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CIVIC STRATIFICATION IN
INDEPENDENT CANDIDACIES:
A typology of independent candidates to executive office in Mexico

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Abstract: Reading Mexico’s recently established figure of independent candidates (ICs) in 2014 as an expansion of democratic political rights, I develop a typology of ICs to executive office that illustrates the differentiated access to political rights within a wider context of civic stratification. I argue this electoral mechanism has benefited particular social groups with more economic resources and political capital, and not the average citizen it was purported to benefit. My findings present six main categories of ICs: citizens/activists, entrepreneurs, politicians, bureaucrats, media figures, and oficialistas.

Keywords: Mexico, independent candidates, elections, political rights, civic stratification

Abstracto: Interpretando el reciente establecimiento de la figura de candidatos independientes (CIs) en el 2014 como una expansión de derechos políticos democráticos, este artículo desarrolla una tipología de CIs a cargos ejecutivos que ilustra el acceso diferenciado a derechos políticos dentro del contexto la estratificación cívica. Planteo que este mecanismo electoral ha beneficiado a particulares grupos sociales con mayores recursos económicos y capital político, y no al ciudadano promedio que suponía beneficiar. Mis resultados arrojan seis principales categorías de CIs: ciudadanos/activistas, empresarios, políticos, burócratas, figuras mediáticas, y oficialistas.

Palabras: México, candidaturas independientes, elecciones, derechos políticos, estratificación cívica
1. Introduction

1.1 Question

Up until 2014, political parties had a monopoly on postulating candidates for elected office. That means that citizens who did not belong to a political party could not run as candidates; they could vote, but not be voted. The Political Electoral Reform of 2014 (RPE) for the first time in Mexico’s recent history allowed candidates to run for office without being part of a political party. The consensus among the political class and sectors of civil society was to welcome independent candidacies as a democratic gain, allowing dissatisfied citizens to challenge traditional parties. Public discourse around independent candidacies reflected this attitude, framing them as an expansion of democratic rights that would benefit the average citizen. In public opinion polls, like the Reforma poll about the RPE, independent candidates (ICs) counted with majority support among average citizens, with 47% in favor and 37% against. The same poll recorded overwhelming approval from opinion leaders, with 85% of public intellectuals and prominent public figures in favor of ICs.¹

Despite this initial effervescence, in its implementation the RPE drew criticism from activists, journalists, and academics. These critics identified restrictions in the law that made it difficult to become an IC. Who, then, has been able to access and exercise this political right and why? In what municipalities are ICs most common? In this paper I will focus on these questions. The first emerges from the repeated critique of IC legislation for setting requisites unattainable

for the most average citizens to register as ICs. In its evaluation of the 2014 RPE, the senate research institution concluded that IC requisites like signature collection and financial constraints made it difficult for citizens to exercise their right to vote and be voted. Most importantly, all political rights grant unequal benefits to citizens' according to their differing capacities to take advantage of them. This is largely determined by socioeconomic class. If the registration as an IC is limiting due to legal requisites and socioeconomic standing, it leads to the question of who gains and who experiences a deficit in this expansion of political rights. The second question seeks to identify the types of municipalities and conditions that favor ICs in their current configuration. In this paper, I posit that ICs are less common in poorer and less populated municipalities. Additionally, I argue that this electoral mechanism is accessible to social groups with more resources.

1.2 Significance

Given the recent introduction of ICs into the Mexican electoral field, the literature on independent candidacies is limited, though, most of it converges on the idea that registering as an ICs is difficult and restrictive for most citizens. The logical question that follows this observation is to ask, if the average citizen is unable to take advantage of the IC figure, then who has able to run as an IC? It is a question that is not addressed by the existing literature. This paper will contribute to filling this gap in the literature by developing a typology of who has access to this electoral mechanism with focus on the role of distinct types of capital (human,
economic, political) in the exercise of political rights. My work aims to be a reference for a more inclusive and accessible IC figure by highlighting that IC legislation, though theorized and designed with the intention to expand democratic rights, excludes less advantaged sectors of society in its implementation since 2014. Independents in the 2018 elections have generated mixed expectations and heated public debate; the purpose of my work is to provide a useful classification that can also be applied to ICs competing for executive office in 2018.

I begin by framing independent candidacies as political rights and discussing them in the Mexican historical context. Then, I survey the nascent literature on Mexican ICs, with special attention on the IC figure that emerged from the 2014 RPE. I then expound the concept of civic stratification from the perspective of accessibility to political rights. I follow this by presenting the methodology I use to develop the IC typology. Finally, I demonstrate the categories of ICs and discuss the restrictions and limitations that enable specific minorities of citizens to take advantage of the IC electoral figure. I end by discussing the limitations of this study and suggesting avenues for future research.

2. Theory and Literature Review

2.1 Civic Stratification of Political Rights

Independent candidacies are situated within the spectrum of suffrage rights, specifically the right to vote and be voted, considered an indispensable political right in a democracy. In this paper, I use a definition of democracy resting on general procedural and descriptive formulations of how democracy functions, as opposed to normative definitions of how democracy should work. For the purposes of this paper, I look to political scientist Robert Dahl.
He presented democracy as a political system meeting the following set of procedural requirements. First, a democracy is a political system in which citizens can vote, remove, and influence their political representatives. These representatives have constitutional control of governmental decision-making and are elected in free, fair, and frequent elections. For a democracy to exist, citizens have effective access to alternative sources of information as well as the right to freedom of expression, including criticism of governments, institutions, ideologies, and individuals. Moreover, citizens are free to create relatively independent private organizations that populate civil society. In a democracy, this extends to include the creation of political parties as well. Lastly, all adults have universal suffrage: the right to vote and be voted.\(^4\)

Indeed, recent literature on the quality of democracy in Latin America concurs in using the exercise of political rights in society and key institutions as the main measure of democratic quality.\(^5\) In her report on ICs for the Mexican Federal Electoral Tribunal (TEPJF), Mexican scholar Mariana Hernández Olmos also situates independent candidacies within the frame of political rights and political participation, which she presents as the two principal metrics in the quality of democracy.\(^6\) She identifies the IC figure as an expansion of political liberties, noting it amplifies the opportunities for citizen participation and expands the spectrum of available political rights.\(^7\) Similarly, legal scholar Pedro Salazar Ugarte, observes that Mexican electoral

\(^7\) Ibid., 18-19.
law has famously and historically played crucial roles in the aperture of avenues for political change and the further expansion of political rights. The 2014 RPE falls within this pattern of electoral law inaugurating new spaces of political participation. Thus, ICs can be interpreted as an attempt to improve the quality of Mexican democracy through the expansion of political rights, albeit a deficient attempt in the eyes of several of the few scholars who have investigated the IC figure.91011

Galván, for instance, underscores the biggest paradox of the IC figure: the requirements to register as an IC are equal and in some respects (like signature collection for presidential candidates) are greater than the requirements to form a political party. According to him, the RPE requires that ICs have levels of organizational capacity and financial backing that mirrors the formation of a political party. In fact, a requirement to register as an IC is to formally constitute an asociación civil (a non-profit, non-governmental organization) for at minimum the duration of the election. For all intents and purposes, this organization functions as a political party. For Galván, the RPE represents a failed attempt to consolidate an elusive Mexican democracy. Instead, he argues, the RPE has facilitated the consolidation of the party system (partidocracia) it intended to make more accessible and accountable.12

