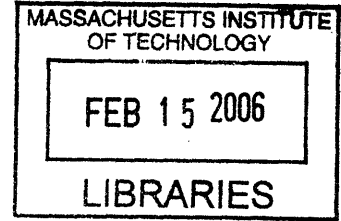Why Do Poor People Demand Accountability from some Participatory Programs and not Others?

by

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Abstract

There is a consensus that citizen oversight, or the capacity of citizens to demand accountability, over government programs improves program performance. Yet little is known about the conditions that enable citizens/beneficiaries to demand accountability. This dissertation approaches this void in the literature by comparing two Community Driven Development (CDD) programs in Argentina and asking the question of why beneficiary oversight was higher in one program than in the other and why, within the same program, it was higher in some provinces than in others.

The main conclusions are:

(i)   for beneficiary oversight to work at the project level (i.e., for beneficiaries to be able to control subcontracted providers of technical assistance) it was *not* sufficient to have accountability mechanisms at that level (in this case being able to hire and fire providers);

(ii)   due to asymmetries of technical knowledge and power between beneficiaries and providers, the former *depended* on the support of program staff willing to level out these asymmetries;

(iii) given a highly politicized context, ensuring that program staff supported beneficiaries at the project level required having beneficiary oversight at the *program governance level;* in the program where this did not happen, patronage and clientelism took over the program, distorted its participatory nature and led to its collapse;

(iv)   when beneficiary oversight took place at the program governance level it was due to (a) the program's commitment to support the consolidation of beneficiaries as a political actor capable of interacting with government, which expressed through (b) the creation of institutional mechanisms for program governance oversight that provided access to information about the program's performance, (c) the strengthening of supra-local networks at the national, provincial, and local level which increased beneficiaries'capacity for collective action and leverage; and (d) the construction of the program as part of the beneficiaries identity, which motivated them to mobilize to defend the program.

(v)   Intra program variation (across provinces) in beneficiary oversight was related to the capacity of state and civil society actors to resolve successfully the tensions involved in relations of critical collaboration (i.e., relations where actors need to collaborate with each other while remaining critical and vigilant of maintaining their autonomy).

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Finally, my family. I dedicate this dissertation to my wife Marcela, for her continuous love and generosity in slowing down her own dissertation to help me with mine, and to my son Sebastian, whom despite the many fatherless week-ends and the missed vacations still says that when he grows up he wants to do a Ph.D. "in everything." Keep up that spirit, son! And, of course, I can't forget my mom, who is always present in anything (big or small) that I accomplish.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CDD	Community Driven Development
CLDS	*Comision Local de Desarrollo Social* (Local Social Development Commission)
CPP	*Consejo Provincial Participativo* (Participatory Provincial Council)
FD	Farmers Delegate
FIS	*Fondo de Inversión Social* (Social Investment Fund, Bolivia)
FISDL	*Fondo de Inversión Social para el Desarrollo Local* (Social Investment Fund for Local Development, El Salvador)
FISE	*Fondo de Inversión Social de Emergencia* (Emergency Social Investment Fund, Nicaragua)
FONCODES	*Fondo Nacional de Compensación y Desarrollo* (National Fund for Compensation and Development, Peru)
FOPAR	*Fondo Participativo de Inversión Social* (Participatory Social Investment Fund, Argentina)
FOSIS	*Fondo de Solidaridad e Inversión Social* (Fund for Solidarity and Social Investment, Chile)
INCUPO	*Instituto de Cultura Popular*
INDES	Instituto de Desarrollo Economico y Social
INTA	*Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria* (National Institute of Agricultural Research and Extension)
MAM	*Movimiento Agrario Misionero* (Agrarian Movement of Misiones)
MOCASE	*Movimiento Campesino de Santiago del Estero* (Peasant Movement of Santiago del Estero)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NUB	*Nucleo de Beneficiarios* (Nucleus of Beneficiaries)
PROSOL	*Programa Federal de Solidaridad* (Federal Program of Solidarity)
PSA	*Programa Social Agropecuario* (Agricultural Social Program)
PC	Provincial Coordinator
PCU	Provincial Coordinating Unit
PU	Provincial Unit
SENASA	*Servicio Nacional de Sanidad y Calidad Agroalimentaria* (National Agency for Agro-product Health and Quality)
SIEMPRO	*Sistema de Información, Monitoreo y Evaluación de Programas Social* (Social Program Information, Monitoring and Evaluation System)
SIGEN	*Sindicatura General de la Nación*
TST	Technical Support Team (ETA- Equipo Tecnico de Apoyo)

Contents

Chapter 1 .
Demanding Accountability in Participatory Antipoverty Programs

1.1. Introduction

This study grew out of a frustration. Searching for a dissertation topic in the summer of

2000, I looked back at the almost ten years I had been studying participatory antipoverty

programs in rural areas in Latin America. I realized, then, that the forms of participation I had

observed in those programs were mostly about poor people collaborating with government but

very little about these same poor people monitoring government. I had seen beneficiaries sharing

information with public officials about their development needs and priorities, or pitching in

their free labor to co-finance a community infrastructure (e.g., a school), or putting their time to

collectively manage a community good (e.g., a well, a tractor, etc). I had seen much less,

however, of those same beneficiaries demanding accountability—pressuring front-line

bureaucrats to deliver better services, demanding explanations about the program's budget, or

questioning the way funds had been allocated within their municipality. And that frustrated me,

for two reasons.

First, the literature on development had already started to show that citizen's vigilance

over government's performance was a critical element in making government services work

better—e.g., citizens' role in informal monitoring of community health agents in Northeast

Brazil or exposing corruption in public works programs in Rajastan.[1] I wondered what was

different in the programs that I have been looking at. Why was it that I had *not* noticed these

forms of civic action more often? After all, and this was the *second* source of frustration, these

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[1] See Tendler (1997) for the case of Northeast Brazil, and Jenkins and Goetz (1999a, 1999b) for the case of Rajastan. The main argument of the recent World Bank's World Development Report 2004 ("Making Services Work for Poor People") was that services can be improved by "putting poor people at the center of service provision: by enabling them to monitor and discipline service providers, by amplifying their voice in policymaking, and by strengthening the incentives for providers to serve the poor" (p1). See next section for a more extended discussion on accountability.

were participatory programs that claimed to be increasing the social capital of their users and their ability to participate in decisions affecting their quality of life. And according to prevailing wisdom, greater levels of social capital should have translated in an increased civic capacity to hold government accountable.[2]

I was interested in particular in the type of participatory programs that I had been working on over the last ten years,[3] which are broadly known as "Social Funds" (SF) or "Community Driven Development (CDD)" programs. SF/CDD programs, which became very popular over the last 15 years, were a response to the criticisms levied at the antipoverty programs of the 1970s and 1980s.[4] These criticisms (similar to those levied on the state as a whole) included: overly centralized decision making, higher spending in salaries and government infrastructure than in benefits to beneficiaries, lack of responsiveness and accountability, lack of transparency, etc. One of the main answers that the development community offered to these critiques was to design a new breed of antipoverty or development programs that are known under names such as "demand driven programs", "social funds", "rural demand-driven funds", and are now generally referred to as "Community Driven Development" programs or CDD programs.

The design of these programs offered a dual response to the criticisms of the earlier generation of antipoverty programs. The first response was to contract out the provision of services as much as possible, leaving only a relatively small team of government employees to

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[2] The classic reference linking social capital with accountability is Putnam (1993). Other important work in this area include Krishna (2001, 2002), Fox (1994), Evans (1996), Fung and Wright (2001).

[3] See footnote 33 for a list of these programs.

[4] Conservative estimates place the growth of the World Bank portfolio from $325 million in 1996, $1 billion in 2000, and $2 billion of annual investment in 2005, averaging about 10% of the Bank's portfolio. (Wassenich and Whiteside 2004, WB 2005a). Expanding the definition of CDD to a broader community development focus (that includes all projects where there is some form of collaboration, consultation, and information sharing with communities) shows that the share of projects in the World Bank portfolio grew from about 2 percent in fiscal 1989 to 25 percent in 2003 (WB 2005b).

run the program, and doing away with the sole reliance on government agencies that had characterized the earlier programs. The second response was to increase beneficiaries participation in all aspects of program implementation: the investments or activities funded by government had to be driven by the demand (directly proposed and selected by beneficiaries) rather than supplied by government; service providers had to be selected by and respond to beneficiaries rather than only to government; and, in the more "advanced" versions, even the money for each community project had to be managed by the beneficiary group itself rather than government.

The arrival of this new breed of antipoverty programs has provoked a heated debate in the development community; arguably, in no place this debate has been greater than within those organizations, like the World Bank, which have been the main sponsors of these programs. When CDD advocates claimed that these programs strengthened the capacities of poor people to act collectively, to collaborate, and to demand accountability from the state, their detractors countered saying that the evidence to support those claims was absent or unreliable. In fact, they argued, these programs were the opposite to what the advocates claimed, namely, a new version of the old clientelistic and pork barreling practices disguised under the discourse of participation—which, detractors argued, explained why CDD was so attractive to the presidents of developing countries, under whose office many of these programs were located. Similarly, when the advocates claimed that CDD programs had a more efficient and cost-effective way of reaching the poor cutting through large development state bureaucracies, the critics pointed to the potential destructive effects that these programs could have in the institutional development of government—because of their enclave nature and the bypassing of line ministries and local governments. Part of the criticism was also aimed at the role that multilateral organizations have

played, not just because they had promoted these programs, but because of the pressures and incentives they brought to these programs.[5]

This dissertation does not try to "resolve" this debate, because I do not think it is practical or productive to try to do it. One of the characteristics of Social Funds or CDD programs is the sheer variety of their design features, which defies easy definitions. For every example that one of the camps brings to support their argument, the other camp brings another example that shows the opposite. CDD programs are continuously changing not only across countries but also within a country across time. Rather than generic discussions of participation, then, I decided to focus on the extent to which CDD programs influenced the capacity of beneficiary groups to demand accountability from the program—more concretely, to demand accountability (a) from subcontracted providers of technical assistance (private professionals, firms, and/or NGOs) regarding the quality of their assistance, and (b) from program staff (provincial coordinators and supervisors as well as national officials) with regards to the governance of the program. As I mentioned in the beginning, in my exposure to these programs I was frustrated to see that beneficiary groups engaged more in acts of collaboration than oversight and accountability demands, despite the rhetoric to the contrary. I was curious to find out, then, what conditions enabled beneficiaries to demand accountability. Also, while the social sciences and the development literature posited that citizen oversight contributed to improve the programs' performance, the literature was pretty silent about the conditions that enabled this to happen. For this dissertation, then, I decided to focus on the following question: *to what extent do the way*

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[5] The academic piece that has articulated many of these criticisms, and which has had a major impact in the debate, was Tendler (1999, 2000). For critical perspectives from within the donors' world see Mansuri and Rao (2004); and WB (2002, 2005b). For the research piece that has provided the more solid evidence about the positive impact of SF/CDD programs see Rawlings, Sherburne-Benz and van Domelen (2004). Other works include Owen and van Domelen (1998), IDB (1997) Wassenich and Whiteside (2004), Rao and Ibanez (2003), Parker and Serrano (2000).

CDD programs are designed, and their interplay with the implementation context, matter for enabling beneficiaries to demand accountability?

Before explaining the approach to answer this question, next section states briefly what does accountability mean, the importance of beneficiary oversight and their pressures for accountability, and what is their relevance for the literature on good governance in developing countries.

1.2. Relevance

Greater government accountability is often presented as a remedy to problems of poor governance and poor service delivery. But what does the term mean? What is the role of citizens in accountability relations? And why are CDD programs relevant in discussions of accountability?

Accountability

A common way to define it is as (i) the obligation of public officials to inform about and to explain what they are doing (answerability) and (ii) the capacity of accounting agencies to impose sanctions on powerholders who have violated their public duties (enforcement).[6] Traditionally, the justification for accountability has been to ensure that public officials followed

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[6] Schedler (1999). *Answerability* implies a double quest for information and explanation or justification. The informational dimension involves the right to receive information and the corresponding obligation to release all necessary details. It is basically a monitoring activity concerned with obliging powerholders to exercise power in transparent ways. The argumentative dimension involves the right to receive an explanation and the corresponding duty to justify one's conduct. It forces powerholders to justify their acts, to give valid reasons. The *enforcement* dimension of accountability implies rewarding good and punishing bad behavior. Depending on the severity of the offense, possible sanctions range from the destruction of reputation through public exposure and removal from office, through legal sanctions. All three dimensions of accountability (information, justification and punishment) do not need to be present in all instances we describe as accountability. They are "continuous variables that show up to different degrees, with varying mixes and emphases. Furthermore, even if one or two of them are missing we may still legitimately speak of acts of accountability." (p. 15)

the rules and standards regarding (i) the proper handling of public monies (accountability for finances) and (ii) the treatment of all citizens in a fair and equitable way (accountability for fairness). More recently, however, the call for accountability has also relied on a third principle, namely, ensuring that public officials produce results that meet the expectations of citizens about the outcomes and outputs of public action (accountability for performance).[7]

Accountability mechanisms can be of two types: internal or external. Internal accountability mechanisms are intra-state mechanisms that could be political (e.g., constitutional constraints, separation of powers, legislative investigative commissions); fiscal (e.g., formal systems of auditing and financial accounting); administrative (e.g., hierarchical reporting, norms of public sector probity, public service codes of conduct, rules and procedures regarding transparency and public oversight); and legal (e.g., corruption control agencies, ombudsmen and the judiciary).[8] External (or vertical) accountability mechanisms are those that rely on civic action. In democratic states, the principal means by which citizens hold the state to account is elections.

Both types of mechanisms have been plagued by structural and contextual problems. Internal mechanisms such as the ombudsmen, anticorruption agencies, or legislative investigative commissions, have to face the structural impossibility of monitoring the almost infinite number of government actions (and inactions) as well as the contextual difficulty of the lack of adequate funding, limited enforcement capacity or the absence of second order accountability (i.e., holding accounting agencies accountable).[9] Elections, on the other hand, have proven to be a very weak

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[7] Behn (2001)
[8] Goetz and Gaventa (2001)
[9] Ackerman (2004).

and blunt instrument for citizens to hold the state to account.[10] There is an important body of literature showing the specific shortcomings of the classic mechanisms of governmental accountability in Latin America.[11]

Citizen Demands for Accountability

The limitations of conventional mechanisms of accountability have encouraged an expansion in the repertoire of instruments through which citizens can hold the state to account, beyond voting. These instruments include traditional practices such as public demonstrations, protests, and investigative journalism, as well as more innovative ones such as participatory budgeting, or citizen report cards.[12] What they have in common is to try to build accountability through civic engagement. Donors have termed this approach, in which it is ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations who participate in exacting accountability, social accountability.[13] Since this term can cause confusion, I use the more descriptive term of citizen or beneficiary oversight, citizen/beneficiary demands for accountability, or accountability demands.

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[10] Some of the structural and contextual problems are (a) elections only held elected officials accountable, and not appointed bureaucrats, (b) elections *cannot give clear accountability signals* to individual office holders because voters have only one shot at punishing or rewarding *numerous* governmental decisions and because we can never know whether they are enforcing prospective or retrospective controls; (c) voting is a decentralized strategic action—since it is hard for citizens to coordinate the orientation of their votes, the power of voting as a control mechanism is weakened; (d) shortages of information prevent voters from having an adequate standard for evaluating government performance and decisions. (Przeworski, Stokes, and Manin 1999; Ackerman 2004; Smulovitz and Peruzzotti, 2000).

[11] Scholars of Latin American democracies agree that the classic mechanisms of governmental accountability are extremely weak in the region. The unconstrained behavior (discrecionalismo) of many elected presidents, the politicization of the judiciary, and widespread corruption in public administration are frequently cited as evidence of such weakness. (Smulovitz and Peruzzotti 2000, p. 148; see also the literature on 'delegative' or 'illiberal' democracies, O'Donnell 1999).

[12] See Jenkins and Goetz (1999a, 1999b) on social audits, Paul (2002) on citizen report cards, and Abers (2000) on Participatory Budgeting.

[13] Ackerman (2005), World Bank (2004b). The term in Latin America is social control ("control social") (Cunill Grau 2000). The term accountability doesn't have a direct translation into Spanish (a fact which is very telling about the political culture in the region). The closest term, and the one used most often, is "rendicion de cuentas".

The role of citizen/beneficiary oversight is not to replace but to complement and enhance conventional internal mechanisms of accountability. The concepts of "police patrol" and "fire alarm" oversight mechanisms illustrate well this complementary role. "Police patrol" oversight is the traditional modality in which supervisory agencies operate, trying to keep a constant eye on those they are supposed to monitor. In contrast, "fire alarm" oversight happens when an agency relies on external actors to detect when there are problems (to "sound the alarm") and then focuses its attention particularly carefully on those areas.[14] A similar emphasis on the complementary role of citizen oversight appears throughout the literature.[15]

Citizens demands for accountability can contribute to (i) improved governance (by monitoring that authority is exercised in a transparent, responsive, and fair way), (ii) improved service delivery (by providing feedback to service providers on areas that need improvement and helping to discipline them), and (iii) deepening democracy (by allowing citizens to exercise their right to expect and ensure that government acts in the best interests of people).[16]

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[14] McCubbins and Schwartz (1984)p. "Congress establishes a system of rules, procedure, and informal practices that enable individual citizens and organized interest groups to examine administrative decisions (sometimes in prospect), to charge executive agencies with violating congressional goals, and to seek remedies from agencies, courts, and Congress itself. Some of these rules, procedures, and practices afford citizens and interest groups access to information and to administrative decision-making processes. Others give them standing to challenge administrative decisions before agencies and courts, or help them bring alleged violations to congressmen's attention. Still others facilitate collective action by comparatively disorganized interest groups." (McCubbins and Schwartz 1984, p. 166)

[15] See Paul (1992) on the relationship between "exit" and "voice" and control. In Latin America, the work of Smulovitz and Peruzzotti on what they call "societal accountability" makes a similar emphasis. They define societal accountability as a nonelectoral, yet vertical mechanism of control that rests on the actions of a multiple array of citizens' associations and movements and on the media, actions that aim at exposing governmental wrongdoing, bringing new issues onto the public agenda, or activating the operation of horizontal agencies. It employs both institutional and noninstitutional tools. *The activation of legal actions or claims before oversight agencies* are examples of some of the available institutional resources; social mobilizations and media exposés illustrate some of the noninstitutional ones." (Smulovitz and Peruzzotti 2000, p. 150)

[16] For this perspective, broadly known as "participatory or deliberative democracy", conventional democratic institutions do not ensure the existence of the robust public sphere that is needed for citizens to give feedback and control government action. A more recent trend, called "Empowered Participatory Governance" looks at how alternative political and administrative designs can "surpass conventional democratic institutional forms on the quite practical aims of enhancing the responsiveness and effectiveness of the state while at the same time making it more fair, participatory, deliberative, and accountable." (Fung and Wright 2001, p.8)

While has great potential, the conditions that allow this potential to materialize are not easy to come by. In fact, the most likely situation is to expect passivity from citizens rather than zealous oversight. The question then is to learn what are the conditions that enable effective processes of beneficiary oversight. For those interested in supporting it, what are the important issues to take into account when designing laws, policies and programs to support it.

Enabling Conditions

When it comes to the design of institutions and mechanisms for citizen/beneficiary oversight, a major cleavage in the literature centers around what the nature of state-society relations should be. The conventional perspective has been to emphasize the need for a clear separation, an arms-length relation, between state and society. The recent book on accountability by the Development Administration Latin American Council (CLAD) illustrates well this position: "Co-management is irreconcilable with control. The efficacy of [social control] is directly dependent on the independence and the autonomy that societal actors maintain with respect to state actors."[17]

In contrast, a recent current of research has shown how citizen oversight can flourish precisely in institutional forms where the boundaries between state and society are blurred or confused. These institutional forms, which have been termed "co-governance for accountability," violate explicitly the separation between state and society, inviting civil society to the inner chambers of the state to "participate directly in the core functions of government itself."[18] Those

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[17] Cunill Grau (2000). The position that state-society collaboration hinders society's capacity to control the state has been entrenched in the literature, particularly in the social movement literature. It can be traced to the classic text by Piven and Cloward (1979) for whom 'poor people's movements' could be effective only if they totally rejected cooperation of any kind with state agencies, and pursued the strategy of making a nuisance of themselves to the state apparatus. Much of the social movement literature has focused on the need to avoid cooptation and losing autonomy.
[18] Ackerman (2004) has summarized this literature (see citations). While there is a previous literature that showed how mixing state and society could lead to positive, synergistic, development outcomes (see articles by Evans,

functions could be the elaboration and control of local budgets through Participatory Budgeting,[19] or the hiring and firing of principals through Local School Councils,[20] or the auditing of local government managed public works programs through social audits and freedom of access to information laws.[21]

The CDD programs mentioned before have been an important vehicle for introducing similar type of institutional innovations. Some of these innovations have relied on *exit* strategies to exact accountability. This is the case, for instance, of what has been called "direct financing to communities" in which government shares the procurement function with village-level organizations, transferring to them the resources and authority for procuring goods and services to produce local public goods (such as schools, health posts, water systems, etc).[22] By giving village organizations the resources and authority to hire and fire providers (of technical assistance, or supplies) as well as to stop payments if dissatisfied with the provider's performance, community contracting creates the option for (and threat of) disciplining providers through exit. Other innovations have relied more on *voice* strategies. This is the case of the many programs in which representatives of beneficiaries form part of local councils. These councils allow beneficiaries to voice their protests and feedback into the program.[23]

Despite the fact that CDD programs have often had these kinds of beneficiary oversight mechanisms, until very recently the emphasis among donors and governments had been more on

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Ostrom, Lam, and Tendler in the 1996 issue of World Development 24 6) it is more recently that this argument has been articulated for social accountability.

[19] Baiocchi (2001), Abers (2000)

[20] Fung (2003)

[21] Jenkins and Goetz (1999a)

[22] de Silva (2002)

[23] Paul (1992) was the first to apply Hirschmann (1970) concepts of exit and voice to development programs.

issues of participation as collaboration or self-help than as demands for accountability.[24] In fact, when the issue of accountability was raised was often in the context of the clientelistic and patronage use of these programs. Research in Peru, for instance, showed how the Fujimori administration used the CDD program as part of clientelistic strategies to consolidate its electoral position.[25] Other scholars have also showed how the nature of these programs can be conducive to traditional pork barrel practices.[26] In the last few years, however, with the prominence of the topic of accountability and beneficiary oversight, donors have made more explicit the strategies through which CDD programs relate to issues of accountability.

Discussions about the relationship between CDD programs and citizen/beneficiary oversight usually register two themes. One theme, more prevalent among academics, emphasizes the influence of *external or contextual*[27] conditions in producing social accountability. The argument presented by these scholars is that CDD programs will show greater social accountability in contexts where the social capital of the poor is thicker and at a sufficient scale to give them leverage in their interactions with powerholders.[28] The other theme, more prevalent among donors, emphasizes the influence of *program design* conditions. Unfortunately, this theme has usually expressed in a rather reductionist fashion, focusing too much on social accountability "tools"—as if introducing a citizen report card, participatory budgeting, or direct financing to communities in a CDD program would automatically enable beneficiaries to

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[24] Despite the large amounts of money invested in this type of programs, the assessment of their performance has been fairly limited. To the extent that is has happened it has focused more on issues of efficiency, and on certain aspects of the participation dimension that do not include accountability.

[25] Schady (1999), Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni (2003).

[26] Tendler (1999) and others cited therein

[27] By contextual factors I mean those factors that are outside of the control of those who design and implement a program. They may have to do with the political orientation of the government, or with the characteristics of civil society, or the level of economic development in a certain region.

[28] Fox (1994)

demand accountability.[29] What has been missing is a broader understanding of design that includes those features of the program or initiative other than the "tool" that influence the conditions under which beneficiaries can effectively take advantage of the opportunity created by the "tool". For instance, participatory budgeting is a "tool" that provides citizens with information about the municipal budget and with instances to express their preferences and to interrogate local governments with regards to past performance. But research has shown that if the municipal budget is too small, citizens will probably lack incentives to mobilize and demand accountability. Or if citizens are poorly organized, their capacity to effectively demand accountability will also be hampered. And so the extent to which the design of a program or institution takes into account these aspects of the context should be considered part of the design, and not just the mechanical procedures regulating citizen-local government interaction. This broader perspective, therefore, emphasizes the extent to which a certain design interacts with the context in which it is implemented. This broader perspective on design factors is the one adopted in this study.

While there is some research to sustain the argument that contextual factors matter for beneficiary oversight, there is much less research on whether and how program design matters for beneficiary oversight. For instance, picking up on the issues mentioned before, to what extent does introducing exit or voice mechanisms matter? And to what extent the tensions brought by programs whose design involve co-governance arrangements undermine beneficiary oversight? We also know little about the interplay between program design and the implementation context. How effective are the social accountability mechanisms of these programs in dealing with clientelistic contexts? To what extent do the different sociopolitical contexts at the sub-national

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[29] Government and donor organizations are naturally drawn to find "tools" that would reduce the uncertainty about how to produce a social outcome by following result.

level influence outcomes? This is the void that this dissertation aims to fill: *to contribute to a better understanding of how design aspects of CDD programs, and their interplay with the context in which they are implemented, influence the capacity of beneficiary groups to demand accountability (a) from the subcontractors that provide them technical assistance, and (b) from the program staff that manages the program?*

1.3. Methodology

I approached these questions by doing a paired comparison between two CDD programs in Argentina.[30] A rural development program called PSA (*Programa Social Agropecuario*—Social Agricultural Program), and a small-scale rural infrastructure program called FOPAR (*Fondo Participativo de Inversion Social*—Participatory Social Investment Fund).[31] I chose these programs for three reasons. *First*, most Argentine scholars and policy makers singled both of them out as the most participatory programs of the wave of targeted antipoverty programs that had emerged during the 1990s in Argentina.[32] Thus, they represented ideal candidates to explore the influence of participatory programs on accountability demands. In other words, this helped

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[30] Yin (2003).

[31] Initially, FOPAR had a plan for urban provincial capitals and another one for the rural countryside. I focused on the rural plan. After disappointing results in the urban plan, FOPAR dropped it.

[32] Compared to other Latin American countries, targeted antipoverty programs are a relative recent phenomena in Argentina. While in the late 1980s there were a handful of national programs, by the late 1990s there were 69 programs (Jefatura de Gabinete, 2000). The gradual expansion in the number of programs during the 1990s did not result from a coherent vision on how to fight poverty nor it reflected a stronger commitment with poverty reduction. Instead these programs represented the attempts of the Menem administration to show some government action in response to different demands or crisis (the demands from donors and civic groups to do something about the "social costs" of structural adjustment policies, the increase in poverty, his presidential reelection in 1994, a surge in unemployment in the late 90s, etc). The low budget for antipoverty programs and its *fragmentation* into a myriad of programs dispersed throughout multiple Ministries resulted in overlapping mandates, beneficiaries with multiple coverage and others with none, lack of synergies across programs, and isolated and low social impacts. This fragmentation revealed the absence of a vision on how to tackle poverty. Despite this fragmentation, their design shared some elements of the development management discourse that was in vogue during the 1990s, both in Argentina and internationally: (i) increasing civil society involvement in public policy by *subcontracting* to NGOS and by strengthening community *participation* in program implementation, (ii) *decentralizing* decision-making and resources to the local level, and (iii) *targeting* interventions on the poor or other categorical groups (Repetto, 2000; Rodriguez Larreta, 1999).

me avoid the risk of concluding my dissertation by saying that differences in performance were explained because one program was "truly" participatory and the other was not.

Second, they shared important similarities that made them largely comparable: (i) their participatory approach was similar in that for both programs the strengthening of social capital was a central objective of the program, and both financed projects that were supposed to be selected by beneficiaries rather than program officials (they were "demand-driven"); (ii) their managerial structure and organization was also similar in that both programs operated through deconcentrated units, technical assistance and extension services were subcontracted to the private or non profit sector, and most of the national and provincial managerial staff were committed bureaucrats that came from the NGO sector; and (iii) territorially they had important overlaps since PSA worked in the six provinces where FOPAR operated, most of the rural municipalities were they worked were the same, and many of the villages that received projects from FOPAR were also assisted by PSA.

Third, despite these similarities, both programs had important differences (both across programs and within them) with respect to the kind of design and context issues I was interested in exploring: (i) the *tools or mechanisms that beneficiaries had for demanding accountability* from private providers and public officials were different across programs (FOPAR beneficiaries had the authority to hire and fire private providers, while PSA beneficiaries did not; PSA beneficiaries could oversee how the program was managed through their representation in); (ii) the *political context* in which both programs operated changed from a first period of being insulated from clientelism to another period of strong patronage and clientelistic pressures; and (iii) the relative autonomy that provincial units had in each program allowed to see how different *provincial contexts* influenced accountability demands.

Since these programs were in different sectors (PSA in rural development funded mostly productive projects through loans , FOPAR in infrastructure funded mostly small-scale works through grants) I compared dimensions of the programs' performance that were of a generic rather than sector specific nature—i.e., the way citizen-beneficiaries demanded accountability from providers of technical assistance and from program officials. In this way I treated the different nature of the sector as an independent or intervening variable rather than as part of the dependent variable—i.e., I explored whether the nature of the sector was relevant for understanding why there was more social accountability in one program than the other.

Although this dissertation is mostly based on two cases in Argentina, I will also bring to bear in the analysis my experience doing evaluation research with similar programs or issues in other countries. As I have mentioned before, my observations of the participation and accountability dynamics in these programs provided the initial motivation for this research project. These other countries include: Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Mozambique, and Panama.[33]

In what follows I (i) summarize the basic facts about PSA and FOPAR, and their similarities and differences (Table 1); (ii) describe briefly the objectives and distinctive aspects of each program; (iii) develop more extensively the similarities and differences between them; and, finally, (iv) describe the way I collected the data.

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[33] These programs are: the Northeast Rural Poverty Alleviation Program implemented in three states of Brazil (Ceara, Pernambuco, Bahia); the Development Agents Program of the Bank of the Northeast in Brazil; Social Investment Funds in Bolivia (FIS), Peru (FONCODES), Honduras (FHIS), El Salvador (FISDL), and Nicaragua (FISE); the "Trabajar" Program and "Jefas de Hogar" Program in Argentina; the Decentralized Planning and Finance Program in Mozambique, and the Sustainable Development of Darien Program in Panama (see Serrano 1996, 1999abcd, 2000, 2002ab, 2003; Parker and Serrano 2000, Serrano and Warren 2003).

