linkage between individuals, organizations, and leaders. The SES, or socioeconomic status, variables focused on level of education, income level, and occupation and served as the main approach to understanding why individuals participated in politics.[54] The strong correlation between SES and the types and level of political participation by individuals are well documented. The relationship between SES and Latino political participation is not as strong. The work of John A. Garcia highlighted how the inclusion of group consciousness, ethnic identification (e.g. Chicano in place of Mexican American), provided further variables towards explaining Latino political participation.[55] In MAO's case, the additional factors Garcia highlights point towards a greater understanding of why MAO's members became politically active at Urban Inc., also, MAO's members overwhelmingly possessed experience in political organizing.

MAO's political empowerment includes structural factors, which influenced the how, why, and to what extent MAO's members participated. Political Science traditionally focused on voting systems and representation.[56] The case of MAO was no different; MAO's members believed that the system they practiced, while flawed, enabled them to have an important voice in what MAO did as an organization. Additional structural variables that encouraged MAO's members to participate were the ability to meet on company time and property, as well as access to high-ranking officials at Urban Inc.

Coalition Building

Recent work on how and to what level Latinos at the mass and elite levels interacted across Latino and non-Latino groups are now available.[57] The research pointed out that Latinos

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[54] Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie, *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality* (New York,: Harper & Row, 1972); Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady, *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[55] John A. Garcia, "Political Participation: Resources and Involvement among Latinos in the American Political System," in *Pursuing Power: Latinos and the Political System*, ed. F. Chris Garcia (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997).

[56] Hero, *Latinos and the U.S. Political System: Two-Tiered Pluralism.*

cooperating across Latino sub-groups and with non-Latino groups was more apparent at the elite

level, than at the mass level. The coalition building appeared to be more practical, than the

creation of a new pan-Latino or pan-community of color identity. As the Latino population

grows and becomes more concentrated in urban areas, opportunities for coalition building with

non-Latino groups increases.[58] Other communities of color such as, African Americans, Asian

Americans, and Native Americans, are struggling for increased economic, political, and social

power and share similar policy concerns.[59] Electoral coalition building and competition at the

local and municipal level formed the main area of coalition building research, as coalitions

formed across groups and work for greater political power, or competition between groups drove

them apart.[60]

As it will be shown, MAO engaged in coalition building with African Americans and

Asian Americans in MAO's initial organizing efforts. In this case, the high level of previous

political experience among MAO's members might serve as a proxy for considering them elite.

While coalition efforts among the different communities of color at Urban, Inc. existed at the

initial stage, two overwhelming opinions existed among MAO's members. First, MAO's

members believed that there was not enough support from other groups for Mexican Americans

to merit continued coalition efforts. Last, Mao's members believed that Urban Inc. actively

engaged in pitting the different groups of color in competition for jobs and company resources.

The Case Study

The following sections were structured to reflect the successive negotiation rounds

between Urban Inc. and MAO. Organizing the paper in this manner, best demonstrated how the

[57] Jackson, ed., *Race and Ethnic Politics in California;* Sonenshein, *Politics in Black and White: Race and Power in Los Angeles*.

[58] John A. Garcia, "Hispanic Political Participation and Sociodemographic Correlates," in *Pursuing Political Power: Latinos and the Political System*, ed. F. Chris Garcia (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997); Garcia, "Latino Studies and Political Science: Politics and Power Perspective for Latino Communities and Its Impact on the Discipline."; Garcia, "Political Participation: Resources and Involvement among Latinos in the American Political System."

[59] Garcia, "Hispanic Political Participation and Sociodemographic Correlates."; Garcia, "Latino Studies and Political Science: Politics and Power Perspective for Latino Communities and Its Impact on the Discipline."; Garcia, "Political Participation: Resources and Involvement among Latinos in the American Political System."

[60] Jackson, ed., *Race and Ethnic Politics in California;* Sonenshein, *Politics in Black and White: Race and Power in Los Angeles*.

organization and communication cadres developed and the relationship between the communication cadre to oligarchy and co-optation.