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Likewise, Ruíz interprets ICs as a reaction to address political dissatisfaction, specifically citizens’ alienation from their elected representatives. Like Galván, Ruíz describes ICs as a failed attempt to improve democratic quality, identifying them as one of the most deficient aspects of the RPE, which he evaluates as a mere simulation of democratic aperture.\textsuperscript{13} Campos, on the other hand, interprets ICs with more ambivalence and less criticism. He posits ICs provide citizens another instrument to access political power, thus generating more spaces for political participation.\textsuperscript{14} Nonetheless, he recognizes the restrictive requirements to register as an IC and proposes that the IC figure be refined in future legislation.\textsuperscript{15}

More broadly, the literature on ICs agrees differentiated access to this electoral mechanism exists. Scholars specifically identify institutional factors like the exigent requisites demanded by the RPE and complementary state or federal laws in the form of high signature requirements, low public funding, and limited space in media. Aside from formal regulations, the unequal distribution of political opportunities and material resources define and delimit access to political rights. The literature on democratic quality in Mexico and broadly in Latin American concurs that socioeconomic inequalities are reproduced as political inequalities.\textsuperscript{16} In his seminal study of political participation among the poor in Mexico, Holzner finds that socioeconomic inequality explains the inequities in political participation.\textsuperscript{17} The discrepancies he finds refer to the differentiated abilities of citizens to exercise their political rights. In sum,

\textsuperscript{13} Ruíz, “México,” 143.
\textsuperscript{14} Campos, “Las candidaturas,” 95.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 96.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
Holzner’s findings reflect Mexico’s civic stratification; they delineate civic inequities that result from the institutionalization and socialization of citizenship under various forms of inequality and class stratification.\(^{18}\)

There are four types of civic stratification: civic expansion and its inverse, civic exclusion as well as civic deficit and its inverse, civic gain. Civic exclusion refers to the formal denial of rights to social groups. Civic exclusion always entails either a *de facto* or *de jure* denial of rights but always explicitly excluding a specific social group.\(^{19}\) Civic expansion refers to the expanding terrain of rights, those not yet conquered but pursued. For instance, the denial of universal suffrage to Mexican women before 1952 is civic exclusion and civic expansion is the struggle of the Mexican feminist and suffragist movements before that year.

On the other hand, civic gain and civic deficit concern the unequal provision of benefits to citizens from rights in accordance to their ability to enjoy them. Civic gain is found when social position and material resources enhance a right for specific social groups. A civic deficit is found when the absence of political and material resources impairs the exercise of rights by socially disadvantaged groups. In the case of civic deficit, disadvantaged social groups are not formally impeded from exercising certain rights as in civic exclusion; rather, a series of socioeconomic disadvantages prevent them from accessing the same rights despite being formally entitled to them. Applied to this context, ICs are a type of civic expansion because they are recently conquered political right. However, I theorize they represent a civic gain to the entrepreneurial

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\(^{18}\) Lockwood, "Civic Integration," 532.

\(^{19}\) Lockwood, "Civic Integration," 537, 542-3.
and political classes. Inversely, I predict ICs represent a civic deficit to lower classes and the average citizen it was originally intended to empower.

There are a range of factors that prevent disadvantaged social groups from fully exercising their formal rights. British sociologist David Lockwood, as one of the main theorists of civic stratification, proposes three types of deficits and two types of resources that determine the civic gains or deficits of political rights for social groups. The three types of deficits are the power, prestige, and economic deficits, which are formed in the absence of the resources described next. A power deficit exists when a power imbalance prevents an individual from exercising her rights. Lockwood uses the example of a wage earner’s right to enter into a free an equal contract as a classic example, given she must sell her labor to survive and the capitalist has greater bargaining power as owner of capital. Prestige, or stigmatized, deficit is when the structure, function, and socialization of citizenship justifies an inferior quality or quantity of resources assigned to specific social groups. For instance, in the U.S. veterans’ benefits are conferred higher priority and prestige than disability benefits, which communities of color are more likely to receive. Finally, an economic, or fiscal, deficit is present when lower wealth and income levels prevent citizens from exercising formally conferred rights. For instance, the financial expenses of filing a lawsuit deters economically disadvantaged social groups from exercising this right.\(^{20}\)

Additionally, Lockwood identifies two categories of resources—material and moral—that delimit the exercise of citizenship and political rights. Material resources primarily consist of the

\(^{20}\) Lockwood, "Civic Integration," 537-42.
economic and fiscal resources available to a citizen. Moral resources are more commonly known as cultural or social capital. This category of resources includes social prestige and networks of community and social contacts, including familial networks and the resources resulting from them. Likewise, these resources include navigational capital or “command of information and general know-how” to navigate institutions and social situations.21

In the case of independent candidacies, economic, social, and navigational capital are the most important institutional determinants in the civic stratification of this political right. This means that social groups have differentiated access to the IC electoral mechanism depending on the economic resources, established social networks, and ability to navigate government and electoral institutions. Disadvantaged social groups experience a civic deficit in relation to independent candidacies. On the other hand, favorably positioned and well connected social groups benefit from a civic gain in the IC figure. Employing this theoretical frame of civic stratification informs my methodological approach by providing a class framework of political rights, relating socioeconomic inequalities to IC access.

2.2 Historical Antecedents in Mexico

The history of independent candidacies in Mexico can be divided in four distinct periods. The first period began in 1824, the year Mexico became a federal republic, and ended in 1911 when the first free elections were held after the revolution of 1910. During this initial period, there was no regulation of either independent or party candidacies. Neither of the constitutions of 1824 and 1857 referred to political parties and they did not define independent candidacies.

21 Lockwood, "Civic Integration," 536.
In the absence of legal regulation, formal and informal organizations participated frequently and openly alongside ICs. However, ICs during this historical period do not resemble the contemporary IC figure. First, the conditions of limited suffrage and indirect election in which ICs competed were fundamentally different to contemporary electoral norms. Secondly, legal definitions of citizenship were discriminatory and restrictive, meaning the IC figure was highly exclusionary.

The official, institutional recognition of these types of candidacies in Mexico began with the second period from 1911 to 1946, with ICs appearing in electoral law for the first time in 1911. During this period, party and independent candidates competed on more equal footing, though the former eventually roused more political support and institutional legitimacy. For instance, the last time any piece of legislation between 1911 and 1946 mentions ICs is in 1918. After 1918, the law neither promoted nor prohibited ICs. As part of the post-revolutionary project of nation-building and institutionalization between 1920 and 1946, political parties, unions, and civil associations became institutionalized as channels for electoral participation and political struggle. Conversely, during this time there was a lack of institutionalization of independent candidacies, which led to a third period in IC history beginning in 1946 in which ICs were prohibited.

In 1946 the ruling revolutionary party transitioned from Partido de la Revolución Mexicana (PRM) into Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), which remained the hegemonic

24 Ibid., 23.
25 Ibid., 24.
ruling party until 2000. This transition was accompanied by an electoral law that restricted political participation to consolidate a single party, corporatist system. Thus, from 1946 to 2012 it was the exclusive right of political parties to register and postulate candidates to public office.\(^{27}\) Despite the legal monopoly political parties had in ballot access, there were instances in which ICs to municipal offices obtained recognized victories. Such was the case in the 1958 elections in the state of San Luís Potosí, in which the Potosí Civic Union, led by popular opposition figure Dr. Salvador Nava, won eight municipal presidencies, including the state capital.\(^{28}\) Later, in 1983, two ICs were elected municipal presidents of Jaumave and Ocampo in the state of Tamaulipas. The State Electoral Tribunal ratified their victory, ruling that while the state electoral code neglected to mention unregistered candidates, it did not prohibit them either.\(^{29}\) The distinction between unregistered candidates and independent candidates has become an important one in electoral jurisprudence, as I demonstrate later in § 2.2.1. These cases of ICs are rare exceptions, though, since the period of 1946 to 2014 was the most unfavorable to ICs.