Table 1. Basic Facts, Similarities, and Differences between PSA and FOPAR

	PSA	FOPAR
Basic Facts		
Year of Initiation	1993	1995
Secretary/Ministry where the program is located	Secretary of Agriculture, Ministry of Economy	(1995-1998) Secretary of Social Development, Office of the President; (1998-2001) Secretary of Social Policy, Ministry of Social Development
Funding Source	National Treasury (about 80%) World Bank loan (about 20%)	World Bank loan (about 90%) Treasury (about 10%)
Budget	US$ 70 million (1993-2001)	US$ 45 million (1995-2001)
Provincial Coverage	21 provinces (only two provinces in the country were excluded, Santa Cruz and Tierra del Fuego)	6 provinces (Misiones, Corrientes, Chaco, Santiago del Estero, Salta, Jujuy) in 2000 adding 4 more.
Type of financial assistance	Loans/grants	Grants
Sector	Rural development	Small scale infrastructure
Similarities in Program Design		
Importance of Participation	Strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries to act collectively is an objective of both programs	
Design of Project identification	Demand driven	
Managerial Organization	Deconcentrated to provincial units of the program	
Technical assistance	Subcontracted to private providers (individuals or firms) or NGOs, and in PSA also to public agencies.	
Type of public contract regulating program staff job	Temporary, six-month to one year renewable contracts.	
Staff Profile	A significant part of staff recruited from development NGOs, or with history of working with poor people.	
Territorial/beneficiary overlap	PSA worked in the six provinces where FOPAR operated, and in the same municipalities, and in many of the same villages.	
Differences in Program Design with respect to Accountability		
	PSA	FOPAR
Tool that beneficiaries have to demand *accountability from providers*	Complain to PSA provincial officials	Resources and Authority to Hire/Fire and pay Provider
Tool that beneficiaries have to demand *accountability from program officials*	Farmers have representatives in provincial and national councils overseeing program implementation	No formal mechanisms
(Similar) Variations in Context		
Political context	Both programs went from "insulated" to "patronage and clientelistic" pressures.	
Subnational variation	How different provincial contexts influenced demands for accountability	

PSA

PSA was created in 1993 by the Secretariat of Agriculture in response to the government's intention of showing a more active antipoverty policy. PSA was the flagship program for fighting rural poverty and, indeed, the first program in Argentina's history to target "poor small farmers"[34] at a nation-wide scale.[35] The Secretariat of Agriculture estimates that there are approximately 160,000 families of poor small farmers in the country, [36] which account for 47% of the total number of agricultural properties and 1.7% of total agricultural land (see annex 1 for a distribution of farmers across provinces).[37] PSA, which was funded mostly with resources from the national treasury rather than the donor community, had two basic goals: first, to improve the economy of small farmers by providing them with credit, technical assistance, training, and marketing support;[38] and second, to increase the organized participation of small farmers in projects, programs, and policies affecting them.

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[34] The term used in Argentina for poor small farmers, and which constitutes the target population of PSA, is *productores minifundistas*. PSA defined "productores minifundistas" as those farmers that meet the following criteria: (i)The farmer and his family work directly on the farm, where their permanent house is also located; (ii) There is no hiring of permanent salaried workers, except in the peak seasons when temporary workers are needed to supplement family labor; (iii) the farmer does not have additional sources of income, except those coming from temporary work or sale of handicrafts not exceeding the salary of a rural peon; (iv) their monthly income should not exceed twice the monthly salary of a permanent rural peon ("peon agropecuario"); (v) the capital of the farm (improvements and working capital) should not exceed one partially depreciated medium tractor (70-80 HP). (PSA 1999)

[35] Up to the mid 1980s, government policy in Argentina had neglected to provide poor small farmers of any significant assistance to improve their living conditions. Rural and agricultural development policies have focused only on the needs of medium and large capitalized farmers, located in the rich agricultural lands of the country. Minifundistas had been "invisible" and "voiceless" when it came to government policy-making. The most important precedent of PSA happened in the mid-1980s, when a group of reform-minded public bureaucrats, rural development NGOs, and academics gathered periodically in the national headquarters of the Agricultural Research and Extension Agency (INTA) to discuss the guidelines of a pro-active rural development policy. While this group generated some interesting programs, most of them were circumscribed to a certain region of the country or very limited in the tools. It was in 1993 that an opportunity opened up to design a national level program, and this group grabbed this opportunity by creating PSA.

[36] PSA (1999).

[37] Basco (1993), Lattuada (2000).

[38] Each household could receive a loan of up to US$1,200 for the development of a particular productive proposal. Given the convertibility law that pegged the peso to the dollar between 1991 and 2002 the peso was overvalued. This amount was just enough to finance the operating costs of a hectare of horticulture crops. In addition, each household could receive a subsidy of US$200 to support small household consumption proposals (called

While these two goals were nothing new in rural development, what was more innovative about PSA was its institutional design. Agricultural development programs in Argentina had been traditionally managed by a command-and-control structure which centered all decision-making powers in the agency's bureaucrats (INTA).[39] PSA, in contrast, proposed a managerial model that devolved key programmatic responsibilities to deconcentrated provincial offices managed partly by provincial stakeholder committees.[40] In each of the 21 provinces PSA created a provincial office integrated by two bodies. One was a small group of technical staff (a Provincial Coordinator and 4 to 6 officials responsible for credit, training, etc) called Provincial Coordinating Unit (PCU). The other was a stakeholder committee called Provincial Unit (PU) formed by six members representing five stakeholders—two representatives of small farmers in the province[41] (elected periodically by farmers), one from the NGO sector, one from the provincial government, one from the provincial branch of the national agricultural research and extension agency (INTA), and PSA's Provincial Coordinator. (see Table 2)

This stakeholder committee was a deliberative body—which met once or twice a month for one or two full days each time—empowered to voice its opinion in the main managerial decisions affecting the programs activities in the province: (i) defining the strategy for supporting small farmers in the province (the type of crops, agricultural practices, or marketing initiatives that showed more promise; the geographic areas to target; the strategic alliances that

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autoconsumos) and that had to be "repaid" in kind (farmers had to deliver part of their production to community institutions or do some work in these institutions such as painting, cleaning, etc) (PSA 1999)

[39] The main agency in charge of agricultural development has been INTA (Instituto Nacional de Tecnologia Agropecuaria).

[40] Rather than trying to reform INTA, which was a semi-autonomous agency with a rigid internal hierarchal structure, PSA was a stand-alone program affiliated with the Secretary of Agriculture. PSA was designed explicitly outside of INTA because of the rigidities of the bureaucracy of INTA.

[41] In many provinces, the representation of farmers was expanded to eight or ten to facilitate the communication between farmer representatives and their constituents.

should be pursued; etc.); (ii) approving all credit, technical assistance, and training projects; (iii) discussing implementation problems; and (iv) approving partnerships with other institutions.

Farmers were also represented at the national level where four representatives (one from each of the four regions in the country) participated in the deliberative stakeholder committee that the program had at the national level. The forty two farmer representatives from the 21 provinces were grouped in four regions. Each region elected two farmers to represent them at the national level, so that there were eight regional farmers delegates participating at the national level. [see Graph 1]

Between 1993-2001, PSA has disbursed 70 million dollars for projects benefiting about 45,000 minifundista families.[42] PSA's budget has come mostly from the National Government. In addition, since 1996 PSA has had complementary funding from the World Bank. Credit disbursements are made directly by the national unit to the producers groups. The role of the central government's unit of PSA is mainly to set standards, supervise the functioning of the provincial coordinating units, and monitor the achievement of the goals set by the latter.
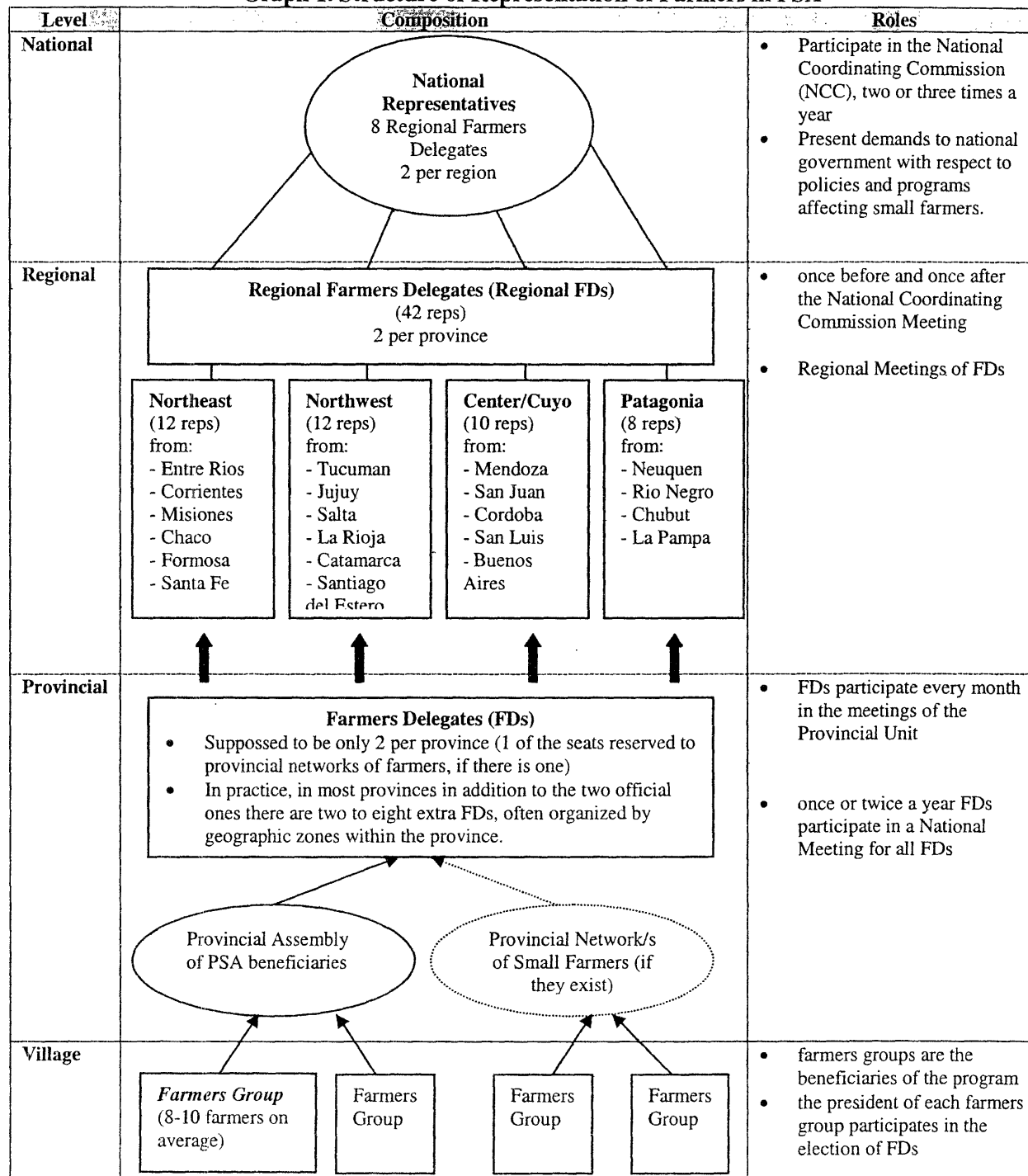
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[42] PSA (2001)

Table 2. The Organizational Structure of PSA

Unit	Main Responsabilities	Composition
National level		
National Coordinating Unit (NCU)	Coordinate program implementation Link PSA with other programs Manage program's resources Collaborate with Provincial Coord. Units Monitoring and evaluation Diffussion of PSA's actions	• 1 National Coordinator Area of Programming and Monitoring: • 1 Director • # Support Staff Area of Operations: • 1 Director • 3 Provincial Referents (Referentes)--PR • 1 Coordinator of Training • 1 Coordinator of Marketing • 1 Administration/Accounting Officer
National Coordinating Commission (NCC)	- coordinating PSA's planning with that of other public and non-profit sector programs that benefit small agricultural producers, - advicing PSA's strategic planning, - following up of the program's operations, - suggesting improvements for PSA operations. The NCC is formed by fifteen members.	• 4 reps. from programs of the Secretary of Agriculture: PRODERNEA, Dir. Forestal, Dir. de Desarrollo Agropecuario, Proyecto de Reconversion de Areas Tabacaleras, • 2 reps from programs of the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA): Prog. Minifundio and Programa Prohuerta. • 4 NGOs acting in at least three provinces: INCUPO, INDES, FUNDAPAZ, CADIF • 1 rep from the Conferation of Agricultural Cooperatives (CONINAGRO) • 4 small farmer representatives (1 from every region: NE, NW, Center-Cuyo, Patagonia).
Board of Advisers (BA)	To support the NCU in the formulation of operational criteria and guidelines	not more than five persons of recognized trajectory working in rural development
Provincial level		
Provincial Coordinating Unit (PCU)	1- Identify potential beneficiary groups 2- Appraise initial proposals 3- Select, jointly with beneficiaries, TA providers 4- Contract selected TA providers 5- Perform ex-ante evaluation of subprojects 6- Responsible for allocation and resource use 7- Implement PU decisions 8- Ensure Program's diffusion 9- Political, institutional and technical networking 10- Monitoring beneficiary, credit and TA operations 11- Design and implement Training Plan for beneficiaries and TA providers 12- Provide marketing support to beneficiaries	• 1 *Provincial Coordinator (PC)* • *Technical Support Team (TST)* formed by professionals specialized in: - Monitoring and evaluation, - training, - marketing, and - accounting. Staff size varies according to provincial program size.
Provincial Unit (PU)	1- Define PSA provincial operational strategies in armony with national and provincial gov policies 2- Operationalize targeting and resource allocation criteria at the departmental level 3- Appraise and approve beneficiary groups and TA plans, after the ex-ante evaluation of the TST 4- Propose priority issues for Training Plan for Beneficiaries and Technicians 5- Approve the provincial Operational Annual Plan 6- Propose to NCU agreements with public/ private org 7- Approve agreements with partners 8- Inform about the actions of the organizations they represent and accurately communicate to the latter about the Program's activities and results 9- strive to strengthen interinstitutional relations	• 1 rep from PSA (the PC) • 1 rep from provincial government's Secretary of Agriculture • 1 rep from provincial INTA • 1 rep from NGO • 2 reps from small farmers

Source: own elaboration based on Operational Manual PSA (1999).

Graph 1. Structure of Representation of Farmers in PSA

Level	Composition	Roles
National	**National Representatives** 8 Regional Farmers Delegates 2 per region	• Participate in the National Coordinating Commission (NCC), two or three times a year • Present demands to national government with respect to policies and programs affecting small farmers.
Regional	**Regional Farmers Delegates (Regional FDs)** (42 reps) 2 per province **Northeast** (12 reps) from: - Entre Rios - Corrientes - Misiones - Chaco - Formosa - Santa Fe **Northwest** (12 reps) from: - Tucuman - Jujuy - Salta - La Rioja - Catamarca - Santiago del Estero **Center/Cuyo** (10 reps) from: - Mendoza - San Juan - Cordoba - San Luis - Buenos Aires **Patagonia** (8 reps) from: - Neuquen - Rio Negro - Chubut - La Pampa	• once before and once after the National Coordinating Commission Meeting • Regional Meetings of FDs
Provincial	**Farmers Delegates (FDs)** • Supposed to be only 2 per province (1 of the seats reserved to provincial networks of farmers, if there is one) • In practice, in most provinces in addition to the two official ones there are two to eight extra FDs, often organized by geographic zones within the province. Provincial Assembly of PSA beneficiaries Provincial Network/s of Small Farmers (if they exist)	• FDs participate every month in the meetings of the Provincial Unit • once or twice a year FDs participate in a National Meeting for all FDs
Village	**Farmers Group** (8-10 farmers on average) Farmers Group Farmers Group Farmers Group	• farmers groups are the beneficiaries of the program • the president of each farmers group participates in the election of FDs

FOPAR

FOPAR was created in 1995 by the Secretariat of Social Development, with a loan from

the World Bank (that first loan and a second one in 1999 added up to US$ 45 million). Its main

goal was to develop the capacity of poor people to initiate and manage projects that would increase their welfare.[43] Its main strategy was to fund small-scale community infrastructure projects (community centers, latrines, small water systems, etc.) through the "direct financing to communities" approach described before. The main hypothesis underlying FOPAR's strategy was that by allowing community groups to have control over the project money and the hiring and firing of technical assistance, they would increase their social capital to engage in development—they would gain confidence to address other problems on their own, would learn how to join their resources, and how to interact with contractors and outside actors.

If what was innovative in PSA was the representation of beneficiaries in the management of the program, what was innovative in FOPAR was that the public money for investment projects was managed directly by community groups rather than by government agencies or the nongovernmental or private sector. FOPAR transferred the funds to a bank account owned by the community group which, in turn, was responsible for hiring (and firing) professionals for project design and implementation. FOPAR also provided training and technical assistance to these groups in issues such as how to manage a community organization, accounting, etc. Between 1995 and 2000, FOPAR funded over 1,200 subprojects in six provinces (states) of northern Argentina[44] for a total of US$ 45 million.

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[43] FOPAR (2000)
[44] Misiones, Corrientes, Chaco, Santiago del Estero, Jujuy, and Salta.

Table 3. The Organizational Structure of FOPAR

	Main responsibilities	Composition
National level(Ministry of Social Development)		
Central Office	• Manages program design and implementation • Develops methodology and training of provincial teams on Promotion/outreach • Develops menu of eligible projects, appraisal instruments, and appraises projects accordingly • Develop project supervision system, and support provincial unit in project supervision • Monitoring and evaluation of program outcomes and lessons for adjustments • Make contracts with beneficiary groups, authorize disbursements	• 1 National Coordinator • Direction of Promotion • Direction of Project Appraisal • Direction of Supervision • Programming Office • Administrative/Legal/Finance Office
Consultative Council	• Advice on program strategy • Information and criteria for interinstitutional coordination	• 2 or 3 representatives from relevant govt agencies/programs (1 is PSA) • 2 or 3 "notables" from academia, church organizations, etc
Provincial level		
Provincial Unit	• Coordinate program implementation in the province (the promotion/outreach, technical and financial supervision of project implementation, support to beneficiary group for conflict resolution and funds administration) • Coordinate with other provincial programs	• Provincial Coordinator • Supervisors • Inspectors • Promoters
Participatory Provincial Council	• Selecting the municipalities where the program will invest. Meets only	• Provincial Government representatives (Ministry of Social Development) • Provincial NGOs • FOPAR Provincial Coordinator
Municipal level		
Social Development Local Council **(discontinued after pilot phase)**	• supporting function during the municipal diagnosis and project promotion.	• representatives of local actors (local government, political opposition, community organizations, church, NGOs, etc)
Village level		
Nucleus of Beneficiaries (*Nucleo de Beneficiarios,* NUB)	• procuring all goods and services required to implement the project. It hires professional services to assist in the construction process, and pays according to work completed. The NUB is responsible for buying construction inputs, with the advice from the contractor. The treasurer has to keep a notebook with the receipts for all expenses made, and present them to all NUB members in an assembly.	• all the direct beneficiaries of the project • they elect 3 reps: 1 president, 1 secretary, and 1 treasurer

Source: Own elaboration based on Operational Manual FOPAR (2000).

Table 4. FOPAR's Project Cycle

Stage	Description
Targeting of municipalities	In accordance with the targeting criteria of FOPAR, Provincial Participatory Council selects eligible poor rural municipalities.
Promotion/ Project identification	A period of approximately three months is designated for communities in those municipalities to identify their needs, form beneficiary groups (NUBs), and seek technical support from private sector in the presentation of subprojects.
	FOPAR provincial unit actively assist in this process, organizing community meetings, orienting groups in subproject formulation, and identifying technical resources available to NUBs.
Project Appraisal	FOPAR's Central Office does the appraisal of project proposals.
Project implementation	FOPAR's Central Office channels funds to a bank account opened by three NUB representatives. NUBs manage resources and project implementation.
	FOPAR provincial staff are responsible for supervision of execution, and for training NUBs in management of FOPAR resources and project execution.

Similarities and Differences

As I previewed at the beginning of this section and in Table 1, PSA and FOPAR shared similarities and differences that made them appropriate for a comparison on the influence of design and context on citizen oversight. Here, I will elaborate on these similarities and differences.

The relevant similarities in the design of these programs can be clustered around three areas. *First*, they shared a similar participatory approach in that:

- Both programs had as an important objective to build the social capital (or capacity to act collectively) of their beneficiaries. They both reached their beneficiaries not individually but through beneficiaries organizations. by supporting worked with NUBs are responsible for managing resources and project implementation. FOPAR channels funds to a bank account opened by three NUB representatives. The NUB is responsible for procuring all goods and services required to implement the project. It hires professional services to assist in the construction process, and pays this professional according to work completed, which is certified by an inspector from FOPAR. The NUB is responsible for buying construction inputs, with the advice from the contractor. The treasurer has to keep a notebook with the

receipts for all expenses made. This is periodically revised by FOPAR's inspector and also presented to all NUB members in an assembly.

- both programs were *designed* with a "demand-driven" process for identifying projects to finance—bureaucrats did not decide on their own what type of service or good to provide and to whom but instead screened and approved projects presented by community groups. The procedures were that FOPAR will finance were in response to the demand expressed by community groups in participatory diagnostic sessions, in which they chose from a menu of options and had an in-kind contribution from the community in terms of unskilled labor and local materials.[45] Similarly, in PSA it was the group of farmers who decided (in a dialogue with the extensionist) what kind of productive project they wanted.

Second, their managerial structure and organization was also similar in that:

- Both programs had small headquarters in the country's capital and operated mostly through *deconcentrated* units based in each of the provincial capitals. Total number of staff (headquarters plus provincial offices) was also relatively small, about 100 in FOPAR and 150 in PSA. In FOPAR and PSA the provincial teams were formed by one provincial coordinator and a small team of technical staff. Technical staff in FOPAR included engineers/architects, called inspectors, who provided general technical assistance to community groups regarding the construction aspect of the projects and approved the final delivery of the project, and social workers who assisted community groups with regards to group dynamics, and the administration and accountability to the broader community of the project money. Technical staff in PSA provincial offices generally included people responsible for technical assistance,

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[45] A period of approximately three months is designated for communities to identify their needs, form beneficiary committees (called NUBs—*Núcleos de Beneficiarios*) and seek technical support in the presentation of subprojects. FOPAR promoters actively assist in this process, from organizing community meetings, orienting groups in subproject formulation and identifying technical resources available to NUBs.

other for training, other for credit, another for marketing, etc. Headquarters offices in Buenos Aires were smaller in PSA than FOPAR. PSA had about 15 technical staff, and FOPAR had about 40 staff.

- Both programs argued that the main reason for following a deconcentration strategy rather than a decentralized one of working with the provincial governments, was the strong patronage and clientelistic use of social programs that provincial governments were known for. While both programs allowed representation of provincial governments in their governance bodies, they did not want to give them autonomy for the administration of the program.

- Both programs were staffed by temporary public employees, contracted as short-term consultants for six months or one year (renewable), and had few to none civil service staff. During the 1990s, the Ministry of Finance did not allow new permanent hiring of employees in government, and instead all had to be short-term consultants.

- Both programs relied for most service delivery on third parties such as NGOs, other federal and provincial public agencies, and private professionals.

Third, the target population of both programs shared roughly similar levels of economic resources, social capital, and political organization. PSA worked in all six provinces where FOPAR operated. In those provinces, FOPAR focused on the poorest rural municipalities, which is where the heavy load of PSA projects were located since those where the areas with higher concentration of small farmers. In those municipalities, both programs had a few projects in the municipal town but mostly tended to be in the rural villages surrounding the municipal capital. These villages are quite homogeneous in terms of socio-economic status, with the local elite

(merchants, owners of small agro-processing businesses, politicians) living in the municipal town. These villages were formed mostly by 20 to 100 families of small farmers that relied mostly on family labor for their farms. In terms of their social organization, some of the small farmers that were part of the group assisted by PSA would be part of the group managing the building of the bridge with FOPAR money. Or the village-wide association would have members being part of PSA groups and would also sponsor the building of a community center for the whole village. Some of the women in these villages (women made an important share of both programs) engaged in the self-consumption, the agro-processing, or the marketing activities supported by PSA would be part of the group managing the water project supported by FOPAR. The important point is not so much the extent to which the actually overlapped but that they could overlap because their target populations were similar. At a higher level, most of the important federations present at the provincial level preceded both programs and were thus a social capital available for both programs—e.g., MAM in Misiones, MOCASE in Santiago del Estero, UNPEPROCH in Chaco all were formed before 1993.

Despite these similarities, the comparison between PSA and FOPAR provided the opportunity to analyze three set of contrasts that were of particular interest to my research project. *First,* the design of these programs had different mechanisms to allow beneficiaries to demand accountability from third party providers and program officials. In the relations with providers, FOPAR gave its beneficiary groups the resources and authority to hire, fire, and pay the third party providers providing technical assistance in project building; PSA, in contrast, did not have a similar mechanism and farmer groups had to voice their dissatisfaction with providers of technical assistance to program officials (either directly or through their Farmer

Representative described in Graph 1). In the relations with program officials, PSA gave farmers groups representation in provincial and national stakeholders committees (described before in the PSA section) as well as other venues (annual provincial assemblies with beneficiaries) where beneficiaries could voice and oversee program implementation on a regular basis; FOPAR, in contrast, did not have any similar mechanism of communication and oversight. *To what extent did these differences in program design mattered for the ability of beneficiaries to demand accountability?*

Second, the political context in terms of how beneficiaries demanded accountability from government officials, the interesting contrast was that both programs had been exposed to the same change in their exposure to patronage and clientelistic manipulation. a first stage where they were quite insulated from political manipulation, and a second stage where both faced the same patronage "attack."[46] While PSA and FOPAR had been relatively spared from patronage and clientelism during the 1990s, they both confronted a head-on patronage and clientelistic assault by the Radical party during the year 2000. The Radical Party (UCR) which won the presidency[47] in 1999 saw in deconcentrated antipoverty programs a key instrument to re-energize their languishing provincial political machines. Understanding the way these programs reacted to this change in clientelism was an interesting window into the conditions under which poor people could demand accountability to stop clientelism.

Third, since both programs were implemented at the provincial level with relative autonomy, they offered an opportunity to observe variation in the context of implementation

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[46] I will consider patronage and clientelism as similar forms of political exchange, the main difference being that clientelism is more penetrating and all-encompassing than patronage. While patronage involves mostly the distribution of public jobs in exchange for partisan support, with clientelism, all public decision-making may become a token of exchange: from a birth certificate to a building permit, from a disability pension to public housing, from a development project to a tax exemption. (see Piattoni 2001)

[47] UCR was the main party of the Alianza coalition that won the presidential elections.

across provinces. For each program, I have used the *embedded case study* design, that is when within a case "attention is also given to a subunit or subunits" of analysis.[48] For this, out of the twelve provinces about which I gathered information, I looked for cases that would illustrate contrasts in terms of social accountability, and try to find out what explained the difference in performance. I ended up using eight provinces (Misiones, Santiago del Estero, Corrientes, Chaco, Entre Rios, Tucuman, Jujuy, and Cordoba).

To facilitate the understanding of the different actors involved in both programs Table 5 presents the five key actors involved at the provincial level, the generic terms used to refer to them, and some of their characteristics.

Table 5. Map with Key Actors in CDD Programs

Actor	Generic terms used	Who are they?/Characteristics	
		FOPAR	PSA
Provincial Coordinators	Provincial Coordinators (PC), Provincial Managers	A professional, with short term contract, Provincial Coordinator	
Provincial Technical Support Team	Field program staff,	Inspectors (engineers, architects) Social Assistants (social workers, sociologists, anthropologists)	Most were Agricultural engineers, some agricultural technicians.
Sub contracted third party providers of technical assistance	"providers", "contractors" "third party providers" "subcontracted providers"	• Private firms • Individual professionals • Provincial NGOs	Same as FOPAR **plus** • Farmers federations that have professionals/technicians • Public sector organizations with agreements with PSA
Target Population	Beneficiary groups, beneficiaries, community organizations	Beneficiaries Nucleus (NUBs)	• Farmers groups • Federations of farmers groups
Partners in Governance of Program	Partners	• Provincial Government/ very limited role.	• 2 Farmers Delegates • 1 rep from NGOs • 1 rep from Prov Govt • 1 rep from provincial INTA

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[48] Yin 2003

Data Collection

Between August 2000 and December 2001 I spent nine months doing field research in Argentina. Field work involved about 200 in-depth and semi-structured interviews to a wide range of actors. Some of the interviewees became key informants with whom I conducted several interviews, or day-long car trips throughout the countryside visiting projects. In the nation's capital, where both programs have their headquarters, I interviewed 10 officials from FOPAR, 8 from PSA, 3 from the Secretary of Agriculture, and 3 from the Ministry of Social Development. I also interviewed 6 academics that have done research on these programs or on antipoverty issues in Argentina, 5 national level development NGOs, as well as 4 officials from the World Bank. At the provincial level, I visited four provinces (Misiones, Santiago del Estero, Chaco, and Corrientes). In these provinces, I interviewed about 62 farmers participating in these programs and others that had not participated, as well as leaders from 4 rural labor unions. I also interviewed the 18 staff from PSA's provincial technical teams and 16 from FOPAR, 6 staff from the provincial Ministry of Agriculture, 8 from the local branch of the agricultural research and extension institute (INTA), 12 from provincial NGOs, as well as 8 mayors and municipal councilors. In addition, I interviewed farmers and PSA officials from three other provinces (Tucuman, Jujuy, Entre Rios) as well as 15 provincial and regional Farmers Delegates from twelve provinces (the seven aforementioned plus San Juan, San Luis, Neuquen, La Rioja, Santa Fe).

I attended four events where PSA staff and stakeholders discussed policy issues. In three of these events, lasting two to three days, farmer representatives from all over the country were present. In addition, I analyzed archival material from these two programs. Archival research included minutes from provincial meetings of stakeholder committees, as well as evaluation

meetings. I also reviewed the magazines that the PSA provincial offices published as well as other more informal means they had to communicate with farmers. I analyzed internal monitoring reports as well as ex-post evaluations done by independent researchers. I also used newspaper articles in the national and provincial press that registered some of the mobilizations of PSA farmers.

I had access to and analyzed a project monitoring database that FOPAR had in its headquarters which contained detailed information about project implementation (including contractors performance, community oversight, etc). Unfortunately, the software was not prepared for easy data manipulation, and the copy I had hoped to convert to a more friendly software was lost when my computer crashed in 2002.[49] Still, I managed to do significant "manual" analysis of the data. In particular, I systematized 133 projects implemented in the province of Misiones. In addition, I reviewed and systematized the findings of monitoring reports, which provided more extensive narratives of the implementation experience of a sample of projects. Probably the richest depiction of the life of these projects came from the "diaries" that FOPAR frontline social workers carried of their visits to rural communities during the initial years of the program. I had the opportunity to read and take notes from some of these diaries.

The fact that my fieldwork straddled the period before and after the patronage and clientelistic attack of both programs gave me a good opportunity to contrast both periods. I had already gained the trust of many. Part of my fieldwork involved hanging out in the national headquarters and provincial offices of these programs, reading documents, having informal conversations with the staff over coffee breaks or having a beer after work. Gaining their trust was important not only to understand better how they saw their work, but also for them to share

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[49] Needless to say, I tried to get another copy but the situation of the program prevented me from doing it.

with me the clientelistic politics that were going on inside the programs with the change in government, without fear of losing their jobs.