Protest and Organize The Mexican American Organization

The Mexican American Organization (MAO) advocated for Mexican Americans at Urban Inc.[61] The organization's goals were for Mexican Americans to have the same rights and opportunities as their Caucasian co-workers and to end racial discrimination against Mexican Americans at Urban Inc. MAO's members strongly displayed unity in their purpose, goals, and egalitarian beliefs. All of MAO's members, except one, claimed that no leader or group of leaders controlled the group.[62] Indeed, MAO members purposefully sought to avoid having a single leader or leadership cadre by not holding elections leadership positions and meeting at least twice per month. The stated purpose of the frequent meetings was to decrease the opportunity for leaders to develop or become entrenched and to increase the access and flow of communication and information. MAO meetings did not have a formal chairperson to regulate meetings. Group members engaged in open discussion and collectively solicited comments from silent members. A majority vote determined MAO's course of action after an issue was discussed. Thus, MAO's structure and membership critically tested the Communication Cadre Theory.

Fewer than twenty Mexican Americans worked at Urban Inc., of those, sixteen belonged to MAO.[63] They originally organized from 1981 through 1982 and joined other workers of color to combat racial discrimination in wages, job opportunities, and work environment. The state government controlled Urban Inc. and the initial administrative response created an advisory board charged with investigating and handling the situation. A slow state investigation,

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[61] The terms Mexican, Mexican American, and Chicano are used interchangeably and reflect the self-nomenclature MAO members used. MAO members spanned a wide occupational spectrum from secretaries and laborers to foremen and supervisors. In addition, MAO members belonged to different unions and several members worked in management and were not eligible to belong to a union.

[62] The lone exception came from Jim, who claimed that he was the leader. Information from all the other interviews, however, did not support his claim.

[63] The actual number of Mexican workers at Urban Inc. was not known. Company records and MAO members placed the amount as less than twenty.

accompanied by little administrative activity to address the complaints, gave the loosely organized Mexican Americans time to become more organized. Member participation was high and almost all of them volunteered and served in leadership activities (e.g. committee or individual tasks). In order to accommodate this organizational structure, the administration sat down and mediated with almost all of the Mexican American workers, (while only negotiating with representatives from other racial groups). MAO's organizing led to the promotion of a Mexican American employee, Joe, to be the company's first civil rights officer. Group members identified Joe as belonging to a core group of five MAO members who initiated the protest. The state then promised to implement and enforce new work practices that addressed MAO's concerns.

MAO members quickly stopped organizing after their initial success. Almost ten years later, in 1990, they believed that Urban Inc. failed to honor their previous agreement and reorganized. Once again the company sat down to mediate with MAO. This time, however, the administration told MAO to pick members to represent their group. MAO conceded and members estimated that at least twelve of sixteen members actively participated in the second round of negotiations.[64] MAO threatened Urban Inc. with a class action, civil rights lawsuit and the first settlement was reworked with new figures for promotions, hiring, and plans to improve the work environment by decreasing racial discrimination.

Several different unions represented different segments of MAO's membership. During the early 1990s, several MAO members received pay raises. The pay raises, however, resulted from different union contracts and only applied to those MAO members who belonged to those specific unions. The majority of MAO members, however, were represented by different unions, whose members were not due pay raises. Consequently, the majority of the Mexican American employees did not receive wage promotions. Furthermore, Urban Inc. failed to hire additional employees of Mexican or Latino descent and none of the members of MAO received job promotions, as Urban Inc. had promised in the previous negotiations.

Once again, the Mexican American employees stopped organizing. In 1996 and 1997 racial tensions increased between Caucasian and Mexican workers, in part, because Mexicans

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[64] MAO members do not know the actual number and they do not possess records indicating who or how many people participated in the negotiations. When questioned, MAO members individually responded with a number from twelve to sixteen.

were not promoted nor hired in accordance with the previous settlement. The Mexican American civil rights officer, Joe, resigned and accepted a lower level position. When asked why he did this, he responded that the pressure was too great and that Urban Inc. had not honored its agreement with MAO. MAO wanted substantial and faster change, while Urban Inc. wanted to keep the workers of Mexican descent from advocating for change. As the civil rights officer, Joe constantly balanced the interests of MAO and Urban Inc. He was forced to fend off accusations from both organizations that he favored the other group. Sam, a Puerto Rican American, was hired in his place and MAO changed its membership policy to include all Latinos.