In 2012, a limited constitutional reform to Article 35 of the Constitution expanded citizens’ political rights to include the right to run as candidates without party affiliation. However, the reform did not modify Article 116, which gave political parties exclusivity to register candidates, and it did not legislate specifically in relation to the electoral figure of the

\(^{27}\) Hernández, “La importancia,” 24-6.
\(^{28}\) Ibid., 29.
\(^{29}\) Campos, “Las candidaturas,” 82.
IC. The Mexican legal system requires states to homologize their local laws with federal constitutional amendments. Consequently, between the 2012 partial reform and the 2014 RPE, the states of Durango, Hidalgo, Quintana Roo, and Zacatecas ratified electoral laws regulating ICs. It was only with the RPE in 2014 that federal law specifically defined the IC figure and commenced a fourth period in IC electoral history. I explore the specificities of the 2014 RPE and secondary electoral legislation in § 2.4.

2.3 Independent Candidacies in the Tribunals

In recent history, four important cases of ICs have set precedents in Mexican electoral jurisprudence. The first is the 1998 case of María del Rosario Elizondo Salinas in Jiménez, Tamaulipas. Running for the municipal presidency, Salinas won the election as an unregistered candidate with 46.53% of the vote. Unregistered candidates are individuals that campaign for political office without formally registering with the electoral authorities for a variety of reasons, like failing to meet the legal requirements for a candidacy. The main difference between unregistered and independent candidates is that an unregistered candidate can be affiliated to political parties or not, while independents are not affiliated and they are registered.

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32 Ibid., 2-24.
33 Notably, Valentín Campa ran for president as an unregistered candidate for the Mexican Communist Party in the 1976 elections. He had been denied registry since the Communist Party was not officially recognized at the time.
In that election, the PRI, as the runner up, challenged the results in court. The PRI argued votes cast in favor of Salinas should count as null votes since she was unregistered and federal law gave political parties the exclusive right to postulate candidates. The Electoral Tribunal of Tamaulipas ruled in favor of Salinas employing a unique argument: since the state electoral code did not nullify votes not cast in favor of a political party, then votes cast in favor of candidates not affiliated with a political party were permitted. According to the state tribunal, votes to unregistered candidates existed in this category apart from null votes. In addition, they framed their ruling as falling within the constitutional right of citizens to vote and be voted, explicitly affirming that unregistered candidacies are acceptable alternatives in case citizens find themselves unsatisfied with other electoral options.34 Though this framing of unregistered candidates as outlets for political dissatisfaction is similar to the framing of ICs, the tribunal did not rule on independent candidacies at all.

A similar case can be found in Yucatán, where Adonai Avilés Sierra became independent municipal president of Yobaín in 2007. State and federal electoral tribunals ratified his victory after the PRI legally impugned the election on similar grounds as it did in Tamaulipas in 1998, alleging unregistered candidates were ineligible.35 Nevertheless, legal victories like the ones in Tamaulipas and Yucatán are the exception. After the transition to competitive multiparty elections in 2000 and before the partial reform of 2012 (2000-11), Mexico’s highest electoral court, the Federal Electoral Tribunal of the Judicial Power (TEPJF) ruled against the registration

35 Ibid., 83
of ICs twenty-five times.\textsuperscript{36} Between 2012 and 2014, the most common ruling by the TEPJF regarding ICs was the dismissal of cases to state electoral tribunals, since states were free to regulate the specificities of the IC figure after the limited 2012 reform.\textsuperscript{37}

Perhaps the most relevant legal case in IC history has been the Castañeda case of 2004 that reached the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (CIDH). In the prelude to the 2006 presidential elections, academic and former Secretary of Foreign Affairs Jorge Castañeda Gutman expressed his intention to run as an independent. When the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE, now INE) denied his registration, Castañeda immediately filed a legal challenge. He argued Article 175 of the Federal Code of Electoral Institutions and Procedures (COFIPE, now LEGIPE) was unconstitutional and violated the right to vote and be voted enshrined in Article 35 of the Constitution. Utilizing a legal recourse called a \textit{writ of amparo}, he appealed until the case reached the Supreme Court (SCJN).\textsuperscript{38} Interestingly, the SCJN decided not to rule on the constitutionality of ICs, merely affirming the district court’s decision. The lower court had ruled that the legal instrument known as \textit{writ of amparo} could not dispute electoral law. The ruling was based on the \textit{Ley of Amaparo} that states the \textit{amparo} is inapplicable to political or electoral matters.\textsuperscript{39} Like the \textit{habeas corpus}, the amparo is a legal recourse that grants guarantees against the violation of due process and personal rights, but the amparo is

\textsuperscript{36} TEPJF. “Candidaturas independientes: Sentencias TEPJF.” http://portales.te.gob.mx/candidaturas-independientes/sentencias
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{39} Nakamura, “Las candidaturas,” 121-2.
preventive, used before legal or criminal action is taken against an individual, while *habeas corpus* is a remedial procedure employed *ex post facto*, or after the fact.

With this reversal in the SCJN, Castañeda proceeded to take his case to the CIDH. Castañeda claimed Article 175 of the COFIPE violated the American Convention on Human Rights, specifically Articles 8, 13, 16, 23 and 24. Article 23 enshrines the right to participate in government, to vote and be voted. Articles 8 and 24 ensure due process and equality before the law; Castañeda contended that by throwing out his *amparo*, the SCJN was in violation of these articles. Above all, Castañeda maintained the prohibition of ICs forced citizens to affiliate themselves to a political party if they desired to participate in government, violating freedom of association and limiting freedom of expression (Articles 16 and 13, respectively). In their ruling, the CIDH found Mexico did not violate any of Castañeda’s political rights or right to equality before the law while sustaining it violated his right to judicial protection by not providing him with an alternative legal recourse to challenge electoral law where the *amparo* was inapplicable. Consequently, the CIDH sentenced that Mexico needed to expand the legal mechanisms to challenge electoral legislation and political rights, in this case, the right to vote and be voted.

The Castañeda case has become the most widely cited IC case in Mexico, serving as a reference for subsequent judicial and electoral decisions regarding this form of candidacies. It was significant because despite the possibility, the CIDH did not determine that independent

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41 Ibid., 780-1.
candidacies qualified as protected political rights. Rather, it justified political parties’ monopoly on ballot access as responding to “imperious social necessity based on a diverse historical, political, and social reasons.” It added that parties’ exclusivity in this regard was not a disproportionate barrier to citizens’ political participation. However, the CIDH opined that citizens lacked adequate mechanisms to challenge electoral law and it instructed the Mexican government to establish these mechanisms so citizens could have available legal recourses.

