

# Introduction

On a clear day in the winter of 2009, I boarded a bus leaving Guadalajara, the second-largest city in Mexico, and headed toward the municipality of Comarga nestled high in the northern mountains of Jalisco. The bus hugged the shoulder of the two-lane highway and zigzagged its way through switchbacks along Route 23. Agave fields, old Catholic churches, and rural villages punctuated the rural countryside. Every so often the bus stopped to collect and drop off travelers. I welcomed these little pauses in the journey, precious moments to recover from vertigo, take in the local scenery, and buy fruits and veggies soaked in lime and chilies from sellers who hopped on the idling bus. Each town we passed had its own history and feel—San Cristóbal de la Barranca, Teul, Tlatenango, and Momax. Rows of tomatoes, beans, greens, and livestock farms lined the road leading into the municipal town center where local residents congregated in plazas with round pavilions and market stalls.<sup>1</sup> Chickens, goats, and lambs milled about the courtyards of adobe and concrete flat-roofed houses that lined the roads. I saw cars and trucks with license plates from California, Texas, and Illinois. And peppered throughout the towns, alongside more modest dwellings, sat renovated houses with grand new additions, gable roofs, circle driveways, and buffed wooden garage doors. Many of these improvements were funded with remittances earned in the United States and sent home to migrant families in Mexico. In each town we passed, signs of northern migration to the U.S. commingled with familiar features of the rural countryside.

Along the bus route I also saw big placards that noted sites of new public infrastructure. In connection with the Mexican government, migrants also financed public goods and services with remittances. They pooled resources in the U.S. and built schools, bridges, and health clinics in their hometowns. They paved roads



FIGURE 1. Road pavement project completed through 3x1 Program in Guanajuato. Photo by author.

and sidewalks; supplied school buses and ambulances; constructed parks; and extended public electricity, water, and drainage for residents left behind. Between 2002 and 2016, migrants implemented more than 26,000 public works projects in half of all Mexican municipalities, many in localities classified as “poor” and “very poor” by the Mexican government. Some migrants in the United States from a common place of origin have formed voluntary associations where they express shared ties to the people and places they leave behind and invest collective resources back home. These hometown associations (HTAs) (*clubes de oriundo*) exist around the globe—from Ghana to Germany, Japan to Cuba—and go by different names—*sons and daughters of the soil*, *landmanshaftn*, *kenjinkai*, *cabildos de naciones*.<sup>2</sup> But Mexican HTAs are different in one important way. In response to their collective, grassroots mobilization, these migrant groups and the Mexican government developed a federal social spending program that matches migrants’ collective resources to coproduce local public goods and services. The program is called the 3x1 Program for Migrants (*Programa 3x1 para Migrantes*) (hereafter “the 3x1 Program”).

While scores of studies have documented migrant hometown groups and their role in development,<sup>3</sup> little is known about how partnerships with the sending state

affect local democratic governance. What are the political consequences that result from migrant transnational partnerships with the sending state? Who is involved in these transnational partnerships and how do they differ from place to place and over time? What can migrant participation in public goods provision tell us about who makes decisions in local governance and how those decisions are made? This is why I came to study in Mexico.

The answers to these questions lie in the underlying social and political conditions in which transnational partnerships are situated because they contribute to partnerships being organized differently. Some migrants remain socially embedded in the hometown by maintaining diverse social ties and constructing new social relationships with important stakeholders. Migrants who are more socially embedded also practice meaningful cultural repertoires that confer their community membership even while living abroad. In the political sphere, the bureaucratic capacity and electoral considerations of local governments also affect the organization of transnational partnerships. Together, these social and political factors determine how involved local residents and political officials are in the provision of transnational public goods and yield different political consequences. For example, when broadly inclusive of the local citizenry and when local government is also engaged, partnerships induce a form of transnational participatory governance in which both territorial and extraterritorial citizens articulate interests, exercise rights, meet obligations, and mediate conflicts<sup>4</sup> through deliberation and cooperative decision-making. This kind of synergetic partnership entwines migrants, local citizens, and government representatives in a network of democratic decision-making, which leads to more socially accountable and responsive government authorities. Participatory governance also expands the array of non-state actors who are involved in democratic decision-making and empowers many local citizens to participate in local civic and political processes for the first time.

By contrast, different combinations of community inclusion and government engagement reflect more corporatist, substitutive, and fragmented types of transnational partnership and are associated with different political outcomes such as outright corruption and partnership failure. For example, in many cases of corporatist and fragmented coproduction, political clientelism results.<sup>5</sup> Broadly conceived, clientelism refers to the exchange of goods for political support and involves an asymmetric power relation between patrons and clients in which clients receive targeted, nonprogrammatic spending (e.g., bags of rice, gift cards, cash) in exchange for their political support come election time. In more substitutive cases of coproduction, local political officials offload responsibility for public goods provision entirely onto migrant groups. And in cases of corruption, resources that migrants commit to cofinancing public goods “disappear” from state coffers, which often leads to project and partnership failure.

Over the last eight years, I examined when, why, and how people who left their countries of origin collaborated with state actors to provide public goods back

home through transnational partnerships. During my fieldwork, I visited municipalities across Mexico and studied the interactions between government officials, migrant groups, and residents as they unfolded over time. I listened to residents, current and former migrants, priests, business owners, mayors, political party officials, civic leaders, state and federal political officials, and learned that migrants' involvement in public goods provision had unintentional, yet profound political effects. I found that migrant actors, when more socially embedded, facilitated new modes of inclusive, democratic engagement that made local government more responsive to the citizenry. A focus on how migrants organize transnational partnerships reveals not only the conditions under which public service delivery increases and democratic participation and government performance improves in high-migration locales, but also how the process of coproducing public goods across national borders changes relations between state and society.

#### MOTIVATING EMPIRICAL PUZZLES

Although official Mexican statistics classified the municipality of Comarga as middle-income, like many of the 196,000 localities in Mexico with less than 2,500 inhabitants, the village of Atitlan was much poorer and greatly in need of public goods, especially when compared to the more densely populated county seat.<sup>6</sup> Atitlan is one of Comarga's five main localities and home to 340 residents. Despite democratization and decentralization reforms over the last 30 years, residents could not recall a single public works project in Atitlan since the late 1970s. As soon as I got off the bus this was evident—little improvement could be seen. Unlike the county seat where streets and sidewalks were paved, most streets in Atitlan were compacted dirt that flooded during the rainy season and swelled with garbage and sewage. Since the public drainage system reached just half of the households, those without access either purchased piping with their own money or disposed of sanitation in the old stone latrine that snaked its way through the back part of town. There were also few light posts in the village. Residents gave me a flashlight to navigate the streets at night. I had never experienced such darkness before my first night in Atitlan. But for the stars in the sky, it was pitch black. It was hard to tell where one's body ended and blackness began.

In 2004, the mayor (*presidente municipal*) of Comarga traveled to U.S. cities to meet paisanos, fellow countrymen and women, who had emigrated abroad.<sup>7</sup> During dinners and meet and greets, the mayor asked migrants to form clubs, raise money, and help the municipal government provide public works through the 3x1 Program. Four clubs formed after the mayor's trek across U.S. cities. Emilio and Esme, migrants from Atitlan, agreed to form a club and worked with the mayor on his proposed project: a concrete vehicle bridge. The mayor proposed the bridge project because the town was separated by a river. The only way for residents on the west side to access the main route into town was to cross a rickety, wooden

footbridge or wade through the river on horseback or donkey and in small boats, which often capsized. After they recruited other paisanos, Club Atitlan planned the bridge project with the mayor's administration.