During this time, Peter, a MAO member, began filing a civil rights violation against Urban Inc. The Latino employees once again re-organized. As predicted by the Communication Cadre Theory, Urban Inc. insisted that MAO decrease the number of their representatives involved with negotiations. MAO responded by decreasing the original twelve to sixteen representatives to the first ten members to volunteer. The management of Urban Inc. disliked dealing with such a large group, but MAO insisted that they had honored Urban Inc.'s request and negotiations continued. Once again the mediation procedure resulted in the original settlement being re-worded with different statistical goals for new hires and promotions. Peter dropped his civil rights lawsuit. Unfortunately for MAO, the new settlement would only be partially honored by Urban Inc.

The third round of negotiations differed qualitatively from the preceding two rounds. Urban Inc. encouraged Latino employees to continue participating in MAO, by allowing them to meet on company time. At this time, MAO began exhibiting strong evidence of a communication cadre. Meetings between Urban Inc.'s administration and the at-large Latinos stopped. All communication between MAO and Urban Inc. took place via official and unofficial groups. A permanent, "official" Latino Advisory Board composed of MAO members Joe, Job, Al, and Sam (the Puerto Rican civil rights officer) met with Urban Inc.'s advisory council.[65] The Advisory Board met with Urban Inc. every two weeks. In addition to the official Advisory Board, MAO members Aldo, Carlos, and Ben formed a second "unofficial Latino" Advisory Board that communicated with Urban Inc.'s administration.

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[65] Urban Inc. placed Sam on the official Latino Advisory Board and forced MAO to accept Sam as a member. The implications of Urban Inc.'s actions will be discussed later in this section.

Almost all members of the official and unofficial Advisory Boards formed the official and unofficial communication cadres. The two communication cadres were composed of Joe, Aldo, Carlos, and Ben. Joe, Aldo, Carlos, and Ben initiated MAO in the very early 1980s.[66] The four MAO founders were continually involved in communication and information flows and strongly influenced MAO's policies. Ten of the eleven MAO members interviewed identified these four founders as the people who communicated the most with Urban Inc. and the persons who provided them (the interviewee) with most of their information. Furthermore, the members considered these four people the ones who most influenced and lead MAO. The two communication cadres controlled communication and information between MAO and Urban, Inc. As Urban Inc. limited direct interaction with MAO's members, MAO's members increasingly relied on the official and unofficial communication cadres for their information and to communicate for the organization with Urban Inc. Consequently, MAO's membership relied increasingly on the official and unofficial cadres to represent their needs, interests, and opinions.

MAO leadership became based on who was part of the two communication cadres. MAO accepted the first three volunteers as their members on the official Latino Advisory Board.[67] Urban Inc. filled the fourth board position with Sam, the civil rights officer. When MAO protested this move, Urban Inc. forced them to accept Sam as one of their representatives by threatening to withdraw from all negotiations. All of MAO's members felt wary of Sam, due to his perceived unwavering support of Urban Inc.'s position and expectation by MAO members that he should be supportive of their position.

Once Urban Inc. appointed Sam to the Latino Advisory Board, MAO's entire membership considered him a company man and declared him *persona non grata.*[68] They accepted his membership, however, for three stated reasons:

1) To continue negotiations,
2) He could be outvoted by MAO's members in MAO and on the Latino Advisory Board,

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[66] Ten of the 11 people interviewed identified four people as the founders of MAO: Joe, Aldo, Carlos, and Ben.

[67] Some of MAO's members voiced displeasure with the volunteer method for choosing the Board positions and pushed to elect the advisory board. The organization implemented the majority decision to use volunteers to fill MAO's positions on the Latino Advisory Board.

[68] Sam's continued MAO membership and position on the Advisory board was extensively debated. Of critical importance, is the fact that the two opposing factions in MAO, to be discussed shortly, accepted Sam for the reasons listed.

3) They could feed him false information, and
4) They would hold secret meetings without his presence to discuss sensitive material.

Neither faction of MAO considered Sam a supporter of their position. The stated reason from members of both factions indicated that he was not to be trusted. Almost all of the members interviewed, though, considered him more closely aligned with the official cadre's position. As Joe stated, the position of civil rights officer and MAO member was difficult to balance. Urban Inc. definitely made the tough balancing act more difficult when they forced MAO to accept him as one of their representatives on the Advisory Board.