1.4. Preview of Key Arguments and Contributions

This dissertation conveys two broad messages to those engaged in the CDD debate (one to the critics and one to the advocates of these programs), and makes two contributions to the literature on civic engagement. For a more detailed and comprehensive summary of the findings and lessons see the conclusions chapter

To the critics of CDD, the message is that despite the vulnerability of CDD programs to clientelistic and patronage pressures, they can also create the conditions to prevent these forms of political manipulation. And these conditions have to do with the potential these programs have for enabling beneficiaries to become effective accountability-demanding agents; an image that, again, differs from the critics' portrayal of CDD programs as only capable of bland forms of civic engagement. As is common in many participatory programs, both PSA and FOPAR enjoyed an initial phase during which the top officials that sponsored these programs protected them from the political pressures that would have undermined their objectives. As is also common, however, when these top officials left office, both FOPAR and PSA had to confront strong patronage and clientelistic attacks. And here is where the until then similar paths of these two programs diverged; FOPAR, following the more conventional response, succumbed to this attack and declined its performance, ultimately leading to the collapse of the program; PSA, in contrast, saw beneficiary groups mounting a strong defense of the program, denouncing the patronage and clientelistic attack through the media, mobilizations, occupying the program's

provincial offices, ultimately leading to prevent the take-over attempt, and to sustain the original objectives and nature of the program.

While conventional wisdom would explain cases like PSA on the basis of favorable circumstances (e.g., the presence of higher levels of social capital), that explanation would not apply in this case since the context under which both programs operated was quite similar (both worked with a similar type of population in the same territory and were implemented in the same political and institutional context). What was different between PSA and FOPAR was the approach of these programs to beneficiary oversight, which leads me to my second point.

To the advocates of CDD, the message is that CDD programs will have a higher level of beneficiary oversight if instead of focusing predominantly on accountability at the project level, as it has been the tendency so far, they focus more on increasing the capacity of beneficiary groups to demand accountability from program managers and staff about the way decisions are made and the program is governed. Accountability about program governance and project implementation are not incompatible, and both are needed. What I argue is that the emphasis should be the reverse of what the conventional approach has been, and the argument is that in the context of CDD programs it is difficult to have beneficiary oversight at the project level without having oversight at the program governance level.

I found that for beneficiary oversight to work at the project level (i.e., for beneficiaries to be able to control the subcontracted providers of technical assistance) it was not sufficient that (as FOPAR did) beneficiaries had control of the resources and authority to manage the contractual relation with providers. Due to asymmetries of technical knowledge and power between beneficiaries and providers, the former *depended* on the support of program provincial staff willing to level out these inequalities. Ensuring the assistance from the provincial program

staff (both managers and supervisors) was critical, then, for beneficiary oversight at the project level. PSA beneficiaries were able to maintain this assistance because they were capable of overseeing the way the program was governed, and thus of preventing that committed program staff were replaced with clientelistic-oriented one. FOPAR beneficiaries lacked this capacity and could not do it.

What does it take to enable beneficiary oversight at the governance level? Why was PSA more successful than FOPAR at doing it? The main argument is that PSA's program design expressed a *different* conception of civic engagement and beneficiary oversight, more political, than the one that pervaded FOPAR and that is common in most CDD programs.

FOPAR's conception of civic engagement (or "community empowerment" to use the donors term) was about strengthening the capacities of beneficiaries to organize at the village level, to increase their capacities to solve village-specific problems through self-help and collective action. It reflected the more apolitical, small-is-beautiful version of social capital, in which the government was present only initially to facilitate this local organizing effort. Therefore, when it came to designing institutional mechanisms to strengthen beneficiary oversight, it was natural for FOPAR to focus on strengthening beneficiary oversight at the local, project level, on increasing beneficiary capacity to demand accountability from subcontracted service providers.

PSA's conception of civic engagement, in contrast, was about *minifundistas* becoming a movement at the provincial and national levels defending its right to influence government policies, it was about organizing concrete social group that had been the object of historical neglect and that deserved to be treated differently by government. PSA's approach, then, was to strengthen the capacities of beneficiaries to organize in supra-village networks at the provincial

and national level, to support the emergence of a minifundistas movement, and to use those networks to engage directly in demand-making and collaboration with government around programs and policies aimed at the minifundistas sector. Therefore, it was natural for PSA to focus beneficiary oversight over the governance dimension of the program, monitoring the way program managers and staff made decisions regarding the implementation of the program.

PSA had a more political conception of beneficiary oversight than FOPAR to a large extent because of the distinct origins of these programs, because of the institutional characteristics of the actors that built them. PSA was an indigenously designed program that emerged from a network of rural development NGOs and professionals that had been collaborating inside and outside government for over thirty years (usually as part of efforts to bring the reality of minifundistas to the government agenda). While the World Bank funding for PSA began a couple of years after the program had already been designed, FOPAR was designed largely under the advice and support from the World Bank. The ideas for designing FOPAR, came to a large extent from the international fashion with social funds and direct financing to community in multilateral organizations. FOPAR's institutional roots were more shallow, its embedded ness in the network of development agents in the country much weaker and artificial than in PSA. It is important to note that the difference between PSA and FOPAR in this respect was not so much in terms of the background of each program's staff. In fact, their backgrounds were very similar. FOPAR's staff also came from the NGO sector, from academia, they also had trajectories of social activism. The difference lied in that PSA's staff formed part of a larger community that tied them together around a common cause.

Finally, in addition to the literature on CDD (and participatory development programs in general), this dissertation makes two contributions to the literature on civic engagement. One is

to challenge a core argument that is entrenched in much of the literature on citizen oversight (particularly in Latin America), namely, that a necessary condition for citizen oversight to work is an arms length relation between citizens and the state to ensure the autonomy of the former to oversee the state. The program that performed better in terms of accountability had a mechanism that blurred the boundaries between beneficiary and government (PSA co-governance through Provincial Units). Differences in the performance of PSA across provinces suggests that what is important is *not* to keep beneficiaries and governments apart but rather to overcome the tensions involved in relations of critical collaboration (i.e., relations where both actors need to collaborate with each other but also need to remain vigilant and critical of each other). The other contribution relates to the sustainability of participatory programs. The literature on civic engagement has focused more on analyzing the origins of participatory institutional experiments than on explaining what allows some of these innovations to be sustained over time while others perish. By explaining the factors that led to the sustainability of PSA and the demise of FOPAR, this dissertation contributes to fill that gap.

1.5. Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized as follows:

Chapter 2 and 3 are about the main social accountability outcomes and about the context in which programs operate. They present the evidence about social accountability with respect to beneficiary-provider, and beneficiary-government official relations. They are also organized according to the two major political contexts under which these programs operated. Chapter 2 presents what the social accountability outcomes were during the initial participation friendly context. Chapter 3 focuses on the period during which both programs had to confront the patronage and clientelistic attack.

Chapters 4 and 5 are about the factors that explain why PSA had higher levels of social accountability than FOPAR, and why PSA performed better in some provinces than others. Chapter 4 focuses on how farmers developed the collective capacity and Chapter 5 focuses on how farmers developed the motivation to demand accountability. The final chapter provides a summary of the main findings of the dissertation.

Chapter 2
Accountability Demands in a Participation Friendly Context

According to conventional wisdom on empowerment and accountability, beneficiaries were in a much better position to hold providers accountable for their performance in FOPAR than in PSA. While in both programs beneficiaries could chose the provider of technical assistance, in FOPAR beneficiaries controlled the resources for paying providers while in PSA it was the provincial office of the program that did that. FOPAR beneficiaries could fire the provider if they were not satisfied, and/or use that threat to discipline them. PSA beneficiaries could not. Instead they had to express their complaints through the provincial office.

When I looked at the actual experience of beneficiaries-providers relations in both programs, however, I did not find much of a difference in terms of beneficiary oversight. In fact, what stood out in both programs was the importance that field program staff had in ensuring that third party providers of technical assistance (whether private firms, professionals, NGOS, etc) were held accountable for their performance. In both programs it was hard for beneficiaries to control private providers on their own because of asymmetries of information, power, and organization. What made beneficiary oversight work well was not so much whether beneficiaries could hire and fire providers or not, but the complementary role that field program staff played in monitoring providers and in strengthening beneficiaries oversight role. These provincial field staff as well their provincial managers were key in balancing out the asymmetries between beneficiaries and providers. The partnership between provincial staff and beneficiaries in monitoring providers was enabled by the favorable context in which these programs operated during the initial years. Similarly to other cases, the top officials who had sponsored these programs (the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Social Development) provided political protection during the initial years of implementation, preventing patronage and

clientelism from dictating government officials' behavior. This chapter focuses, then, on this initial period that goes from their inception until the year 2000, characterized for being a "participation-friendly" context.

The chapter is organized in four parts. The first two sections discuss beneficiary-providers relations in contexts where exit is an option (FOPAR) and where it is not (PSA). The last two sections discuss beneficiary-government officials during this participation-friendly context.

2.1. Controlling Providers When Exit is Present

During my work with CDD programs in Central America, a common observation that impact evaluations made regarding cases of poor project performance was that beneficiaries[50] lacked "teeth" in their control over contractors. Even if beneficiaries complained about contractors performance, these evaluations pointed out, they did not have the capacity to impose sanctions on contractors and therefore the latter did not feel any pressure to respond to beneficiaries' complaints.[51] One of the examples of giving "teeth" to community control, it was thought by donors evaluating these programs, was to do what FOPAR did, to allow communities to chose (hire and fire) contractors.

After reviewing the files of more than two hundred FOPAR projects in two provinces and interviewing dozens of communities, contractors, and program staff, my conclusion is that choice was not as important as portrayed by common wisdom. While beneficiaries' actions contributed to holding contractors accountable, beneficiaries' contribution came more in the

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[50] By beneficiaries I mean the beneficiaries of these projects, usually village-level groups or organizations in poor rural areas, mostly formed by relatively poor people although usually these groups also encompassed the relatively better off in those villages.

form of providing information to field government officials about contractor's performance than in firing providers or keeping them under a tight leash. When contractors were taken to account, it was rarely the product of communities action alone but more commonly of communities and government agents acting together.

The vigilant eye that some community members kept on contractors was often an important source to assess and correct the contractors' performance. They knew how many days was the contractor at the work site. They checked whether the materials being used were of the same quality as those indicated in the project; or whether the well was as deep as it was supposed to be. When a contractor wanted to locate the community center in a different place than the one the community had chosen (because it was more convenient), the community made the initial decision stick.

It was also clear that exit *alone* was *not* the most effective way for communities to exert influence over contractors' performance. During the initial years of the program, in which FOPAR relied to a greater extent on communities to discipline contractors, the number of projects with problems due to contractors' performance was quite significant. Still very few contractors were fired. In Misiones, more than half of the projects executed between 1995 and 1998 had implementation problems due to poor contractor's performance (73 out of 133). (see Table 6). While in about half of these cases the consequences were only longer construction times, in the other half the consequences were more serious as they meant poor quality of infrastructure (e.g., roofs that started leaking, walls that fell, wells too shallow to find water). Still, communities replaced the contractor in only 5% of these problematic projects (4 out of 73). In the province of Corrientes, out of 130 projects only in four of them community groups

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[51] See ESA Consultores (1999). ESA Consultores was a consulting firm that did most of the ex post evaluations of Social Funds in Central America for the World Bank, IDB, and other donors.

decided to change the individual consultant or the firm contracted, even though, reviewing the projects records there were many more instances where this would have been warranted. After the first few years of program implementation, the monitoring division of the Ministry of Social Development (SIEMPRO)[52] commissioned an ex-post evaluation on a random sample of twenty six projects across four provinces. It confirmed that problems with contractors were a generalized problem. In 46% of the projects the contractor was responsible for substantial delays or construction problems due to insufficient attendance to the works site or lacking the minimum technical qualifications (12 out of 26).[53]

Table 6. Incidence of Contractors Behavior on Project Performance—Misiones 1995-1998

Number of projects...	No.	% (out of 133)
...where construction took significantly more than what was planned due to problems with contractors	37	28%
....where the infrastructure was of an unsatisfactory or bad quality partly because of poor technical assistance	40	30%
...with any of the above problems [some projects had both]	**73**	**55%**
...where the beneficiaries fired the contractor because of poor performance	4	*5% (out of the 73)*

Source: FOPAR Information Management System.

NUBs had a hard time controlling service providers because of the existence of large asymmetries of technical capacity and power between them, with beneficiaries on the weaker side of the relationship. Briefly, it was because (i) beneficiary groups lacked the technical knowledge to control contractors; (ii) NUBs feared that firing contractors would lead to political retaliation or losing other benefits that they got from their relationship with the contractor; (iii) contractors used their status to manipulate or trick communities in doing things that were negative for the project. According to SIEMPRO's ex-post evaluation, in 40% of the projects

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[52] SIEMPRO was the monitoring and evaluation division of the Secretariat/Ministry of Social Development, and it was initiated as part of the same World Bank loan that funded FOPAR.

[53] Mallimacci et al (1998).

studied beneficiaries said that they felt overpowered by professionals and that there had been intense conflict with them.[54]

As FOPAR officials identified these weaknesses they gradually took a more active role in the beneficiary-contractor relationship. They did two things. On the one hand, FOPAR's frontline workers (the *inspectors* who supervised the infrastructure aspect of the project and the *social workers* who supervised group dynamics) became more attentive to reduce beneficiary-provider asymmetries (see below). On the other hand, FOPAR managers took steps to improve the quality of the supply of contractors from which communities selected. Both of these factors resulted in a gradual improvement in contractors' performance.

In the remainder of this section I present both the most important asymmetries that beneficiaries had with contractors and also how FOPAR officials' intervention restored the balance. The asymmetries that communities had vis-à-vis contractors had to do with a variety of factors that can be broadly grouped as imbalances of technical knowledge and/or power.

In some cases, it had to do with technical knowledge. While NUBs provided valuable information about the contractor's performance, they often lacked the technical capacity to oversee certain aspects of the contractor's performance. For instance, many beneficiaries did not realize if the roof was built well or not. It was only when FOPAR's inspectors came to tell them that there was a problem, and that they had to demand the architect to fix it that they did it. The reports that FOPAR's inspectors filled for each project were full of remarks about technical aspects that the contractor had overlooked and that the communities had missed out completely, from the proper preparation of the cement (so that it did not have too much water) to a wall that did not have the required thickness. There were, of course, exceptions. Some villages had a mason with significant construction experience who could challenge the professional's decisions.

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[54] Mallimacci et al (1998)

But, in general, beneficiaries were at a disadvantage when interacting with the contractor because of their lack of technical knowledge.

In other cases, it was not a problem of asymmetrical knowledge but power. For instance, some beneficiaries found it difficult to confront contractors because they feared political retaliation, as in the case of a community in the province of Corrientes which had requested a water system. To dig the hole for the water system, the contractor and his partner submitted a bill for $5,000 which was the price for a 60 meter-deep excavation. The community, who had watched the perforation process, realized that the hole didn't have 60 meters. They estimated it had about 16 meters, but they were scared of denouncing the contractor. The contractor was a professional with political affiliations linked to the brother of the governor "Tato" Romero Feris. At the time, Romero Feris was one of the most important *caudillos* of Corrientes, which he governed through his provincial party PANU (Partido Nuevo). PANU, which was known as one of the most corrupt and clientelistic provincial parties in the country, was at the peak of its control over provincial politics, though not for much longer.[55]

Fearing retaliation from the party if they confronted the contractor, the community opted for alerting FOPAR's provincial team about the situation, asking them to go to the community to verify. FOPAR sent one of its inspectors who requested an official driller to do a physical inspection and called the contractors to be present at the meeting where the hole was going to be measured. The result was that the hole did not have the 60 meters that appeared in the bill they had submitted. They had to acknowledge it in front of the community and the latter, supported by FOPAR, requested their resignation. FOPAR also sanctioned these contractors by requesting that they resign in other projects that they were about to begin assisting. The willingness of FOPAR's

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[55] Not much later on, governor Romero Feris was jailed and indicted, and the province intervened by the federal government, due to the widespread corruption and mismanagement of provincial finances.

provincial team to face the political heat that the provincial party put on it was a critical condition for the success of cases like this one. Political parties exerted strong pressures on provincial teams to be able to influence the program's decision-making.

Other times, contractors' power over beneficiaries came not from their connections to a certain political party but because they were a "bridge" for communities to access other resources that communities valued. Sometimes, the contractor is an agent that has been providing assistance to that community for a few years, either as a member of an NGO, a provincial agency or the local government. Some groups were willing to sacrifice poor performance of the contractor in FOPAR's project in exchange for keeping the future (longer-term) benefits the contractor could bring to them. For instance, in the community of Blanco Cue in Corrientes FOPAR had to fire the contractor because he was not going as regularly as he was supposed to. Despite the fact that he had missed many of the visits he had committed to, and despite FOPAR's insistence that the community group should at least threaten to fire him, the group refused to do it. The reason was that this contractor was working for the Provincial Secretariat of Agriculture (SAP) and was one of the few "powerful" contacts that they had outside of the community. He had brought workfare program benefits to members of the community (Plan Trabajar), he brought the seeds from the provincial seeds distribution program, etc. According to the president of the community group: *"people owe him favors, they won't 'resign' [meaning fire] Balbuena"* ["no lo van a renunciar a Balbuena"]. Balbuena had warned this group that if they fired him they could forget of the Trabajar plans. In a very uncommon move for FOPAR, the provincial office decided to fire him and take the responsibility away from the community.

Another source of contractor power that was common was the one emanating from the higher status and respect that the voice of a professional (the "engineer" or the "architect")

carried in the eyes of a community. For instance, even though the role of the contractor with regards to buying of construction materials was only to provide advice to communities, with the responsibility for buying lying entirely on the community, some contractors tricked or bullied communities in giving them the money for buying inputs, and then they managed this money on their own. In one project in Corrientes, the architect convinced the community to give him US$13,000 of the project budget for buying inputs. A FOPAR official then heard that this contractor was spending his time and money "drinking" in the bar of a hotel in the provincial capital. FOPAR's provincial coordinator informed the community and jointly they pressured the political ward, who had promoted the project and appointed the professional, to recover (at least partly) the project money.

All these examples show the importance that FOPAR field level officials had in compensating for beneficiaries weaknesses in disciplining contractors. The importance of these officials came through not only in my interviews with beneficiaries but it was also captured in other studies. When the ex-post evaluation asked beneficiaries whether they thought they could have implemented the project without support from FOPAR's officials 97% answered in the negative.[56]

In addition to compensating for beneficiaries weaknesses, FOPAR officials also tried to improve contractors' performance by operating on the supply-side of technical assistance. They realized that they were having so many problems partly because the contractors did not have the adequate profile for the job, and therefore made an effort to improve the supply of assistance. If we take the 73 projects for Misiones that had problems with contractors (presented in Table 6 before), in 77% of them FOPAR monitoring reports indicated that the contractor's profile was

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[56] Mallimacci et al (1998), p. 28. Although "implementing the project" is not limited to dealing with the contractor, it is a significant part of this kind of projects.

not the adequate for the job.[57] The adequate profile for the job for FOPAR meant a professional who not only was technically qualified but, more importantly, who understood that one of the central objectives of the program was to increase the capacities of poor people to actively search for solutions to their community problems, that treated poor people fairly and with respect—for some contractors it was degrading to be contracted by people they considered inferior, and tended to dismiss beneficiaries' observations. To improve the quality of the supply of technical assistance FOPAR officials did several things: they limited the number of projects that each contractor could assist to three (initially there was no limit); they blacklisted those who had had serious misbehaviors; and gave more orientation to contractors about the kind of attitude they need to have when working. There was also some process of self-exclusion—i.e., the strict control that FOPAR officials and communities exerted over contractors during the first stage of the program convinced the most opportunist contractors that it would be too hard to get a free ride and therefore desisted from offering their services. As a result of these efforts to improve the quality of the supply of service provision, the number of problems declined, and thus the need for beneficiaries to control service providers and for FOPAR officials to compensate beneficiaries' weaknesses. This doesn't mean that there were no problems but that they were significantly less than before.

2.2. Controlling Providers When Exit is Absent

A look at the experience of PSA provides further proof that a good relationship between program officials and beneficiaries is more important for controlling third party providers than having available the exit option. PSA beneficiaries had "voice" (they could propose to the

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[57] In 37 projects the answer was that the provider *completely* lacked the profile, and in 19 projects that the provider *partially* lacked the profile.

program who they wanted their provider to be, they assessed the performance of the provider) but differently from FOPAR they had no "exit" option (providers were hired, paid, and fired by the program). Still, there were no significant differences between PSA and FOPAR in the level of control that beneficiaries had over providers. In fact, the trajectory of beneficiary-providers relationships in PSA had remarkable similarities with the one in FOPAR. There was also a difficult beginning in PSA in which many service providers were not performing well, and government officials were also crucial in improving the performance of service providers both directly and by empowering beneficiaries to control providers more effectively.

When I looked at the records on beneficiaries satisfaction with extensionists (service providers) that PSA had in Misiones I was struck to see that most of these assessments were positive. When I shared my surprise with program officials in the province they referred me to the assessments of the initial years (1993-1996) rather than the later years (the ones which I had been reviewing so far). The contrast was clear. Reports from the earlier years had repeated references to problems with providers. In some cases, the problem was that the extensionist had a very hierarchical/authoritarian relationship with farmers that led to either impose his/her ideas about what project to do, or meddling in the group dynamics. Usually these were extensionists who had been formed in the national or provincial extension and research agencies, where the prevailing organizational culture was of agricultural engineers as the owners of knowledge and farmers (specially if they were poor) as ignorant. In other cases, extensionists were involved in politics, and using the program for their political campaign.

The problem of poor contractor's performance was compounded by the weaknesses of farmers in controlling them. According to PSA officials at the national level, during the early years, beneficiaries in most provinces were quite fearful and passive in their control of

extensionists: *"In the beginning farmers had the fear that if they complained to us [PSA officials] about their technicians, they would lose the professional and no one would replace him."* Either because they had never had professional assistance before or because this assistance had been top-down, it was hard for farmers to see themselves as the principals in their relation with professionals. Many farmers were also accustomed to be passive. Small farmers that had been growing tobacco (a very important cash crop in Misiones), for instance, had grown accustomed to follow the orders from the tobacco company's instructor. This instructor visited periodically to each field and told farmers exactly what to do, when, how, and where. As one farmer put it *"I felt castrated, I couldn't do anything on my own."*

Reviewing assessment reports, minutes from meetings, and talking to both officials and farmers that had been for many years with the program revealed a picture of gradual improvement in the quality of service provision: doing all the visits that were programmed (and sometimes even more), treating farmers with respect and taking into account their points of view, attending the training sessions that the program gave to professionals, etc. Long time providers acknowledged that as time went by beneficiaries became more assertive in their interactions and challenged them more. PSA officials also said that beneficiaries reached out more frequently to complain about the extensionist.

Similarly to FOPAR, improvements in the beneficiaries capacity to control providers and in provider's performance in general came to a large extent as a result of the active role that PSA public officials played in improving both the demand for good performance and the quality of the supply of service provision. In terms of improving the demand, there was greater emphasis in informing beneficiaries better about their rights, dissipating concerns that if they complain they would lose technical assistance. This was done through the different communication mechanisms

that PSA had: meetings, radio programs, newsletters, as well as through Farmer

Representatives[58] themselves. Several Farmer Representative made remarks like this one:

"producers are much better informed than before, they don't accept that tecnicos impose the

project [...] as representatives we try to help groups to form before the tecnico arrives. So the

group already has an idea of what they want before the tecnico arrives."

PSA officials also made a big effort to reinforce the notion that farmers had valuable

knowledge, that they were "experts" in agriculture, and that they should not shy away from

questioning providers' technical knowledge. One of the events I attended and that embodied this

perspective was the Annual Seeds Fair that the program organized in each province and

sometimes by regions (several provinces). These were two to three day events where farmers

from all over the province got together with providers, and the key message was about farmers'

realizing the variety of seeds that they already had in their fields, and exchanging the knowledge

among farmers about what kind of crop their different varieties of seed would produce, rather

than looking only for hybrid seeds and depending on the market.

On the "supply" side PSA officials either blacklisted or put pressure to leave to those

professionals that did not perform according to the expectations. According to an official from

Misiones: *"We did a purge of those [the ones doing politics]. We didn't accept working with*

them any more. There were others that did not have a vocation for this type of job, and they

progressively self-excluded. They couldn't keep-up with the demands of the program." Officials

in Santiago del Estero also told of the different ways in which they improved the supply of

technical assistance. For instance: *"we believed necessary to stop those professionals that*

manipulate young [incipient] groups"; "we don't accept professionals that don't have the

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[58] These are the representatives of farmers in the provincial stakeholder committees.

adequate technical profile [...] with a bad background, such as a lack of commitment with small producers."

In addition, in provinces like Misiones and Santiago del Estero, PSA officials pursued a deliberate and active strategy of attracting professionals who were committed to a vision of empowering farmers. This included both reaching out to veteran professionals that were dispersed (and sometimes undervalued) throughout the different public bureaucracies in the province, as well as recruiting young technicians (some of whom came from farmers families) that were later on trained by the more veteran professionals. It also meant strengthening the NGOs with the longest trajectory in rural development, which (as the rest of the NGOs in Argentina during the 1990s) had been weakened by a reduction in the inflow of foreign aid towards NGOs. The importance of these professionals was not just that they treated farmers with respect and listened to their opinions but also that they pushed farmers to demand accountability, to take the initiative, to speak up, that they nurtured farmers with leadership potential. In fact, one of the indications that PSA used to know if an extensionist was good was if his or her groups became more vocal and outspoken during public meetings.

Although FOPAR officials had taken a similar approach in shaping the supply of technical assistance, there were important differences in the type of relationship that each program established with service providers which had implications for accountability. I will come back to these differences in chapter 5. Here I just want to highlight that, differently from FOPAR, beneficiaries in PSA were often part of the efforts for improving the supply of technical assistance. In addition to the individual assessment of providers that beneficiaries in both programs did as part of project implementation, PSA beneficiaries also had several instances where they did collective institutional assessments of the overall technical assistance. These

involved different instances where all farmers or their representatives expressed their views about the strategy or the principles that the program had for regulating technical assistance. An example of these are the provincial Assessment Meetings in which beneficiaries assessed the different aspects of the program's performance, included technical assistance. This is how a Farmer Representative from Chaco explained the significance of those meetings:

"In my province, there was this large meeting between all farmers and the guys from PSA to assess how the program was doing and one of our conclusions was to complain that many technicians were just coming to our plots, giving their technical speech, getting their visits signed by us, and then leaving. But we wanted these technicians to help us not just with our crops or animals but also with our organizing aspects, helping our groups of producers to work better together and to address collectively the next steps we have to take to improve our situation. Many technicians didn't like it. The guys from PSA [provincial staff] organized meetings with technicians to discuss this, and we [farmers' representatives] were there. The response to our request varied according to the extensionist but in general it [the extensionists' performance] has improved substantially."

Since PSA was a program where beneficiaries did not have the exit option, in addition to working on the demand and the supply, what was critical was building trust between farmers and PSA officials. In later chapters I will describe how this trust was built. Here I just want to share an illustration of the importance that trusting public officials had for farmers. While PSA was negotiating a loan with the World Bank, and at the insistence of the latter, the program considered the idea of giving the resources for technical assistance directly to producers groups, for them to hire and pay the extensionist (like FOPAR did). In Corrientes, PSA selected the four

better-organized and more assertive groups and offered them this possibility, but the four groups rejected it. One of the main reasons was that they did not want to spoil the good relationship they had built with the extensionist by introducing money issues between them. They had a trust relationship with the extensionist and wanted to avoid saying "we'll cut you the funds." They preferred to complain to the PSA office in Corrientes and for PSA to "pull the ears" of the professional.

2.3. Overseeing Provincial Staff Managing the Program

This section is about the capacities of beneficiaries to demand accountability from bureaucrats during the initial years of the program, and raises the question of why beneficiaries had higher capacity to demand accountability from PSA staff than from FOPAR's. Although the presence of participation-friendly, responsive, program staff (managers and technical staff) during the initial years of these programs (see next section) made it less necessary for beneficiaries to demand accountability from them, that did not mean that beneficiaries were in accord with everything that these staff did. The question, then, is what control did beneficiaries have over these government staff? After all, government employees were the original target of critique calling for greater beneficiary oversight, and there is enough written on the risks of government malfeasance and rent-seeking to justify this concern. In programs such as FOPAR and PSA where service delivery is substantially contracted-out, the main government responsibility lied in the *governance* aspect of the program. This involves all decisions regarding the allocation and management of government resources: allocation of funding across regions and types of activities within a province? How are subprojects approved? How are subcontractors selected and monitored?

Part of the reason why beneficiaries had higher capacity in PSA than in FOPAR to demand accountability about how program staff managed the program was because PSA had formal institutional arrangements to facilitate this, while FOPAR did not. Here I present the evidence on how those arrangements worked during a participation friendly context and in the next chapter how they worked during the patronage and clientelistic attack. In chapters 4 and 5 I show what were the conditions that enabled beneficiaries to take advantage of these arrangements and use them effectively.

FOPAR beneficiaries had limited control over how the program was governed. From my interviews with FOPAR beneficiaries it was clear that they were dissatisfied with several aspects of the program. For instance, they had questions about why some projects were financed and others were not, why certain communities were chosen for presenting projects and others were not, how much budget the program had and how it was allocated, why the range of projects they could ask for was limited, how beneficiaries had to be organized, etc. Beneficiaries expressed these complaints individually to the inspectors and social workers that visited them. Sometimes they got answers, other times they did not. The important point was that there were no institutional arrangements to channel collective demands for information and explanation about what government officials in FOPAR were doing and why, and beneficiaries never got organized to do it on their own.

In PSA, in contrast, had two institutionalized venues through which farmers could demand accountability from government officials: the *Provincial Unit (PU)* and its correlate at the national level, and the *Annual Assessment Meetings*. PSA officials also used these instances (as well as others means like newsletters and radios) to account for the program actions and decisions without being prompted by farmers. These arrangements allowed beneficiaries to

engage in multiple practices through which they influenced and monitored how bureaucrats governed the program, from questioning the policy the program had for service provision to asking for information and explanations about criteria for selecting projects, why the budget from the national unit was not being transferred, how farmers were represented in decision-making instances, etc. This kind of demands took place both at the provincial and national levels, and even extended outside of the program to other government bodies.

As I have previously mentioned, PSA's *Provincial Unit* was a stakeholders committee where farmers had two elected representatives or Farmers Delegates (FDs). In practice, though, and to make it easier for FDs to represent their constituents, meetings were usually attended by the four FDs (the two "titulares" and the two "suplentes"). These committees met once or twice a month and the main conclusions and decisions of the meetings were recorded in minutes. Reviewing the minutes of these meetings from 1993-2000 in two provinces (Misiones and Santiago del Estero) and talking to farmers, PSA officials, and others present in these meetings it was clear that, in these two provinces, farmers had an active presence that brought greater beneficiary control to the program.