When the bridge was finished, club members in the United States were proud and felt like they contributed something important in their absence that locals appreciated. I was a bit taken aback, then, when residents told me they resented migrants' involvement. Many locals were initially confused—who were these migrants? Why had the paisanos not discussed their plans with leaders of the town's most important civic association, the *Patronato*, the patron saint festival group? Why did locals not have the same privileges, the ability to access political officials and get them to deliver goods and services they needed in their town? Residents felt slighted. After all, they lived there, they had voted for this mayor, and they had their own ideas about what the village needed. Relations further deteriorated when residents who were left out of discussions about 3x1 projects became increasingly suspicious of migrants' intentions. At the height of tensions, residents of Atitlan prohibited the club from participation in local public affairs and mobilized to vote against the incumbent mayor's political party to punish the administration for their alliance with the migrant club.

The turmoil unleashed by Club Atitlan's cross-border participation in public goods provision had several unanticipated impacts on political participation and relations between local government and Atitlan society. Residents mobilized a collective effort and punished the incumbent's party for privileging migrants' voices over that of local citizens. Their social exclusion from project governance motivated short-term political activism. Atitlan voters banded together and cast ballots for the opposition in the 2010 election, which likely played some role in the defeat of the incumbent in a close race. But the initial wave of political activity petered out and turned into political disenchantment. Frustrated with members of the migrant club who residents perceived as allies of the local government, residents turned away from politics and refocused their energy on the social and religious activities of the community.

The case of Atitlan and its paisanos in the U.S. raises important questions about how international migration reconfigures local democratic engagement in origin countries. Migrants who use material resources collected abroad mobilize new mechanisms of voice and make political decisions in their places of origin that affect migrant and nonmigrant households alike. The cross-border participation of migrants and migrant groups upends traditional modes of local governance because although migrants have exited, some never really leave. Migrant loyalty and social connectivity to the hometown catalyzes the collection of new-found resources acquired abroad, which they use to participate in public affairs back home.

A 30-minute drive along a potholed road took you from Atitlan to El Mirador, another locality in Comarga. Because a bus could not safely navigate the high

mountain road, El Mirador was only accessible by all-terrain vehicles such as trucks or jeeps, or on horseback. It was also a poor village with a substantial portion of its population living abroad, mostly in Chicago and southern Indiana. I hitched a ride to El Mirador with a local crew going up to finish the most recent transnational project between Club El Mirador and the municipal government; the last bits of corrugated metal roofing were being installed on a new recreation court (*cancha*). More geographically remote and higher up in the Sierras, I thought El Mirador would be worse off than Atitlan because the town's geographic isolation meant the provision of public goods was more difficult to implement up in the mountains. But after entering through the tall gates of the long paved road into town, I saw this was not the case at all. Every street in El Mirador was newly paved with a hydraulic drainage system underneath. Almost every house was connected to the electricity grid. A new kindergarten school room was recently constructed. And while only half the town had use of the public water system every other day, a well had recently been installed to meet local needs. In addition to the new recreation area, a new rodeo ring (*lienzo charro*) was built for neighbors to enjoy horseback competitions and festivals. All of the new infrastructure was provided through the collaboration between migrants from El Mirador and the local government with matching funds from state and federal 3x1 Program partners.

Yet, none of the tension or political turmoil between residents, migrants, and political officials in Atitlan was present in El Mirador. Residents spoke highly of HTA members—as friends, paisanos, and community members—and said their relationship with the club was copacetic. Local residents of El Mirador were actively engaged in the selection and implementation of projects and visited the municipal government building (*ayuntamiento*) in Comarga. There they discussed project budgets, timelines, materials, and labor contracts with political officials. Local residents even fundraised and donated resources to a few projects. The first year into the transnational partnership, residents formed their own public works committee in El Mirador, the first of its kind in recent memory. The contrast in number of public services between Atitlan and El Mirador was stark. The nature of the interactions between key social and political actors was also qualitatively different. The Atitlan partnership was mired in conflict and cleavages that divided residents, migrants, and municipal officials. After a short burst of political interest and activity, citizens recoiled from politics and from involvement with “outsiders” (dubbed *fuereños*). In contrast, citizens of El Mirador formed a civic association, solved local problems through deliberation, and became more politically aware and active through the process of providing public goods.

Why were transnational partnerships between organized migrants and local government in the two communities within the *same* municipality so different? The same mayor organized and worked with the clubs. Both villages were similar in terms of population size and level of economic development. Both villages had high rates of out-migration. And both villages were “strongholds” of

the incumbent party in which a plurality of voters regularly turned out to support the National Action Party (*Partido Acción Nacional*, PAN). Furthermore, El Mirador did not benefit from any favoritism from the mayor, who, in fact, had been born and raised in Atitlan. Unlike in Atitlan, Club El Mirador recruited local residents to participate in public goods projects and residents regularly engaged in deliberations with municipal officials. Since El Mirador was more geographically isolated, there was more trust and cooperation among neighbors,<sup>8</sup> and migrant club members regularly engaged in festivals, home ownership, the local Catholic church, and maintained the dress, traditional customs, and mannerisms of their rural community. Migrants, in other words, continued to practice cultural repertoires of community membership while living abroad in ways that were meaningful to friends, family, and strangers who remained behind. Despite their physical distance, they remained socially embedded in the local community from beyond national borders.

In comparison, migrant club members from Atitlan did not remain well integrated into the social life of the hometown after exit. Time away from Atitlan taxed the breadth and depth of social ties, and migrants' quest for social status and an alliance with political authorities created animus with residents. Migrants still felt connected to Atitlan even though they had emigrated. They also had a common bond with each other in the U.S. as they shared a migration experience. But their physical absence and social location outside the hometown network prevented them from exercising legitimate voice in the community in which they were no longer inhabitants. In turn, the process of public goods provision created contests for recognition between migrants, migrant families, and residents in relation to the municipal government in Atitlan, while the process broadened civic engagement in collective decision-making practices in El Mirador.

The transnational partnership case of El Cerrito, a larger locality in the municipality of Selvillo, Guanajuato, was organized differently and produced different political dynamics over time. Unlike in Atitlan and El Mirador, where political officials were enthusiastic about coproducing public goods with migrant groups, the PAN administration in Selvillo was initially inactive. Club El Cerrito produced its first few projects without the involvement of local government because the mayor who had promised support never delivered on it. The migrants relied on cofinancing from state and federal tiers of the Mexican government and implemented projects on their own. Club El Cerrito selected the projects, hired the contractors, sourced the materials, and coordinated all facets of project implementation. In the early years of migrants' investment in El Cerrito the club substituted for local government provision with limited involvement of El Cerrito residents.

Living far away from their homelands, migrants from El Cerrito were able to improve public goods without support from local officials and community residents, but doing so presented two challenges. The first obstacle was logistical. Accountable to the migrant members who invested their own scarce resources to

better conditions back home, club leaders feared that poor management and inadequate implementation of projects discouraged future investments. Since the club leaders and members had moved far away from their hometowns, they lacked the capacity to monitor projects during and after implementation. Moreover, monitoring was crucial, as the projects were targets of predators of various sorts, whether laborers or contractors who shirked on quality and failed to supply materials on time or outside parties who tried to seize the materials bought for the projects that the association funded. Club El Cerrito, like many hometown clubs, faced the constant risk that unscrupulous local actors, such as local political bosses referred to as *caciques* and organized gangs connected to criminal drug-trafficking networks, would take advantage of the migrants' absence.