2.4 The 2014 Political-Electoral Reform

The 2014 RPE replaced the COFIPE with a new General Law of Electoral Institutions and Procedures (LEGIPE) that regulates the IC figure. The LEGIPE divides the registration process into five parts:

1. The electoral institute publishes the call for candidates, delineating rules, requisites, and deadlines
2. Citizens manifest their interest in a candidacy and submit the required documents
3. ICs collect signatures and voting identification numbers to verify citizen support
4. Citizens are registered as ICs if they reach citizen support thresholds with valid signatures

The LEGIPE establishes the collection of signatures as the only accreditable legitimizing mechanism to prove that aspiring ICs count with citizen support. The TEPJF ruled that the collection of signatures is the only practical mechanism to accredit IC legitimacy and public

43 Carmona, “El caso,” 783.
44 Ibid., 783-7,
45 México, Candidaturas independientes, 6.
support without infringing on citizens’ rights. Moreover, the TEPJF declared the legal suitability of such mechanism as an indication that a particular independent candidacy is of public interest and therefore justifying their electoral participation and their public funding. If we accept that this is the most suitable legal mechanism to participate in electoral processes as ICs, then the question of proportionality in this requisite becomes the most important and highly debated aspect. Previously, the TEPJF ruled the IC law in Baja California Sur requiring signatures equivalent to 4% of the electoral rolls was unjustified and disproportionate. The TEPJF opined that proportionality of signature requirements for ICs are in relation to other electoral requirements like the formation of a political party (above 0.26% of electoral rolls) and the loss of a party’s registry (votes below 2% of electoral rolls). The type of public office determines the thresholds of citizen support. For presidential ICs, the required signatures to register are more than those needed for the formation of a new political party. Within a span of 120 days, ICs must collect the equivalent of 1% of the electoral rolls based on the number of registered electors by August 31 of the year before the election. These signatures must come from at least 17 states and signatures in each state must be equivalent to at least 1% of its electoral rolls. State governments set this threshold for municipal presidencies.

Whereas the TEPJF has delineated the parameters of IC registration requisites, the trend in state legislatures is the tightening of IC requirements in clear attempts to protect political parties’ interests. States like Chihuahua, Veracruz, Tamaulipas, and Puebla unconstitutionally
raised the signature requirement to 3%.\textsuperscript{51} In Puebla, the leader of the PAN’s parliamentary bloc declared the law was intended to prevent “resentful politicians” from taking advantage of the IC figure. He added ICs must prove they have electoral presence and territorial support. Even more restrictively, the Puebla law also requires citizens to go to the electoral authority’s district office to provide their signature in person.\textsuperscript{52} Other state legislatures have followed suit, discussing and enacting what has become “anti-Bronco” legislation, in reference to the only electorally successful gubernatorial IC nicknamed “El Bronco.”

Another requirement is in Article 368 § 4, which requires that ICs constitute and register a civil association with electoral and tax authorities to administer campaign finances, including the public funding received.\textsuperscript{53} Public funding is not available for the signature collection process, but ICs may use private funding following the restrictions set by electoral institutes.\textsuperscript{54} In Mexico, the number of votes received by a party in the previous election determines their access to television and radio airtime as well as certain types of public funding. ICs are allocated funding and airtime as if they were a new political party with no previous electoral record. Private funding to ICs cannot exceed 10% of the total maximum expenses permitted by electoral authorities for that electoral year.\textsuperscript{55} Additionally, ICs cannot hold positions in political

\textsuperscript{53} Ley General de Instituciones y Procedimientos Electorales, D.O.F. § 368.
\textsuperscript{54} México, \textit{Candidaturas independientes}, 6.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 6.
parties or be a member of one and they are subject to all other regulations that party candidates must obey.\textsuperscript{56}

### 3. Methodology and Definitions

For the development of my classification of ICs, I systematically compiled data on candidate profiles to create two sets of data with different units of analysis. The first dataset takes the IC as the unit of study; it is an original dataset that records candidate demographic, biographic, and electoral information. The first data point I recorded for IC dataset was the level of schooling and the educational institutions attended. Level of schooling was given a value from 0 to 4; 0 denoting no information; 1, primary education (elementary); 2, lower secondary education (middle school); 3, upper secondary education (high school); and 4, university education. Likewise, I recorded the type of degree attained and the institution. Besides educational attainment, level of schooling in the Mexican political context is a useful indicator of shared cognitive bases, networking sources, and social capital.\textsuperscript{57}

Additionally, I recorded previous political participation as a 0 or 1 indicator variable; a 1 indicating membership in political parties or participation in previous elections as party members or candidates. Likewise, I researched and recorded their business activities and entrepreneurial networks. I recorded membership in civil or business associations and business ownership as indicator variables. I did the same for any history of unelected government posts. For this part of the data collection, I consulted the databases of the National Electoral Institute.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 8.
(INE) and local electoral bodies which sometimes publish registered candidates’ *curricula vitae* (CV) of candidates as well as other basic candidate information. State electoral institutes’ websites also host electoral information like turnout, results, and the votes for each IC. My primary source of electoral data like turnout, results, and IC presence was the Statistical Consulting System of the Federal Elections, or SICEEF, which provides downloadable electoral data from municipal, state, and federal elections between 1994 and 2016.⁵⁸

For candidate information not published by the ICs or electoral institutions, I consulted local and national print and electronic news sources. Smaller, rural municipalities had no news sources of their own, but medium-sized municipalities and large urban centers all had at least one print and electronic news source listing specific sections by municipality or region. I used this function to search for information about ICs from smaller municipalities where their only information was basic demographic data recorded by the electoral authorities. Additionally, I searched these news publications for candidate names, nicknames, and variations.

Moreover, ICs’ websites and social media pages hosted biographical, educational and professional data that I crosschecked with secondary news sources and the electoral authorities’ information. For ICs that have previously formed part of any state or federal legislatures, CVs are available in the legislatures’ websites. In sum, the IC dataset consists of name, geography, state/municipality, year of election, gender, education, occupation, occupation type, political membership, labor union membership, membership in civil or

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business associations, electoral performance (votes, percentage, and victory), and lastly, IC type according to my classification.

The second dataset, called the Marginalization Index, was last published in 2015 by the National Population Council (CONAPO) and it uses the municipality as the unit of analysis; it consists of sociodemographic and electoral variables for all 2,440 municipalities. The Marginalization Index is developed and made publicly available by the CONAPO, a public Mexican institution dedicated to inform, formulate, and evaluate “demographic planning.” The index measures the level of socioeconomic marginalization of all Mexican states and municipalities by collapsing education, housing, population distribution, and income into one variable called the Marginalization Index.59 This municipal level data consists of the state/municipality, total population, the Marginalization Index and its subcategories, and the IC indicator variable that I added; 1 indicating one or more ICs in a municipality.

In this study, I expound governor ICs as specific case studies; municipal ICs serve to reinforce and refine the results but the ideal types of my typology in the Weberian sense are the gubernatorial ICs. In this study, I choose to focus only on ICs to executive and not legislative office because responsibilities and campaigns differ in modality and scope. A candidate to executive office has a different relationship to the voter because the responsibilities of the office are different and the perceived distance with constituents are more proximal than for a legislator. In other words, the position of the municipal president or governor is perceived as

more consequential and immediate in a voter’s life than a legislator. This has implications for who attempts to run for those offices and for the subsequent framing of ICs. In addition, governorships are the most important subnational executive offices. Since its transition to competitive multiparty elections, the governorships of Mexico’s 32 states function as preliminary electoral exercises for presidential elections, like in the State of Mexico (Edomex) in 2017. Therefore, gubernatorial ICs after 2014 are essential to understand the repercussions of ICs in 2018 and future presidential elections.

As an important note, the high number of municipalities in Mexico (2,446) and a limited literature in the subject makes a comprehensive observational descriptive study difficult. Nevertheless, the compilation of as much data as was publicly available from both the municipal and state levels strongly supports my IC typology, though in some municipalities, especially in rural areas, data was not readily available. Moreover, it is important to note that though I recorded year of election, I did not control for or compare across time. The recent implementation of the RPE means there have only been two elections in which ICs have been able to participate (2015 and 2016) for which there is comprehensive published data. For this reason, I chose to analyze them in conjunction, without making distinction in the year of their election.