There were two main ways in which FDs participation in the PU increased beneficiary oversight in the program. First, they acted as a "two-way transmission belt" between beneficiaries and the program on a broad range of issues. On the one hand, FDs brought complaints or requests for explanations from farmer groups to the program officials—e.g., why the program had not sent the credit installment that was overdue, or why the program was not attending farmers of certain municipalities any more. On the other hand, FDs relayed information to farmers about the decisions made in the program—e.g., the program had a new line of activity (a grant for certain type of infrastructure). Since FDs were usually elected by

sub-regions of the province, their role was to keep in touch with the farmers that the program was serving in that sub-region. FDs were paid only for attending PU meetings (traveling costs and the daily minimum rural salary) but not for their representation work. Therefore, all the traveling costs and time they spent in communicating with farmers in their subregion was at their own expense. FDs said they tried to do their best by taking advantage of trips that they had to make (when they went to the city and had to pass through certain communities, or when they went to the market fair during the week-end). FDs and PSA officials, however, acknowledged that relying on the good will of FDs was not a good enough communication channel in and of itself. That is why this was complemented by other mechanisms (see below).

Second, FDs were part of the Provincial Unit's discussions about the strategy and management of the program in the province. The main functions of the Provincial Unit were to approve the annual work plan and budget and to review and approve the projects that had been appraised by the Technical Unit.[59] From an accountability perspective, the main contribution of beneficiaries presence was to witness how decisions were made and to raise questions about these decisions. The transparency intrinsic in making decisions in front of FDs (and recorded in minutes) meant that the sole presence of FDs in the Provincial Unit brought a potential degree of beneficiary control over decisions uncommon in most participatory programs. An official from INTA in Santiago del Estero described the impact of farmer's presence in the following terms: *"You always have to remember that the farmers are listening. And if you forget, don't worry, they will remind you."* Reviewing the minutes from different provinces it was clear that, while not all FDs were equally active, overall they raised important questions about things like the strategy of the program in the province (why wasn't the program acting in a certain region of the

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[59] Each PSA provincial office had a Technical Unit formed by 4 to 6 PSA officials and responsible for, among other things, the technical appraisal of projects.

province?), about representation of farmers (why weren't more farmers present in the provincial unit?), the budget (shouldn't there be more money for credit and less for technical assistance?), and other issues. Participating in these discussions had a deep effect in many delegates who said that it confirmed and deepen their perception that "the voice of the producer matters" (*la voz del productor importa*) in the program and "they take us into account" ("nos tienen en cuenta").

If the Provincial Unit was the space where farmers influenced the program through their delegates, the Assessment Meetings were the space for the beneficiaries to interact directly with the program officials and other major stakeholders (providers, provincial government, officials from INTA, NGOs, etc). These Meetings served as a space to have a diagnosis of the program from the beneficiaries' perspective and to see how the program could attend beneficiaries' requests. Depending on the province, and how much money PSA had that year, these meetings happened once or twice a year. In Santiago del Estero, for instance, during the initial years there were three meetings a year, each one of two days, initially about 60 or 80 producers representing their groups, and then up to 400 farmers. In these meetings, the topics ranged from assessing the quality of the technical assistance (similar to the comment presented from the representatives from Chaco in the previous section) to the rate of credit repayment, to questions about program priorities. Another topic which was hotly debated in Santiago del Estero, for instance, was how FDs should be selected. In Santiago del Estero the two FD positions were occupied by members of MOCASE (Movimiento Campesino de Santiago del Estero), a large provincial network of peasant organizations. While MOCASE had been the main partner for PSA, after a couple of years PSA was also assisting an important number of farmer groups that were not part of MOCASE. These farmers demanded from the program that they wanted to chose one of the two representatives in the Provincial Unit. MOCASE initially opposed this arguing that it could

weaken their movement. After many going back and forth that went on for a long time, and very heated discussions, MOCASE accepted the demand from non-MOCASE farmers. I describe this case in more detail in chapter 4.

The Provincial Unit and Assessment Meetings were not only an instance for beneficiaries to question PSA bureaucrats but also for the latter to give accounts to farmers and FDs (withouth prompting) about the different areas of program implementation. For instance, one of the most persistent and disrupting problems that PSA staff had to deal with was the program's budgetary instability and uncertainty. Throughout the program, it was common to have periods during which the Ministry of Finance would not release in time the budget that was approved. Another budgetary problem appeared when the new funds expected from a World Bank loan had to be concentrated during the first two years of the loan only on the northeastern provinces which had suffered severe flooding, disappointing the expectations that farmers and the other stakeholders had about those funds in the non-flooded provinces. Throughout those periods of financial instability and uncertainty, PSA provincial program managers took special care in explaining to farmers what was going on and why the program would not be able to expand to different areas as promised or why it was late in fulfilling its commitments with approved projects, etc.

Besides these formal mechanisms that the program had for channeling demands/ complaints/requests from farmers (i.e., Provincial Unit and Annual Assessments), there were also the informal contacts that farmers had with program officials. In particular with the larger membership organizations (like MOCASE in Santiago del Estero and MAM in Misiones), PSA had a fluid contact. In the words of an official from the office in Santiago del Estero: *"It was very common for the MOCASE leadership to call PSA's provincial coordinator to explain to the*

larger coordinating body of MOCASE why the program had decided to take certain actions.

They (farmer leaders) talked to us [professionals] as equals ("se sentaban de igual a igual)"

The practice of engaging in relationships of accountability with government had effects that exceeded the boundaries of the program. PSA beneficiaries did not limit their demands of accountability to the PSA but also to other government agents. Organizing small producers as a social actor allowed the latter to make demands on and collaborate with their provincial governments in a way they had not been able to do before. One issue that came up in many provinces (e.g., La Rioja, San Juan, Santiago del Estero) was the issue of land titling. In San Juan province, for example, as a result of farmers demands (supported by PSA), the provincial government passed Law 7.039 to legalize land titles. In other provinces, the Agricultural Secretary began consulting farmers for their views on the provincial rural development policy. In still others, the provincial government has created a department to attend to a policy issue raised by farmers. In Misiones, the Ministry of Agriculture created the Department of Town Markets to support the work of the provincial Federation of Town Markets. The federation holds periodic discussions with the department about how the provincial government can support its work.

At the national level, beneficiaries were able to influence national level government officials through the participation of the regional representatives in the National Coordinating Unit of PSA. They lobbied the government to adapt the taxing system to the reality of small producers. Although the Tax Agency created a taxpayer category that better fits their reality, and lowered the tax rate, the movement is unsatisfied with the results and is still demanding further changes. Since 1999 beneficiaries also began to have a more active role confronting national deputies and senators about cuts to programs' budget.

All these are examples that show that PSA beneficiaries were more able to demand accountability from government officials than FOPAR beneficiaries. One event that captures and illustrates well the difference in this area between PSA and other programs like FOPAR was my first interaction with PSA beneficiaries, in September of 2000. About forty Farmers Delegates from all over the country had gathered in downtown Buenos Aires, in an old house that belonged to the church, on a Monday night. They were discussing what the national government was doing to assist them and what they should do to push government to do better. Two representatives from every province in the country had come the day before for a three-day event organized by PSA's national unit. They were there to assess the progress (and lack of progress) of the program. Part of their agenda was also to meet with their representatives in Congress. Liliana, a peasant leader from Santiago del Estero, one of the poorest provinces in Argentina, was very excited with the meetings they had had in Congress. *"We went to the Chamber of Deputies.[...] We complained that this year's budget was too low, we told them that this program was our life and we wanted to know how much they were going to give to the program for next year."* Talking to other delegates from Chaco, La Rioja, Misiones, and Corrientes, I learned that in their meeting farmers had asked Deputies about other issues like the tax reform. They had also met with the Secretary of Agriculture and, had asked him why wasn't he doing something more.

In total, farmers met with 34 National Deputies and six Senators, and went to the media and defended the program. As a result of these meetings, PSA's budget suffered a much lower cut than was initially proposed (the budget for 2001 that had been cut down by 7.5 million dollars to 2.5 million was increased to 8.5 million). The representatives that participated in these meetings (poor small farmers that met national politicians for the first time) told me it was a powerful experience in which they learned how government institutions work and that gave them

greater confidence to try to influence budgetary and policy decisions in their respective provincial and municipal governments.

The contrast between what they had told me with my experience with beneficiaries of other participatory programs struck me. While I was accustomed to seeing beneficiaries receiving low-level officials in their own remote communities, these beneficiaries were coming to the heart of the state to see top congressmen and high government officials in the country; while those beneficiaries were responding questions made by others, these beneficiaries were the ones asking questions and demanding answers; while those beneficiaries often had a fuzzy knowledge of what the program was about, these ones knew about the budgetary situation of the program. What was more remarkable, they were making these demands with the support of a public program.

2.4. Participation Friendly Officials (or the Origins of these Programs)

If one of the conditions that enabled beneficiaries to control providers was the presence of "participation-friendly" government officials—officials willing to resist political pressures that undermined beneficiary's control, willing to teach beneficiaries how to monitor contractors work, and so on—the question then is: Who were these "friends of the poor"?[60] How did they get to these programs? And why were they not behaving like the stereotypical public officials in Argentina—i.e., either as unresponsive, recalcitrant, top-down bureaucrats, or political appointees using these programs to distribute favors within their political machines?

The short answer is that each of these programs resulted from the confluence of three elements: (i) appointing a team to design and coordinate the program who had a strong commitment with the program objectives, backed up by trajectories of social activism and strong

technical credentials, and with no political party allegiances or agenda to compete with the program objectives; (ii) hiring policies that gave great flexibility to form the program staff, and (iii) the political support of their respective Minister/Secretaries who insulated them from patronage pressures. In addition, PSA (and this is a very important difference with FOPAR), was the result of a deep rooted national network of professionals and organizations who had developed a vision for rural development in the country. In what follows I elaborate on these three similarities and one contrast to explain why both PSA and FOPAR staff had these participation-friendly attitudes and orientation.

Both the Secretary of Agriculture (Felipe Sola) and the Secretary of Social Development (Eduardo Amadeo) chose people to design and coordinate these programs who had a strong technical profile and trajectory. For PSA, Secretary Sola invited Gaston Bordelois, one of the most respected persons in the rural development field in Argentina. Bordelois, an agricultural engineer in his sixties, had been Secretary of Agriculture, was board member of an important association of catholic businessmen (ACDE-Asociacion Cristiana de Empresas), member for 25 years and president of an extensive network of ACREA (Asociacion de Consorcios Rurales de Experimentacion Agricola), and had founded one of the most important rural development NGOs in the country (FUNDAPAZ). In addition, he came from a family with deep connections in the agricultural world since his father was one of the founders of the National Agricultural Research and Extension Agency (INTA). He was aided in program design by people with a long trajectory in rural development like Susana Aparicio and Monica Cattaneo (see below). For FOPAR, Secretary Amadeo appointed Ana Etchegaray, an economist with a trajectory as an international consultant with social investment funds in Latin America. Being someone who had worked with multilateral organizations, she was well suited for a program funded by the World

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[60] Joshi and Moore (2000)

Bank. To design the program Etchegaray surrounded herself with a small team of sociologists who had a strong background working with organizations of poor people through NGOs, particularly in rural areas.

Bordelois in PSA and Etchegaray in FOPAR had significant flexibility to recruit staff that met the profile they were looking for. As I mentioned in chapter one, all program staff were temporary government employees, hired as "consultants". Since the structural adjustment reforms implemented by Minister of Finance Domingo Cavallo in the early 1990s, new public employees were contracted as short-term consultants for six months or one year (renewable). The Ministry of Finance did not allow the hiring of new civil servants, and many of the old civil servants (specially the most qualified) accepted the "voluntary retirement" policies and then came back as consultants. Being able to recruit all program staff from scratch, rather than having to work with pre-existing civil servants helps understand partly why program staff was not the stereotypical unresponsive bureaucratic type.

While the recruitment method was different, in both cases it followed an open and transparent process. PSA appointed 21 provincial coordinators through open and extensive consultations and nominations in each province with a wide range of social and political stakeholders (NGOs, rural unions, national and provincial agricultural agencies), selecting coordinators with prestige in the province. FOPAR appointed the initial 6 provincial managers and their staff by public contests. The teams of professionals that both programs put together at the national and provincial level were similar in many ways. They were formed by people with a technical (rather than political) profile and substantive experience in development programs. In the case of PSA this involved people that came from rural development NGOs (CADIF, FUNDAPAZ, INCUPO, INDES), from the rural movements of the 1960s/70s (Ligas Agrarias),

others that had participated in regional programs with small farmers, worked in the provincial secretaries of Agriculture or in INTA, or that taught rural development in national and provincial universities. In the case of FOPAR, it involved people that came from NGOs working in urban grassroots development projects and rural development (CEADEL, GADIS, CEDEPO, and others), from government community development programs, etc.

During the recruitment process, both Secretaries Sola and Amadeo protected the national coordinators from the pressures coming from the governing peronist party to appoint people that did not meet the required qualifications. This political protection was also crucial for keeping the patronage and clientelistic pressures at bay during the initial years. Both Secretaries had a modern vision of politics, believed in participatory programs, and were willing to back up these programs against pressures of the party political machine. In the case of PSA, all the provincial and national level managers I interviewed pointed out that Secretary Sola was crucial in protecting the program from patronage and clientelistic pressures. Sola, an agricultural engineer in his early forties, was a raising politician in the Peronist Party who had already been Minister of Agrarian Issues in the province of Buenos Aires (the most important in the country), and national Deputy heading the Agriculture Commission in Congress. In the case of FOPAR, protection by the Secretary of Social Development was also important but not as strong as in PSA, and it was complemented by the rules established by the World Bank for hiring staff. In 1995, president Menem appointed Eduardo Amadeo as Secretary of Social Development. Amadeo was a renowned progressive economist who had been Director of the Bank of Buenos Aires Province. Scholars that studied social policy in Argentina portrayed his administration as characterized by an emphasis on a technical discourse, its proposals for widening the space for

social participation and strengthening of civil society, as well as for a concern with strengthening

the administrative and professional capacities of the Secretary.[61]

An example of the kind of political protection that Amadeo offered was the case of the

latrine projects in the municipality of Santa Rosa, Corrientes. The Peronist mayor of Santa Rosa

had asked one of his officials to prepare projects for FOPAR. Without following the

participatory procedures required by FOPAR this official had prepared thirteen projects, all for

latrines. After the Evaluation Unit of FOPAR did the routine desk and field appraisals all

projects were rejected (something very unusual) because of problems such as communities not

knowing a project had been presented on their behalf, or because the community had other

priorities, or because another program was going to fund the same project in the same place, etc.

The National Senator for Corrientes called FOPAR's coordinator, arguing the case for

approving, and she passed it on to Secretary Amadeo, who was firmed in backing up the

program's decision.

Though Amadeo provided some protection to FOPAR, FOPAR managers could not rely

completely on him for political protection as PSA was able to do with Sola. An illustration of

this comes from the different fate that the provincial manager of each program had in the

province of Santiago del Estero. Santiago del Estero is arguably the most politically backward

province in the country.[62] Governor Carlos Juarez demanded both Sola and Amadeo to remove

the provincial coordinators of PSA and FOPAR. He accused these coordinators of communists

because their provincial offices were financing projects of MOCASE, one of most vibrant

peasant movements in Argentina based in Santiago. While Sola stood by PSA's coordinator,

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[61] Repetto (2000), pp. 193-4.

[62] Juarez has developed a parallel intelligence and repressive system that allowed him to keep a totallitarian control over provincial matters. Denounced for permanent human rights violations.

Amadeo gave in and removed FOPAR's. Amadeo did a similar thing in Salta, while Sola never accepted pressures to remove any provincial coordinator.

According to the national coordinator having the World Bank's lending and oversight allowed her to use it as "shield" or "excuse" to prevent the governors of Santiago del Estero and Salta from imposing their candidates. Anticipating patronage pressures, during loan negotiations with the World Bank she had made a point of specifying in the Operations Manual that all "key positions" (such as provincial managers) had to be filled through public contests. Since the governors' candidates lacked the minimum technical requirements to participate in the public contest, she informed the governors that they were not eligible to participate in the contest. Although FOPAR's national coordinator was not able to stop pressures to fire the provincial coordinators from Santiago del Estero and Salta, she was at least able to prevent the governors of these provinces (Juarez and Romero) from imposing their candidates for coordinators. The compromise was to leave the positions vacant, and to share the responsibilities of coordinator between Buenos Aires staff and a person from the provincial team.

Despite these similarities in PSA and FOPAR origins, there is one important factor that is different, namely, the source of ideas that motivated and justified the design of each program. While the ideas for designing FOPAR came to a large extent from the fashion with social funds and "direct financing to communities" in organizations like the World Bank, the motivation for designing PSA came from a deep rooted community of professionals and organizations strongly committed with the development of small farmers. This "community" had a broad and in-depth knowledge of the problems and opportunities that afflicted the sector and was sustained by an institutional infrastructure (both public and private) across the country that made it easier to embed the program quickly in the realities of each province. These were people that had been in

and out of government during the last thirty years (usually as part of efforts to bring the reality of "minifundistas" to the government agenda), had founded rural development NGOs, taught rural sociology courses at universities, and overall shared a strong frustration with the historical neglect that small farmers had suffered in Argentina. This network had many of the characteristics of what has been termed a "community of practice."[63]

In contrast, FOPAR was to a large extent an artifact of the fashion of participation and civil society themes in the current development discourse.[64] Its institutional roots were more shallow, its embeddedness in the network of development agents in the country much weaker and artificial. It is important to note that the difference between PSA and FOPAR in this respect was not so much in terms of the background of each program's staff. In fact, their backgrounds were very similar. FOPAR's staff also came from the NGO sector, from academia, they also had trajectories of social activism. The difference lied in that PSA's staff formed part of a larger community that tied them together around a common cause.

During the initial years of these programs FOPAR beneficiaries did not suffer so much the consequences from this lack of control partly because of the pro-participation attitude that

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[63] Wenger et al (2002) "Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis. Engineers who design a certain kind of electronic circuit called phase-lock loops find it useful to compare designs regularly and to discuss the intricacies of their esoteric specialty. Soccer moms and dads take advantage of game times to share tips and insights about the subtle art of parenting. [...] These people don't necessarily work together every day, but they meet because they find value in their interactions. As they spend time together, they typically share information, insight, and advice. They help each other solve problems. They discuss their situations, their aspirations, and their needs. They ponder common issues, explore ideas, and act as sounding boards. They may create tools, standards, generic designs, manuals, and other documents—or they may simply develop a tacit understanding that they share. However they accumulate knowledge, they become informally bound by the value that they find in learning together. This value is not merely instrumental for their work. It also accrues in the personal satisfaction of knowing colleagues who understand each other's perspectives and of belonging to an interesting group of people. Over time, they develop a unique perspective on their topic as well as a body of common knowledge, practices, and approaches. They also develop personal relationships and established ways of interacting. They may even develop a common sense of identity. They become a community of practice." (pp. 4-5)

[64] During Amadeo's tenure in the Social Development Secretariat many other participatory programs were created, with support from IDB and the World Bank, such as the Program to Strengthen Civil Society or the Program for Vulnerable Groups.

FOPAR officials had. However, around 1999 the circumstances that created this "benign" context for FOPAR and PSA began to erode and in finally unraveled in 2000. It is then, under a more hostile context, that the difference in voice between programs will become more critical and salient, and in which the effects of what had happened during the initial period will become clearer. That is the story of the next chapter.

Chapter 3
Accountability Demands in a Patronage and Clientelistic Context

It is not uncommon for participatory programs to enjoy significant political protection during their initial years of activity. As we saw in chapter two, it is common for reformist bureaucrats or politicians to create a window of opportunity in which truly participatory programs are insulated from those who try to manipulate (and distort) these programs for their own rent-seeking purposes. Sustained by a cadre of managers and frontline workers committed to work with the poor, these programs can enjoy a couple of years where its staff can follow the basic goals of the program. These benign contexts, however, usually do not last long. The progressive reformers protecting the program would leave the agency, the pressures to "normalize" the program would become stronger, and the challenge then would be how the program responds to the changed context.

This chapter is about what happened to FOPAR and PSA when their window of opportunity closed and there was a stronger attempt to use them for patronage and clientelism. In particular I focus on how and to what extent the exit and voice accountability models embodied by FOPAR and PSA had enabled beneficiaries to confront patronage and clientelistic pressures. In chapter two I showed that PSA enabled beneficiaries to demand accountability about the governance aspects of the program to a much larger extent than what FOPAR did, but that this difference was evened out by the presence of public officials that tended to behave in an accountable, responsive fashion and that were insulated from clientelistic pressures.

This chapter shows how, once that friendly context was replaced by a much more hostile one, the differences in beneficiary oversight between these two programs stood in starker contrast, eventually influencing the fate that each program will follow. Patronage and clientelism took over FOPAR without eliciting any beneficiary response, and deteriorating the performance

of the program to a level that led to its closing. Faced with a similar take over attempt, PSA's

beneficiaries mobilized to denounce and block patronage and clientelism, not only protecting the

core principles of the program and its continuity but also representing the level of empowerment

that the program had achieved. What the story of these two programs show is that, in contexts

that are prone to patronage and clientelism, establishing mechanisms that allow beneficiaries to

control program governance is one crucial element to ensure the viability of participatory

programs.

This chapter is structured as follows. First, I look at how, as is common in many cases,

the window of opportunity that both programs enjoyed during their initial years progressively

closed down and how they came under similar patronage and clientelistic pressures. The second

and third section look at how each program coped with these pressures, and the role beneficiaries

played in them. A final section presents, in a nutshell, the main argument about what explains the

different levels of beneficiary oversight between programs and within programs across

provinces.

3.1. Working under Patronage and Clientelistic Pressures

As is the case in many developing and developed country contexts, politicians in

Argentina have often used antipoverty programs as vehicles for patronage and clientelism. Even

though many of these programs, like FOPAR and PSA, opted for a deconcentrated provincial

structure to avoid being captured by the provincial political elites (often dominated by caudillos),

they ended up being prey of the party in power at the national level. Appointing and controlling

provincial managers and field staff in these deconcentrated units has been the way in which the

national governing party used these programs for clientelism. Provincial managers' wide

discretion in program implementation allowed them to manipulate program rules to further the

political interests of those who appointed them. Here, as in many other contexts, "clientelism

'implies' patronage."[65] One of the most conspicuous examples of this is the TRABAJAR

Program (renamed recently as Jefes y Jefas de Hogar), a workfare program plagued by scandals

and accusations of patronage and clientelistic practices.[66] Newspapers constantly reported cases

of local politicians (from both parties) distributing workfare benefits among their families and

party members, of supposed beneficiaries that gave ridiculous names and inexistent addresses,[67]

of the surveys showing that most people did not fulfill their labor counterpart,[68] etc. My own

field research (in the context of another project) in the headquarters of Trabajar as well as in the

provinces of Misiones and Corrientes confirmed this broad picture of political manipulation.[69]

One provincial manager of the national Ministry of Labor even spelled out for me some of the

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[65] Although it is common to use the terms patronage and clientelism interchangeably, depending on the geographical and historical context in which they are used, they can refer to different phenomena and not necessarily be a negative phenomenon. For instance, "while in nineteenth century Britain, patronage truly reflected the 'organic ties' betwen representatives and constituencies, in continental Europe patronage often showed a less benign face and was less the expression of constituency ties than sheer instrument of repressive rule" (Piattoni 2001, p.6; for the English case see O'Gorman 2001). Unfortunately, the case of Argentina is more along the lines of the continental European (and American) "model." I will consider patronage and clientelism as similar forms of political exchange, the main difference being that clientelism is more penetrating and all-encompassing than patronage. While patronage involves mostly the distribution of public jobs in exchange for partisan support, with clientelism, all public decision-making may become a token of exchange: from a birth certificate to a building permit, from a disability pension to public housing, from a development project to a tax exemption (p. 6). According to this characterization, "clientelism 'implies' patronage: in order to bend the administrative decision-making process to particularistic criteria, in view of the electoral return that this would yield, the elected officials need to be able to put pressure on career officials, hence to control (albeit informally) their hiring, firing, and advancement" (Piattoni 2001, p.7). In Argentina, controlling officials is even easier than in Europe because most of them do not belong to the civil service but are temporary employees hired for the program.

[66] Kremenchutzky (1997), Ronconi (2002).

[67] One of the most renowned cases is the beneficiary that wrote as his name "Argentino el Diego" (Argentine, The Diego) which alludes to the most popular soccer player in Argentina, Diego Maradona.

[68] In a survey in Capital Federal and Gran Buenos Aires only 18% of those interviewed had fulfilled the labor counterpart—which is the essence of the self-selection mechanism used for targeting poor people.

[69] Serrano (2000).

ways in which provincial managers could (and some did) use their discretion to fool the

safeguards the program had to prevent political manipulation.[70]

The Beginning of the Attack

In the cases of FOPAR and PSA the political protection offered by Secretaries Eduardo

Amadeo and Felipe Sola began to wither away in 1998 when they both left office and were

replaced by more traditional politicians. This marked the beginning of a period in which both

programs would be subject to pressures for political patronage and clientelism. Initially, during

the end of President Menem's Administration (1998-1999), the Secretaries that replaced Sola

and Amadeo did not try to make massive changes in FOPAR and PSA. Instead, and motivated by

the provincial elections scheduled for end of 1999, they manipulated the program only in the

province where they were building their political career. It would be with the change in the

national government that took place with the presidential elections of 1999, won by the Alianza

coalition headed by Fernando de la Rua, that a more systematic political take-over of these

programs will happen.

In the case of the Secretariat of Social Development, it was Secretary Figueroa[71] who

brought clientelistic politics back to the Secretariat. Social policy scholars in Argentina

characterize his administration as follows: "with his arrival to the agency, all technical aspiration

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[70] See Serrano (2000) for a description. This picture of clientelism and poor performance is in marked contrast with the good reputation that the program achieved at the World Bank, who was funding this program. This reputation was based on a study conducted by the World Bank (Jalan and Ravaillon, 1999) asserting that Trabajar was very well targeted. Argentine scholars, however, have questioned this econometric exercise since "it was based on a sample that could be biased. The universe of beneficiaries in the period under analysis was of 65,000 people. The authors took a random sample of 350 projects (about 7,000 beneficiaries). But they could only get the address of 4,500 beneficiaries of which they could only interview 3,500 (because the other thousand declined to answer). Furthermore, of the 3,500 the study only took 2,800 that answered all questions. It is evident that the 2,800 observations from which conclusions are extrapolated has a high probability of representing a biased sample of the 7,000 beneficiaries of the original random sample" (Ronconi, 2002, p 12)

was abandoned, and the agency was directed towards purely charity-type interventions ["asistencialista"], reinforcing long-standing clientelistic practices."[72] Figueroa focused in particular in the province of Santiago del Estero where he was running in the Peronist primary against incumbent governor Carlos Juarez. Figueroa replaced the provincial manager of FOPAR with a political appointee (who, though, technically qualified, had a highly questionable record in terms of probity that disqualify him from working for the state),[73] and placed all the provincial offices of the several national programs in the same building in the provincial capital, allowing him to have direct supervision of them in his weekly trips to the province (staff in the Ministry complained that Figueroa spent more time in the province than in the Secretary's headquarters). His appointee put together a network of "punteros" (captain wards) that traveled throughout the province promising mayors that more money was coming to the province (even though the budget for the province had all been allocated). He also put pressure on communities with FOPAR projects to replace their providers with political appointees (in an effort to control the money from the projects for the campaign—remember that the project budget was directly deposited from Buenos Aires in a community bank account), and bullied existing providers to abandon the projects. Even though officials from FOPAR's national office tried to limit these manipulations of the program in the province (by sending more supervision missions), still the credibility and performance of the program suffered. Farmers, professionals, mayors, and NGOs I talked to said that the program became "politicized", and projects suffered from the turbulence surrounding the providers, etc. With the change in national government, in 1999, Figueroa (who

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[71] Amadeo was replaced in 1997 by Ortega who did not interfere with FOPAR. In 1998 Ortega left the Ministry and was replaced by Figueroa.

[72] My translation (Repetto, 2000, p.201)

[73] This official failed to pass the "Veraz" which is the administrative system that records individuals credit and financial transactions history. The information provided in the Veraz disqualified him for working for government. But this was not taken into account.

lost the primary) left the Secretariat. This isolated event in Santiago del Estero was a small anticipation of what would happen at a national scale with the administration of President de la Rua.

In the case of PSA, similar events took place during this period. President Menem replaced Secretary Sola[74] with Gumersindo Alonso, a political operative of Carlos De la Sota, who was running as the peronist candidate for governor of Cordoba (the second most important province in the country after Buenos Aires). Alonso, who was quickly followed by another De la Sota operative, used PSA as well as other programs of the Secretary of Agriculture to support De la Sota's campaign in Cordoba. Since their focus was Cordoba, the new Secretariat replaced PSA's provincial coordinator and staff in Cordoba. He also tried to change the provincial coordinator of PSA in Entre Rios. However, since beneficiaries mobilized to protest the intended change and this province was not a priority for Alonso, he gave up quickly. In Cordoba, unlike what happened in Entre Rios and what would happen later on in other provinces during the administration of de la Rua, there was no beneficiary mobilization or resistance to the change of provincial coordinator. I explain the reasons for this difference below (see section 3.3).

During the year of the campaign the work of PSA in Cordoba was completely reorganized to serve the De la Sota campaign. The funds that PSA had for Cordoba, plus additional funds, were pooled into a new program just for Cordoba which gave grants to (rather than loans) to small farmers without any of the appraisal criteria or selection procedures that PSA had. This new program worked in areas of the province where the candidate was weak even though PSA did not work there because it did not meet its target population. The activists appointed as technical staff who were supposed to be analyzing credit projects, supervising

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[74] Sola resigned from his position of Secretary of Agriculture to run as vice-governor for the province of Buenos Aires (the most important province in the country). He won and in a later term became governor.

subcontracted extensionists, and so on, where instead spending their time working for the campaign, using the offices' vehicle to ferry farmers to political rallies, etc. De la Sota was elected governor of Cordoba.

A Systemic Patronage and Clientelistic Attack

The patronage and clientelistic pressures that insinuated during the final years of the peronist administration became much stronger during the administration of the Alianza coalition, which took power in December 1999.[75] Before, the pressures had been part of short-term, electoral strategies focused in a particular province but the national coordinator as well as the rest of the staff had been maintained, allowing the program to function normally in the other provinces. The project of the Alianza administration, however, was to replace all the staff both at the national and provincial levels.

The Alianza, particularly the Radical Party, saw in national deconcentrated social programs like FOPAR and PSA a useful vehicle to reenergize its languishing provincial political machine.[76] With ten years of a Peronist national administration and with most provincial governments either in the hands of the Peronist Party or provincial parties, the provincial branches of the Radical Party had been starved of resources to do politics (i.e., clientelistic politics). Once the party won the national government, one of the most attractive resources it had to offer its political machine were the deconcentrated social programs. By 2000, there were about 70 such programs, most of which had deconcentrated offices at the provincial level. These

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[75] The Alianza was a coalition of two main parties, the Radical Party and the FREPASO. The dominant party in the coalition was the Radical Party. FREPASO was a center-left party of recent formation that imploded a few months after being in office when its key figure, vice-president Chacho Alvarez, resigned.