The second obstacle concerned legitimacy.<sup>9</sup> While the migrants' distance from their hometowns made them vulnerable to local opportunists, it also potentially undermined their legitimacy, as they claimed to belong to a community in which they no longer resided. Just as in Atitlan, residents in El Cerrito were suspicious of the club's motives and publicly challenged the migrants' involvement in the delivery of public goods. The migrants still had family and friends in El Cerrito, but they had limited social ties beyond their immediate social circles and only a few residents knew those migrant leaders who served as the visible ambassadors of the club. Since migrants were no longer embedded in hometown social life, residents did not initially recognize them as social actors with a legitimate voice to make decisions in public affairs. Moreover, low levels of trust that were pervasive in the town spilled over into migrants' efforts. However meritorious Club El Cerrito's project proposals were to the migrants and their close circle of familiars, since a broader swath of local residents did not have a direct stake in the outcome and they did not believe that migrants represented their interests, the proposal was insufficient and illegitimate.

But just three years later the local government and residents were active contributors in the transnational partnership. By 2013, close to 30 public works projects had been completed throughout El Cerrito such as road pavement, sidewalks, electricity, street lamps, a computer lab, and a recreation area for the elementary school to name a few. Migrants' horizontal ties in the community and vertical ties to local government facilitated new modes of interaction and deliberation between local citizens and elected representatives through the process of coordinating public goods with migrants. Migrants constructed meaningful social ties with different citizen groups in El Cerrito through social events such as rodeos, dances, and fundraising dinners and actively recruited residents into project governance. Three new civic associations were created to work with Club El Cerrito, but they also completed their own projects and solved local problems on their own. In turn, when they witnessed increased involvement of residents (voters) and experienced fiercer competition from opposition political parties, local government scaled up its engagement in the process and continued to be supportive

even as the administration switched political party from PAN to the Institutional Revolutionary Party (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, PRI) and then back to PAN. The completion of highly visible public projects in which incumbents claimed credit became a politically expedient method that shored up public support in hotly contested municipal elections. The case of El Cerrito shows that the organization of transnational partnerships is not set in stone. Community inclusion and government engagement change in response to social outreach and political conditions in the hometown.

These cases generate important questions for researchers of international migration, political sociology, and participatory development. Who has the legitimate authority to speak for whom in a political community? Can migrants who exit use their voice in hometown public affairs as if they were still residents? What are the political consequences of doing so? Does it matter if cross-border political participation is materially conditioned by remittances? How does “doing” development enable and foreclose opportunities for political inclusion, activism, and equality in places with high migration? These questions motivate this book.

#### HOME-COUNTRY LOYALTIES AND MIGRANT TRANSNATIONAL PRACTICES

Many of the 244 million migrants located around the world who leave their homelands for economic opportunity and safe haven abroad realize their dreams in a promised land.<sup>10</sup> Individuals and families leave their countries of origin when staying is no longer a sensible option and when an economic and political system in which they feel they have no ability to change strips them of security and opportunity.<sup>11</sup> Many people do not want to go but do so when it seems like they have no choice. When the price of crops plummets, when cities overflow, when factories cut wages and stop hiring, when children need food to eat, and when families are threatened by violence, migrants make the difficult decision to leave loved ones behind. They do what Albert O. Hirschman and others call “voting with their feet.”<sup>12</sup> Given the choice between staying and using their voice to induce political change and availing themselves of the freedom to exit, many individuals see the latter as the chance for a better life, albeit a life abroad.

Once migrants cross a border into a destination country, they do not cease to feel attached, to meet social, ethnic and religious obligations, and to express solidarity with the people and places they leave behind. As Rainer Baubock explains, migration is an international phenomenon between states insofar as it involves a movement of persons across the territory of sovereign states; however, it becomes transnational when it creates overlapping memberships, rights, and practices that reflect migrants’ belonging to two different political communities.<sup>13</sup> Not all migrants are “transmigrants” who regularly communicate, exchange resources, ideas, and behaviors, and visit the origin country.<sup>14</sup> Loyalty to the hometown and

the people in it takes various forms and is felt to different degrees. Some migrants remain fervently engaged transnationally, others more sparingly. Some keep up with the major news of the day back home and speak their mother tongue. Others send their children back in the summer so that their kids know what life is like in their parents' and grandparents' hometowns. Other migrants return to attend annual community festivals and ethnic and religious holidays. For many, though, the strangeness of a new land, the foreignness that shadows them, and the discrimination they face create trepidation, a longing for home, and generate new kinds of political interests that can be channeled to the hometown.<sup>15</sup> Many migrants simply hope to return one day to the place of their birth and where their parents are buried. Feelings of separation and nostalgia grow with time and compound when immigrants face exclusion in their adopted countries. Motivated by different rationales, many migrants remain loyal and engage in multiple "ways of being" and "ways of belonging" in transnational social and political spaces.<sup>16</sup>

Migrant cross-border engagement is not a new phenomenon. Before Western Union, social media platforms, cheaper air travel, and long-distance telecommunications, Italian, German, Chinese, and Polish immigrants wrote letters to family, kept up with news from the homeland, formed mutual aid societies, and sent money via post or in person on steamships.<sup>17</sup> While people today are more likely to exchange messages on social media platforms and through text and video messaging, migrants' dual loyalties spanning borders are a modern facsimile of earlier historic periods. But the advance of the internet and ability to see the faces of loved ones, old neighbors, and government partners on device screens in the palm of one's hand means that cross-border practices occur with greater ease and in real time. In the case of Latinx migrants in the United States, the majority sustain some degree of cross-border engagement, with only a minority detaching from the homeland altogether.<sup>18</sup>

#### THE FORMATION OF MIGRANT HOMETOWN ASSOCIATIONS

Migrant hometown associations are a common transnational practice enabled by international migration that allows migrants to act out their loyalty to the homeland. HTAs arise in destination countries around the world and date back to the industrial era of migration and even earlier.<sup>19</sup> Hometown clubs arise because, in addition to economic motivations, social network ties lead migrants to concentrate in destination places where other members of their social network reside.<sup>20</sup> The social-networked nature of international migration results in the formation of "daughter" or "filial" communities.<sup>21</sup> In these filial communities, migrants fortify a social connection based on a shared sense of belonging and attachment to a common origin. Paisanos come together in voluntary spaces to chat, dance, play,

reminisce, celebrate holidays, and provide support to each other. Massey and colleagues refer to this kind of social organization as *paisanaje*:

Origin from the same place is not a meaningful basis of social organization for people while they are at home. In general, within the community itself, the concept of *paisanaje* does not imply any *additional* rights and responsibilities to other paisanos that are not already included in the relationships of friend, family member or neighbor. It is not a meaningful concept until two paisanos encounter each other outside their home community. Then the strength of the *paisanaje* tie depends on the strangeness of the environment and the nature of their prior relationship in the community.<sup>22</sup>

The concentration of migrants from a common place of origin and shared *paisanaje* form the seedbeds for the emergence of migrant hometown associations.

Not all HTAs are involved in financing public works in their hometowns. Some are more akin to mutual aid societies of the past, which are societies, organizations, or voluntary associations that provide mutual aid, support, and benefits to their members. Other HTAs focus more on promoting culture and folk traditions, recreation, and social gathering. And those migrant HTAs that do become involved in cross-border development projects often begin with a more social or cultural mission and adopt public goods provision as a secondary goal.<sup>23</sup>

Migrants who are members of development-focused HTAs do so for many reasons. Some do so for purely altruistic reasons and a love of the homeland. Others finance public goods to fulfill ethno-religious obligations. And there are those who contribute resources for instrumental reasons such as securing better living conditions for when they eventually return home and having their social status elevated and valorized by acting as patrons for resident clients who remain behind.<sup>24</sup> But the motivations of migrants are not static. The reasons for participating in HTAs and the goals of the associations change over time as people's circumstances change—increased social mobility, assimilation into the destination society, new obstacles encountered in their adopted countries, natural disasters striking back home. The motivation to create HTAs and invest in public goods is also encouraged by actors in the sending state eager to channel remittance resources toward public ends.