Among MAO's three positions on the Latino Advisory Board volunteers, Joe, embodied the official cadre. He, also, was the only member of the official cadre. He was an established MAO leader and founder with connections to the administration from his previous role as Urban Inc.'s civil rights officer. He was politically ambitious and experienced, as evidenced by his influential role and aspirations in the local Republican Party and at Urban Inc. The other Latino Advisory Board members, Al and Job, testified they received the majority of their information from Joe who often served as their go-between with Urban Inc. In their interviews, they were very upfront about furthering their careers as they advanced MAO's goals.[69]

The unofficial cadre consisted of Aldo, Carlos, and Ben, all of whom founded MAO with Joe. The trio possessed an unobtrusive political style and preferred to act from behind the scenes. They often met individually with Urban Inc.'s administrators to insure that the Mexican American Organization's goals and interests were represented and met. The unofficial cadre took a strong stand against receiving personal perks, patronage, or any offer that could be construed as such. The unofficial cadre strongly advocated for an end to lower, discriminatory wages and lack of promotions compared to their Caucasian counterparts and an end to discriminatory hiring practices.[70] Ben and Aldo were eligible for retirement and Carlos was within "two to three years" of retirement. They felt their retirement status enabled them to place the interests and goals of MAO and their local Latino community above their personal interests. The effect was a strong commitment to create change before they retired. Their strong

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[69] Al and Job often commented on how they were "looking out for [themselves]" and believed that all currently employed MAO members should receive benefits and promotions before addressing hiring discrimination and work conditions.

[70] The issue of discriminatory hiring practices will be discussed later in the paper.

commitment appeared to be based on a feeling of financial security due to their retirement status. They believed that Urban Inc. could not threaten them with unemployment.

Why did two distinct communication groups exist? MAO members provided few answers, because they assumed that no individual or group of individuals controlled communication, information, or MAO. Answers from non-cadre members identified the membership of the communication cadres and, most importantly, which leaders they aligned themselves with. MAO members on the official Latino Advisory Board advocated that Latino equality in on-the-job treatment and job opportunities (i.e., promotions) begin with current Urban Inc. employees. I termed this group the official cadre to recognize their "official" status as Latino Advisory Board members with Urban Inc. Furthermore, the official cadre did not push for rapid changes like their unofficial counterpart.

The unofficial cadre, however, drew majority support in MAO and was historically MAO's power brokers. The unofficial communication cadre benefited from long term, established relationships with some of Urban Inc.'s management and support staff. The relationships went back almost 20 years to MAO's founding and lasted through several rounds of negotiations between the two sides. In this scenario, the unofficial cadre was too influential for Urban Inc. to ignore.

The official and unofficial cadres represented the two factions within MAO. Each cadre advocated different policies to address the discriminatory environment against Latinos at Urban Inc. The official cadre totaled 6 supporters (1 cadre member, 4 supporters, and Sam). The unofficial cadre totaled 9 supporters (3 cadre members and 6 supporters). One person, who self-identified as belonging to neither group, ridiculed the official cadre. He then said in an angry voice that he planned on supporting the official cadre, which would increase the official cadre's supporters to 7.

The Communication Cadre Theory predicted that the cadre's size would decrease as relations increased between MAO and Urban Inc. and as MAO aged. As predicted, a communication cadre developed despite the egalitarian views and efforts of MAO members. During the first round of negotiations in 1981 and 1982 almost twenty Mexicans were directly involved in negotiations and communication flows with the state. By 1997, official and unofficial communication cadres consisted of four people who controlled communication and

information between MAO and Urban Inc. The two cadres comprised MAO's unofficial political

leadership, because they did not represent elected or appointed leadership positions of MAO.

Prior to the third round of negotiations, patronage was isolated to Joe's promotion as the

newly created civil rights officer in the early 1980s. A couple of MAO members received

overdue wage and salary promotions to the next higher government pay grade, also. During the

third round of negotiations, a member of Urban Inc.'s administration informed MAO that Sam,

the Puerto Rican civil rights officer, received a $60,000 a year salary.[71] A salary that was

$20,000 greater than the maximum his government employment level was entitled to. The large

discrepancy in pay confirmed the members' feelings that Sam was acting on behalf of Urban Inc.

and being subsidized for it.

Once again, the Communication Cadre Theory's prediction came true, in regard to co-

optation. Urban Inc., the stronger organization, forced MAO to accept Sam as one of their

representatives on the Latino Advisory Board. Arguably, Sam was not co-opted by the state,

since he was always identified as an advocate of the state's position, but he received patronage

for his support. The state, however, had definitely begun to co-opt MAO by forcing them to

accept a representative whom they did not want. Sam's continuous support for Urban Inc.'s

position among his fellow MAO members may also be looked at as his and the state's effort to

co-opt MAO.