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60 The Index has 2,440 observations from data compiled prior to 2015, while there are now 2,446 municipalities as of 2018.
4. Results

4.1 Summary

The results of my typology of ICs to executive office in Mexico captures six categories of ICs, in order of their frequency: citizens/activists, entrepreneurs, bureaucrats, politicians, media figures, and oficialistas. This classification illustrates the disparities in access to the IC electoral mechanism and the civic stratification of this political right. I hypothesized average citizens benefit less from ICs and though, numerically, there are more citizen ICs, civic stratification is not merely about becoming an IC, but also about the following institutional arrangements that make it difficult for disadvantaged groups to effectively exercise a political right, as I demonstrate beginning in § 4.2.

![Figure 1. Regression table: IC, Index, Population](image)

As Figure 1. illustrates, ICs are more common in municipalities with lower degrees of marginalization on the marginalization index (index1). This confirms Holzner’s findings on the
political participation of the poor and my own hypothesis that ICs are less common in areas
with high levels of social marginalization. Figure 1 also demonstrates that ICs are most
common in municipalities with higher populations ($pop_{tot}$).

Figure 2. Regression table: IC, Index, Population, Index Subcategories

Figure 2. is a regression table that includes the previous variables as well as 3 other
variables in the Marginalization Index: illiteracy, lack of elementary education, and lack of
access to electricity. Interestingly, higher levels of illiteracy ($analfabeto$) are also correlated with
IC presence in a municipality while more people without elementary education is correlated
with a lower likeliness of IC presence. Furthermore, less access to electricity is correlated with
less ICs. This regression model explains more of the variance but it does not tell us more than
Figure 1. Like in Figure 1, all variables are statistically significant for other IC types here and in
the rest of the results I present.
In sum, I recorded 279 ICs to municipal presidencies between 2015-16, some of them competing in the same municipalities. Below, summaries of the classifications are provided in order of their frequency.

1. Citizens/activists: count with developed social networks and formal organizations; lower levels of navigational capital, formal schooling, and economic resources.

2. Entrepreneurs: university-educated; extensive economic resources; established social networks facilitating campaign infrastructure; some amount of political capital.

3. Politicians: former party members; usually renounce party membership after failing to obtain a candidacy; count with recognition among electorate (social capital); navigational capital and political experience.

4. Bureaucrats: accrued navigational and political capital; likely not a party member and better known for career public service, not public office; appeal to technocratic experience.

5. Media figures: able to capitalize on their presence in media (mainly TV and radio); count with familiarity among electorate; extensive economic resources and social capital.

6. Oficialistas: close ties to a political party (exclusively the PRI in this study); campaign aims to divide opposition vote, not achieve victory; deployed in states and municipalities where the election is competitive between two main contenders; appeal to “independent” brand.

Some ICs have characteristics that approximate them to more than one category. For example, some politicians have held bureaucratic positions and some entrepreneurs have been
part of a political party. For those cases, I use the Weberian typological approach, meaning that the determinant of their IC category is their *most salient and accentuated activity or characteristic* in relation to their candidacy. For instance, I classify the only elected IC governor as a politician despite having an entrepreneurial background because his political career has been most influential in the shaping of his candidacy. Similarly, I classify the competitive gubernatorial IC in Chihuahua as *oficialista* despite his diversified entrepreneurial portfolio because his independent candidacy served the interests of the incumbent party that tacitly supported his candidacy.
### Figure 3. Gubernatorial Independent Candidates 2015-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Private Sector</th>
<th>University Education</th>
<th>Previous Party Affiliation</th>
<th>Previous Bureaucratic Post</th>
<th>Previous Political Office</th>
<th>Civil Society/Labor Association</th>
<th>Classification</th>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>PRI</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Politician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>PRI</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2017</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>PAN</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Entrepreneurs: 6  Politicians: 5  Oficialistas: 3  Bureaucrats: 2  Activists: 2  Media figures: 1
4.2 Citizens/Activists

Citizens, or activists, are the most common ICs to municipal presidencies with 94 candidacies of the 279 recorded (33.7%), though they make up the second least common ICs to governor’s office with only 2 candidates. The main characteristic of this IC type is that their candidacy is not determined by economic assets, political capital, media presence, or officialist interests; rather, they are private citizens with limited or null presence as economic and formal political actors or media figures in the public sphere. This IC type articulates a citizen-based and citizen-focused political aspiration arising from immediate, community grievances.

Just over half, 52.5% count with an established social base that can mobilize electoral support through their membership in civil associations and community organizations, while only 7.6% had any membership in a political party. Campeche’s gubernatorial IC, Luis Antonio Che Cu, found in Figure 3, is an artisan and campesino by occupation and leads the Independent Campesino Front Emiliano Zapata (FRECIEZ), focused mainly on campesino social

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**Figure 4. Regression table: Citizen/Activist, Index, Population, Index Subcategories**

| Ciudadano | Coef. | Std. Err. | t | P>|t| | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|-----------|-------|-----------|---|-----|---------------------|
| index1    | 0.933243 | 0.0464108 | 2.01 | 0.045 | 0.0019572 | 0.1846915 |
| pop_tot   | -3.66e-07 | 1.22e-07 | -2.99 | 0.003 | -6.06e-07 | -1.25e-07 |
| analfabeto| -0.183906 | 0.0073169 | -2.51 | 0.013 | -0.32795 | -0.0039862 |
| particip  | -1.1771909 | 0.2024684 | -0.88 | 0.382 | -0.5775823 | 0.2214004 |
| _cons     | 0.6494663 | 0.1223567 | 5.31 | 0.000 | 0.4085876 | 0.8903451 |
causes. Similarly, in Tlaxcala, gubernatorial IC Jacob Hernández Corona was leader of a teachers’ union (STE, not to be confused with SNTE). Membership in any type of social organization is important for activist ICs because they do not count with the political capital, economic resources, or entrepreneurial networks to facilitate the collection of signatures. In fact, since the LEGIPE mandates the formation of civil associations for all ICs, activists who already belong to social organizations have an advantage because they do not have to establish a new organization. Rather, they rely on the social support of their organization, which later provides electoral support and unpaid campaign volunteers. The civic associations mandated by IC legislation are mainly intended to administer and record ICs’ public and private funding since they are always audited by the electoral institute after the election to verify compliance with electoral law and financial regulations. These social organizations also provide a community group, or social platform, to overcome the two biggest stumbling blocks of ICs: signature collection and fundraising. Additionally, as legally constituted entities, they facilitate the operational functions of campaigns, such as acquiring goods and services like office space, electoral merchandise, and event logistics.

Despite their social support base, activist ICs are at a financial disadvantage. Compared to the economic resources of entrepreneur, bureaucratic, political, and media figure ICs, activist ICs are generally from a lower socioeconomic class and count with lower educational attainment. Notably, the majority of citizen and activist ICs in my dataset (40%) are from the state of Oaxaca, also one of the poorest states. There are several possible explanations for this. As Holzner notes, NGO’s and social organizations in Oaxaca have filled in the gaps where state capacity is low. Though many of these organizations originated to meet the immediate material
needs of the state’s poor population, they later became crucial sources of resources and political leverage.\textsuperscript{61} Moreover, studies demonstrate that civil associations and NGO’s increase political participation where they are based, and in Oaxaca this type of politicization through social organizations occurred in a specific pattern: individuals left PRI organizations to more attractive, politically independent civil associations.\textsuperscript{62,63} This transition from political-clientelist organizations to independent organizations might explain the high frequency of activist ICs in Oaxaca, also the state with the most total ICs (43). Additionally, of the 2,446 municipalities, Oaxaca counts with almost 25\% (570) of them; it is expected to find more candidacies in states with more municipalities.