#### TRANSNATIONAL PRACTICE OF FINANCIAL AND SOCIAL REMITTANCE SENDING AND EFFECTS

In addition to hometown clubs, migrants engage in other ways across borders and their practices have numerous effects. Financial remittance sending is perhaps the most visible and quantifiable transnational practice. Since migration enables a modicum of social mobility, migrants can save a portion of their savings and send it home. In 2016, migrants sent more than \$601 billion across borders to support families, of which \$441 billion went directly to developing countries.<sup>25</sup> If informal remittances flows could be captured, totals are estimated to be much higher. India,

China, Mexico, and the Philippines are the top recipient countries with remittances ranging from \$73 billion (India) to \$27 billion (Mexico). But as a share of gross domestic product (GDP), smaller countries including Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic (30 percent), Nepal (28 percent), Tonga (28 percent), and Moldova (26) are the largest recipients.<sup>26</sup> A stable form of international finance, remittances are more than three times the size of official development aid (ODA) and mitigate the adverse effects of economic shocks and natural disasters as demonstrated by the massive influx of remittances to the Philippines in the wake of two typhoons in 2009 and Super Typhoon Haiyan in 2013.<sup>27</sup>

Migrant remittances finance household consumption such as educational expenses, medicine, food, clothing, housing construction, appliances, and electronics. They also go toward productive investments and savings<sup>28</sup> and have myriad effects on the political economy of origin countries including economic growth and poverty alleviation; inequality; monetary policy; skill formation; and institutional quality.<sup>29</sup> Given the sheer volume of remittance flows globally, it is no wonder this source of foreign income has been hailed by the development banking community and policymakers alike as a new panacea for development in sending countries.<sup>30</sup>

Beyond economic transfers, migrants also exchange ideas, behaviors, norms, and social capital between origin and destination referred to as *social remittances*.<sup>31</sup> Migrants remit cultural, social, political, and economic worldviews and practices they acquire abroad back to their places of origin through their roles in families, communities, and organizations.<sup>32</sup> Social remittances affect how people rear their children, divide labor in the household, and determine right from wrong. Social remittances also alter political attitudes and behaviors, religious rituals, and burial practices.<sup>33</sup> While distinct, social and financial remittances are also intimately linked.

Financial transfers are “communicative acts”<sup>34</sup> that relay information about migrants’ social positioning in places of origin and sustain social ties between migrants and nonmigrants.<sup>35</sup> Like other forms of monetary transactions, financial remittances are motivated by social relations, and social relations, in turn, affect financial remittance sending practices.<sup>36</sup> When transfers assume a collective form and are sent by transnational migrant associations for public goods provision, the ideational and material effects go beyond interpersonal relationships; they also affect social relations and local politics. Remittances have these community-wide social and political effects because they enable migrants to use voice in decision-making about public goods in the hometown. Collective remittances convey information about migrants’ experiences in the destination country and are situated in preexisting social relationships that affect how collective resources are used and who else is involved in determining their use.<sup>37</sup> These decisions are distinctly political acts in that public goods provision is a core function of government, especially subnational governments in decentralized political systems such as Mexico.

As such, a small but growing area of research is focusing more on the political consequences of different facets of international migration, most notably

individual out-migration, remittances, and their effects on domestic politics in the homeland. Research on “political remittances” suggests migration can have democratizing effects and stabilize authoritarian regimes at the national level.<sup>38</sup> Micro-level research shows that as more migrants leave their places of origin, formal political participation, such as voting in elections, decreases while other studies show no effect on nonmigrant political behaviors.<sup>39</sup> Other research argues that migrants can be agents of democratic diffusion who transfer ideas back to their hometown communities through their social ties, which improves nonmigrants’ social tolerance and civic engagement.<sup>40</sup> While rich and instructive, how *individual* pathways of migration affect national and subnational politics is still up for debate.

Research on how migrant *collective* participation affects politics at home is also incipient and similarly mixed. Studies marshal evidence that cross-border participation can be both “good” and “bad” for democracy.<sup>41</sup> Migrant-led development projects have been shown to have democratizing effects when migrant groups demand higher political standards from authorities,<sup>42</sup> introduce fiercer political competition,<sup>43</sup> and ensure political accountability.<sup>44</sup> By contrast, migrant clubs have been found to work at cross-purposes with the state and local citizens,<sup>45</sup> and local government often pursues partnerships with an eye toward electoral payoff in lieu of development goals.<sup>46</sup> Research on the effects of migrant associations on democracy has come a long way, but we know little about the *conditions* under which migrant associations produce more positive (or negative) political effects for local democracy.

#### SENDING-STATE MIGRANT OUTREACH

The migrant population’s desire to stay connected to the people and places they leave behind and their ability to send money home is not lost on sending country governments. While migrants maintain social ties “here” and “there,” sovereign states also fundamentally shape the relationships between migrants and their countries of origin.<sup>47</sup> The exit of individuals from state control poses a constraint on sending states. Since migrants are no longer territorial residents, sending states have limited capacity to use coercion, extract resources, and make migrants comply with state demands.

As a result of these constraints on control, sending country governments reach out to their nationals abroad and attempt to attract remittances and homeland engagement through both symbolic tools and public policy initiatives. States acknowledge emigrants as “absent sons and daughter” and “heroes” in national discourse. Political officials visit expatriates abroad, expand consular presence and services in destination countries, lobby banks to lower transaction fees for sending money home, adopt dual citizenship policies, and host special events with migrants to cultivate ties. Sending states’ proactive efforts to encourage their

expatriates to remain connected and channel resources home have been instantiated in diverse ways from cabinet positions to federal ministries. In the case of economic development in Mexico, the 3x1 Program was developed with migrants to direct their resources toward public ends. For every project that receives approval, each tier of the government—local, state, and federal—matches migrant resources, three-for-one, for the provision of local public goods and services. The matching grants schema creates an interesting tension for migrant HTAs and public agencies in the sending state.

Migrants, through the process of emigrating to new political jurisdictions, partially invert the power relationship between “state” and “society” because migrants’ evolving resource base generates new sources of political leverage back home. The sending state has no administrative authority to instruct private parties, even if citizens, on how to spend income earned abroad that is sent back directly to households. Household financial remittances are private resources for private use and all the sending state can do is encourage migrants to maintain social connections and continue sending those remittances back to families. But collective remittances amassed by migrant HTAs are different. Since collective economic remittances are intended for *public goods* provision, it not only creates the opportunity for migrants to use voice in local public affairs, it also creates new political opportunities for sending states to determine, in part, how collective resources are used. When sending-state actors become coproduction partners in the provision of public goods and match migrants’ remittances with public funds, the sending state regains some control over how those resources are used in the homeland for community and, potentially, personal political gain. Political officials often claim credit for public goods that are conjointly funded by extraterritorial migrant citizens living abroad.

But sending states that want to harness collective remittance resources toward public ends must relinquish some control and negotiate with migrants when investing in development projects for public use. Local government cannot completely dictate how funds are used, what projects are chosen, and how labor and supplies are coordinated without some input from migrant actors because each party contributes resources. For organized migrants, emigration grants them access to U.S. wages that generate resources to use voice in local public affairs. Emigration also liberates migrants to express a voice that might otherwise be constrained or coerced at home.