The third round of negotiations was particularly bitter, as the Latinos demanded

immediate and substantial efforts to honor the two previous pacts. The third round's settlement

resulted in several pay raises and job promotions, which decreased the demands and legal threats

of several MAO activists. The less vociferous MAO activists then represented MAO on the

Latino Advisory Board during the fourth round of protests in 1998 and 1999. The unofficial

cadre, however, continued to advocate for rapid changes that included both current and potential

Latino employees.

The fourth round of protests revolved around increased discrimination against Latinos on

the job and no new Latino employees hired since 1987. The lack of new Latino hires became

important, because Urban Inc. had hired substantial numbers of African Americans and Asian

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[71] This person has access to Urban Inc.'s payroll records and confirmed the civil rights officer employment level and salary. To protect this person's identity, no reference is made to race, gender, or position, this person is sympathetic to MAO's cause and regularly offers assistance to the group.

Americans, since 1997. Latino employees were specifically upset that they had recommended

qualified Latino applicants who were not hired despite Urban Inc.'s promises to hire a qualified

Latino if one applied.[72] Latino workers linked this policy to a discriminatory environment

against Latinos, which included "mysteriously" changing job qualifications when Latinos

became eligible for promotions or as job applicants, and greater disciplinary action against

Latino employees than Caucasians. MAO continued to negotiate for their inclusion (or an

employee of Latino descent) to be on the applicant screening and interviewing committees.

MAO also wanted Urban Inc. to enforce a non-discriminatory work environment and to account

for how and why job classifications changed every time Latinos came up for promotions or

employment. The last issue particularly angered the members of the Mexican American

Organization, because when Latinos applied for promotion or employment they would fail to

meet the new requirements. The only exception to this occurred when union contracts stipulated

specific pay raises and the promotions of the members on the Latino Advisory Board.

The Communication Cadre, Leadership, and Co-Optation

The fourth round of protests and negotiations continued after research on MAO ended in

1999, but several facts were evident. First, MAO's leadership was in the hands of an official and

an unofficial communication cadre of four people. The two cadres formed MAO's unofficial

leadership. Second, the number of people in the communication cadres decreased with each

successive negotiation round and MAO's members interacted less and less with Urban Inc.

Consequently, the communication cadre's size decreased from MAO's sixteen organizational

members in 1981 to four out of 16 MAO members in 1999.

The next fact was the presence of patronage. As defined earlier, patronage was a reward

for service or punishment for disobedience and indicated a favorable environment for co-optation

to occur. Urban Inc. dispensed promotions and pay raises to members of the communication

cadre and their supporters, as they decreased their level of activism or support of the unofficial

cadre. In response, the official cadre member and his supporters negotiated their influence in

MAO for personal gain.[73] The most obvious example of patronage was Peter's $60,000 annual

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[72] MAO members knew they sent qualified applicants, because they knew the job qualifications from experience
and from reading job postings.

[73] The administrative informant confirmed the following promotions and pay raises through his/her access to job

salary that was $20,000 greater than his government position was allowed to receive. Joe
provided another example of patronage. He was hired as a civil rights officer and then
negotiated a favorable demotion with excellent job security. Job, meanwhile, used his position
on the Advisory Board to garner a pay raise and then a job promotion with a corresponding pay
raise. Finally, the newest supporter of the official cadre, Al, a union pipe fitter was promoted to
foreman.

Unofficial communication cadre members also encountered patronage, as well as one of
their supporters. Carlos reported that Urban Inc. offered him a pay raise and later a promotion
for his cooperation, which he refused. He stated that his position in the union precluded
favorable salary treatment and that he lacked seniority to be eligible for promotion. He believed
that if he accepted either offer, he would eventually encounter problems with his union. He also
stated that he ideologically refused to be "bought-off" or to accept favorable treatment. Ben
stated that he was offered a promotion he refused. After his refusal, Urban Inc. supervisors
implied his job might be eliminated by government cutbacks. Ruben, a MAO member not
previously discussed, represented the only supporter of the unofficial cadre who faced patronage.
He and a Caucasian co-worker fought at work and Urban Inc. fired both employees, although
Urban Inc.'s regulations required that they be suspended. Within one week the Caucasian worker
was reclassified as suspended, but Ruben remained unemployed when research on MAO
ended.[74]