Except for gender, every other pattern noted in this section is repeated for all IC categories. Figure 4 demonstrates that, like ICs in general, citizen ICs are less common in municipalities that have higher marginalization. Similarly, they are less common in municipalities with higher levels of voter turnout and higher rates of illiteracy but unlike other IC types, citizen ICs are majority female, with women composing 61.5\% of all activist ICs. Despite their frequency, citizen ICs are not competitive as only 4 were electorally successful.

\textsuperscript{61} Holzner, \textit{Poverty of Democracy}, 70-2.
\textsuperscript{63} Holzner, \textit{Poverty of Democracy}, 71-4.
4.2 Entrepreneurs

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<tr>
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<th>R-squared</th>
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| Entrepreneur | Coef.  | Std. Err. | t     | P>|t| | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|--------------|--------|-----------|-------|------|---------------------|
| index_1      | -.0578971 | .0388725  | -1.49 | 0.138 | -.1344238 to .0186296 |
| pop_tot      | -5.29e-09 | 1.02e-07  | -0.05 | 0.959 | -2.07e-07 to 1.96e-07 |
| analfabeto   | .0002939  | .0061264  | 0.05  | 0.962 | -.0117708 to .0123507 |
| particip      | -.2023812 | .1695821  | -1.19 | 0.234 | -.5362306 to .1314683 |
| _cons        | .2466517  | .1024827  | 2.41  | 0.017 | .0448981 to .4484053  |

Figure 5. Regression table: Entrepreneur, Index, Population, Index Subcategories

This category is the second most common at the municipal with 23.74%, or 26 candidates, 4 of who are women. It is the category with the most gubernatorial ICs, with 6 out of 19 candidates classifying as entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs’ business activities go beyond owning a single small business; rather, they extend to different entrepreneurial ventures that employ non-family relatives. It is common for this type of IC to have significant political connections due to their business activities and their economic impact, though only 15% of entrepreneur ICs have formally belonged to a political party.

Those who have political histories within a party generally count with greater political capital than any other IC type except politicians themselves. For instance, the candidates to the state capital of Chihuahua in 2016, Javier Mesta and Enrique Terrazas are both former members of the National Action Party (PAN). Terrazas’ family was historically associated with
the local PAN as part of its entrepreneur-based stronghold in the northern Mexico and counted with political capital as a result.\textsuperscript{64} Entrepreneurs’ political capital allows them to overcome the most critiqued aspects of independent candidacies: signature collection. Their established political networks compose the electoral infrastructure and political capacity to collect signatures and run a campaign. Traditional parties and entrepreneurs struggle for the support of these political networks. In Chihuahua, for instance, the PAN expelled members that supported other candidacies, mainly independents.\textsuperscript{65,66} The ability to mobilize this political capital in the pre-electoral and campaigning periods partly explains the frequency of entrepreneur ICs at both the state and municipal level.

Another factor in the frequency of entrepreneurial ICs is their economic advantage. The economic resources supplement the public funding given to all ICs. Since the funding given to ICs is far less than the public funding to party candidates, this sort of financial backing gives them immense advantage over other IC types, who are less likely to have access to these financial resources and thus less access to this political right. This inequity in funding and in access to legally mandated airtime one of the common critiques leveled at the IC figure. Former electoral official of the Insituto Federal Electoral (now INE), Marco Antonio Baños Martínez writes that IC financial regulations openly favor party candidates. He points to the case of the state capital of Oaxaca, where the IC received $59,730.33 pesos in public funding while party

candidates had a permitted maximum of $34 million.\textsuperscript{67} Entrepreneurs can reduce this inequity because they can leverage their economic resources to meet their campaigns’ financial needs while the average citizen has no similar recourse. There have been multiple instances of ICs symbolically returning the public funds dispensed to them as a form of protest and as political show, like entrepreneur Alfredo Lozoya in Parral, Chihuahua.

Moreover, businesses and employee networks facilitate meeting the other most critiqued IC requisite: the collection of signatures. An example of this advantage is the municipal election in the state capital of Chihuahua, where signature collectors and even attendees at IC rallies were paid.\textsuperscript{68} Entrepreneur ICs also offered t-shirts as an incentive in exchange for citizens’ signatures.\textsuperscript{69} Conversely, ICs with less material resources do not have these advantages when it comes to collecting signatures or campaigning. In this sense, independent candidacies are a civic gain for entrepreneurs and a civic deficit for the average citizen.

Equally important, private firms owned by entrepreneurs provide the electoral infrastructure for an independent candidacy and the subsequent campaign. For example, unlike party members and sympathizers who campaign for free on behalf of parties, ICs pay many of their campaigners and supporters to proselytize, canvass, and campaign.\textsuperscript{70,71} Journalists and


\textsuperscript{71} Valles, "Lo que nadie."
political analysts pointed to how the employees of ICs’ companies and their paid supporters noticeably coincide.\textsuperscript{72} In a highly publicized and well-calculated political maneuver, 250 campaign officials and sympathizers of the IC candidate Terrazas defected to the PAN campaign.\textsuperscript{73} Terrazas later admitted that they had left because the PAN campaign offered to pay them more than he did.\textsuperscript{74} In another case, supporters of Barraza, the competitive gubernatorial IC in Chihuahua, protested outside his campaign office for alleged delays in promised payments.\textsuperscript{75}

In terms of education, all entrepreneur ICs have university education. Their most common educational training is engineering or finance/business administration. These levels of educational attainment mean entrepreneurs possess more navigational capital, allowing them to register their candidacies with more ease as they navigate electoral institutions and political processes. Only 2 of 26 entrepreneur ICs were elected, both at the municipal level; Benjamin Asuncion Ramirez Carrasco from Putla Villa De Guerrero in Oaxaca and Jorge Alfredo Lozoya Santillan from Parral, Chihuahua.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{72} Ibid. \\
4.4 Politicians

![Figure 6](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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</table>

| Politico  | Coef.      | Std. Err. | t    | P>|t| | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|-----------|------------|-----------|------|-----|---------------------|
| index1    | .028285    | .0351608  | 0.80 | 0.422 | -.0409347 to .0975047 |
| pop_tot   | 1.42e-07   | 9.26e-09  | 1.53 | 0.127 | -.4.06e-09 to 3.24e-07 |
| alfabeto  | -.0028397  | .0055433  | -.51 | 0.609 | -.0137525 to .008073 |
| particip  | .168061    | .1533899  | 1.10 | 0.274 | -.1339114 to .4700334 |
| _cons     | .0786421   | .0926973  | 0.85 | 0.397 | -.1038474 to .2611315 |

The third most frequent IC type is the politician, taking up 40 candidacies, or 14.3%. Like entrepreneur ICs, they have high educational attainment. Of the politician ICs for which there was data, 45% have a university education, 2.5% (one candidate) has a high school education, and for the rest there was no educational data. Most importantly, politician ICs are all former party members. The majority renounced their political party membership when they did not obtain a candidacy for that electoral cycle. Politicians who renounce their party membership after being denied a party candidacy are the first subcategory of politician ICs. It is common for aspiring political figures who cannot secure their candidacy within their party to resign only to become candidates through a different party. In fact, this practice has become so common in Mexican political culture, notwithstanding ideology, that Mexicans have incorporated a special word for politicians that “jump” from party to party or position to position: *chapulín*, or
grasshopper. The 2014 RPE gave disaffected party politicians another alternative through independent candidacies. Below, I list examples of gubernatorial ICs of this subcategory.