The devil, however, is in the details. In decentralized systems like Mexico, how migrant and state actors navigate the transnational relationship is not the same across partnerships because local-state capacity and electoral incentives vary and motivate local political actors differently. Moreover, these incentives may not align with the goals of federal and state authorities providing matching contributions to public works projects in programs like the 3x1 Program.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, while a growing number of countries have adopted matching grants programs similar to

Mexico's 3x1 social spending program, many others have no administrative oversight with regard to migrant investment in local projects or an institutionalized method of organizing public-private partnerships between migrant groups and the sending state. In Mexico's 3x1 Program and in other countries where HTAs are active, local, state, and federal authorities respond to migrant remittance-led investments according to their own political incentives, which drives the extent of their participation and cooperation with migrant groups differently across geography and time. Research has yet to fully account for the ways in which government actors' participation varies across transnational coproduction partnerships.

Understanding why and how migrant involvement in public goods provision varies is important because it tells us a great deal about the quality of governance in origin countries with substantial emigration. The origin and evolution of matching grants programs that draw on external migrant resources for development projects serves as an important window into social and political institutional dynamics in local democracy. It also reveals how migrant nonstate actors, with and without the support and involvement of local citizens and the state, propel new modes of civic and political interest and engagement in public service delivery.

#### POLITICS OF PUBLIC GOODS PROVISION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Public goods and services such as potable water, electricity, health services, safety, education, sidewalks, and roads are intrinsic components of people's well-being. Inadequate provision of clean drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene, for example, often leads to disease outbreaks. Access to quality healthcare services reduces complications during maternal childbirth and infant mortality rates. Paved, easily navigable roads connect important market centers where agricultural producers locally sell commodities and export them abroad to earn a living. In short, public service delivery is an essential component of economic development and poverty alleviation everywhere.

Traditionally, the state provides public goods to people in exchange for their quiescence to authority and taxation.<sup>49</sup> Assuming a group of interested citizens has the requisite time, energy, skills, and resources, they could cooperate to build water wells, put up street lamps, pave roads, and erect bridges themselves. However, because public goods benefit everyone, private provision suffers from classic free-rider problems of collective action.<sup>50</sup> When everyone can benefit from clean drinking water whether or not they contribute to get the system up and running, few are willing to sacrifice private time and resources to supply a public good that others will enjoy for free. Certainly, a limited number of goods can be provided this way and citizens have found creative solutions to collective action problems including informal institutions that govern common pool resources.<sup>51</sup> But generally, private provision of public goods leads to underprovision. This is

why government is tasked with supplying public service delivery—to ensure that citizens gain access to the basic goods and services they need to live healthy, productive lives.

In consolidated and recently transitioned democracies, citizens vote in elections and hold officials to account for public goods delivery. Participating in free, fair, and contested elections informs representatives of constituents' preferences and serves as the central mechanism to demand political change.<sup>52</sup> But many democracies suffer from political and institutional distortions that undermine formal instruments of political accountability.<sup>53</sup> First, casting a ballot is a less informative instrument for public officials to learn what kinds of public goods citizens want and need. Second, decentralization reforms that devolve authority over public goods to lower tiers of government frequently fail to improve efficiency and bring citizens closer to the political process. Inefficiencies result because resources transferred from state and federal governments are politically manipulated.<sup>54</sup> Throughout the world, decentralization is unevenly implemented and fiscal authority to collect income taxes and finance social spending lags behind reforms that decenter administrative and political responsibility to subnational governments.<sup>55</sup> Getting government to provide public goods is indeterminate in recently transitioned democracies and nondemocracies because local electoral institutions are absent or are often weak instruments of what political scientists call “vertical political accountability.” By vertical accountability I am referring here to the means through which citizens, mass media, and civil society enforce standards of good performance on political authorities through popular control.<sup>56</sup>

A lack of political accountability fuels skepticism among the citizenry that electoral institutions can *do* anything to improve their lives and leads some to fret over a crisis of faith in political parties and the return of more authoritarian forces.<sup>57</sup> In periods in which participation and contestation are in flux, nonelectoral forms of political participation and coproduction arrangements become critical in the provision of public services.<sup>58</sup> Migrants, with their newfound collective resources earned and pooled abroad, leverage their remittances and become political actors who decide what kind, how much, and where public goods are provided in conjunction with and in place of local government authorities.

#### PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY AND THE COPRODUCTION OF PUBLIC GOODS

Citizens counteract the weakness of electoral institutions through informal, that is, nonelectoral forms of participation in which they communicate information, demand political action, and engage directly with political officials and help make decisions about how the local government operates. These informal forms of civic and political engagement introduce a measure of social or horizontal accountability—an approach toward building good governance that relies on ordinary citizens and

civil society organizations participating directly or indirectly in exacting accountability through bottom-up, demand-based efforts.<sup>59</sup> However, not all citizens participate equally. Some citizens have more resources, are more motivated, and are part of recruitment networks that create and foreclose opportunities for engagement.<sup>60</sup> Some civic cultures are more propitious for civic engagement while others emphasize private entitlements.<sup>61</sup> The large social capital literature shows how norms of trust and reciprocity are imbued in social relationships that promote cooperation and membership in civic associations, and this civic associationalism, in turn, correlates with good government in liberal democracies.<sup>62</sup> But who or what nurtures social trust and reciprocity and brings about citizens' engagement in politics is rather elusive. And the mechanisms through which social networks of trust, reciprocity, and cooperation cause government officials to behave better while in office also remain an open question.<sup>63</sup>

In many cases, citizen participation in public life is determined by costs, benefits, and expectations of democratic engagement<sup>64</sup> and shaped by states. States have enormous power to scale up citizen engagement by opening up new spaces in which citizens propose, deliberate, and help make public decisions alongside elected officials.<sup>65</sup> These participatory spheres not only improve service delivery, but also nurture the emergence of new actors and subjectivities involved in local governance. And as citizens' interest and exposure to political life increases, so too may their sense of personal political efficacy, that is, the belief that they can understand and influence political affairs and bring about a more responsive government through purposeful action.<sup>66</sup>

Since this kind of participatory sphere brings ordinary people into government decision-making, it also has the transformative potential to improve social inclusion and more equitable allocation of public resources. Drawing on citizens' local knowledge and resources harnesses their agency to make them what Gaventa calls "makers and shapers" rather than simply "users and choosers."<sup>67</sup> And being open to the role of "co-governance" or "coproducer" in providing public goods and services creates opportunities for citizens to "cut their political teeth"<sup>68</sup> and be more inclined to engage in other arenas that bring about social and political change. Public goods are a kind of problem that sometimes cannot be solved by government actors alone, but also may not be solvable without them.

In turn, citizens and the state can create new institutional arrangements for public goods delivery when either entity is incapable or unwilling to do so alone. These public-private partnerships between state and society arise to coproduce public goods and services.<sup>69</sup> Each public (state actors in public agencies) and private (social actors in civil society) entity supplies complementary resources to conjointly organize the provision of public goods. Coproduction partnerships between public and private actors can also have democratizing effects when the quality of deliberation and who is engaged in public decision-making expands to include more marginalized, previously excluded voices.

While ostensibly beneficial for local democracy, our collective understanding of how public-private partnerships emerge, are structured, and affect political and civic engagement from beyond national borders remains undertheorized and empirically systematically underexamined. To date, research on coproduction partnerships has not fully examined the transnational dimensions of public goods provision and the conditions under which this kind of transnational institution injects political change in places with extensive emigration. This book does just that.

#### WHY TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS MATTER FOR LOCAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

The great variety and significant effects of transnational public goods projects are most fruitfully understood when they are situated in the preexisting social and political contexts of both the destination and place of origin. While prior research has emphasized how transnational practices are embodied in larger social structures and political institutions, few studies have systematically linked how these spheres of influence interact to structure the ways in which transnational practices are forged and organized and lead to success and failure.