[76] Since the 1950s and until the collapse of the Radical Party in 2001, the Radical and Peronist parties had dominated party politics in Argentina. They have been the only parties with the capacity to run for elections across the country, sustained by party committees throughout provinces and municipalities. In the Alianza coalition it was then the Radical Party the one with the greatest pressures to "feed" its political machine.

provincial offices meant jobs and positions of influence for the provincial branches of the radical party, and they also meant having the key for delivering goods and services to their beneficiaries. Talking to radical activists at the national and provincial levels it was clear their perception that this was their big opportunity. In Misiones (a traditionally Radical province that throughout the 1990s had been controlled by a Peronist administration), for instance, a local activist of the Radical Party told me:

> *"Before [the presidential elections of 1999] we had to fight really hard for every 'quota' of projects, it was tough... But now, we also have resources and so we can either go on our own or bargain with the peronists here how we split the pie. For instance, with the Plan Trabajar, it was very difficult for radical mayors to distribute plans. They (the peronist managers of Trabajar) would give them to the peronist councilors instead."*

Being one of the few resources that the Radical Party had for patronage and clientelism may explain, then, why this party went much more strongly after the national programs than what the Peronist Party (who also controlled the provincial governments) had done in the previous administration. While the Radical Party was able to replace managers and staff in most programs, in FOPAR, and particularly in PSA, the process was not so smooth.

The first move was to replace the national coordinators, which was partly achieved in both programs. In the case of PSA, the first Secretary of Agriculture of the Alianza was Antonio Berhongaray, a radical national senator from the province of La Pampa with no background in agricultural issues. Since it was difficult for Berhongaray to fire the existing national coordinator of PSA, Gaston Bordelois, due to his high prestige and good political connections across parties, he demoted him to a marginal advisor position. He also fired Bordelois' second-in-command. Berhongaray replaced both with two people that had worked closely with him in the campaign

for senator but who had no substantive knowledge on rural development. I will refer to them indistinctly as "political brokers" or "political operatives."

In the case of FOPAR, the Alianza had transformed the Secretariat of Social Development into the Ministry of Social Development, and FOPAR was under the Secretariat of Social Policy. Its Secretary (Morales) tried to appoint a young, inexperienced lawyer as National Coordinator of FOPAR to replace Ana Etchegaray. The World Bank, however, rejected the candidate on the basis that he did not meet the minimum requirements defined for this position in the loan agreement with the Bank. The proposed candidate not only lacked any experience in social programs, but had no management experience at all in any public or private endeavor. His only "experience" was as a recent leader of "Franja Morada" (the university student's branch of the radical party) in the province of Cordoba. Since Secretary Morales was not able to place someone as official National Coordinator, he appointed a political broker[77] who managed the program "in the shadows"—i.e., he did not have any official position but was the one making all the decisions—and was known by FOPAR's staff as the "comisario politico."

Once the political brokers had gained control of the national coordination of each program, they tried to replace all the provincial coordinators and staff with party loyalists. This is where the programs' trajectories, convergent up to this point, began to diverge. While in FOPAR replacements took place, in PSA they did not. As Table 7 shows, between the end of 2000 and early 2001 FOPAR's political broker tried to replace five of FOPAR's six provincial coordinators (in the provinces of Misiones, Chaco, Jujuy, Santiago del Estero, and Salta) with political appointees from the provincial branches of the Radical Party.[78] Faced with no opposition, his appointments were confirmed, and the program became a clientelistic instrument

that led to a deterioration in performance, and eventually to its collapse. In the same period, PSA's political brokers tried to replace seven provincial coordinators. Differently from FOPAR, however, beneficiaries actively opposed, questioned, and tried to limit appointments in five of these provinces, and were able to maintain the integrity of the program.

Table 7. Changes of Provincial Coordinators in FOPAR and PSA (2000-2001)

	FOPAR	PSA
Attempt to change Provincial Coordinators with political appointees	5	7
Pressures from beneficiaries to oppose political appointments	0	5

In the following two sections I analyze how each program, and particularly their beneficiaries, reacted to these attempts and what were the consequences in each case.

3.2. FOPAR Crumbles

As is often typical after elections, the newly appointed provincial coordinators fired part of the existing provincial technical teams, replacing them with lowly qualified staff from the provincial Radical Party. The new staff kept some of the formal aspects and procedures of FOPAR's methodology, but change it in ways that devoid it of its original intentions and meaning. For instance, the new staff gave allied mayors and local "punteros" (captain wards) rather than community groups, the initiative in identifying and managing projects. Two examples from the provinces of Jujuy and Misiones illustrate this new trend. After the comisario politico began running FOPAR, projects started appearing in headquarters without having followed the program's methodology for identifying and prioritizing projects. One of FOPAR's Directors illustrate this with what had happened in Jujuy:

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[78] He also appointed political coordinators in two provinces where FOPAR was initiating its operations (La Rioja and Tucuman).

"One day, [the political broker] went to the people that do appraisal [79]and gave them a pile of 70 projects. He said 'These are the projects we will finance in Jujuy'. I couldn't believe it. He had completely bypassed the participatory process of project identification and formulation that we had! All these projects had been formulated by municipal officials without much consultation with the communities. Since Morales [the Secretary of Social policy who was the "boss" of the broker] was running for Senator in Jujuy he was trying to convince mayors (both peronists and radicals) to support his campaign. [he eventually won]. The Appraisal's Unit was pressured to do a very quick and formalistic review of the projects so they could all be financed quickly"

My interviews with provincial staff, service providers, and beneficiaries in Misiones confirmed this general picture. In the municipality of Delicia, for instance, farmers had high expectations when FOPAR announced that it would start funding projects there. When the provincial team arrived to a meeting in the municipal town, however, things did not turn as they expected. What follows comes from a conversation with two agricultural engineers who attended the meeting. They had been working for four years in the municipality assisting different farmer groups (as part of several development programs including PSA) and were interested in helping those groups to apply to FOPAR funding. This is what they said:

"We were eager for FOPAR to come to the municipalities where we were working because we had heard very good things about the program, that it was very strict and participatory [...] But when we went to the first meeting in Delicia we were shocked because every decision had already been made. The mayor was there with three professionals that were coming from Posadas [the provincial capital]. One was an

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[79] Project appraisal is coordinated by a team based in Buenos Aires.

official from FOPAR [one of the new political appointees] and the other two the mayor

said were the people who would be designing the projects and then providing technical

assistance during construction. The mayor and the professionals wanted to have a

decision right there about the projects that were going to be built. That's not

participation! We had heard that FOPAR was participatory! I was so mad that I wrote a

letter from Caritas Diocesana[80] to FOPAR to complain. They never answered me."

Farmers from Delicia were also dissapointed. Since they grew sugar cane and "rapadura"

(a sweet made out of sugarcane) sold well inside the province, they wanted to request FOPAR to

finance a "fabrica de rapadura" [81] but FOPAR official said the best thing was to have a

community center, and then they could use it to put a fabrica de rapadura. The agricultural

engineers were frustrated:

"We have been working in Delicia for four years. We know this place very well, farmers

trust us, and suddenly this people from Posadas come, they have no clue whatsoever of

what's going on here [but] if farmers want to get the projects [approved] they know they

have to accept these professionals"

This way of identifying and formulating projects was a mockery of FOPAR's emphasis

on participation and social capital. Communities were supposed to chose the project after several

meetings and discussions among themselves rather than being coerced into a decision in the first

meeting; community groups, and not the program officials or the mayor, were supposed to select

professionals formulating the projects; project designers (who usually were those assisting later

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[80] Caritas Diocesana is the charity organization of the Catholic Church. This agricultural engineer also worked in Caritas local office.

[81] In the last couple of years before the political take over, FOPAR had began financing productive infrastructure projects like this, usually in partnerships with other programs like PSA. FOPAR started doing this as a result of criticisms to its initial emphasis on social infrastructure which was constraining excessively the demands of its beneficiaries.

on in implementation) were not supposed to be present during project selection to prevent biases.[82]

What was happening in Delicia and throughout the province was a result of the increased politicization of the program that came with the new administration. The new provincial coordinator had appointed three officials from the party to work with him, and kept three from the previous administration. Taking advantage of the fact that I knew one of those who had remained in the program,[83] I talked to her about her opinion of the newcomers:

"They are nice, a bit young and inexperienced, though. But what struck all of us was that the first thing the new [provincial] coordinator and his people asked us was to which political party we belonged. And it's funny because we realized then that each of us belonged to a different party, there are peronists, radicals, from FREPASO, there's even one from the PC (Communist Party). It was weird for us since we had never paid attention to that."

When asked about whether anything had changed in the program's operations, one of the comments was:

"Well, yes, this people [officials from the Alianza] try to benefit only professionals [contractors] from the Alianza for project design and implementation. When professionals heard that FOPAR had fresh money to work in new municipalities, they came to the office to find out how they could participate. The new officials, however, put in place a filtering process [...] They had one person asking professionals to which party they belonged, if they weren't from the Alianza, they didn't meet with them."

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[82] For a description of how professionals can bias project selection in a similar program in Northeast Brazil see Serrano (1996).

[83] I had interviewed here in a previous trip, before the political take-over of the program.

Talking to contractors who had previously worked for FOPAR projects confirmed this. They even said that they had not bothered to get information about the new areas where FOPAR was intervening because "*we heard that now FOPAR is working only with people from the Alianza.*" None of these projects were finally implemented because the collapse of the Alianza administration and of FOPAR by the end of 2001 (see below) stopped the project cycle. However, if communities had had difficulties in controlling professionals before the political take over (when they had the freedom to hire and fire them, and with FOPAR's provincial staff trying to compensate for their asymmetries), it is easy to imagine what control could these communities have exerted when contractors were being imposed on them by the program itself.

The continuous violation of FOPAR's core tenets took a toll in its reputation at the provincial and national levels. In Misiones, for instance, in addition to stories like the ones in Delicia local newspapers began reporting conflicts in other municipalities. In the municipality of Obera, for instance, a scandal broke out because it was leaked out to the press that the radical and the peronist parties had agreed to split among them the projects that FOPAR would finance there. What was happening in Misiones and Jujuy was also going on in other provinces, like Salta and Chaco. NGOs from these provinces said that contractors that wanted to be hired by FOPAR had to agree to give one month of their salary to the radical party for the political campaign.

The morale of the staff at the national level also suffered. Although the broker had not tried to replace the national staff to prevent further confrontations with the World Bank, he was "forcing" them to play along with the new dynamics at the provincial level. Most of them wanted to leave the program, but could not do it because of the difficulty of finding other jobs. Witnessing how the philosophy of the program was repeatedly violated, they did not feel proud anymore of what they were doing. Many told me that they were just "*pretending to work.*" Some

of them blamed the World Bank for what was happening. One of the Directors said: "*The World Bank has vanished, this is not a coincidence. They are washing their hands, they know what is happening here, and they don't do anything. Supervision missions have stopped coming.*"

In any case, the overall decline in FOPAR's performance was the prelude to its closing. The collapse of the Alianza administration in December of 2001 and the transition to a peronist administration did not find FOPAR in good standing. The new peronist administration of Duhalde saw FOPAR as a program that the Radical Party had been using for clientelism. Given the huge pressures the government faced to attend the social emergency, FOPAR's tainted reputation made it easier to justify its closing and transformation into a program to finance community-managed soup kitchens. About two thirds of its staff was fired and new staff was hired to manage this food transfer program.

With the closing of FOPAR, an institutional space that had opened for poor people to participate in the public sector was lost. FOPAR had much room to improve its strategy and instruments. In particular, the passivity of FOPAR's beneficiaries in a more hostile new context revealed the limitations of the exit approach to community empowerment in contexts that are prone to political patronage and clientelism. Still, the principles that inspired the creation of FOPAR were still valid. Empowering poor people to become more active participants in their own development and enabling them to control how public resources were spent continued to be important elements for Argentina's social policy. Unfortunately, with the failure of FOPAR the resources devoted to this kind of programs (in terms of trained people, ideas, learning, and money) were lost. The only consolation would be to think of Hirschmann's principle of the conservation of social energy which posits that the failed social experiments of the present leave

a latent capacity and social energy that reemerges in and is critical for future successful experiences.[84]

3.3. PSA Beneficiaries Mobilized

What happened to FOPAR represents the most common trajectory for innovative participatory programs. They survive while a favorable political context supports them but, sooner or later, end up being fagocitated by a more hostile context.[85] What is less common is what happened to PSA, where rather than leading to the decline and demise of the program, the patronage and clientelistic attack generated a reaction among beneficiaries that mobilized to defend the integrity of the program. This defense not only enabled the program to survive (and actually become the oldest targeted antipoverty program in the history of Argentina), but it also increased its recognition at the national level as a program with high levels of popular support. This section tells this story in five parts following the chronological sequence in which events unfolded: (i) initially beneficiary's pressures manifested through the regional FDs who confronted the national program authorities through the media, then the conflict translated to the provinces where the provincial coordinators were being replaced—conflicts followed three stages: (ii) protests and mobilization to the program headquarters in the province, (iii) deliberation in assemblies, and (iv) negotiation with program authorities.

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[84] Hirschmann (1984)

[85] The "Social Justice" Program in the province of Buenos Aires is another example of this phenomenon. In the early 1990s, a group of committed progressive professionals designed this program with the purpose of strengthening organizations of poor people (neighborhood associations, squatter settlements' groups, housing coops, etc) by supporting, with small grants, the self-help activities these organizations were already carrying out. After the peronist mayors noticed that associations that were not among their beneficiaries had been supported by the provincial program, they pressured the also peronist governor to close down "Social Justice". Giving in to their pressures, the governor reformed the program, replacing the staff and letting mayors allocate funds. The results were

Regional FDs Confront National Program Authorities

The confrontation between farmers and the new political authorities started by the end of 2000 when PSA's political broker (and new national coordinator of the program), Carlos Bruno, fired the national Technical Coordinator as well as five provincial coordinators (from Misiones, Santiago del Estero, Chaco, Tucuman, and Jujuy). According to several of them, Bruno openly acknowledged to them that their dismissals were not related to their performance but to the need of Secretary Berhongaray to repay electoral campaign efforts to Radical Party leaders. Technical staff from PSA's national office immediately informed the eight regional FDs about the imminent firings,[86] and they in turn communicated the news to FDs from the other provinces. FDs told me that they were very upset by the way in which the new program authorities were operating (which they found disrespectful and unfair towards staff that farmers found professional and committed). More importantly, they were concerned that this could be the end of the program as they knew it since, they said, they had already seeing signs in their provinces of the Radical Party trying to manipulate the program politically.[87]

Since some of the regional FDs had a long trajectory of social activism through the rural movement in their provinces, they knew of the power of the media in political fights. Taking advantage of contacts they had with the national press, regional FDs appeared in several newspaper articles criticizing Bruno and the Secretary Berhongaray for using the program for political patronage. For more than a week, national newspapers carried articles on this topic. The

that only organizations linked to the political party received benefits from the program, and the initial support for social movements and other vibrant organizations died out. (Chiara 1999)

[86] As I mentioned in the introduction, the forty two farmer representatives from the 21 provinces were grouped in four regions. Each region elected two farmers to represent them at the national level, so that there were eight regional representatives of farmers participating at the national level.

[87] For instance, the FD from Santiago del Estero knew that the Delegate of Agriculture (who was appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture of the central government) had sent punteros from the radical party to PSA saying: "Go to the PSA office and say you're coming on my behalf and ask for a project." After PSA staff explained to them that it

press campaign was quite effective. As one of the FD that participated told me: *"before the press campaign we were the only ones that were vulnerable, with the campaign we made them [the political brokers] vulnerable too. It was the only way in which we could balance an unbalanced fight."* The press campaign was generating a political cost that the Secretary of Agriculture and his political operators wanted to avoid. The fact that the accusations were coming from the program's beneficiaries rather than from the bureaucrats gave more validity to the accusations. The political brokers chose to negotiate with the FDs, and they agreed to meet in Buenos Aires.[88]

In the meeting in Buenos Aires between the regional FDs and the brokers they agreed that FDs would stop the press campaign and in return the brokers would (a) limit the replacement of provincial coordinators to the five ones announced, (b) avoid replacing provincial staff would political appointees, and (c) maintain the existing mechanisms of farmers participation in the program. One of the FDs told me they wanted to make the last point very clear because they had heard that Bruno had criticized the program for having "too much participation, and that it was expensive."

When the brokers tried to replace the five provincial coordinators, though, there were many provinces in which farmers (together with NGOs, church organizations, and others) mobilized to denounce and try to prevent these changes from happening. During the course of several months the political brokers tried to replace seven provincial coordinators.[89] If we count the two attempts to replace the provincial coordinators of Cordoba and Entre Rios during the Menem administration (described in section 3.1.), PSA has had a total of nine attempts to replace

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was not the procedure to grant projects based on personal recommendations from the party in power, the animosity with the provincial radical party began, becoming a precedent for trying to remove the provincial coordinator.

[88] Before negotiating, however, the political brokers confirmed that the regional FDs were the ones contacting the media. They called one of the representatives who had appeared in the newspaper to the public phone that his village had in San Juan. He not only confirmed that this was an initiative of SP's representatives but also offered to have a meeting between the regional FDs and the political brokers. A few days later they met in Buenos Aires.

its provincial coordinators with political appointees (see Table 8). In five of these nine cases

farmers and partners mobilized strongly against the new appointments. In one of them, the

pressure came mainly through Farmers Delegates (Chaco). In the other three cases, beneficiaries

did not mobilize. I will describe, first, the basic features of the process that went on in the

provinces with mobilization and then in those provinces without mobilization.

Table 8. Reaction of PSA Beneficiaries to Political Appointments for Provincial Coordinators (1999-2001)

Province	Date	Beneficiaries Pressure
Cordoba	May 1999	No
Entre Rios	July-Aug. 1999	Yes
Misiones	October/ November 2000	Yes
Santiago del Estero	November 2000	Yes
Entre Rios	November 2000	Yes
Formosa	December 2000/ Feb 2001	Yes
Tucuman	2000	No
Jujuy	2000	No
Chaco	2000	Yes (from FDs)

Note: the first two were during the end of the Menem administration, the rest during the de la Rua administration.

The five cases where farmers resisted patronage (Misiones, Santiago del Estero, Formosa,

and twice in Entre Rios) followed a similar sequence that can be divided in three stages: protests

and mobilization to the program headquarters in the province, deliberation in assemblies, and

negotiation.

<u>Protest</u>

The main form of resistance was through the occupation of the provincial offices of the

program. Between one to three hundred people gathered in "popular assemblies" formed mostly

by small farmers (some representing themselves, others farmer organizations) but also with an

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[89] In addition to the five original provinces, and despite the agreement, there was also an attempt to replace the coordinators of Formosa and Entre Rios.

important presence of NGOs, religious social activists, private and public agricultural extensionists, and mayors. When the political brokers went to appoint the new candidates, they had to face not only these large assemblies but also TV, radio and press reporters. In some of the most heated assemblies, even the police was there. While in some provinces, like Misiones, popular assemblies had already been taking place several days before the date when the change of coordinator was going to take place, in others they gathered the same day in which the new coordinator was supposed to assume.

A typical sequence of events was the following. After the provincial coordinator was notified that he would be replaced, he informed the members of the Provincial Unit (where farmers, NGOs, and government are represented). Each of these members started spreading the word through their contacts and quickly it got to the radio talks and the press. Farmers knew about the intended change of coordinators through different means. The most important one was the radio, but also through the farmer representatives in the Provincial Unit, the networks of farmers organizations,[90] and those extensionists regularly working with them. Beneficiaries and partners of PSA mobilized to the program's headquarters to protest and ask for explanations. They arrived to the assembly by foot, by bicycles, in the run-down car of one of the better-off farmers, in trucks that some farmers organizations had, or in the cars of extensionists. Some farmers told me that they had gone to the municipality to ask for money for gas to go to the program's headquarters. Farmers mobilized to these meetings on their own. They were not coerced or blackmailed to participate. Nobody promised them anything in return for attending. This represents a big contrast both with traditional forms of party manipulation of the poor (where busloads of protesters are shipped to political acts mostly with the promise of food) as

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[90] In Misiones, for instance, the Association of Ferias Francas, was a network that had delegates in over forty municipalities that were in permanent contact about the news of the program.

well as with the massive mobilizations that have taken place in the last few years in Argentina where beneficiaries of Workfare Programs (Plan Trabajar) have often attended rallies and route blockades under the threat that if they didn't they would lose the benefits that mediators provided them.

It was also important that those who mobilized, both beneficiaries and partners, represented a wide spectrum of political affiliations, including many from the government party. In all the assemblies there were always affiliates of the radical party arguing how embarrassed they felt for being member of a party that was trying to politically manipulate the program, and how difficult it would be for them to go back to their districts to convince people of voting for the party.

Deliberation

Discussions in these assemblies extended for several hours, sometimes until four in the morning. When the political brokers confronted the assemblies, both sides refused to back down from their initial position. Each side based its argumentation on principles that were valid but in conflict. The political brokers argued that the Secretary of Agriculture had the legal right to appoint directly all government employees paid by the Secretary. Farmers and PSA's partners argued that they had the right to control whether the new appointments had the necessary qualifications to perform well. They said they that the government's motivation for replacements was not based on improving the program's performance but instead on using it for patronage and clientelism. To back up this claim they usually offer different versions of the following three arguments:

First, that there was no apparent reason to justify firing the existing managers and their teams since they had been performing well. Second, that the new candidates proposed by the Secretariat lacked the required competence (technical and/or moral) for the position. In Santiago del Estero the candidate for PC was an agricultural engineer with a reputation of being a mediocre professional.[91] In Formosa, the party candidate was an ex-mayor from the radical party who not only was being prosecuted for municipal financial mismanagement[92] but had also had his picture recently printed in the local newspapers allegedly driving a truck with stolen cattle. Their candidacies were supported by important figures in the radical party (national deputies and senators, ex-governors, etc). Third, and most important, that if any replacement was to happen it should be done through a merit-based public contest or in consultation with beneficiaries and not by a political appointment. They were accustomed to participate in the decisions about the program and their right to control was based on their dual identity as citizens and as beneficiaries. Being this a program funded with public money they were entitled as citizens to manifest their opinion about public decisions, and that it was an obligation of government to hear what citizens had to say. More important than their right as citizens, it seems that it was their right as beneficiaries the basis to demand accountability. Beneficiaries often argued that through their active participation in the program, they had earned the right to defend it, and that they felt it was their program. A dialogue between the broker and farmers illustrates well this feeling. In

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[91] Unemployed at that time, he had previously worked for a local NGO that fired him due to his poor performance. He had a bad reputation in the province as a technician that was "lazy", "opportunistic", "politically motivated", and not "committed to work with poor farmers", to use the expressions told by farmers and other. To make things worse, in the weeks before the mobilization, the candidate had been criticizing the program saying that the existing staff supported "communists"(because they worked with MOCASE, the landless movement organization) and that they were corrupt (without giving any specifics).

[92] The dissapearance of municipal property (agricultural equipment such as tractors, trucks, computers, etc) as well as a number of financial The national government had stopped fiscal transfers to the municipality after several federal audits proved the mayor's administration cannot give an account of how he had spent federal grants for social programs implemented by municipal governments.

one of the negotiations between the political broker and farmers, the former was trying to undermine farmers bargaining position, so he asked them:

— Broker: What have you done for the program that makes you believe you can put so many conditions?

— Farmer: "We've done much about this program because it is ours" "Last year [for 2000] we as well as the producer representatives from every province met with all deputies and senators from every province to defend the budget of the program that was being cut, and that's why we got a good budget for this year"

— Broker: OK, that's fine, but what else have you done?

— Farmer: "We care for credit repayment. After every meeting in the Provincial Unit I meet with the delegates of my zone and we talk about those producers that are not repaying. Also, if there is an extensionist that is not working well, I inform the Provincial Unit. And nobody pays me for that."

Negotiation

After the assemblies hit deadlocks, an impasse always followed that, depending on the province, would last days or even weeks. Faced with the refusal of PSA's farmers and partners to back down, political operators decided to negotiate. For that they asked the assemblies to appoint a "negotiating committee". Negotiating committees were formed by seven or eight people representing the different sectors in the assembly. The political brokers met with the committees and after several meetings, proposals and counterproposals, and consultations with the Radical Party, agreements to select the new managers were reached.

The agreement in each province was slightly different (see Table 9). For instance, in

Santiago del Estero, the broker agreed to withdraw the original candidate[93] and to chose one candidate from a list of three names proposed by the Negotiating Committee. The broker selected one which was supported by the Radical Party, and who, apparently, was also the most qualified of the three. In Misiones, although the broker initially reached the same agreement as in Santiago del Estero, the provincial branch of the Radical Party refused to withdraw the original candidate. The broker proposed then to split the coordinator's position into two: a "political" coordinator (the original party candidate) and a "technical" one (selected by him from a list elaborated by the committee). Although the committee initially rejected this proposal, after a couple of weeks they decided to accept a split coordination but only under certain conditions: both could make decisions regarding resource management, both will communicate with the national level on an equal foot, the PSA's technical team would be maintained, and the role of the Provincial Unit will be respected. [94] The political broker accepted and two coordinators were appointed. In practice, the technical coordinator had command of the program and the political coordinator couldn't do much because his initiatives were always shut down in the Provincial Unit.

As a consequence of their demands for accountability farmers were able to achieve the following immediate results: (i) in four of the seven provinces where the had already selected new provincial managers these candidates were rejected, and either the existing one was confirmed (one case) or a new manager was selected by consensus between the beneficiaries and the SOA (three cases); (ii) in the other three provinces the SOA's candidate was appointed but in

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[93] Apparently the provincial authorities of the Radical Party acknowledged that they had proposed a bad candidate, who, even before assuming the position, had already generated a lot of animosity among the program's constituents.

[94] In a move to strengthen his chances for being elected, the party candidate started a campaign to get more support (eg, he convinced the Bishop to lift the opposition to his candidacy) and to divide the opposition (eg., the radical committee was collecting firms from individual members of the Federation of Producers in Fairs –Federacion de Feriantes-, who had opposed the candidate, saying that they did not oppose the candidate). Realizing that the

one of them (Chaco) beneficiaries were able to attach strings limiting the damage managers could cause to the program's performance; (iii) SOA gave up its plans to replace provincial managers in the remaining thirteen provinces; and (iv) SOA agreed not to replace the provincial technical teams (the professionals working with the provincial managers) with political appointees.

Table 9. Reaction of PSA Beneficiaries to Political Appointments for Provincial Coordinators (1999-2001)

Province	Beneficiaries Pressure	Was the party's candidate appointed?
Cordoba	No	Yes
Entre Rios	Yes	No. The original coordinator was confirmed
Misiones	Yes	Coordination was split in two, a "political" one for the party candidate, and a "technical" one for a candidate proposed by an assembly of farmers and partners. Political coordinator tightly controlled by Provincial Unit.
Santiago del Estero	Yes	No. A new coordinator selected from 3 candidates proposed by PSA farmers and partners was appointed.
Entre Rios	Yes	No. the existing coordinator was ratified thanks to the mobilization of about 700 small farmers in support of his administration.
Formosa	Yes	No. Initial and more questionable candidate was rejected. Replaced by a more acceptable one with strings attached to limit his discretion.
Tucuman	No	Yes
Jujuy	No	Yes
Chaco	Yes (from FDs)	Yes. FDs met with the new coordinator to make it clear that they would not accept political manipulation of the program, and asking to have a greater role in project supervision.

Lack of Mobilization

Of the four cases where there was no beneficiary mobilization, there is one (Cordoba) where clearly there was no interest on the side of beneficiaries to mobilize. The main reason was that the provincial coordinator, who did not believe much in the organization of farmers, had not spent much effort in strengthening organizations. He was selected coordinator because of his solid technical skills in agricultural development, but lacked. As a consequence, the FDs were more token symbols but did not have behind a network of farmers who would be interested in

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consequences of this could be very dangerous for the small farmers movement in Misiones, the leaders of the

mobilizing to stop the clientelistic use that took place during the end of the Menem administration.

In the other three provinces (Jujuy, Tucuman, Chaco) where farmers did not mobilize, their leaders told me that it was not because they were not able to do it or because they did not care about the politicization of the program. Rather, they said it was because (for different reasons in each case) they thought they would fail, that they were in a weak position to put pressure on government. Probing further it became evident that these were provinces where there had been more conflict, where the provincial coordinator had not been able to build solid alliances with beneficiaries and third party providers, or farmers' network were organizations were fragmented. I develop these cases in the following chapters.

3.4. What Explains Differences between FOPAR and PSA?

According to what has been discussed in this and the previous chapter the analysis of FOPAR and PSA reveals two basic contrasts regarding beneficiary oversight outcomes: first, beneficiaries were better able to control the performance of government officials in PSA than in FOPAR; second, within PSA, beneficiaries were better able to demand accountability in some provinces than in others. The following two chapters offer my explanation of what accounts for these contrasts. In a nutshell, the argument is as follows: PSA had a significantly different vision for how to empower the poor than FOPAR, and this vision got translated in the design of these programs. This different design impacted both (i) the capacity of beneficiaries to act collectively in pursue of their demands for accountability as well as (ii) their motivation to demand accountability in the first place. Differences in design explain why beneficiary oversight was

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opposition decided to accept the proposal.

higher in PSA than in FOPAR, while differences in the way PSA design was implemented in a particular province explain variations in beneficiary oversight across provinces.

PSA beneficiaries were able to control patronage and clientelism from taking over the program because, differently from FOPAR beneficiaries, they had developed a certain capacity to act as a countervailing force in the governance aspects of the program. They had the capacity to mobilize and engage the state on their own, autonomously, to defend the responsibilities and resources that the program had devolved them. If PSA beneficiaries created this countervailing power, and FOPAR beneficiaries did not, it was largely because of the different approach each program had to beneficiary's empowerment. FOPAR's vision of empowerment was about village-level groups of poor people increasing their capacities to initiate and manage village-level projects. Its vision of empowering did nothing to empower its beneficiaries to influence how government worked. PSA's vision of empowerment, in contrast, was about *minifundistas* becoming a movement at the provincial and national levels defending its right to influence government policies. For PSA, its beneficiaries were not isolated groups of small farmers but a very concrete social group that had been the object of historical neglect and that deserved to be treated differently by government.

These different visions of beneficiary empowerment translated into different institutional design options of the program's participatory structure. This different design options, in turn, had important implications for the capacity of beneficiaries to engage in demanding accountability about the governance aspects of the program. That is what I discuss in the next two chapters.

Chapter 4
Horizontal Networks or the Collective Capacity to Demand

The importance of horizontal networks for empowering poor people to demand accountability is not a new insight. This issue has been treated, for instance, in the social movements and the social capital literatures.[95] It is also being mainstreamed in the discourse of international development agencies, which increasingly recognizes that "[it] is only when groups connect with each other across communities and form networks or associations-eventually becoming large federations with a regional or national presence-that they begin to influence government decision making and gain collective bargaining power with suppliers of raw materials, buyers, and financiers."[96]

What is less known is how can government programs, and particularly CDD programs, tap into and foster the formation of such horizontal networks? Despite the centrality that the notion of community empowerment has had for CDD programs, their effects in strengthening networks of poor people's organizations have not been significant.[97] FOPAR is a good example of those programs that, despite having social capital and empowerment of poor people as a key objective, still have found it difficult to strengthen networks of poor people. PSA, in contrast, has been quite successful, particularly in certain provinces, both in tapping into and strengthening existing networks of poor farmers groups as well as in stimulating the formation of new ones.