- Juan Bueno Torio (PAN, Veracruz) sought the PAN candidacy but denounced that national PAN leadership imposed its preferred candidate.
- Francisco Gabriel Arellano Espinosa (PRI, Aguascalientes) was sidelined in 2010, 2015, and again for the 2016 elections.
- José Francisco Chavira Martínez (PRD, Tamaulipas) had a falling out with party factions that did not embrace him as candidate.
- Jaime Heliodoro “El Bronco” Rodríguez Calderón (PRI, Nuevo León) left the PRI after party leadership neglected to consider him as candidate.

The second subcategory of politician ICs is the party dissident. These politicians resign over irreconcilable differences with either party leadership, party corruption, or party line. These ICs are inner critics of their own parties who become convinced they cannot remain as party members. I give examples of dissident politician ICs to gubernatorial office below.

---

• Javier Guerrero García (PRI, Coahuila) criticized the Moreira family controlling state politics.81

• Ana Teresa Aranda Orozco (PAN, Puebla) denounced corruption and political repression of the PAN governor.82

The customary practice of politicians leaving parties when they do not favor their electoral aspirations partly explains the frequency of politician ICs now that independent candidacies are an electoral option besides seeking a candidacy through another party. In addition, politician ICs enjoy recognition among the electorate, facilitating signature collection through voter appeal. When they resign from their party, they also take with them political capital that aids their pursuit of an independent candidacy. The navigational capital and political experience of politician ICs allows them to navigate electoral and political institutions as they register their candidacies and run their campaign. In sum, these conditions make the IC figure a civic gain for this social group. Of all politician ICs, only 6 were elected. No municipalities had a female politician IC, but Puebla had a gubernatorial female IC in 2016.


4.5 Bureaucrats

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Bureaucrat  | Coef.  | Std. Err. | t    | P>|t| | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|-------------|--------|-----------|------|------|----------------------|
| indexl      | -.0287154 | .0271652  | -1.06 | 0.291 | -.0821944 - .0247635  |
| pop_tot     | 1.71e-07  | 7.15e-08  | 2.40 | 0.017 | 3.05e-08 - 3.12e-07  |
| alfabeto    | .0106611  | .0042827  | 2.49 | 0.013 | .0022299 - .0190923  |
| particip    | -.0937647 | .1185086  | -0.79 | 0.430 | -.3270679 - .1395384 |
| _cons       | .0157559  | .0716177  | 0.22 | 0.826 | -.125235 - .1567469  |

Figure 7. Regression table: Bureaucrat, Index, Population, Index Subcategories

Though none were elected, I found that the third most common category in gubernatorial and municipal ICs are bureaucrat ICs (23 candidacies, or 8.2% of all ICs in which data is available). Bureaucrat ICs have careers in public service and have served in government posts. In contrast to politician ICs who have careers in elected public office, bureaucrat ICs have careers in appointed public service. All bureaucrat ICs are university-trained and their specialized knowledge is reflected in their bureaucratic posts. For instance, Alejandro Campa Avitia, gubernatorial IC is a medical surgeon and worked in health-related posts. Similarly, Miguel Ángel Casio Piña, municipal IC in Durango has a long educational record in security and an accomplished career in public security. This pattern holds at the municipal level, in which ICs’ educational formation determines the bureaucratic posts they occupy. Given their careers in public service, bureaucrat ICs have accrued navigational and political capital that they employ in the construction of their candidacy.
Additionally, I found no trend in bureaucrat ICs’ party membership or non-membership.

In the case that bureaucrat ICs are members of a political party (only 9%), their formation in public service and appointed positions outweigh their militancy and party membership.

Bureaucrat ICs unequivocally employ this distance from party politics as a favorable element during the campaign. “Apartisan” bureaucrat ICs capitalize even more on this aspect since it gives them more credibility as politically independent in a context of generalized dissatisfaction with the traditional political class. They also appeal to their technocratic experience in their discourse, portraying themselves as competent and accomplished, fit for public office. In sum, this political right serves as a civic gain for bureaucrats, given their navigational capital, educational level, and material resources.

### 4.6 Media Figure

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<td>278</td>
<td>.014182203</td>
<td>R-squared = 0.2458</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Media figure | Coef. | Std. Err. | t     | P>|t|  | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|--------------|-------|-----------|-------|------|---------------------|
| indexl       | -.0061225 | .010422 | -0.59 | 0.557 | -.0266398 .0143949 |
| pop_tot      | 2.49e-07  | 2.74e-08 | 9.07  | 0.000 | 1.95e-07 3.03e-07 |
| alfabeto     | .0019332  | .0016431 | 1.18  | 0.240 | -.0013014 .0051679 |
| particip _cons | .0774342 | .0454662 | 1.70  | 0.090 | -.0120733 .1669417 |
|               | -.0744412 | .0274764 | -2.71 | 0.007 | -.1285328 -.0203496 |

Figure 8. Regression table: Media Figure, Index, Population, Index Subcategories
Media figure ICs appear in only one gubernatorial IC in Nayarit and four municipal ICs. This IC type has an established presence in media, specifically TV and radio, but no formal political memberships. This media presence is an advantage for two main reasons. First, these ICs count with familiarity among the electorate and can mobilize this recognition into support as they collect signatures and run their campaign. In the case of Ciudad Juárez, elected municipal candidate Héctor Armando Cabada Alvídez was a news anchor and news director of a TV station with higher ratings than the local affiliates of the national TV duopoly.\textsuperscript{83} A Reforma poll placed him at 83% recognition and 55% favorability rating, even higher than a previous municipal president running for reelection with 70% recognition and 26% favorability.\textsuperscript{84} Similarly, in Guadalajara, Guillermo Cienfuegos López, better known as “Lagrimita” for his TV persona as a clown, also roused support largely due to his media presence. In fact, he garnered only 4,835 votes in the election compared to the 23,714 valid signatures he collected capitalizing on his TV persona. This demonstrates an initial “interest” appeal due to public familiarity that did not translate into electoral support.

Secondly, media figure ICs count with extensive economic resources and social capital, mobilizing them for the collection of signatures and for electoral infrastructure. An example is Carolina Aubanel Riedel, the only female media IC at any level. She is founder and television presenter of Síntesis TV whose family is influential within the local PRI. Riedel capitalized on her


diversified business network, her social capital as a publicly recognized TV figure, and her political connections through her family. In Nayarit, the gubernatorial IC, Hilario "El Layín" Ramírez Villanueva, does not own a media outlet; rather, he became a national media sensation in 2014 after cynically admitting to stealing from the local government as municipal president; “but only a little because [the municipality] is poor. I just gave it a little trim,” he infamously stated to the press. Since, then he has been the protagonist of other scandals, like celebrating his birthday in lavish parties for the whole town with celebrity attendance, giving away expensive gifts, distributing cash at rallies, advocating for a negotiated truce with notorious narco-trafficker “El Chapo,” and making other outlandish statements to the media. I classify Ramírez Villanueva as a media figure IC despite his entrepreneurial and political background since his candidacy was only possible because he capitalized on his highly mediatized personality, becoming a viral sensation every few months across Mexico and counting with a notable TV and radio presence. This social capital and public recognition as a media figure allowed him to become the only electorally successful media IC. All media ICs experience these candidacies as civic gains since they employ their social capital, media visibility, and economic resources to register as ICs and run their campaign.