My observations do not depart from the voluminous migrant transnationalism research that emphasizes the role of social ties and relations in facilitating cross-border practices, specifically transnational development and public goods provision. It is the case that migrants' "multipolarity" in two social worlds, the society of origin and destination, widens their field of existence such that they embody new identities and assert rights and duties of belonging and citizenship both "here and there."<sup>70</sup> Asserting continued belonging and attachments to places of origin is the very foundation of many migrant social groups' involvement in public goods provision. Migrants, through the translational act of sending collective remittances through hometown organizations, relay messages about increased social position, status, and prestige to nonmigrants at home while simultaneously claiming what Carling and Lacroix refer to as the "repayment of communality" and "lifeworlds" and the reassertion of "villageness" that helps migrants meet their social and ethnic obligations to community and allegiance to the hometown through the provision of development projects.<sup>71</sup>

However, my project is not an excursus of migrants' multidimensional motives to engage in this particular form of cross-border engagement with the homeland. Rather, this is my point of departure. All of the migrant actors I observed were involved in hometown associations and remain, to varying degrees, "loyal" to the homeland to borrow Hirschman's canonical language.<sup>72</sup> How I build on previous research is to start from the premise that all transnationally engaged migrants and their hometown clubs are not similarly situated in the hometown social network after departure. This is the half of the equation that needs to be explained. I heed

Levitt and Glick Schiller's call to focus on spatially embedded relations or networks, which puts the emphasis on the fluidity and openness of social relations. In doing so, it is incumbent on me to explain why migrants' social embeddedness in the hometown varies from place to place and over time and how this variation produces different kinds of cross-border partnership. By theorizing and testing how the structure of migrant social ties varies, I am able to show when local citizens are included in transnational development activities in ways that improve democratic participation and governance. Drawing on the migrant transnationalism literature provides a starting point for analyzing what kinds of migrant social relations structure how public goods projects are carried out, who is involved in selecting and managing projects, and how interactions are negotiated over time to expand the range of actors participating in and influencing decisions about goods and services that directly affect their lives.

But unpacking the variation in migrant social embeddedness to discern who is involved in making decisions about public goods provision in origin locales is just half of the analytic puzzle that requires explanation. The transnational practice I study necessarily involves state actors and government agencies in the sending state who become more or less engaged in the coproduction of public goods with migrants according to key political incentives and institutional climates. Across space and time, the political institutional context stymies and encourages local, state, and national government actors to forge public-private ties to emigrants and their organized groups abroad. It is thus also incumbent on me to theorize and empirically examine the political factors that structure coproduction partnerships. By disentangling the political *and* social conditions that interact to structure the transnational partnerships in which migrants, nonmigrants, and government actors provide public goods across national borders, I account for how different transnational partnerships shape and transform local democratic governance.

While there is a large and growing literature on the relationships between migration and development and the political consequences of international migration for both sending and receiving countries, we lack a good answer for why some partnerships are better or worse for local democracy. I argue the lacuna stems from three sources. First, the focus on single cases for exploratory theory and confirmatory analysis cannot test how conditions varying across different migrant-sending communities affect the transnational partnerships that migrant associations seek to promote.<sup>73</sup> Comparative analysis is better suited to isolate and contrast factors that influence the nature of transnational partnerships and catalyze political dynamics in diverse hometown settings.

Second, when research does capture variation in migrant development efforts, it examines either the role of political institutions or social factors without considering how both arenas interact to affect outcomes or change the nature of transnational partnerships over time.<sup>74</sup> In other words, how might social and political relations between relevant state and migrant actors change as a function

of coproduction activities? There is very little research that theorizes and empirically examines why and how social and political conditions at origin shape and are shaped by transnational partnerships and how these partnerships are responsive to changes in relations at home and abroad.<sup>75</sup>

There are reasons to be concerned with how political and social institutions interact to successfully coordinate public goods with migrant groups. Public goods decisions made between state and migrant actors may not be compatible with the needs of *local citizens* who are not passive recipients of public projects, but actors with a stake both in their voices being heard (the democratic process) and in policies that directly affect their quality of life (development outcomes). Moreover, government engagement in partnerships cannot be taken as a given since political officials face fiscal constraints, shirk responsibilities onto migrant groups, and use matching resources for personal gain. And changing conditions in both origin and destination locales including rising violence and economic recession may tax migrants' capacity to engage in coproduction regardless of any favorable initial conditions that create more synergetic partnerships. Explaining how partnership types change over time and break down in response to changing social and political conditions at origin and destination requires systematic and in-depth, micro-level exploration.

Finally, compared to their household counterparts, *collective* remittances sent by migrant groups are a drop in the bucket and virtually impossible to systematically track. Few researchers have examined the conditions under which HTAs and their development partnerships with the sending state alter democratic participation because there is skepticism that the small sums invested in public goods, when compared to household remittances, have observable political effects. Additionally, the lack of large-n data limits the ability of researchers to challenge this skepticism.<sup>76</sup> But the empirical gap in research does not mean that the political effects are negligible. As I show in the chapters ahead, migrant groups and their transnational partnerships with the sending state are a fruitful window for assessing how external nonstate actors, and the intermediary arrangements they help create, change the way people take part in government and its operation by “doing” development. It is not the amount of money sent across the border that matters as much as how that money affects and is affected by social and political structures and agency in origin and sending communities.<sup>77</sup>

#### SCALING UP DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT FROM ABROAD BY DOING DEVELOPMENT

People are on the move engaging in politics across national borders. So who is involved in development and how development happens are no longer confined within the domestic walls of the nation-state. Using newly acquired resources abroad made possible through the act of emigrating, transnational migrants and

their social groups upends traditional modes of political engagement because while people exit, some still use voice.<sup>78</sup> Spaces for civic and political participation are created with one purpose in mind such as public goods provision, but during the process social actors renegotiate boundaries of recognition, belonging, and community membership. And once migrants (re)negotiate their membership in the hometown community by creating and replenishing social ties and overcoming perceived status differences with hometowners, local and transnational citizens work together to directly and indirectly oblige political officials to answer for their actions while in office and sanction them for poor performance. The increase in civic and political participation of citizens supplements their role as voters and watchdogs of government to create more social actors involved in local governance.

Spearheaded by transnational migration, the widening of deliberation and inclusion constructs a politics of engagement in which previously excluded and dormant citizens and citizen groups have the opportunity to use voice in the local democratic process. In doing so, citizens make their concerns legible to the state through political participation in formal electoral institutions as well as informal modes of engagement including participation in protest activities, petitions, political campaigns, rallies, marches and protests, town halls, and civic associations.<sup>79</sup>

But since some migrants do not remain embedded in the social base of the hometown after exit and some local officials are unwilling and unable to engage migrant partnerships, competition for resources and recognition can lead to friction between migrants, residents, and political officials. While sometimes bursts of political activity occur in response to contests for power, contests for status and recognition between social actors, more often than not, lead to political disengagement. Apart from the substantive merits of a project proposal, be it a schoolhouse or health clinic, when residents and migrants do not share mutually intelligible meanings of community membership required of decision-making authority in public affairs, migrant-state partnerships may be deemed illegitimate and suffer contention and breakdown.

Furthermore, not all civic associations have democratic ideals. Migrant groups fall prey to opportunism, much like political officials, and transnational partnerships devolve into patronage for the local government or succumb to outright corruption. Migrant groups use resources acquired abroad and invest in public goods across national borders, improving citizens' access to essential services,<sup>80</sup> but the organizational structure and social learning inherent to ongoing relations in transnational partnerships reveals when it is effective at deepening political engagement and inducing more responsive governance.