The final point was that a power struggle occurred in MAO between the official cadre
and the unofficial cadre. The official cadre advocated institutionalized ethnic group
advancement over time with immediate promotions from within, while the unofficial cadre
advocated for immediate institutionalized guarantees of ethnic group advancement and hiring of
Latino employees. When this research ended, it was too early to know the outcome, but Urban
Inc. was using patronage to encourage support for the official cadre's position. The unofficial
cadre, meanwhile, was using legal counsel to file a civil rights lawsuits against Urban Inc.[75] The

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classification and payroll records.

[74] Ruben based his claim on information from his union business agent and a lawyer whom he hired to represent
him.

[75] Aldo was the first MAO member to advocate a civil rights lawsuit in the fourth round of negotiations. Several
other MAO members joined him. They were incorporating former, qualified Mexican applicants who were

stakes of the struggle within MAO were high, control of MAO and the ability to determine what policies the organization as a whole would support and advocate for. Despite the outcome, the size of the communication cadre would more than likely decrease to one or three members depending on which cadre won the internal struggle.

The Cadre, Leadership, and Co-Optation of Mao

The Latino experience at Urban Inc. was consistent with the Communication Cadre Theory, even though MAO was a small organization composed of dedicated and politically experienced members who actively attempted to avoid entrenched leaders. The size of MAO's communication cadres decreased and the cadres' importance increased with the expansion of negotiations with Urban Inc. Concurrently, a favorable environment for Urban Inc. to co-opt MAO was created through patronage and communication cadres. The communication cadres and their supporters became appealing targets for Urban Inc. to co-opt, because the communication cadres controlled the Mexican American Employee Organization. The official communication cadre and its supporters benefited from patronage. Urban Inc., meanwhile, targeted the unofficial cadre for patronage in exchange for a decrease in their activity level or change in their policy position. Finally, supporters of the unofficial cadre were offered patronage to change their support and position.

Sam was identified by almost all MAO members as the proponent of the state's position. As indicated earlier, Peter is considered part of MAO. MAO allowed all Latino's to join and the state mandated that all "Hispanics" could be part of the group. Urban Inc. forced MAO to allow Sam to represent them on the advisory board. Consequently, Urban Inc. placed their advocate in the communication cadre and positioned him to be one of MAO's leaders. If Urban Inc. could place someone in another group's communication cadre, one group can influence the composition of another group's cadre. Once again, the Communication Cadre Theory's prediction came true. Urban Inc., the stronger group, used force to place one of their members, Sam, in MAO's cadre and rewarded him with an illicit pay raise for his loyalty. An act of patronage, and hence co-optation, was performed.

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disqualified when job requirements changed after they applied for employment.

Summary

This paper outlines and reviews a case study that supports the Communication Cadre Theory. The theory proposes that communication networks are mechanisms for the development of oligarchy in organizations and the creation of an environment conducive to co-optation. Throughout the process of testing the Communication Cadre Theory, a question continually lingers in the background. To what extent can democracy and representation exist in the presence of communication cadres? The Communication Cadre Theory provides a substantial explanation for the lack of greater political power by disadvantaged groups. The theory explains how leaders come to power in disadvantaged groups and why oligarchy and a favorable environment for co-optation develop. The Communication Cadre Theory accounts for why groups of the elite seek to co-opt disadvantaged groups, why leaders are in a position to be co-opted, and for the various methods elite groups use to accomplish co-optation. The relationship between the control of communication, leaders, oligarchy and co-optation must be understood for an organization to avoid oligarchy and co-optation. If disadvantaged groups want to prevent leaders from "selling them and their goals down the river," placing time constraints on the terms of communicators is essential.

The huge normative concern with this research is the need for groups of the disadvantaged to implement organizational rules that insure a communication cadre does not develop. The alternative is to follow a strong, charismatic leader and risk the danger that a successful organization will terminate or become unsuccessful with the leader's co-optation or demise. The implementation of rules that prevents a communication cadre from developing will aid an organization or movement in maintaining their goals. For example, rotating leaders and communicators cultivates new leaders who will stay true to the organization's or movement's ideals and goals.

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