Since both programs had a significant overlap in the geographic areas and populations that they served, this difference did not lie so much in pre-existent stocks of social capital. Instead, it had to do with the different types of social capital that each program activated and created, particularly in the greater capacity of PSA to network farmers across communities. The

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[95] Putnam (1993), Fox (1994), Skocpol (2003), Bebbington and Carroll (2002), Piven and Cloward (1979)
[96] Narayan (2002).

central argument of this chapter is that variations in beneficiary oversight are partly explained by the effects that each program's participatory governance structure (and the way it was implemented) had on the social capital of its beneficiaries.

The discussion is organized in five parts. First, I present the main differences in design between FOPAR and PSA. The following three sections describe the three main strategies through which PSA strengthened farmers networks. The final section shows what was different in the implementation of PSA design that made it that in some provinces the outcomes presented in the previous three sections did not take place as strongly.

4.1. Why Program Design Matters for Social Capital and Beneficiary Oversight

FOPAR's participatory structure had incentives for beneficiaries organizing at the village level, stressing the creation or strengthening of *intra*-village ties among its beneficiaries (bonding social capital). PSA's structure, in contrast, had incentives for beneficiaries organizing and acting through *horizontal supra-village networks*, stressing the creation and strengthening of ties that bridged farmers *across* villages and provinces (bridging social capital).[98]

In FOPAR, as in many other community demand-driven programs, beneficiaries' participation was mainly circumscribed to the individual investment projects that beneficiaries

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[97] For two exceptions see the case of the Moldova Social Investment Fund, and of the Andra Pradesh DPRP program (Helling et al, 2005).

[98] For a discussion on types of social capital see Granovetter (1974), Woolcock and Narayan (2000), Gittel and Vidal (1998), World Bank (2000, p.128). Very briefly, the main distinctions are the following:

- *Bonding* social capital refers to the strong ties connecting family members, neighbors, close friends, and business associates. These ties connect people who share similar demographic characteristics.
- *Bridging* social capital refers to the weak ties connecting individuals from different ethnic and occupational backgrounds. This implies horizontal connections to people with broadly comparable economic status and political power.
- *Linking* social capital refers to the vertical ties between poor people and people in positions of influence in formal organizations (banks, agricultural extension offices, the police). This dimension captures a vitally important additional feature of life in poor communities: that their members are usually excluded—by overt discrimination or lack of resources—from the places where major decisions relating to their welfare are made.

requested support for. It was around this project that the relation between government and community was structured, and which provided the incentives for beneficiaries organizing: beneficiaries organized to discuss and identify a project, to contract and supervise service providers, to contribute their labor for the project, etc. If a federation of organizations of poor people was involved in the program it was through their individual member organizations presenting individual investment projects. FOPAR organized poor people around village-level issues, where members identified themselves as "users" of a specific community facility (a well, a community center, or a school). By learning to share a common resource these organizations strengthened the ties that already existed among rural neighbors (*bonding* social capital).

PSA, in contrast, not only strengthened ties within groups of farmers but, more importantly, it strengthened and created networks that connected groups of farmers across villages and provinces. PSA supported farmers' networks in three different ways. I only mention them here since I will elaborate on each of them in the next three sections. First, by requiring farmers participation in the provincial and national stakeholder committees, the program created a network of Farmers Delegates that linked organizations and other networks of producers (such as MOCASE or MAM) within and across the 21 provinces covered by the program. Second, by making existing networks of farmers to be privileged interlocutors of the Program (for instance, guaranteeing them a space in the provincial council), PSA was able to tap into and strengthen pre-existing networks such as MOCASE in Santiago del Estero or MAM in Misiones. Finally, PSA often supported the creation of new networks to advance the economic development of small farmers (such as the Association of Town Markets in Misiones, the Association of *Puesteros* in San Juan, or the *Mesa Caprina* in Santiago del Estero).

Fostering networks was important not only because of the increase in scale that they bring but also because it implied contacting and strengthening the agents or leaders that can activate the social capital latent in those networks. As the recent research on social capital shows "social capital is an asset that remains latent until agents activate this stock and use it to produce a flow of benefits.[..] Social capital is brought to bear upon institutional performance through the mediation of agencies or conduits, each of which is concerned specifically with issues related to some particular social domains and not others. The effectiveness of the mediating agency is as important as the level of the asset (social capital) for understanding variations in institutional performance."[99]

The different approach towards social capital formation underpinning PSA's design was reinforced by two other features related to its design. First, it is easier for a sectoral program like PSA to organize beneficiaries across communities than for a multisectoral program like FOPAR. It is easier to generate activities in common when beneficiaries share the same identity (being small farmers) than when they have different ones (some of them manage a community center, others a well, and others have built latrines). PSA has organized thousands of events in the country around issues of common interest to all beneficiaries (such as regional fairs to exchange seeds, training courses in agro ecological practices, and workshops on local marketing), which would have been hard to do for FOPAR. Second, PSA accompanied groups for longer periods of time than FOPAR. FOPAR's average time with a group was eight months. After that, there was no other formal contact between FOPAR and the group. PSA, in contrast, usually worked with groups of producers for prolonged periods (about two to three years), allowing these groups more time to become stronger and more autonomous. Continuity in PSA allowed groups to

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[99] Krishna (2002, p. 27).

consolidate. There was also more time to understand what the program was about (being informed), getting accustomed to a new relationship with government officials, etc.

Relating to the program through horizontal supra-village networks rather than village-level organizations provided PSA beneficiaries with a number of advantages when it came to demanding accountability. For instance, since PSA beneficiaries were organized at the provincial, regional, and national level, they were able to receive and process information about national and provincial politics and organize a reaction based on that information.[100] It also gave PSA beneficiaries greater leverage as a group to pressure government and engage as an actor in demand-making and negotiations. For example, it was this structure of representation what allowed the eight regional Farmers Delegates to initiate the actions through which farmers prevented the patronage and clientelistic attack. Claiming to represent 40,000 families of minifundistas these FD talked to the media to denounce political brokers, exchanged information among them about what was happening in each province, and negotiated that the political brokers would limit changes to six provinces and would not touch the provincial technical teams (see previous chapter, section 3.3). FOPAR beneficiaries, in contrast, were organized only at the village level and lacked any mechanism or tradition of getting together at the provincial level. Even if they had wanted to organize against the manipulation of the program, they wouldn't have known who the other beneficiaries were, and whether they could trust them or not.

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[100] Skocpol (2003) makes a similar argument for the US, showing that what made civic organizations effective was not to act at the local level, but rather to have a federated structure that mirrored the federal structure of the government—municipal, state, federal—allowing them to interact with government at all levels. See also Fox (1994) for the case of Mexico

4.2. Creating Networks Through Participation in Decision-Making

The most important mechanism through which PSA created supra-village ties was its multi-tier structure for farmers' representation and participation in the program. This structure had three levels—provincial, regional, and national. While its main function was to allow farmers to participate in the two collaborative decision-making instances the program had: the Provincial Unit, and the National Coordinating Unit (see Graph 1 in chapter 1), its deeper purpose was to foster a network of *minifundistas* across the country. In this section I will present the kind of relationships that this structure created both within and across provinces.

At the base and core of the structure was the *provincial* level. According to the Operational Manual of the program, PSA beneficiaries were supposed to (i) elect only two representatives (and two alternates) to participate in the Provincial Unit, and (ii) in those provinces where there were provincial level organizations (like MAM in Misiones) one of these two seats was reserved for a representative designated by that organization (or organizations if there was more than one). Farmers were elected through secret ballot in large meetings where all the beneficiaries of the program were convened, and that usually coincided with Assessment Meetings. These positions were for two years. Even though there were always two farmers that were the official Delegates, the practice in most provinces was for more than two farmers to attend the Provincial Unit meetings and to act as Delegates. The number could go from four (with the two alternates also attending meetings and acting as reps) to ten.[101] To facilitate communication with farmers, Delegates were usually chosen by geographic region. Sometimes these divisions coincided with the type of crops farmers grew. In Tucuman, for instance, some of the regions corresponded to cane growers and others to tobacco growers.

Having to elect and monitor representatives gave the groups of small farmers assisted by PSA an incentive to get together periodically and forge links among themselves. The interactions generated around the representation of farmers in the Provincial Unit were reinforced by a host of more informal activities organized by PSA which strengthened the belonging of farmers to a larger social group called minifundistas (see next chapter).

In provinces where there was no provincial-level federation of farmers, the experience of being organized and represented through FDs sometimes served as stimulus to build such a federation. The case of "La Red de Delegados" in Entre Rios is a good illustration of this kind of dynamic.[102] In 2000, after about six years since the start of the program in the province, farmers supported by the program became interested in having their own provincial-level organization. They divided the province in nine zones, each zone represented by two delegates and two alternates. These thirty six delegates are known as *La Red de Delegados* (The Network of Delegates). Each zone meets every two months and La Red meets every three months. In total they represent about 800 farmers families. In some zone meetings, farmers invite mayors of the municipalities located in their zone so that at the end of the meeting they can listen to the problems and priority demands that farmers have discussed. It is from this Network of Delegates that the two representatives for the Provincial Unit are elected.

According to PSA staff and farmers, there was a confluence of factors that led to support the formation of a network. First, an awareness of PSA's limitations in attending farmers needs and demand. According to the provincial coordinator: "*Gradually, whithin the Provincial Unit, a*

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[101] In provinces like Santiago del Estero, twice or three times a year, the program had what they called "Expanded" Provincial Unit where farmers representatives from each of the ten zones in which the province was divided attend the meeting of the Provincial Unit.

[102] Another example is Mendoza, where farmers created the *Mesa de Apoyo de Productores* (Producers' Support Group). It was formed by all ex-delegates (about 12) who wanted to keep participating in representation of farmers, met before the monthly meeting of the Provincial Unit. Its purpose was to expand the channels of communications and demands that farmers had not only with respect to the program but also to other government agencies.

consensus has been emerging on creating a union-type organization because in the Zone and Annual Meetings both producers and professionals see that producers present proposals that exceed what the program can do and therefore the answer must come from the producers' initiative. They are the ones that have to demand, and we [professionals] have to support them." Second, the possibility that the program could be shut down. When farmers saw that in two occasions the provincial government had tried to remove the provincial coordinator and the technical team and to use it politically, they realized they could lose what they had been building for over six years. An FD said: "*And if the program ended, how were we going to keep linked to each, to keep putting pressure on government, let's take advantage of the program to get organized, we thought!*" Third, through their participation in the Regional Meetings (where FDs from all the provinces in the northeast region met–see below), the FDs from Entre Rios had the opportunity to learn about what farmers could achieve through provincial-level organizations: "*When I saw all the achievements that the organization in Chaco was having, I thought it's nice what can be achieved, they have gained resources and they are listened to by the [provincial] government.*"

Despite the good relations with PSA officials, however, farmers said that they still found it "strange" that the government was helping them organize: "*I was afraid that if I told the coordinator that we* [small farmers] *should form an organization to represent us with the support of the program, he would think it was to organize us against them* [the program's staff]. *But then Benjamin* [the coordinator] *told me 'but if that is what PSA is exactly for'* [...] *I don't know, it seemed to me that it didn't fit...to form an organization with the support of the state to fight against the state?!*".

To facilitate farmers participation at the national level, PSA created a mediating instance at the regional level in the form of Regional Meetings of FDs. The 42 official representatives from the 21 provinces were grouped in four regions: Northeast, Northwest, Center/Cuyo, and Patagonia. The purpose of the Regional Meetings was for FDs (i) to discuss the agenda of issues that they wanted to raise in the meeting of the National Coordinating Unit (NCU), which met two or three times a year in Buenos Aires, and (ii) to discuss issues outside PSA that they wanted to act together. Each region elected two FDs (one official and one alternate) to represent the region in the NCU meeting, and met once before the NCU meeting (to discuss the agenda) and once after it (to discuss and socialize the results of the meeting). In addition, all forty two FDs met every year for two or three days in Buenos Aires to assess the program's performance.

In these Regional Meetings, FDs shared information and experiences about the situation in their provinces (in terms of organizing, relationships with NGOs and the provincial government, agriculture, marketing, etc) and about priorities for collective action. The regional and national meetings were important not only for what they did as a group but also for the work in their provinces. An FD from San Luis, for instance, said that after meeting the MOCASE representative at the NCU, and knowing about their history of fight, he had requested the program to support a training exchange between MOCASE and his association of farmers in San Luis. The exchanges and solidarities generated in these Regional Meetings and other events among provincial organizations sometimes led to efforts to form regional federations of farmers organization—e.g., PEPUNOA (*Pequenos Productores Unidos del NorOeste Argentino*—United Small Producers of the Northwest of Argentina).[103]

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[103] While this experience eventually died out it served to strengthen the connections between a number of organizations of the Northwest, which informally kept working together.

4.3. Tapping into and Strengthening Existing Farmers Networks

When PSA and FOPAR began, in the early 1990s, there were about five provinces (those with higher concentration of small farmers) that had federation-type organizations representing small farmers at the provincial level (see Table 10).[104] In some provinces there was more than one organization. The use that each program made of this pre-existent stock of social capital was different. While PSA's structure was sensitive to these stocks of social capital, tapping into and strengthening them, FOPAR did limited use of them. In this section I will (i) give a brief historical overview of the formation of these associations, (ii) show how each program related to these associations.

Table 10. Main Provincial-Level Federations of Small Farmers in Argentina

Province	Organizations
Misiones	• MAM -Movimiento Agrario Misionero • AFAMM- Asociación de Familias Agroforestales Minifundistas de Misiones
Santiago del Estero	• MOCASE- Movimiento Campesino de Santiago del Estero
Corrientes	• APPPC- Asociación Provincial de Pequeños Productores Correntinos • Federación Correntina de Asociaciones y Cooperativas de Productores Familiares
Chaco	• APECH- Asociación de Pequeños Productores del Chaco • UNPEPROCH- Unión de Pequeños Productores de Chaco • Coordinadora de El Tacuruzal (Quitilipi)
Formosa	• MAF- Movimiento Agrario Formoseño

The origins of these organizations were of two different kinds. Some organizations, like MAM (Movimiento Agrario Misionero) in Misiones, date their origins back to the rural social movements that emerged in Argentina during the late 1960s and early 1970s in the northeast provinces and that were known generically as Agrarian Leagues (Ligas Agrarias).[105] MAM's demands were about better prices for farmers' crops (specially *yerba mate*) and about access to

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[104] FOPAR worked only in four of these five provinces: Misiones, Chaco, Santiago del Estero, Corrientes.

social benefits, and its strategy mostly confrontational (strikes, mobilizations, route blockades, etc). MAM's leaders were crushed by the military dictatorship (1976-1983).[106] The movement lost relevance until the democratic transition of 1983 in which MAM began a process of reorganization. While it maintained some of its more radical demands (land reform, better prices) MAM also embraced a service orientation toward its members which included providing technical assistance, facilitating access to government programs, marketing opportunities, and starting agro-processing businesses. Currently it has around 3,000 members (small and medium producers) that are organized in "nucleos de base" (grassroots groups) formed by 20 to 100 farmers.

Other federations, like the ones in Santiago del Estero, Chaco and Corrientes, emerged during the 1980s with the support of grassroots development-oriented NGOs and, to a lesser extent, government programs. In Santiago del Estero, for instance, a group of NGOs, government programs and Catholic Church organizations[107] supported rural development initiatives throughout the province. Each organization worked in a different part of the province, where they helped formed a local farmers association.[108] Conveyed by the leader of one of the farmer organizations a set of informal exchanges among these organizations and the supporting agencies took place between 1988 and 1989.[109] This resulted in the formation of a federation of peasants organizations called MOCASE (*Movimiento Campesino de Santiago del Estero*), and of an informal network of professional groups supporting the federation called EPA (*Equipo de*

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[105] MAM was created in the early 1970s with the support of the christian rural movement (Juventud Agraria Catolica) which had come from Europe to help poor farmers organize throughout Latin America. In the province of Formosa, there was a similar movement called MAF (Movimiento Agrario Formoseno).

[106] About 500 members were imprisoned by the dictatorship and about 10 were either killed or are "missing."

[107] NGOs (INCUPO, FUNDAPAZ, CENEPP), government programs (INTA-Minifundio, PRODEMUR), Obispado de Anatuya.

[108] The original seven were: CCC Los Juries (which was the main promoter of the initiative), CUPPAF, CCPPAS, CCC Anatuya, APPAC, Delegados de Garza, and UPPSAN. (see table xx for the full name of these organizations).

[109] Allegedly all began with soccer matches between "peasants organizations" and "NGOs" teams.

Apoyo). By the year 2001 MOCASE represented about 6,000 peasant families[110] grouped in 12 zone organizations. Each zone organization was autonomous and was formed by a number of smaller organizations clustered in the same geographic region.[111] The main goal of MOCASE is the "fight for land ownership and for improving the living conditions of peasants families."[112] Before MOCASE was born, it was common for farmers to be expelled from their plots in what was known as *"desalojos silenciosos"* (silent evictions).[113] MOCASE's most public image relates to its work helping farmers threatened by evictions, organizing them and supporting them with political mobilization and legal advice.[114] But, similarly to MAM, MOCASE has also another side related to its provision of services to members (technical assistance, access to credit, etc).

PSA saw these federations as strategic partners and, in most provinces, was able to establish synergistic relations that, although not without conflicts and tensions, were quite productive for both sides. I will deal with the tensions part of the argument later on. Here I just want to mention the benefits that this relationship brought to each actor.

PSA strengthened farmers federations in three ways. First, by reserving them one seat in the Provincial Unit the program increased the legitimacy of these federations vis-à-vis farmers and other government instances. In a context where the provincial government was often either unresponsive or openly repressive to them (as in Santiago del Estero) having a seat in a government decision-making body meant that the national government recognized them as valid

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[110] MOCASE represents a wide variety of productive profiles, including cotton producers from the east of the province, goat herders from the center region, and rural semi-wage workers from the northern part of the province (Alfaro 2000).

[111] CUPPAF, for instance, is located in the Department of Figueroa and is formed by 13 "comisiones de base" (village groups, farmers groups, women groups, etc) that total about 437 families.

[112] MOCASE (1999).

[113] Big landowners or corporate groups (backed up by a corrupt and authoritarian provincial government, which controlled the provincial police and justice system) would send armed men to expel farmers out of their property, taking advantage of the precarious land tenancy in which the majority of farmers lived, and their ignorance about the tenants' right to land ownership after 20 years of living and producing in it (*"el derecho de posesion veinteanal"*).

interlocutors and representatives of farmers. Second, PSA brought important resources to these organizations. They ranged from being able to use the facilities that the program had in the provincial capital (for meetings, access to telephone and email), to getting information about government and NGO programs, getting access to the network of contacts that the program had, to funding for the member organizations projects. By sitting in the Provincial Unit they participated of the discussions among the Research and Extension Agency (INTA), the NGOs, and PSA officials about the strategy to be pursued in the province. This was information that was then relayed to their member organizations for preparing projects. As the example of the Farmers Markets in Misiones illustrates (see next section), federations also had the opportunity of proposing new initiatives. In any case, as an external evaluation of PSA in Misiones noted, federations showed PSA projects as another 'service' that they offered to their members.[115] Third, PSA helped expand the coverage and representation of these federations in the province. As unorganized farmers got organized to work with PSA, some of these new groups decided to join the federations. For instance, out of 13 new organizations created in Santiago del Estero as a result of PSA funding, four joined MOCASE.

PSA also benefited from working with these federations in several ways. Since PSA was interested in strengthening small farmers as a social actor, the existence of federations made its job easier in the sense that there was already an actor that they could work with in defining a vision for the sector. Starting up the program in provinces with federations was easier since they already organized to present projects and participate in the program. Since these federations had fluid channels of communication with its members, they allowed PSA to keep beneficiaries

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[114] An emblematic case of this was the case known as "La Simona" in which a group of farmers, backed up by MOCASE, stopped a group of bulldozers which had been tearing down farmers houses, trees, and crops. This case had big national repercussion in the national media, and helped to put MOCASE in the national spotlight.

[115] Caceres and Cervino (1998, p.25).

informed about what was going on in the program. In the monthly meetings that MOCASE held, for instance, it was common to have updates on the situation in PSA. These federations also had leaders that were seasoned in the art of representing and negotiation, and social activism in general. The contact and mix between these seasoned leaders and new, inexperienced, leaders was a great way of training the latter.

4.4. Fostering the Creation of New Autonomous Networks

While beneficial, the relationship also posed significant challenges to both parties. In addition to strengthening existing federations, PSA also fostered the emergence of new supra-village level networks. Examples of these are the Association of Town Markets in Misiones, the Provincial Commission of Town Markets in Corrientes, the Association of *Puesteros* in San Juan, the *Mesa Caprina* in Santiago del Estero. In this section I will illustrate this with the case that is, arguably, where PSA has been most successful: the Association of Farmers Markets (*Ferias Francas*) in Misiones.

In a context where most attempts to expand the marketing opportunities of small farmers in Argentina has either failed, artificially survived due to high subsidies from NGOs, or remained isolated experiences, the diffusion of Farmers Markets throughout Misiones and their expansion to other provinces constitutes one of the most important marketing and productive experiences that small farmers have had in Argentina.[116] In 1994, PSA's office in Misiones and MAM began supporting the creation of Farmers Markets in the province. A Farmers Market consists of a group of small farmers, between 30 to 100 producers, that bring their farm products every week

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[116] Caceres and Cervino (1998), Ricotto and Almeida (2002).

(usually on a week-end day) to the municipality town to sell to local customers.[117] Since mid-1995, when the first market was established in the municipality of Obera, the interest of farmers in this initiative grew steadily to the point that by the end of 2001 there were about 40 such markets throughout the province, involving approximately 2,500 families of small farmers. In addition, around 1999 all the markets in the province joined their forces creating a provincial Association of Farmers Markets (*Asociacion de Ferias Francas*) to represent them vis-à-vis government and to provide support services to the individual markets.

Even though there is no systematic study on the impact that these markets have had on the well-being of small farmers, all the reports and studies[118] done so far point out the many positive economic outcomes of this experience. Changes in production include a significant improvement in production for self-consumption.[119] There is a trend to gradually replace declining cash crops with products for farmers' market. In addition, they have introduced new simple technology and there is a better use and planning of their plots as well as the family labor. In terms of changes in income it has compensated for the drop that cash crop prices suffered throughout the 1990s.[120] The gross profit that farmers make per week varies sharply across farmers, from some who make US$350 per week to others that make US$40. This income was used for diversifying food consumption and clothing, for small capitalizations (buying animals, tools), and in some cases even for generating some savings. Preliminary studies suggest that for

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[117] Products include processed foods (cheese, marmalades, pickled foods, different types of breads, cold cuts, liquors), fresh fruits and vegetables, milk, eggs, meats, etc. Even though they do not have certification as organic products yet, a large percentage of the products marketed in these markets are produced under organic agriculture and their beneficiaries recognize this as one of the advantages of buying in the markets.

[118] Rosenfeld et al (1998) did a study of the first eight markets. Other sources include Caceres and Cervino (1998), Ricotto and Almeida (2002), and my own interviews.

[119] The products that they used to produce only for self-consumption are now produced in greater quantities to supply the market, there is more variety of products responding to demand (some markets have up to 150 different products), and greater quality, all of which has also an impact on their own family consumption.

[120] The price for *yerba mate* (for a kg of green leaf) dropped from US$0.137 in 1992 to US$0.067 in 2000. This drop was caused by the deregulation of the market for yerba mate that took place in the early 1990s.

many producers, the farmers market represents a cash income source that is higher than what they get from tobacco. In addition, it gives a steady (weekly) flow of income for farmers' economy, in contrast to tobacco planting (the main cash crop).

If the Farmers Markets have been a positive experience for farmers from an economic perspective, they have been as positive or even more in terms of linking farmers across boundaries and with outside actors. First, each market brought together farmers groups from different *villages* of the same municipality. Second, through the Association of Farmers Markets, producers from more than forty *municipalities* linked to each other, allowing them to exchange ideas and experiences, and to make collective demands to government. Third, the successful experience in Misiones inspired the offices of PSA in other *provinces* to promote similar initiatives in Corrientes, Chaco, Formosa, Santa Fe, and Salta. Some of these provincial associations held every year a provincial event where representatives from the other provinces were also invited, exchanging lessons and developing connections and solidarities across provinces.

These new ties become even more relevant when we consider that a large percentage of the farmers involved are women and youth, two groups that are often excluded from rural development experiences even though they are crucial for a vibrant and more democratic countryside. The farmers market movement has provided a space for women farmers to develop as social leaders in each market, and some of them occupy important positions in the Association (eg, the vicepresident). It is known that young people leave the countryside due to a lack of opportunities, and so opening up spaces for them is also important.

In addition to these ties among producers, the Farmers Markets created new ties between farmers and outside actors. First, they created ties of solidarity with *consumers*. Farmers say that

one of the most satisfying experiences of the markets has been the new interactions with the municipal town population, which values their products because they are fresh, home-made, and with no or little chemical inputs. Since many town beneficiaries have roots in the rural area (either they are producers that migrated to the town or they still have family in the rural area) they say that they also like shopping in the market because they can talk to farmers about how they grow and process their products. Weekly interactions with consumers have made farmers more confident about speaking in public spaces, and have provided them with a direct understanding on how the market works.

Second, these markets created new links with *government*. Farmers created new connections with their local governments, by petitioning for support, advocating for change in municipal regulations affecting the markets, and in general met with responsive and supportive local governments. In addition, the Association linked farmers with provincial government and, as a result of the Association pressures, the provincial government created the Direction of Small Producers, Gardens, and Farmers Markets (Direccion Provincial de Pequenos Agricultores, Huertas, y Ferias Francas) in the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs to support this initiative. The Association holds periodic discussions with the Direction about how the provincial government can support its work. One of the areas where the Department was working was on a Bill to provide legal status and regulation to the Markets, which otherwise are vulnerable to being closed due to their informal status.

The initiation, expansion, and success of this initiative was a direct result of the partnership between PSA-Misiones and MAM. The drop in the prices of the basic cash crops grown by small farmers in Misiones (yerba mate, tobacco, and tea) in the early 1990s took a big hit on their economy. To mitigate the excessive vulnerability to market fluctuations and to

improve nutrition PSA-Misiones began supporting production for self-consumption.[121] Some of

the first soft credits for self-consumption activities went to farmers groups affiliated with MAM.

When farmers starting to have a surplus of produce, PSA-Misiones and MAM engaged in a set

of meetings to discuss what to do with that surplus. These included large meetings with all

producers involved as well as smaller meetings between PSA officials, MAM leaders, staff from

the INTA local agency, and NGOs. One of the options suggested was a Farmers Market. MAM's

leaders had visited a very dynamic one in a neighboring municipality on the Brazilian side (a

municipality called Santa Rosa (state of Rio Grande do Sul) which was about 100 miles from

the municipality of Obera, where MAM's headquarters were). PSA decided to finance the trip

for a group of farmers and technicians to visit. Excited by what they saw in Brazil, MAM opened

in 1994 the first Market in Obera.

PSA contributed to the success and expansion of the markets in several ways. First, many

of the farmers groups selling at the Markets had received soft loans from PSA and the

technicians supporting them were funded by the program. Second, it financed or directly

provided training courses on a number of issues that were of interest to farmers: what is a

market, how should farmers think about planning the produce to bring to the market, packaging,

presentation of their products in the stands, cost analysis and profit calculations, sanitary

conditions, attending beneficiaries, etc. Third, PSA also got funding from a federal fund (FET-

Fondo Especial del Tabaco- Tobacco Special Fund) to create a rotary fund (Fondo Rotatorio)

that each Market used to provide short term credit to its members. Fourth, PSA helped in many

other small and intangible but important ways. In particular farmers highlighted how PSA's

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[121] PSA had seen that many small farmers had become so dependent on cash crops income that they had forgotten about many of the traditional practices of producing for self-consumption that their immigrant parents had brought from Europe (Misiones had a wave of Eastern European migration in the early 1900s), making them more vulnerable to market fluctuations.

marketing officer, Lucio Schmidt, had become a champion of the Markets traveling throughout

the province to see how the Markets were doing, facilitating their access to services, controlling

how professionals were assisting producers, and providing tips on what was working in other

Markets to those that were struggling. That kind of dedication and commitment earned him

comments like this from a top leader in the markets' movement: "he is known throughout the

province and everybody loves him."

As town markets spread throughout the province, with PSA's crucial support, some

problems arose. In 1999, for instance, a few cases of brucelosis appeared in the milk brought by

producers to the town markets. If the disease spread it could have been a devastating blow to the

reputation and viability of town markets. To address this threat, the PSA manager and the

Federation of Town Markets linked with the provincial Ministry of Agriculture and with

SENASA, the national agency responsible for animal health, and organized a vaccination

campaign for all the animals of small farmers selling in the town markets. PSA also played an

important role in the creation and dynamism of the Association of Farmers Market. Since the end

of 1996, PSA and MAM sponsored frequent meetings among Markets to share experiences and

training courses, which led to the formation of the Association of Farmers Markets.

The network of 40 markets and the Association linking them represented not only a

concrete example of PSA's work that farmers could see and appreciate, but it was also a social

capital that gave small farmers in the province more cohesion and a stronger presence in the

program. Since the formation of the Association, a representative of the Association (the vice-

president) has been participating in the monthly meetings of the Provincial Unit. This has

allowed her to inform in the Associations' monthly meetings about what was going on in PSA.

The regular communication that the Association facilitated between the program and farmers

was important for the sense of ownership and commitment that many farmers developed with respect to PSA. In fact, the Association played an important role in mobilizing against the patronage and clientelistic attack that PSA had in 2000. The Farmers Markets (30 at that time) were an important medium through which farmers learned what was happening and that other farmers were mobilizing to the program's headquarters to protest and prevent the political take-over of the program.

While PSA-Misiones played a crucial role in developing the network of 40 Markets in Misiones, by 2003 all these organizations were autonomous and did not depend on PSA for their functioning. While the continuous presence of PSA always provided useful inputs to many, if the program was closed, this initiative would continue on its own. Many markets did not have any direct support from PSA, and they had an autonomous decision-making structure both as individual markets and as a network through the Association.

4.5, The Challenges of Critical Collaboration

The previous sections showed how the design of PSA created *opportunities* for the strengthening of farmers' federations. They contained cases where the implementation of PSA's design led to positive social capital outcomes. However, these positive outcomes should *not* be interpreted as an automatic consequence of the design of the program. Rather, they represent cases where the opportunities were grabbed. What was different between the provinces that grabbed these opportunities and the others that did not? Briefly, it was the capacity of the provincial actors involved in the program to manage the tensions involved in establishing relations of critical collaboration—i.e., relations where both actors collaborate with each other but also remain vigilant and critical of each other. PSA's approach to fostering federations role in

demanding accountability from the program requires that both farmers and PSA can collaborate with each other while keeping a minimum of autonomy. For PSA, this means strengthening these federations without being captured by them (i.e., without the benefits going only to the members of the federations and excluding the eligible farmers groups that do not belong to these federations). For farmers, it means, for instance, that the federations created or strengthened through PSA are not coopted by the program.