The political dynamics unleashed by migrant groups' investment in local public goods are not the goal of transnational partnerships with the state. Rather, I argue they are unintended consequences. As I show in the chapters ahead, migrant actors are overwhelmingly apolitical and the principal objective for most clubs is

implementing the project—building the school, paving the road, and constructing the bridge. But through the complicated process of coordinating projects in transnational space, migrants, local citizens, and political officials realize different motivations for participating (or not) and they become constrained and enabled by social relationships and local-state capacity. In other words, public goods provision through transnational partnerships is a window into seeing how actually existing local democracies work. The process shows who is involved in making decisions about goods and services essential for well-being, whose interests are being represented by whom, and who is excluded. It also shows how institutional arrangements emerging from outside the boundaries of the nation-state can scale up political participation but also exclude marginalized groups. And finally, the transnational process shows when and how political authorities are willing to shirk their primary responsibilities and offload service provision to migrant groups abroad that wield resources acquired through the act of emigrating abroad.

#### THE STRATEGIC CASE OF MEXICO

In few places are issues related to public goods provision, migration, and democratization more salient than in Mexico. Over the last century, Mexican migrants have crossed the 2,000-mile border into the richest country in the world to find jobs and reunite with love ones abroad. As of 2016, the Mexico–U.S. migration corridor is considered the most heavily traveled in the world.<sup>81</sup> Between 1970 and 2013, more than 10 million Mexican immigrants came to the U.S., an increase of about 1,000 percent, and are the largest share of the foreign-born population. While out-migration from Mexico was traditionally concentrated in states in the rural, central-western part of the country, as of 2010, few municipalities in Mexico remain untouched by U.S.-bound migration.<sup>82</sup>

Over the same period, Mexico has also experienced subnational changes in political development. Subnational democratization occurred throughout the 1990s and culminated in national democratization in which the PAN defeated the PRI after 71 years of uninterrupted rule. During this time in which more opposition parties effectively competed for state and local office, the federal government adopted decentralization reforms. These decentralization reforms introduced important variation in subnational political authorities' interest and ability to provide public goods. First, there are subnational differences in levels of economic development, which a vast literature has shown is highly influential in shaping public goods provision and democratic governance.<sup>83</sup> Second, while civil society organizations have strengthened over time after being lulled by decades of authoritarian rule, recent evidence suggests a stall: only 16 percent of all municipalities report the presence of a citizen assembly; 27 percent, a citizen council or board; 12 percent, representation of municipal delegations (*delegados*) in localities; 20 percent, a comptroller for social welfare and public works projects; and just

over a third of municipalities report the presence of citizen committees of any kind.<sup>84</sup> Since previous levels of political engagement and social capital inherent to civic associations shape and are shaped by transnational partnerships, observing variation across these dimensions is key.

Given the complete lack of systematic data on collective remittances, annual data kept by the Ministry of Social Development (Sedesol) that administers the 3x1 Program provides a rare opportunity to assess the political effects of transnational coordination in a variety of local settings. Between 2002 and 2013, HTAs helped alleviate municipal poverty and increased citizens' access to drainage, sanitation, and water compared to places without active HTAs.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, since three tiers of the Mexican government (local, state, and federal) match migrants' resources, funds for public works are significantly amplified; in a quarter of 3x1 participating municipalities, remittances and matching contributions from the government accounted for more than half of local public works budgets.<sup>86</sup> Many municipalities have come to rely on the 3x1 Program to fund public works. And although collective remittances dwarf household remittances in sheer volume of flows, since these resources are used for public goods they benefit not just migrant households but also those citizens who cannot or choose not to go. Mexico provides an unparalleled opportunity and critical case for analyzing the emergence, variation, and effects of transnational processes in different social and political settings while holding macrostructural features constant.

#### EMPIRICAL STRATEGY: AN INTEGRATIVE MULTI-METHOD APPROACH

Findings for this book are based on original qualitative and quantitative data used in a multi-method research design. This strategy can be thought of as *integrative* in that one method provides an initial summary of knowledge about a problem of causal inference, while the additional methods test assumptions behind the initial summary but also discover new material.<sup>87</sup> I used each method for what it is especially good at, which helped overcome the inherent weakness in the other methodological approaches. Data was collected from a representative original survey of Mexican hometown associations, comparative fieldwork in Mexico, publicly available data for panel analysis of Mexican municipalities, and longitudinal survey data sourced from the Mexican Family Life Survey (MxFLS).

#### TRANSNATIONAL SURVEY INSTRUMENT, CASE SELECTION, AND COMPARATIVE FIELDWORK IN MEXICO

The process of data collection and analysis followed a specific sequence. First, I developed and disseminated a survey to all Mexican hometown associations

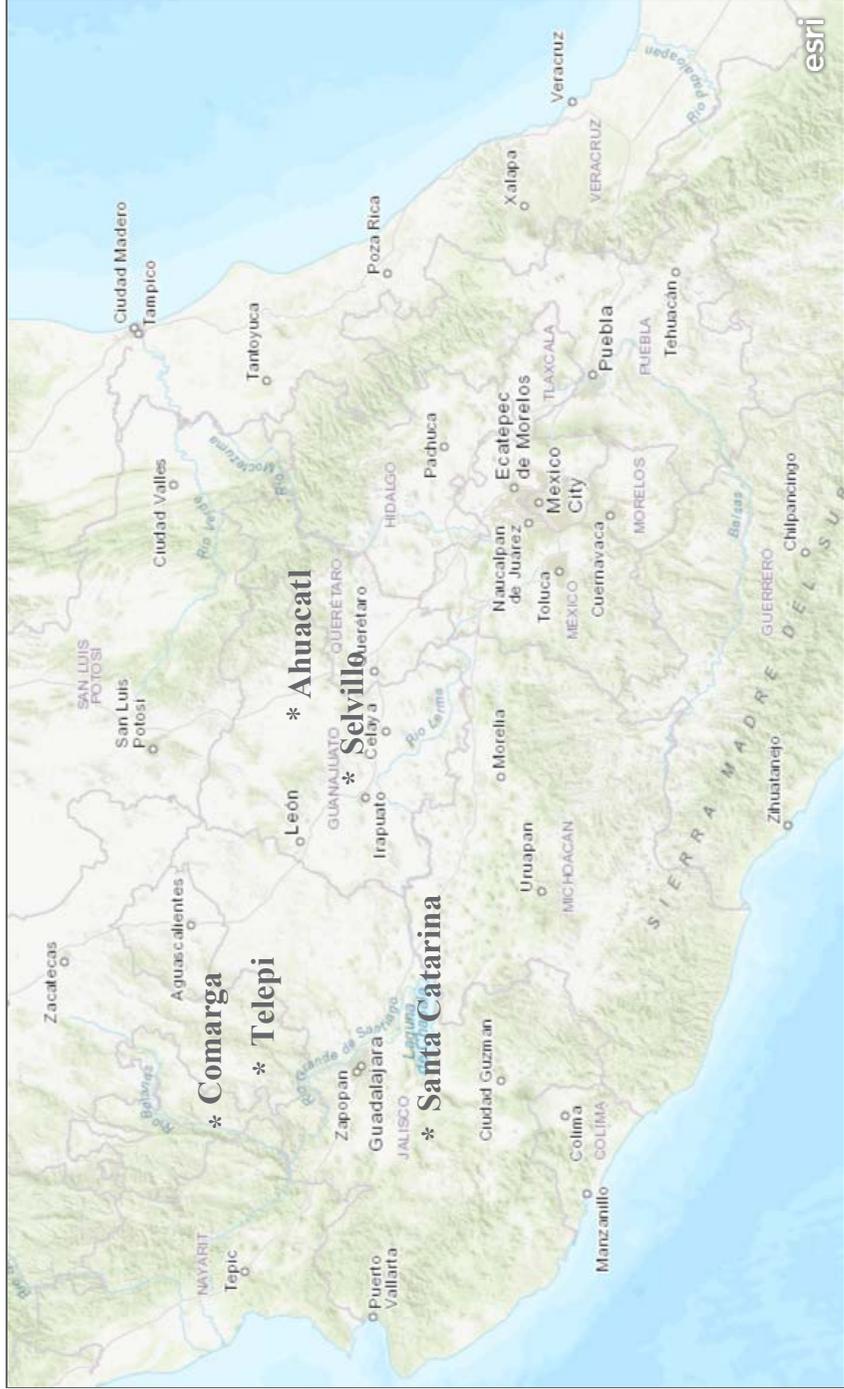
registered with the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (IME). The survey instrument was informed by 30 face-to-face and telephone interviews with hometown association leaders in North Carolina, California, Illinois, and Texas and pilot tested with two clubs. The survey respondents were migrant club leaders located in 25 U.S. states from 23 states in Mexico (and the federal district) and 230 different municipalities.