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4.6 Oficialistas

The rarest category of ICs in this typology are oficialistas, who appeared three times in gubernatorial elections and twice in municipal elections. These are candidates that appropriate the public appeal of the “independent citizen” label to run a campaign that is not aimed at being elected, but at dividing the opposition vote; for this reason, none have been elected. This strategy is meant to favor the party that unofficially promotes their candidacy. In my research, I have found that the PRI is the only party that repeatedly supports oficialista ICs. The PRI deploys this IC type in high-stakes elections where they perceive the vote as competitive between two main contenders. As an electoral strategy, the IC’s intention is to split the opposition votes by adopting the “independent” brand and capitalizing on anti-incumbent sentiment among voters. Often, organizations with ties to the party backing them sustain their campaign by providing electoral infrastructure.

**Figure 9. Regression table: Oficialista, Index, Population, Index Subcategories**

| Oficialista     | Coef. | Std. Err. | t     | P>|t|  | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|-----------------|-------|-----------|-------|------|----------------------|
| indexl          | -0.0045392 | 0.084787 | -0.54 | 0.593 | -0.0212309 to 0.0121525 |
| pop_tot         | 1.23e-08 | 2.23e-08 | 0.55  | 0.583 | -3.17e-08 to 5.62e-08  |
| analfabeto      | -0.0003377 | 0.0003377 | -0.25 | 0.801 | -0.0092938 to 0.0092938 |
| particip        | 0.025787 | 0.0369885 | 0.70  | 0.486 | -0.0470309 to 0.0986045 |
| _ccn3           | -0.0073782 | 0.0223531 | -0.33 | 0.742 | -0.0513938 to 0.0366275 |
There are three notable examples of this figure in the gubernatorial candidacies of Chihuahua, State of Mexico (Edomex), and Sinaloa. In Chihuahua, the incumbent PRI faced extremely unfavorable electoral conditions and losing the 2016 gubernatorial elections to the opposition meant risking that the next government would pursue corruption charges against the PRI administration. Consequently, they tacitly backed the candidacy of José Luis “Chacho” Barraza to divide the opposition vote. Indeed, writing before the main opposition candidacy (PAN) was announced, political analyst Luis Javier Valero prognosticated that Barraza’s candidacy would divide the opposition vote and favor the PRI if an uncompetitive, traditional PAN figure became candidate; Valero argued Barraza knew this from the beginning. Several local analysts and journalists echoed this thesis, pointing to Barraza’s questionable political independence and examples of the PRI’s astute cooptation and undermining of its political opposition. Notably, in several Mexican states, the PRI counts with a “loyal opposition” or “satellite parties” reminiscent of the small 20th century satellite parties that divided the opposition vote while simulating political plurality. At the same time, this loyal opposition operated on behalf of the PRI in a politically symbiotic partnership. Two historical examples are the Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution (PARM) and Popular Socialist Party (PPS), while recent examples vary by state.

All oficialista ICs have significant political ties, contrary to the public’s view of ICs as politically independent. For instance, Barraza has close political ties to the Mexican political

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elite. As president of Mexico’s largest business federation, Barraza coordinated an unconstitutional smear campaign in 2006 against the main leftist presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador in concert with the PAN and PRI party leadership. Serious irregularities and allegations of fraud committed by the PRI and PAN in cooperation with business interests marred the controversial 2006 election. At the municipal level, the oficialista candidates also have questionable political independence, as both belonged to the PRI until shortly before becoming ICs.

In the State of Mexico (Edomex), the PRI deployed a relatively unknown entrepreneur with ties to the party to divide the opposition vote in an election with extremely high stakes (the PRI was in danger of losing a 90-year stronghold).91 Teresa Castell, the only female oficialista IC at any level, was president of the state chapter of the Mexican Association of Women Entrepreneurs (AMME). The AMME had previously changed its name after a falling out with its founder, who accused the new leadership of accepting government contracts in exchange for political support; she denounced the AMME had become a “machine for votes.”9293 Furthermore, photos circulated of Castell at PRI events with President Peña Nieto and numerous PRI governors, including her PRI opponent in the race, who was also the

President’s cousin. These photos of her ties to the PRI further undermined her political independence in the public eye. Likewise, in Sinaloa, the oficialista IC, Francisco Frías Castro, had a decades-long political and bureaucratic career as a priista until months before he registered as an IC. Even more clearly, a former PRI governor of Sinaloa made declarations to the press stating the PRI’s electoral strategy was to divide the opposition vote among party candidates and an IC. After a PRI victory in the election, Frías Castro rejoined the state administration.

For oficialistas, the collection of signatures, is not as difficult as other ICs. State electoral institutes, often failing to uphold political impartiality, rarely challenge the validity of oficialistas’ signatures even in the presence of irregularities. An aspiring IC from Edomex (a PRI dissident) denounced this tactic, accusing the state electoral institute of “planting” fake signatures in his registration to disqualify and legally persecute him while artificially inflating Castell’s signatures. In Sinaloa, Frías Castro allegedly used his position as Secretary of Education and Culture to access databases from the Ministry of Education to use for his

signature collection. While Barraza relied more on his entrepreneurial and employee network for the collection of signatures, he received open electoral support from two unions intimately tied to the PRI corporatist structure since the 20th century, the CROC and SNTSS.

5. Conclusion

In this work, I have argued that independent candidacies are available to limited sectors of the population, mainly those with more resources (human, economic, political) due to the civic stratification of political rights. Through my typology of ICs to executive office, I have demonstrated that the IC figure is more accessible to economically and politically advantaged social groups. The citizen/activist IC was the most common in my study, but it was also one of the least electorally successful and financially capable. Moreover, activist ICs are the only type to come from lower social strata, the other five types are characterized by more economic resources. They are also the only IC type that embodies the intended benefactor of this expansion in political rights: the average citizen. Despite their frequency, citizen ICs face more institutional impediments during the registration process and the campaign. Regular citizens experience independent candidacies as a civic deficit since their material, human, and economic resources do not allow them to effectively exercise this right as other IC types.

102 Valles, "Lo que nadie."
Additionally, I hypothesized these candidacies are less common in municipalities with lower population and lower socioeconomic development. Using the Marginalization Index, I demonstrated this is true. However, outliers like Oaxaca, higher on the Marginalization Index at the state and municipal levels, challenge this claim while also presenting opportunities for future research. What explains higher electoral participation among the poor? What types of ICs are most successful and where? Unfortunately, my research was limited because it did not answer these two questions. Moreover, my research only studied candidates to executive and not legislative office. Expanding this typology to legislative candidates might reveal either additions and observations in my existing typology. Other limitations included the lack of data for many candidates in rural municipalities far away from population centers. This absent candidate data will surely refine the observations I have made with my classification and possibly raise further questions.

However, the most immediate question is what types of ICs will be running in the 2018 Mexican elections from the municipal to the federal level. One politician IC is running for president, while four other aspiring ICs did not meet the requisites – which they persistently criticized – despite their national prominence. Given the recent implementation of the 2014 RPE, the IC figure will only become more prevalent and important in future Mexican elections. This research can be a reference for citizens and policymakers to expand access to independent candidacies, making them more attainable to the average citizen whom these candidacies were intended to serve.
6. Bibliography


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