The main argument of this section is that the provinces where the tensions of critical collaboration were not well resolved had lower levels of beneficiary oversight than those where they were addressed successfully. I illustrate this with three cases. Provinces were the network of Farmers Delegates was too weak or subordinated to what the provincial managers said or did (Cordoba, Tucuman, Jujuy). There were other provinces where there were autonomous networks, but that locked into an adversarial, confrontational attitude with PSA that did not lead to positive outcomes such as Chaco with UNPEPROCH. Finally, there were also cases of conflict that were well resolved such as Santiago del Estero with MOCASE.

Weak, Subordinated Networks–Cordoba, Tucuman, Jujuy

The attitude and orientation of the provincial coordinator was important. While some provincial offices like Entre Rios and Mendoza took advantage of the program to build long lasting ties among farmers other provinces did not. In these provinces, FDs played more of an ornamental role. Sometimes, the provincial coordinator would marginalize an FD that was active and vocal and favor another that was more passive as a way to avoid having a vigilant eye controlling what they did. Other times, the provincial coordinator would not care about fostering the collective action capacities of farmers. .

The coordinators of Jujuy, Tucuman, and Cordoba, for instance, were described as professionals with solid technical qualifications but no or little interest in strengthening minifundistas as a collective actor. In Cordoba, for instance, the provincial coordinator had not paid attention to creating a network among farmers, there had been no farmers encounters to assess the program's performance, no efforts to identify potential leaders, or to promote joint economic initiatives (such as marketing of products). As a result, even though there were FDs in the Provincial Unit, they had no connections with the farmers they were supposed to be representing, and usually did not attend the regional or national events.

Adversarial Relations—Chaco

Let's begin with an illustration of how things can go wrong. The best example of how synergies were not the obvious outcome was what happened in Chaco in the early years of the program. In Chaco there was a federation of farmers groups (called UNPEPROCH) which had been supported by an NGO (called INCUPO, *Instituto de Cultura Popular*). After the first year in which the program had heavily supported UNPEPROCH's organizations with loans and technical assistance, both UNPEPROCH and INCUPO made two demands on the program. First, they said, the program had to give grants instead of loans, arguing that farmers were very poor and that the state had traditionally exploited the poor and that this should be considered an "act of restitution." Second, they said that projects should not go through an appraisal process by the program's Technical Unit but instead that the money should be trusted to the farmers federations, who would in turn pass it on to farmers groups. This was the way that foreign NGOs had been working during the 1980s (MISEREOR from Germany, or the Inter-American Foundation).

PSA managers at the national level explained that since PSA's funding was for individual, private goods, it was appropriate to use loans (subsidized) rather than grants, and also that since these were public funds it was a requirement to have quality control over the destination of these funds. The leadership of UNPEPROCH rejected PSA's position and instructed its members not to pay back the loans that they had gotten, generating a default of US$300,000. PSA, in turn, broke up all relations with UNPEPROCH and INCUPO. In the years that followed, many member organizations of UNPEPROCH left the Union, disagreeing with the way its leader had been conducting ("El Gordo" Trangoni was a very charismatic but also authoritarian and personalistic leader). Two new federations were formed: APECH and Coordinadora El Tacuruzal, which (if they had honored the initial loans) were allowed to present projects to PSA and worked with the program. The fragmentation and conflict among farmers federations, however, had a direct consequence for the capacity of farmers to hold government accountable. Different federations aligned with different political groups and sometimes confronted with each other. This fragmentation and confrontation explains why it was hard for beneficiaries to mobilize when the provincial coordinator was being replaced. In the conflict around the change of provincial coordinator, farmers from APECH and El Tarcuruzal said they were ready to mobilize to defend the program from politicization (specially after learning what had happened in the other provinces). However, they decided against it after they learned that UNPEPROCH was waiting to mobilize against them and was threatening to have violent confrontations.

Tensions are Resolved—Santiago del Estero

In the provinces where synergies took place, it wasn't without conflict or tensions. Only that they got solved. In Santiago del Estero, for instance, PSA had to overcome conflicts with

MOCASE around issues of access to projects and of representation in the Provincial Unit. In the first two or three years, most beneficiaries were from MOCASE because MOCASE's groups were organized and they had technical assistance that could elaborate and present projects. The risk for the program was to keep working only with these groups. The National Unit, however, gave very clear instructions that the program also had to attend those other areas where MOCASE was not present. Around mid-1995, PSA-Santiago del Estero started a strategy to open up new zones where there were no NGOs working nor small farmers organizations.

MOCASE initially opposed it. Even though they personally knew PSA's staff (many of whom had been before in the NGOs that supported MOCASE) some farmers leaders (and some NGOs) still had suspicions that PSA was forming a parallel organization to compete with MOCASE. Some argued that for farmers groups to access the program (credit and technical assistance) they had to be affiliated to MOCASE. Although PSA staff was well aware of how repressive the provincial government had been with MOCASE and understood the latter's concerns, PSA rejected these proposals realizing that there were many groups not covered by MOCASE that deserved to be assisted. The south of the province, in particular, was an area with very few farmers organizations.

To improve the outreach of the program in the southern area, PSA team identified local actors from that area interested in promoting the program: either dynamic mayors, provincial or national government extensionists working in the area, or local parishes. As a result of this effort, PSA was able to get many projects from this unattended area. Table 11 shows that at least 13 new farmers organizations were created as a result of PSA's work, and eight of these were in the south, were previously there were only two.[122] Some of the new organizations were second-level

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[122] Excluded from this list of new organizations are those organizations that disappeared after the PSA project ended

organizations. The Organizacion Zonal de Atamisqui, for instance, was a zone organization that grouped ten farmer groups.

PSA's staff considered coordinating this organizing effort with MOCASE but then *"realized it was better to help generate grassroots organizations that then could decide by themselves if they wanted to join or not the MOCASE."* As Table 11 shows four of the fourteen organizations decided to join MOCASE and nine decided not to.

Table 11. Organizations Created as a Result of PSA in Santiago del Estero

Region of Province	Before PSA	New Organizations (with PSA assistance)
North	1. Comision Central de Pequenos Productores "Aspha Sumaj" (CCPAS)* 2. Organizacion Zonal de Tintina 3. Comisiones Unidas de Campesinos de Pequenos Productores del Departamento de Figueroa (CUPPAF)* 4. Delegados Unidos del departamento de Figueroa Norte de Once Comisiones (DUFINOC)* 5. Union de Pequenos Productores del Salado Norte (UPPSAN)*	1. Organizacion Pellegrini* 2. Cooperativas de Banda
Center	1. Guacho, Parroquia San Pedro 2. Delegados de Garza 3. Cooperativa La Criollita* 4. Cooperativa de Pequenos Productores Agricolas y Cabriteros (CAPPAC) 5. COASE	1. Capital, Cooperativas La Fortaleza y Otras 2. Rio Hondo 3. Silipica
South	1. Comision Central de Campesinos de Los Juries* 2. Comision Central Campesina de Anatuya*	1. Parroquia Loreto 2. Organizacion Zonal Atamisqui 3. Ojo de Agua* 4. Salavina 5. Quebrachos 6. Organizacional Zonal del Departmanto de Mitre (*) 7. Avellaneda 8. Aguirre*

(*) belong to MOCASE

As more new groups were created, a second front of conflict between MOCASE and PSA opened up. These new groups, in addition to the pre-existing groups that were not associated with MOCASE, began to demand more vocally that they wanted to have a delegate of their own

in the Provincial Unit, which until then had two MOCASE delegates. When PSA tried to enforce its rule that one of the farmers seats in the Provincial Unit was for the federation and the other for a delegate of non-federated farmers' groups, MOCASE opposed. MOCASE argued that this sharing the representation with the non-federated would weaken their role since some farmers would see that to access certain benefits it was not necessary to be part of MOCASE. It took months of discussions in the Provincial Unit and in separate meetings to convince MOCASE of the reasons the program had to do this, and that, again, the program cared about not undermining MOCASE. As it had been with the previous issue, the National Unit played an important role in going down to the province and explaining that this was an important rule of the program that had to be enforced.[123]

Although it took some time to get the delegate of the non-federated farmers elected, the results were positive. After a couple of years MOCASE even acknowledged that sharing the seats not only had not hurt the movement but had in fact created new allies among farmers that were sympathetic with many causes of the movement even if they did not want to join it. An anecdote of how seriously farmers took this position comes from all the politics that farmers displayed in electing this new delegate. To elect the delegate for the non-MOCASE slot, farmers in each of the 12 or 13 zones in which the province was divided had to propose one candidate. The first and second most voted were the official and alternate delegates. The first year, MOCASE was able to coordinate its voting so that the candidate they wanted was elected. Since this had been done in an open election, the other farmers could not complain. They were very disappointed though and the following year they agreed among themselves which was going to be their candidate and all the representatives voted the same person. From then on, non-federated

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[123] The fact that the program's National Coordinator was someone with credibility among peasants went down to discuss this issue directly with MOCASE leaders helped smooth things out.

farmers always had their own delegate. The outcome was positive since networks did not weaken, a new more informal network of non-federated farmers also emerged, and PSA managed to respect and preserve the contact with farmers networks while expanding the representation capacity of the non-federated farmers.

Chapter 5
Program Ownership or the Motivation to Demand Accountability

If farmers were able to act as a countervailing force in the governance of PSA it was not only because they were organized in federations and networks that linked them across villages and provinces. While having this organizational infrastructure facilitated their capacity to demand collectively, alone it is not sufficient to explain acts of beneficiary oversight. Farmers also had to be willing to act, to confront or demand explanations from government, and therefore to face the risks and costs inherent in doing so. Risks involve the possibility of retaliation (being excluded from future benefits), of repression by security forces, and even the risk of death in extreme cases of confrontation. Costs involved in demanding accountability range from foregone income or abandoning one's crops during mobilization days, to transportation, food and lodging costs.

Unfortunately, the elements that motivate beneficiaries to demand accountability in antipoverty programs have not been the object of much attention in the literature. The overall assumption has been that information and knowledge will lead beneficiaries to act. This probably explains why many of the currently popular mechanisms of beneficiary oversight focus on transparency, generating and making information (both about what government does and about citizens perceptions) available—e.g., "Citizen score cards" consist basically of beneficiary surveys about service providers performance.[124] But while knowing that ninety percent of the other users believe that the water company is corrupt will likely prompt a certain media

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[124] Inspired by a private sector practice of conducting beneficiary satisfaction surveys, a small group of people in Bangalore, concerned about the city's deteriorating standards of public services, initiated an exercise in 1993 to collect feedback from users. User perceptions on the quality, efficiency, and adequacy of the various services were aggregated to create a 'report card' that rated the performance of all major service providers in the city. The findings presented a quantitative measure of satisfaction and perceived levels of corruption, which are covered in the media. The assumption is that this coverage will lead to pressures for reform. While this might be true in some cases, in

coverage, and might be useful to decision-makers, it does not automatically translate into citizens ready to mobilize and demand an overhaul of the company. They need to be motivated to act, and be willing to confront government.

While self-interest, or the expectation of future material rewards, is a common source of motivation for poor people to participate it is usually insufficient when it comes to controlling a program's performance given that better governance is usually a public good nature that benefits all future beneficiaries equally. Self-interest is certainly not the right explanation in the case of PSA where many of the farmers that mobilized were no longer beneficiaries of the program, and where, by confronting the party in power they were risking to lose the possibility of being benefited again. More importantly, similar attempts of taking over programs for patronage and clientelism had happened in other cases and beneficiaries did not mobilize to stop them.

Rather than self-interest, what motivated farmers to control what happened in PSA had to do with ideas and values, with their identity as minifundistas, and with the meaning that PSA had as part of that identity. Farmers said they mobilized because PSA was "their" program, "the first program for minifundistas", a space where they were accustomed to voice their concerns and try to do something about them, an entitlement that they were not willing to lose. When I first heard this kind of statements, they struck me. In what they were saying about their relationship with government, I sensed there was something different than what I was accustomed to hear in other participatory programs.

No matter how participatory a program is, farmers and poor people in general tend to describe social programs as *government* programs. This certainly was the case of FOPAR. In the case of PSA, however, many farmers did not think that was an appropriate way of describing

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others it will not, and it is in those cases where beneficiaries will need to be motivated to act beyond filling a survey. For more information on the experience with report cards see Songco (2001), Paul (2004).

PSA. It was not that farmers did not know that PSA was funded by the national government. They did. They also knew that PSA officials were appointed and paid by the government. For them, though, PSA was something more and something *else* than a "government program." What this *else* was became clear in the responses farmers gave me about why they had mobilized to protest the changes of provincial coordinators. Their answers almost always included some version of: *"because this is our program"* or *"because we made this program what it is"*. These farmers had developed a sense of entitlement about their right to decide the direction of the program that led them to challenge the traditional logic that had governed social programs.

Different farmers I talked to referred, with different emphases, to the same themes of program ownership and their entitlement to defend the program:

- One farmer put the contrast between PSA and other social programs in very explicit terms: *"The [national] government wants us to believe that it can make any change it wants. And we know that it has the authority. But what people in Buenos Aires [the nation's capital] don't understand is that this is our program. This is not TRABAJAR where the mayor or the deputy do whatever they want. We made this program [PSA] what it is and we won't let them take that away from us."*

- A woman farmer in Misiones said: *"In the beginning, when all that happened [the mobilization] I observed and wondered Why is this happening? I thought it was political. But when I saw that all the producers were defending what the program was because they felt part of it, I felt obliged to participate."*

- And a male farmer in Santiago del Estero said *"We mobilized because we knew Ramon and Pablo and the other guys from PSA, but more than anything because we were defending a*

way of working..., the people became aware..., they took it to the bone(?)("se hizo carne") that there couldn't be changes without consulting the people."

Even though bureaucrats are considered to be poorly placed to provide ideological resources around which poor people can mobilize,[125] PSA did exactly that. It framed the program in a way that bolstered the identity of minifundistas as a movement and made the program part of their identity. For minifundistas, then, defending PSA was defending the cause of the movement. PSA is not the only example of a government program that enabled its recipients to become more active and engaged citizens by affecting their identities and sense of membership. The GI Bill for WWII veterans in the United States is said to have had a similar effect.[126]

This chapter is about what PSA did differently so that its beneficiaries would make the program part of their identity. The next section focuses on issues of design and the following one on implementation issues.

5.1. Why Design Matters for Beneficiaries Identity and Program Ownership

The way PSA beneficiaries talked about ownership differs from the meaning usually ascribed to this term in mainstream development discourse. Donors usually promote beneficiary ownership with respect to the management of the projects funded by their programs (i.e., a community center, a health facility, etc.). The assumption is that if beneficiaries see the project as theirs, it is more likely that they will put the effort to sustain it. This is the kind of *project*

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[125] Joshi and Moore (2000, p.26)

[126] "The extent to which people adopt and take seriously the role of actively engaged citizens can clearly be affected by the tools and policies pursued by government. The direct, highly visible benefits afforded veterans of World War II through the GI Bill resulted in significantly higher levels of participation in civic and political associations by recipients when compared with other veterans. Part of the explanation lies in *the way in which policy altered civic roles and identities.* This occurred through offering people a direct, visible, and highly positive experience of

ownership promoted by FOPAR.[127] In the case of PSA, however, when beneficiaries talked about ownership they were referring to the governing of the program rather than of particular projects. In the same way that FOPAR's design gave incentives for its beneficiaries to develop project ownership, PSA's design, structure, and discourse encouraged the gestation of *program ownership* among its beneficiaries.

How did beneficiaries develop this belief that PSA was their program, and why did FOPAR beneficiaries did not? Two design differences that influenced beneficiary's program ownership were, first, the justification underpinning the design of each program; and second, the role that third party providers had in each program.

While FOPAR justified the program in rather technocratic and abstract terms related to the importance of empowering "poor people" to engage in development, PSA framed the program as a "historical reparation" that the national government was fulfilling for a social group (minifundistas) that had been historically marginalized and ignored by government. The foundational document of PSA stresses how before PSA was created the national government's Secretary of Agriculture had usually treated minifundistas as if they did not exist, as a marginal group destined to oblivion. PSA in contrast, as the first national program aimed at minifundistas at a national scale, was an affirmation that minifundistas "existed" and that the government

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government and public provision, *endowing recipients with a greater sense of membership in the polity.*" (Smith and Ingram 2002, p. 568).

[127] An example of this was what happened in a village in the municipality of Campo Roman, Misiones. The director of the school wanted to take over the community center, replacing the community representatives with two parents whom she had control over. This had been the natural thing to do in that rural community where, until FOPAR's intervention, the director had been running all community affairs with an authoritarian style. Community members, however, decided to stand up to her and did not give up the keys of the community center (the crucial resource whose control determines who is the owner of the place). They told the director that the center was theirs, that they had built it with their own hands, and that the community organization that had become more active with FOPAR's project and training was going to be in charge. The director, then retaliated by asking to fire two of the community members that were part of the school parents' association. The community members agreed to have new elections in the parents association but (remembering FOPAR's training on how to conduct elections in associations) they demanded that it be a secret vote instead of a show of hands. The members the director was trying to displace were reelected by popular vote.

considered them a viable sector. Framing the program this way achieved a dual effect; on the one hand, the existence (and continuation) of PSA became the recognition that the sector existed, a legitimization of the validity of this group; on the other hand, the program represented a space where this group could develop a forward looking agenda, could develop a positive image of itself. By embodying elements of both the past and the future of the minifundistas sector, PSA became intertwined with the process of constructing or strengthening of the minifundistas identity. This is why PSA was something "else" than just a government program.

PSA did not invent the minifundistas identity. Rather the program invested in it, strengthening and building upon the minifundistas initiatives that existed in certain provinces, fostering their creation in other provinces, and promoting ties across provinces. In the early 1990s, minifundistas was a concept pretty much confined to a couple of provinces in the North where federations (most of them weak) existed. In the early 2000s, in contrast, as a result of PSA decision makers were aware of the existence of minifundistas across the country, new federations had emerged and existing ones had been strengthened, and there were new ties connecting these different organizations across the nation in what could be called an incipient social movement. PSA contributed to the formation of this movement by fostering not only the sort of organizational networks described in the previous chapter but also the meaning systems that sustain any process of identity formation.

The social movements literature has developed cultural and social psychological analyses that focus on how actors interpret events and construct meaning systems conducive to movement participation.[128] The efforts of PSA to strengthen the identity of minifundistas resemble the process of building what has been called "oppositional consciousness." Oppositional consciousness includes, at least, four elements: "We say that members of a group that others

have traditionally treated as subordinate or deviant have an oppositional consciousness when they (a) claim their previously subordinate identity as a positive identification, (b) identify injustices done to their group, (c) demand changes in the polity, economy or society to rectify those injustices, and (d) see other members of their group as sharing an interest in rectifying those injustices."[129] PSA did at least two things to strengthen a "minifundistas consciousness."

Subordinate Position Becomes Positive Identification

PSA promoted a whole range of interactions among farmers in which their commonalities were emphasized by the program and discovered by farmers themselves, slowly cementing an awareness of their belonging to a larger group. These interactions were physical (through all sorts of meetings at the provincial, regional and national level) or virtual (through newsletter and radio programs). The messages were always a positive affirmation of farmers knowledge and expertise, and the need to act collectively. Besides the Provincial Assessment Meetings and National Encounters of Farmers Delegates (which I described in previous chapters), PSA had periodic training events. Many of these were of course related to production issues: animal sanitation, soil conservation, organic gardens, bee farming, preparation of sweets/cheese/cold cuts, use and maintenance of agricultural equipment, etc. Other events, such as the Seeds Fair, were not so much about training farmers in a specific topic but about the valorization of farmers know-how. Other meetings were intended to strengthen a specific group within the minifundistas sector. For instance there were provincial and regional Meetings of Women Peasants or Meetings

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[128] Morris and Braine (2001), Mansbridge (2001).

[129] Mansbridge (2001). Oppositional consciousness "takes free-floating frustration and directs it into anger. It turns strangers intro brothers and sisters, and turns feelings for these strangers from indifference into love. It builds on ideas and facts to generate hope. Cognitive and emotive processes mix together, as an emotion focuses a cognition and a cognition triggers an emotion."

of Aboriginal Leaders, or Provincial and Regional Meetings of Town Markets.[130] In addition to these face-to-face interactions, all the provincial offices of PSA published small newsletter or journals through which they kept farmers informed of what was going on in the program, disseminated stories of farmer's innovations, brought news of developments in other provinces or at the national level, etc. PSA Misiones, for instance, published fifteen issues of the "*Boletin del Programa Social Agropecuario*", with an average of 30 to 40 pages. Sometimes, those farmers that could read would share with those that could not the stories in these magazines/newsletters. Other times farmers will hear the newsletter articles on the radio, given that it was common that either one of the PSA staff or someone related to the program would have a radio program on rural development issues.

These different meetings and media channels contributed to farmers growing awareness of being part of a larger group. Many farmers made comments similar to this: "*I didn't know that there were so many of us in the province [...] until I saw the meeting with, like, two hundred farmers like me.*" It also meant being more conscious of who supported them and, by default, who did not. This information was useful when it came to demand accountability. In Misiones, for instance, at the Assembly where farmers were resisting the appointment of the party candidate for provincial coordinator, a farmer stood up and addressed the party candidate in the following manner (according to her own recollection): "*We know the people in this province who have been committed to the improvement of small producers. We don't know you. You have never been in our fields. We have never received any advice from you. Look at how you are dressed. With a suit and tie and leather shoes. That's how politicians dress, not the 'tecnicos' who come to our plots.*" Beneficiaries are empowered not only because they belong to a provincial organization or movement but also because they can tell apart friends from "not-

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[130] For a sample of the type of events during the first two years see Alfaro (1996).

proven-to-be-friends-yet." This identity allows them (or at least the most active of them) to know who is who. It is hard to imagine a beneficiary from FOPAR making such a statement to FOPAR's provincial manager. The topic of FOPAR's interventions was so broad that it would be impossible for a farmer to assess from an experiential point of view whether this person qualified or not.

In contrast to rural development programs that see farmers traditional farming practices and knowledge as archaic and backward, PSA was about reinforcing the notion that farmers had valuable knowledge, that they were "experts" in agriculture. Events like the Seeds Fair were not so much about training farmers in a specific topic but about the valorization of farmers' know-how. These were two or three day events where farmers from all over the province got together with providers, and the key message was about farmers' realizing the variety of seeds that they already had in their fields, and exchanging the knowledge among farmers about what kind of crop their different varieties of seed would produce, rather than looking only for hybrid seeds and depending on the market. For some farmers, the practice itself of participating in the program successfully was also a positive affirmation of their identity as small farmers: "*It [PSA] has helped us to believe in ourselves. Before PSA we believed that small producers were not capable of paying out their debts. Other people also considered us (small producers) as "inviable". Now we know that we can do it. We know that we can return a credit.*"

From a beneficiary oversight perspective, in fact, the advantage of building upon the minifundista identity was that it is an area where farmers are experts in a way that they are not about many other issues (such as how to fix a well, improve school pedagogy, or how to balance a budget). Of all the affiliations that individuals living in rural areas have (water users, users of the health facility, soccer fans, parents, etc) there is no doubt that minifundista is one of the

stronger ones. Talking to a female farmer in Santiago del Estero I asked her why her organization had mobilized to defend PSA against budget cuts but had not done the same with another program aimed at strengthening community organizations (Civil Society Strengthening Program) which was terminated by the government, and she said: *"we are small producers, what PSA supports is what the people do, it is our life."* Because it is their life, they know about it, and this expertise or competence empowers them to participate in decision-making processes and to make demands with a level of confidence and authority that they would not have in other fields. The literature on participatory democracy and deliberative democracy puts strong emphasis on this issue since it relates to the "deliberative capacities of citizens". In participatory development, the problem that has often been pointed out is when poor people participate in decision making as "tokens."

Demanding Changes to Rectify Injustices

In addition to helping farmers experience their commonalities in a positive way, PSA also provided a space where farmers could put into practice that shared identity in a forward-looking manner, identifying their priorities and engaging in decision-making instances and demand-making activities. The link between being able to plan a better future and demanding accountability is well captured by what some scholars call "capacity to aspire": "in strengthening the capacity to aspire, conceived as a cultural capacity, especially among the poor, the poor could find the resources required to contest and alter the conditions of their own poverty."[131]

PSA did this in two ways. First, as I have already described, farmers could participate in the definition of the program's strategy, in important managerial decisions, and in controlling the program's performance. Being able to vote whether supporting mechanization was a good idea

or not, being able to bring new ideas to be supported by PSA (like the Town Markets), being able to demand an overhaul of the way providers assisted farmers, having PSA officials explain to them why the budget for the province had not arrived were all affirmative actions with the same underlying message: this is our program.

Second, and differently from most social programs, PSA did not limit its actions only to the delivery of its core services (credit, training, technical assistance). Instead, in addition to these core services, PSA's national and provincial managers had a more "customized" set of services—they thought farmers should take advantage of the program's structure and resources to push for those issues important for farmers in each province and at the regional and national level. This customized approach reinforced in farmers the notion that the program was directed to their needs, however *they* (and not bureaucrats in Buenos Aires) chose to define those needs. In practice, this customized approach translated some times in simple things such as helping the leaders of a community to get an appointment with the Provincial Secretary of Education because their teacher had been absent for more than a week, or providing office space and services for farmers to organize a protest outraged at the ambulance that did not arrive to the village on time, leaving a baby to die without assistance. Other times it translated in larger, more ambitious endeavors. In the province of San Juan, for instance, the PSA officials and farmers led an initiative to legalize the land titles of a large number of the province's poorest farmers. As a result of these pressures, the provincial government passed Law 7,039. At the national level, PSA supported farmers to lobby the government to adapt the taxing system to the reality of small producers. Although the Tax Agency created a taxpayer category that better fit their reality, and lowered the tax rate, farmers were unsatisfied with the results and were still demanding further changes.

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[131] Appadurai (2001)

Education, land titling, tax reform, these are only a few examples of the different issues in which PSA's staff supported farmers, even though these issues were not part of PSA's core services. The reason for engaging in these activities can be found in the broader ambition that the program had of—as one provincial manager told me—"improving the lives of small farmers in anyway we can." In its interactions with farmers, PSA instilled this message in farmers' minds. Farmers knew that they could bring their problems to the provincial office of PSA and that, there, they would find attentive listeners who would try to work with them in finding a solution. A farmers' leader told me *"I always tell producers that whenever they have a problem they should go to PSA [the provincial office]. That is the place to go to get help."* PSA, however, didn't "supply" the help—it often didn't have the resources or authority to do it—but rather it facilitated the solution (making contacts, giving money for transportation, hiring a lawyer to provide specific advice, etc), letting farmers take the initiative.

This disposition and flexibility to respond to issues other than those defined by the program is in marked contrast, for instance, with most government programs. The attitude in FOPAR both at the central and provincial level was to follow very closely the operational manual that detailed the project cycle. FOPAR's project cycle was much more rigid than that of PSA. FOPAR bears the mark of the social funds in that every action it takes can be traced to a phase of the "project cycle." The unit of intervention is the project and it is very clearly specified what is a project and what is not. This "project-processing machine" feature, which explains the relative efficiency of social funds, at the same time introduces rigidities that conflict with a more flexible approach that seems needed to support the creation of local capacities.

PSA had a view less focused on projects. Provincial managers had a broader mandate and more discretion to pursue it than FOPAR provincial managers. For instance, the mandate of PSA

managers involved playing a catalytic and synergetic role in provincial rural development—through the creation of strategic alliances or complementing the work that others do. The mandate of FOPAR managers, in contrast, was defined in much narrower terms, consisting basically of assuming different responsibilities in the implementation of the project cycle. PSA also granted managers significant discretion to pursue their mandate. For instance, managers could decide if it was worthwhile to pay groups of producers to visit successful initiatives in other provinces or neighboring countries, and decide what those initiatives are. Similarly, if managers identified a problem that may be compromising the success of a PSA-supported initiative they had the freedom to do everything they could to solve it (and were encouraged to do it by the center).

Program Ownership among Third Party Providers

The other element that contributed to generate beneficiary ownership about PSA was when third party providers themselves developed ownership about the program. While FOPAR also relied on third party providers, the latter did not have the level of program ownership that PSA's providers had. Why? The design of the program dictated a specific type of relationship with third-party providers. While FOPAR treated them just as service delivery agents engaged in a business relation, PSA treated them also as partners who had a stake in shaping the program. Differently from FOPAR where these agents had not much of a say in the program, in the case of PSA NGOs, provincial government, and the Provincial branch of INTA had a seat in the Provincial Unit (at the national level NGOs, INTA, and regional rural development programs also had a seat in the National Committee.) This institutional opportunity to participate in the strategic and managerial aspects of the program created a potential for these stakeholders to

influence the program and identify with its mission and its success. In those provinces where the partnership with third party providers worked best (see next section) it was not circumscribed to the sphere of the Provincial Unit but it encompassed all the extensionists and their organizations assisting farmers groups.[132]

The extent to which these third party agents identified themselves with the program's mission was important for beneficiary ownership for two reasons. First, these third party agencies brought in resources (in terms of ideas, contacts, money, personnel, infrastructure, etc) to make the program work (both the core and the more customized services). The more engaged these third party providers were the greater their contribution to the effectiveness of the program. They would participate more actively in the Provincial Unit, making greater efforts to coordinate what the Provincial government or INTA were planning to do with PSA's strategy, or providing information about interesting initiatives to support. Provincial governments would contribute of their own budget to increase PSA's scope of action in the province. NGOs or individual technicians would be willing to keep attending their groups for several months without pay until the resources came from Buenos Aires (delays in sending transfers and even budget cuts were common in fiscally strapped Argentina).

Second, subcontracted professionals were the "street (farm) level bureaucrats" in regular contact with the dispersed population that formed the programs' clientele. Each provincial office of PSA had no more than five or six in-house professionals. So, even though they were quite active, most of the day-to-day interaction with beneficiaries was done by the professionals in the field. In their periodic interactions with beneficiaries (some of) these professionals would impress upon the latter a certain view of what the program was about as well as a view of

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[132] Depending on the province these third parties could be a combination of individual professionals without institutional affiliation, or professionals affiliated with the Secretary of Agriculture, INTA, a municipality, an NGO

themselves as part (or not) of a larger actor. Creating a sense of program ownership among third-party organizations was not small feat since the literature points out that one of the biggest challenges that third-party governance poses is that beneficiaries tend not to recognize as government action the services that are provided by subcontracted providers.[133]

5.2. Why Implementation Also Matters

Both the degree of program ownership among beneficiaries and third party providers was not the same across provinces. Similarly to what I found in chapter 4, in those provinces where there was higher beneficiary oversight (Misiones, Santiago del Estero, Entre Rios), the degree of program ownership was higher than in those provinces with lower levels of beneficiary oversight (Jujuy, Tucuman, Chaco, Cordoba). In the former group, both beneficiaries and third party agents identified strongly with the program's mission and success forming a network that blurred the boundaries between the program and third party agents. In the latter group, in contrast, the relations were generally good but kept at arms length, with greater distrust and distance among parties, and in some cases (Chaco) even with instances of outright conflict.

What appeared to set apart these two groups of provinces in terms of program ownership was the way in which the PSA provincial team (particularly its coordinator) framed the program. In the former group of provinces the provincial team saw the program as an instrument of a larger project (strengthening the minifundistas movement), a project that belonged not to a specific government agency but to the whole network of actors committed to rural development. And thus the program also "belonged" to that network. In the latter group of provinces, in contrast, the program was seen and managed as a government program, a program that despite its

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or a farmers network.
[133] Salamon (2002).

distinctive emphasis in allowing farmers and third parties participation it was essentially a government program to provide services to minifundistas. These contrasts were very clear when comparing the way that beneficiaries, provincial stakeholders, and officials at the national level described the situation in the different provinces.

The coordinators of Jujuy, Tucuman, and Cordoba, for instance, were described as professionals with solid technical qualifications but no or little interest in strengthening minifundistas as a collective actor. People said that they *"adopted the attitude of a public official [...] their attitude was 'this is a government program and I allow you to participate'"*, *"they are usually not very receptive to criticisms of producers, or outside agents"*, *"very hierarchical relation with farmers, NGOs, and "*, *"his own staff criticized him behind his back, that shows you how he was."* A Farmer Delegate from Jujuy described the coordinator saying: *"Payo [the coordinator] came looking for us when things got difficult for him"*, *"he gave us more attention...only then I was able to get the Operational Manual, I thought that being a representative in the provincial unit was boring but after reading the Manual I was excited!"*

Chaco is a different case in the sense that even though the coordinator tried to generate an alliance with third parties and farmers networks, the latter were reluctant to do the same, leading to a confrontation and break-up of the relationship. As I mentioned before, the NGOs INCUPO and INDES together with the farmers network UNPEPROCH refused to repay the program loans (arguing they should be grants) and so the program blacklisted them. As a result, the provincial office worked more with individual professionals and even though new farmers networks appeared, the institutional landscape remained fragmented and in conflict. This manifested clearly in the event of the replacement of provincial coordinator when two groups of farmers networks were opposed to each other.

In contrast to the first group of provincial coordinators who emphasized the government nature of the program, for the second group of coordinators (Santiago del Estero, Misiones, Entre Rios) the boundaries were more blurry, they were more concerned about how the program would strengthen the minifundistas movement and all of those supporting their cause. The coordinator of Entre Rios, for instance, said: "*I have been fighting for these issues [a better life for farmers] for the last forty years. **I took over the program as the fight for a sector**. I wish I had thirty years ago [at the time of the Agrarian Leagues][134] the tools that the program gives me now. When I was named coordinator, I thought what needed to be done was to **harvest power for the sector**.*" In fact, the identification of both beneficiaries and third party providers with the coordinator as a leader was pretty strong in both Misiones and Entre Rios. "farmers identified themselves with the program through the personality of the provincial coordinator. They adored him." (Misiones). The fact that he died in a tragic accident (his helicopter crashed while flying to recognize the areas that were flooded in one of Misiones worst flooding). People referred to PSA sometimes saying "we are like a family"

Networks of third party providers

An important part of In the case of Entre Rios the provincial team had to start the organization of the sector almost from scratch given that there were no rural development NGOs and no farmers network in the province. After many years of work, these efforts paid off and the farmers decided to form La Red de Delegados (I explained this in the previous chapter).

In contrast to Entre Rios, in the cases of Misiones and Santiago del Estero the work was made easier by the pre-existence of an informal rural development network that connected

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[134] He was from a family of small producers, and had been Secretary of the Agrarian Leagues in Entre Rios in the early 1970s.

farmers groups and third party agents. Both provincial coordinators were part of these networks. What these coordinators did was to tap into their respective networks to forge an identity for the program in the province, and then used the program to expand these networks. In Misiones, it was the issue of agro ecology or organic agriculture (broadly defined). In the case of Santiago del Estero, it was the fight for land and the fight to protect against Juarez.[135] the provincial office was able to define a vision for the program in the province around which the different professional groups identified.

In Misiones, the provincial coordinator was Roberto "Coya" Cametti. An agricultural engineer that had worked with NGOs in several northeast provinces, he went to Misiones in the early 1990s with the vision of promoting a more agro ecological approach to rural development. He got involved with the main actors working in agro ecology (professionals from public and non government agencies, farmers, farmers networks) and in May 1993 he convened them to a meeting discuss in organic agriculture in the province. More than a hundred people went to this meeting and as a result the RAOM-Red de Agricultura Organica de Misiones (Organic Agricultural Network of Misiones) was created. The purpose of RAOM was to operate as an informal network that would facilitate contacts and exchanges among people with an interest in organic agriculture. Seven months after RAOM was created, in December 1993, PSA was created. The most important contribution that RAOM made to PSA was its network of contacts and the sketch of a vision about what to do. There was already the sketch of a vision that united a number of professionals and the person that had been able to bring people around that vision was

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[135] For over forty years, Governor Juarez ruled Santiago del Estero with an iron hand, mounting a parallel "intelligence apparatus" that repressed any dissent, persecuted and jailed political opponents, and controlled the press. Its political base came from the rural areas where belonging to the opposition party meant the automatic exclusion from any benefit channeled through the provincial government. The fact that farmers in Santiago del Estero could freely express their opinion in PSA, can dissent and question PSA (the national government) without

named coordinator. That he was named coordinator of PSA was not a coincidence but a direct result of the way in which PSA initially recruited its provincial coordinator—by consulting with the main rural development stakeholders in each province.

In the case of Santiago del Estero, around 1989 a network of third party agents coalesced around their support to the formation of the farmers network MOCASE. As I mentioned before a number of NGOs (INCUPO, CENEPP, FUNDAPAZ, Equipo Tecnico Los Juries), government programs (INTA-Minifundio, PRODEMUR), and church organizations (Obispado Anatuya) formed an informal technical group to support MOCASE (which was itself a network of the different farmers networks that each agent had supported in different parts of the province). This informal group was indeed called MOCASE's Support and Promotion Team (Equipo de Promocion y Apoyo al MOCASE) or EPA. EPA consisted of periodic meetings attended usually by about ten professionals (and sometimes up to twenty) from these different agencies. EPA main goal was to support the farmers movement in the province in three ways: (i) providing technical assistance to the MOCASE groups, (ii) coordinating the formulation of joint projects to raise money from government or donors, and (iii) exchanging information among the different organizations.

When PSA was created in 1993, one person from this network (Pablo Usandivaras) was appointed coordinator and several members of EPA became part of the staff. Between 1993-1995 several other national social programs opened offices in the province and people belonging to this group were appointed (FOPAR, TRABAJAR, Strengthening of Civil Society, INTA-Minifundio). This meant that suddenly this group (which was the opposition to a very authoritarian and repressive provincial government) was managing considerable amount of

suffering any negative personal consequences had a greater importance than in other provinces which did not have these oppressive political environment.

money. The provincial government complained to the national government (which was of the same party) and was able to have all the managers removed from their positions with the exception of PSA (because of the political protection that Secretary of Agriculture Sola offered, and which I explained in chapter 2). In 1996, EPA disappeared and instead a Roundtable of NGOs (Mesa de ONGs) was created which included a larger number of NGOs. This Roundtable elects one member to represent the NGO sector in the Provincial Unit.

Independent of whether there was a previous network or not, provincial teams in all three provinces had an acute awareness of the short-lived nature of most government programs and, consequently, a desire to grab the opportunity offered by the program to create (in the case of Entre Rios) and consolidate and expand (in the other two provinces) a network of professionals and organizations committed to rural development. One member from the provincial team in Misiones, for instance, said that a constant concern of the team had been that "*if the program is shut down, we have to leave something that will keep serving minifundistas in the province. That's why we've been trying to consolidate technical teams in the different regions of the province that are articulated with farmers groups, and that can survive us.*"

To consolidate these teams, PSA officials did three things in these provinces. First, rather that funding independent professionals (like FOPAR or other provincial offices of PSA did), whenever possible they funded professionals that were affiliated to rural development organizations. In Misiones, for instance, all fifty seven professionals/technicians funded by the program were affiliated with an organization: thirty five (62%) worked for government (INTA, the provincial Ministry of Agrarian Affairs, municipalities, or directly for PSA), fifteen (26%)

for NGOs, and seven (12%) for farmers networks (Table 12).[136] When the professional was a

public servant already receiving a salary from the state, then the program contributed with the

inputs for his/her work (transportation, per diems, training)—the lack of which often kept good

professionals seated in their offices rather than in the field. When the government employee

worked part time or as consultant, then the income from PSA's projects complemented their

income ensuring the continuity of a good professional, who otherwise was at risk of leaving the

work of extensionist because he or she could not survive on a part time job.

Table 12. Technical Staff Subcontracted by PSA in Misiones –2000

Institutional Affiliation	# of Profesionals	# of Groups
Government	*35*	*84*
INTA (National Institute of Agricultural Technology)	17	45
Provincial Ministry of Agrarian Affairs	3	8
Municipalities	10	31
PSA	5	(*)
Non Governmental Organizations	*15*	*49*
INDES	5	28
IERE	3	4
RAOM	3	5
APTM	1	4
Pastoral Social *(Church Related Organization)*	3	8
Farmers Networks	*7*	*20*
AFFAM	1	1
MAM	6	19
TOTAL	**57**	**153**

(*) provided training to multiple groups.

Second, while the program funded independent professionals in certain cases (e.g., where

the existing institutions were insufficient to cover the demand or were not present in certain

areas), there was always an effort to link them with existing institutions. For instance, in the

INTA agency located in the municipality of San Vicente, Misiones, there was an experienced

agricultural engineer who was highly respected for his great passion and knowledge in working

with small farmers. Since he could not cover the demand from many of the surrounding

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[136] Out of the fifty seven extensionists there were: sixteen agricultural engineers, three forest engineers, five

municipalities and there were not other organizations working there, the program funded several young agricultural technicians that lived in the area and that reported and were mentored by this more senior public agent. In other areas, PSA teamed up good professionals with active mayors that showed interest in supporting farmers and that while they had no resources to pay salaries they could help in other ways (for instance, lending the infrastructure to establish the Farmers Market in the municipal town, or the municipality's tractor, etc).

Third, to improve coordination and cross-fertilization among the members of the technical support network and between them and PSA, the program divided the province in Zonal Technical Teams (Equipos Tecnicos Zonales) comprised by all the agents working in a specific zone (which generally covered a number of municipalities). In Misiones there were seven Zones (see Map 1) and in each zone technicians met regularly to discuss their activities. In Santiago del Estero, the PSA's technical team observed in 1999 that the quantity of projects approved in the same zone by different independent technicians started to grow and that these were not complementary nor were communicating with each other. PSA proposed to form Zonal Technical Teams with the same geographic boundaries that farmers were organized. Technicians from each of the seven zones got together periodically and there was one of them in each zone that was the "referente" for PSA. The provincial coordinator of PSA in Santiago del Estero described the function of these "referente" as follows: "The main problem we had was doing the follow-up on what these technicians were doing and to have a good communication with them. So what we did was to organize monthly meetings with the referente from each zone to have an exchange on what each technician had done and to answer all the questions that the technicians had for the program, such as the status of each of the projects in the PU, etc. each referente has 2 additional days per month paid to do this work."

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veterinarians, twenty six agricultural technicians, two anthropologists, one sociologist and two social workers.

All of these activities to form networks of professionals and organizations engaged in rural development created a strong identification between many members of this network and the program. This identification explains why in times of budget crisis (when the nation did not send the promised transfers, or when the program's budget was reduced) these members were willing to keep assisting farmers without pay. It explains why many of these network members had a special commitment to work with minifundistas, and why they agreed with the notion that the program should serve farmers and transmitted that message in their interactions with farmers. Finally, it also explains why many of them mobilized to defend the program.

Map 1. Groupings of the Main Municipalities covered by each of the Seven Zonal Technical Teams in Misiones
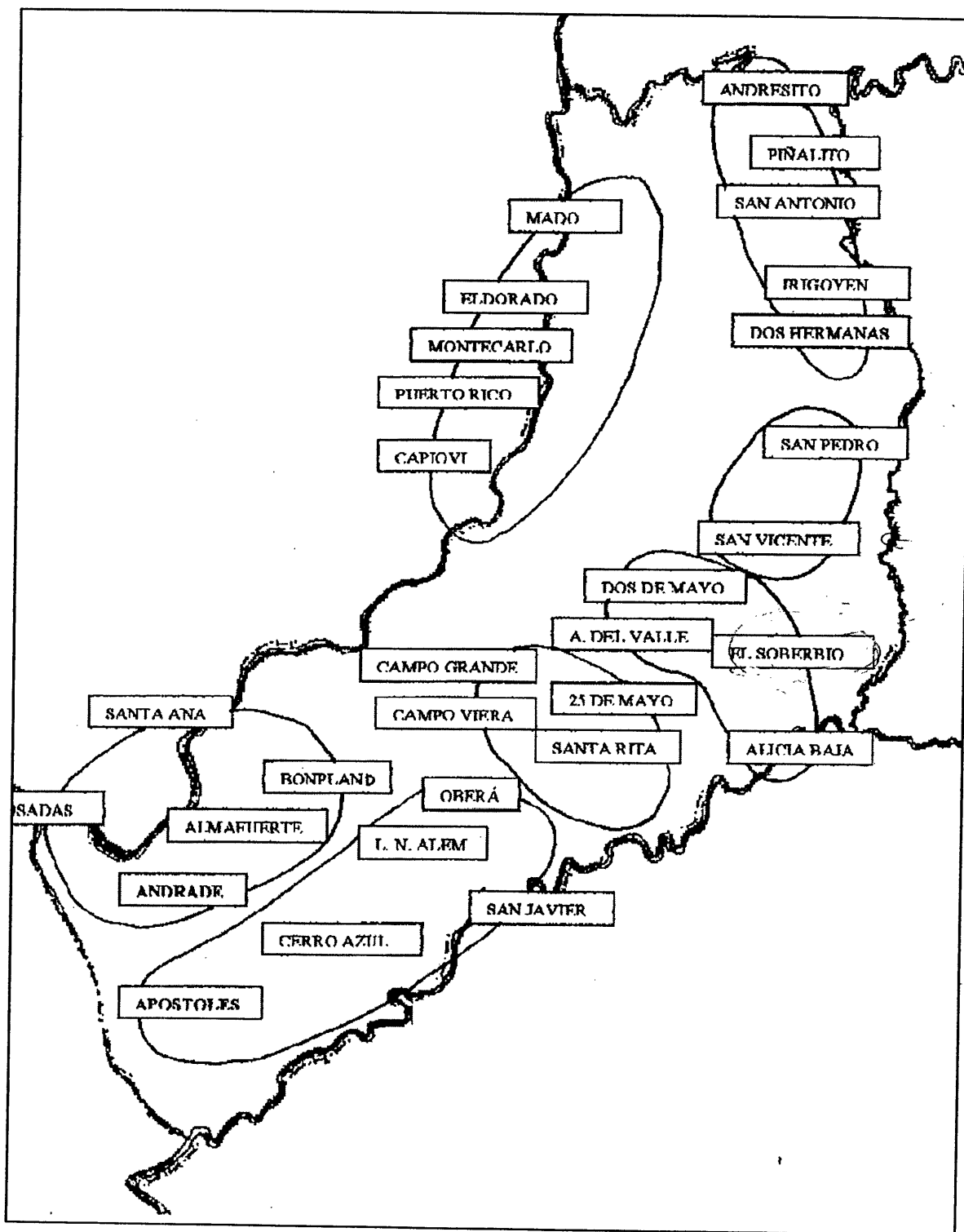
Chapter 6
Conclusions

This dissertation is about the conditions that enable beneficiary groups to demand accountability from Community Driven Development (CDD) programs. Over the last fifteen years, and under the prompting of international organizations like the World Bank, governments all over the developing world have adopted CDD programs as an important vehicle for channeling assistance to poor people. The World Bank defines CDD as an approach that gives "communities" (beneficiary groups) control over resources and decisions in the design and implementation of small-scale development projects. Depending on the program, this control can include planning decisions (allocating investment funds to those services demanded by beneficiary groups—e.g., for a school, a well, irrigation equipment, etc), procurement of goods and services (allowing beneficiary groups to administer the public monies destined to buy the inputs, and to hire the technical assistance needed to implement the investment), and/or service provision (supporting beneficiary groups to manage and operate certain investments—e.g., water user associations, community managed schools, etc). CDD claims that by increasing beneficiaries control over decisions and resources it strengthens their capacity to demand accountability from those agents with whom they interact (government staff, private service providers).

The arrival of CDD has provoked a heated, and at times acrimonious, debate in the international development community about its potential and dangers for promoting development. One of the core issues in contention has been around the participatory or clientelistic nature of these programs. While CDD advocates consider that these programs strengthen the capacities of poor people to act collectively, to collaborate with, and demand accountability from the state, their critics see them as vehicles for patronage and clientelism that

have made them the darling of many presidents in developing countries. As I looked for a dissertation topic in the summer of 2000, and reflecting back on my own work with CDD programs in several countries, I realized that my own experience also echoed these contrasting, and apparently contradictory, perspectives that we find in the literature. I had seen programs that stood out because beneficiary groups collaborated actively in the program implementation; and others where beneficiary groups were highly vulnerable to external manipulation. There were programs that worked better in certain municipalities or regions than in others, and programs that went both through periods of high clientelistic pressures and other periods where these pressures subsided.

My intuition at that time was that the analytical challenge with regards to this debate was *not* to find what image was right or wrong because, in fact, *both were (or could be) right*. CDD programs could be both instruments for participation and accountability and also for clientelism and patronage. The analytical task was to understand what conditions led to one outcome or the other. The label of CDD encompasses a great variety of institutional designs whose performance is highly sensitive to the very different socio-economic and political contexts in which they operate. One can find a program to illustrate one point and another one to illustrate the opposite one. Rather than generic discussions, then, part of the analytical project entails conducting detail studies that illuminate how specific aspects of program design implemented in a specific context lead to specific outcomes. That is what I tried to do in this dissertation.

Instead of focusing on generic participation issues I decided to focus on the extent to which CDD programs influenced the capacity of beneficiary groups to demand accountability from the program. There is a consensus in the social sciences and in the development literature that citizen-beneficiary oversight over government programs contributes to improve the

programs' performance. Yet, little is known about the conditions that enable beneficiaries to demand accountability. This dissertation approaches this void in the literature by asking a question that is crucial for development planners, namely, to what extent do the way CDD programs are designed, as well as the interplay between program design and the context in which it is implemented, matter for enabling beneficiaries to demand accountability?

I selected two CDD programs in Argentina, a rural development CDD program called PSA (and located in the Secretariat of Agriculture) and a small scale infrastructure CDD program called FOPAR (and located in the Ministry of Social Development). By selecting these two programs I was able to hold constant a number of factors: country context, political environment, target population, managerial structure, and a participatory approach that emphasized building social capital as an important objective. These two programs also offered the variation with respect to the two dimensions I was interested in exploring: different mechanisms for beneficiary oversight and exposure to a clientelistic environment.

First, while both programs were highly participatory, they had different mechanisms to enable beneficiary oversight over subcontracted service providers and over provincial field staff. FOPAR, which was funded by and designed with advice from the World Bank, had the mechanism that CDD advocates consider more "participatory" and "empowering" in the beneficiary-provider relation: by devolving the authority and resources for managing the investment process to beneficiary groups FOPAR aimed to "empower" the latter vis-à-vis the private providers of technical assistance, enabling them to hire and fire them and use this authority to discipline them. PSA, which was an indigenously generated program which emerged from an informal network of rural development practitioners from the NGO sector, had the more conventional relation between beneficiaries and providers, with the latter being subcontracted by

provincial program officers rather than farmers groups. Instead, what PSA emphasized was beneficiary oversight over provincial field staff, by allowing representatives of farmers groups in the multi-stakeholder provincial commission that was responsible for overseeing the program's performance. These different accountability mechanisms are similar to what in the literature is referred to as exit vs. voice mechanisms. FOPAR was designed to allow its beneficiaries to exit the relation with subcontracted providers if dissatisfied with their performance, while PSA was designed to allow its beneficiaries to voice their assessment and to monitor performance by participating in a program's co-governance structure.

Second, after several years of implementation both programs had to confront a similar change in their political context. After an initial period in which both programs enjoyed similar insulation from patronage and clientelistic pressures, the new administration elected in 1999 removed this insulation and mounted a full patronage attack on all social programs.

In this chapter I summarize the main findings that come out of the study, and elaborate on some of the lessons that they provide for future design of CDD programs. In addition to the literature on CDD (and more generally on participatory antipoverty programs), this dissertation also makes some contributions to ongoing debates about the role of citizen oversight and accountability in the participatory democracy literature.

There are ten major findings that come out of this study.

Findings

First, this dissertation confirms my initial intuition that both the critics and advocates of CDD programs were right; that CDD programs are vulnerable to political manipulation for patronage and clientelism, and also have the potential to counter this risk. I found that whether these programs move towards or away from patronage and clientelism hinges, to a certain extent,

on the capacity of beneficiary groups to oversee and demand accountability from program managers and officials. Faced with similar patronage attacks, beneficiary groups responded very differently in FOPAR than in PSA. After an initial period in which the top ministerial officials provided political insulation to both programs, the new administration of the Alianza coalition which took power in late 1999, launched a systematic attack to use social programs for patronage and clientelism. Patronage and clientelism took over FOPAR without eliciting any response from beneficiaries, and leading to a decline in its reputation that in a context of budget cuts led to being shut down. Faced with a similar take over attempt, PSA's beneficiaries mobilized to denounce and block patronage and clientelism, protecting the integrity and continuity of the program. PSA beneficiaries mobilized in the national capital and in several provincial capitals to denounce the Secretariat of Agriculture and deter it from replacing PSA's technical teams with party activists who lacked the technical qualifications needed for the job. Their tactics included taking over the program's provincial offices, organizing large assemblies inside and outside the provincial's offices, going to the national and provincial media to make their case, threatening the government to take more drastic actions (route blockades), mobilizing support from church leaders, NGOs, political parties. As a consequence of their demands for accountability beneficiaries were able either to stop political appointments or to agree with authorities on a consensual method for selecting the new appointees. This different reaction to the patronage attacks represents the "tip of the iceberg", the external manifestation of deeper and more structural differences between the beneficiaries capacity to demand accountability in these two programs. Understanding what lied below the surface is what this dissertation tries to do.

Second, I found that beneficiaries had greater capacity to demand accountability in PSA than in FOPAR because PSA's program design was more conducive to enable beneficiaries'

oversight in Argentina's clientelistic and patronage-driven context. Below, I elaborate more concretely on what these design features were and the influence they had; here I just want to stress that what made the difference in terms of beneficiary oversight was not the context (since both programs faced a similar type of population and operated within the same political and institutional context) but rather the distinct way in which the design of each program influenced the capacity of beneficiaries to demand accountability. By highlighting the importance of program design (and thus of agency) this study counters the pessimism of those explanations that stress the rather deterministic influence of structural contextual factors (such as social capital) over citizen oversight. The way program design mattered for beneficiary oversight also differs in important ways from conventional positions (see below).

Third, and contrary to conventional wisdom in the CDD community, the program which "empowered" beneficiaries to manage the contractual relationship with subcontracted providers (FOPAR) had lower levels of beneficiary oversight than the program where it was the provincial staff that managed that relationship. In other words, according to conventional notions of empowerment and accountability, beneficiaries should have been in a better position to hold providers accountable in FOPAR than in PSA because, as mentioned before, they were able to *exit* the relationship (fire the provider if they were not satisfied, and/or use that threat to discipline them). In practice, however, my research shows that the conditions for exit to take place are difficult to meet due to the existence of large asymmetries technical capacity and power between them, with beneficiaries on the weaker side of the relationship. Briefly, these asymmetries stemmed from beneficiary groups (i) lack of technical knowledge; (ii) fear of retaliation causing to lose the other benefits that they got from their relationship with the contractor; (iii) lack of adequate substitutes.

Fourth, while the CDD literature has devoted much of its attention to the role of beneficiary groups and subcontracted providers, it has tended to overlook the role that provincial program staff (the frontline supervisors and the managers located in the deconcentrated provincial offices) play in the program's performance. In both PSA and FOPAR, however, this field staff was critical in leveling out the asymmetries between beneficiaries and providers, ensuring that third-party providers were held accountable for their performance. As field staff identified beneficiaries' weaknesses they gradually took a more active role in the beneficiary-provider relationship. On the one hand, field staff followed more closely the interactions between beneficiaries and providers, backing communities' complaints more forcefully, and reinforcing the notion among beneficiaries about their rights by visiting them more often and improving the initial training on these matters. On the other hand, provincial program managers took steps to improve the quality of the supply of providers from which communities selected. They blacklisted and put pressure to leave on those providers that did not perform according to expectations, and reached out to providers with the appropriate qualifications. The conditions that allowed both programs to have this kind of provincial teams (committed professionals, flexibility in hiring program staff, and political support to insulate these programs from patronage and clientelism) did not last forever. As I showed in my first point, around the year 2000 both PSA and FOPAR suffered patronage attacks, and the question is why beneficiary groups in PSA mobilized to defend the integrity of the program and sustain its participatory nature and beneficiary groups in FOPAR did not.

Fifth, PSA beneficiaries were able to control patronage and clientelism from taking over the program because, differently from FOPAR's, they had developed a certain capacity to act as a countervailing force in the governance aspects of the program. They had the capacity to

mobilize and engage the state on their own, autonomously, to defend the responsibilities and resources that the program had devolved them. If PSA beneficiaries had this countervailing power, and FOPAR beneficiaries did not, it was largely because of the different vision about beneficiaries embodied in the design of each program. PSA's vision was about *minifundistas* becoming a movement at the provincial and national levels defending its right to influence government policies. If for FOPAR, its target population was a rather abstract category of "poor people living in rural areas", for PSA they constituted a concrete social group that had been the object of historical neglect and that deserved to be treated differently by government. These different visions of their beneficiaries got translated into different institutional design options which, in turn, had important implications for the capacity of beneficiaries to engage in demanding accountability about the governance aspects of the program. The next three points show what this design options were and why they were important.

Sixth, what the design of PSA allowed and the design of FOPAR did not was to institutionalize beneficiary oversight in the management or governance of the program. In FOPAR, even though beneficiaries were dissatisfied with several aspects of the program, there were no institutional instances to channel collective demands for information and explanation about what government officials in FOPAR were doing and why, and beneficiaries never got organized to do it on their own. PSA, in contrast, had two institutionalized venues through which farmers could demand accountability from provincial program staff: the Provincial Unit (PU) and its correlate at the national level, and the Annual Assessment Meetings. In addition, PSA staff took advantage of these instances (as well as other means like newsletters and radios) to account for the program actions and decisions without being prompted by farmers. As a result, PSA beneficiaries engaged in multiple instances of control over how program staff governed the

program, from questioning the policy the program had for service provision to asking for information and explanations about criteria for selecting projects, why the budget from the national unit was not being transferred, how farmers were represented in decision-making instances, etc. This oversight happened both at the provincial and national levels, and even extended outside of the program to other government bodies.

Seventh, the design of PSA also contributed to higher levels of beneficiary oversight because of its effects on the capacity for collective action or social capital of its beneficiary groups. Since both programs had a significant overlap in the geographic areas and populations that they served, this difference could not be said to lie so much in pre-existent social capital. Instead, it had to do with the different types of social capital that each program activated and created. On the one hand, FOPAR's participatory structure had incentives for beneficiaries organizing only within the village level, stressing the creation or strengthening of *intra*-village ties among its beneficiaries (bonding social capital). On the other hand, PSA's structure had incentives for beneficiaries organizing and acting through *horizontal supra-village networks*, stressing the creation and strengthening of ties that bridged farmers *across* villages and provinces (bridging social capital). The incentives that PSA offered for farmers' networks were of three kinds. First, by requiring farmers participation in the provincial and national stakeholder committees, the program created an incentive for beneficiaries to get together and elect delegates to represent them in these committees. As a result a network of Farmers Delegates that linked organizations and other networks of producers in the 21 provinces in the country. Second, by making existing networks of farmers to be interlocutors of the Program (for instance, guaranteeing them a space in the provincial council, supporting their efforts to recruit new farmers groups to join their networks), PSA was able to tap into and strengthen existing farmers

networks. Finally, PSA often supported the creation of new networks to advance the economic development of small farmers. Relating to the program through horizontal supra-village networks rather than village-level organizations allowed PSA beneficiaries to receive and process information about national and provincial politics and organize a reaction based on that information, as well as greater leverage to pressure government.

Eighth, PSA also had higher beneficiary oversight than FOPAR because its design was more effective in *motivating* beneficiaries to demand accountability. The source of PSA beneficiaries motivation was less related to self interest and more with their identity as minifundistas, and with the meaning that PSA had as part of that identity. Farmers said they mobilized because PSA was "their" program, "the first national program for minifundistas", a space where they were accustomed to voice their concerns and try to do something about them, an entitlement that they were not willing to lose. One idea for donors and other policymakers is to pay attention not only at making information available but also at the conditions that motivate beneficiaries to act and demand accountability based on that information.

Ninth, the factors that explain the higher levels of beneficiary oversight in PSA than in FOPAR are consistent with the factors that explain why beneficiary oversight was higher in some PSA provinces (Santiago del Estero, Misiones, and Entre Rios) than in others (Cordoba, Tucuman, or Jujuy). Implementing the elements of PSA's vision and design that were conducive to enable beneficiary oversight was not automatic and often required to overcome hurdles and tensions. For instance, in those provinces where the provincial manager did not believe in the importance of beneficiary representation in the Provincial Unit and where farmers were weakly organized to fulfill their role notwithstanding the managers' neglect, the effectiveness of these institutional spaces in increasing beneficiary oversight was rather limited. In those provinces

where preexistent farmers networks were highly adversarial and resisted to abide by the basic rules of the program, the role of these networks in strengthen the leverage of beneficiaries in demanding accountability was more limited. Finally, in those provinces where provincial stakeholders failed to develop a strong partnership between service providers, beneficiary groups, provincial program staff and the provincial government, the contribution of these actors to strengthen beneficiaries identification identity as a movement of *minifundistas* and PSA as their own program was weaker than in those other provinces where these partnerships bloomed and flourished.

Tenth, in addition to the literature on CDD (and participatory development programs in general), this dissertation makes two contributions to the literature on civic engagement. One is to challenge a core argument that is entrenched in much of the literature on citizen oversight (particularly in Latin America), namely, that a necessary condition for citizen oversight to work is an arms length relation between citizens and the state to ensure the autonomy of the former to oversee the state. The program that performed better in terms of accountability had a mechanism that blurred the boundaries between beneficiary and government (PSA co-governance through Provincial Units). Differences in the performance of PSA across provinces suggests that what is important is not to keep beneficiaries and governments apart but rather to overcome the tensions involved in relations of critical collaboration (i.e., relations where both actors need to collaborate with each other but also need to remain vigilant of each other). The other contribution relates to the sustainability of participatory programs. The literature on civic engagement has focused more on analyzing the origins of participatory institutional experiments than on explaining what allows some of these innovations to be sustained over time while others perish. By explaining the

factors that led to the sustainability of PSA and the demise of FOPAR, this dissertation contributes to fill that gap.

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