I then collected additional data that situated clubs in transnational space; that is, I gathered a sociodemographic, political, and fiscal statistical profile of each U.S. destination and Mexican sending municipality that corresponded to migrant club respondents. This transnational data effort represents, to my knowledge, the first survey to link migrant associations with places of origin and destination.<sup>88</sup> This additional step of data collection was important to decipher how destination and origin characteristics made transnational partnerships both more common and more successful while informing the organizational features of migrant clubs. For example, migrant clubs in U.S. rural locales were more isolated and unable to join state-level federations of migrant clubs that aided the dissemination of best practices regarding fundraising, membership recruitment, and leadership know-how for improving club capacity to deliver public works.

Additionally, in Mexican places of origin, long histories of local authoritarianism and escalating violence related to the drug trade and the spread of criminal organizations exacerbated distrust in political officials. In turn, local citizens were more reticent to work with migrant partners in transnational partnerships with the state. U.S. and Mexican place-based characteristics informed how migrant clubs emerged and were structured, but also the extent to which partnerships were likely to be more inclusive of local residents and local government more fully engaged.

Initial analysis of survey responses showed that community inclusiveness and government engagement varied across clubs and were highly correlated with political outcomes. To understand why these factors differed across clubs, I selected five municipalities from three traditional migration states to conduct fieldwork. The geographic locations of the field sites are mapped in Map 1. Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Zacatecas have in common a storied history of migration to the U.S., active HTAs, and participation in the 3x1 Program. In these three states alone, 10,405 coproduction projects were completed between 2002 and 2013, representing over half of all 3x1 projects across Mexico and 44 percent of 3x1 Program expenditures.<sup>89</sup> Over the full time period, approximately \$288 million (USD) was spent on 3x1 projects in just these three states.

The transnational partnerships I selected in each municipality maximize differences in community inclusiveness and government engagement and are exemplary of different organizational types. Some key factors including club capacity such as resources, time, energy, and interest of the club membership base were held constant, but the cases were initially stratified by economic development and local political conditions at origin. Four of the municipalities selected for fieldwork



MAP 1. Geographic location of field research sites in Zacatecas, Guanajuato, and Jalisco, Mexico. Source: ArcGIS Mexican Administrative Level Boundaries, Municipalities, ISO-19139 Metadata.

were of active migrant clubs and one municipality was the site of a failed transnational partnership. More detailed information about the case selection process, including a distribution of the cases by organizational type, and the transnational survey appears in Data Appendixes A and B.

After the cases were selected, I conducted fieldwork during 2009 and 2010. In every municipality I visited, I spoke to past and present government officials, the director of the office of migrant outreach (if there was one), local residents, leaders of civic associations, business and shop owners, migrant households, political party candidates and operatives, church pastors, locality delegates to the municipal government,<sup>90</sup> and members of local public works committees. I also regularly attended local public works meetings, town halls, assemblies, social and religious events, and ceremonies for public works installations. In most cases, I stayed with host families and participated in social events and weekly Catholic mass to build familiarity and trust with locals. The fieldwork generated 60 semi-structured interviews with key informants and hundreds of informal chats. I followed up with individuals with whom I had been unable to meet during fieldwork over email and telephone and participated in several HTA fundraising events and meetings in Illinois and California. This was necessary because in one case, Santa Catarina, drug violence made it unsafe for me to stay as long as I had planned.

I also interviewed state and federal political officials in Jalisco, Guanajuato, and Zacatecas, and the director of the 3x1 Program in Mexico City. In the U.S., I interviewed 3x1 Program officials at the Chicago and Los Angeles Mexican consulates and several migrant HTA leaders, club members, and HTA federation leadership. Many states have organized state-level federations composed of several hometown clubs from the state across U.S. cities. The states of Michoacán, Jalisco, and Zacatecas have the oldest and most well-organized federations in Texas, California, and Illinois, but most states in Mexico have at least one state-level federation of migrant clubs in the U.S.

The multi-sited fieldwork and interview data offered support for my initial intuitions about the factors that shape transnational partnerships. But the qualitative data revealed to me more concretely that migrant social embeddedness and continuous interactions between migrants, political officials, and residents that led to social and political learning were the key underlying mechanisms that explained why and how community inclusion and government engagement changed over time and accounted for different political outcomes. The comparative fieldwork also showed me that in places where social ties between migrants and local residents had decayed or were limited to begin with, social ties could be constructed when migrants recruited locals into the coproduction process and when they reengaged in repertoires of community membership. The kinds of membership activities included, for example, meetings with civic association leaders and pastors, participation in social and religious events including festivals, rodeos, dances, church meetings, dinners, and town halls, and social interactions in person and over social media, video chats, texting, and phone calls with

residents in the hometown. Thus the survey and fieldwork were complementary. The survey helped to identify cases for in-depth analysis of micro-processes while the fieldwork provided evidence in support of the initial hypothesis and unearthed new information about causal mechanisms, which I could then test using additional data sources and methods.

#### SURVEY, PANEL DATA, AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

With fresh insights garnered from fieldwork, I then revisited the survey data and more closely examined organizational variation in transnational partnerships using cluster analysis and determined whether organizational types were linked with civic and political engagement before and after the start of transnational partnerships. Since the survey data is cross-sectional, I also evaluated aggregate effects of transnational partnerships across all Mexican municipalities from 1990 to 2013 to assess the effects longitudinally. In the final phase of the analysis, I compiled data on the sociodemographic, political, fiscal, and migration characteristics for Mexican municipalities and assessed, with statistical techniques tailored to the quasi-experimental nature of the data, how places with and without transnational partnerships differed in political participation and government responsiveness. Additionally, I looked to the Mexican Family Life Survey (MxFLS), a longitudinal survey, and analyzed how transnational partnerships affected more informal forms of civic engagement and nonelectoral modes of political participation across a representative sample of Mexican municipalities.

The integrative multi-method research strategy provides compelling evidence that migrant transnational partnerships improve political and civic engagement under certain conditions. The comparative case study method, initially selected to confirm hypotheses, became more exploratory when it revealed new information about why the structure of transnational partnerships varied, which then required closer scrutiny. The close examination of the micro-process of public goods provision showed that migrant social networks and political institutions shaped how involved local actors and political officials were in the transnational partnership with migrant groups. Moreover, observations of variation within cases over time showed me how different organizational forms of partnership were linked to different political consequences for local governance. Examination of cases like El Cerrito brought to light how migrant actors who lacked social embeddedness in the hometown constructed social ties to community stakeholders through outreach across multiple projects, which culminated in a process of social learning.

While the small-*n* method can neither be used to generalize effects in the aggregate nor control for the great variation that exists in the real world, without it, I would not have known to examine processes of social learning or even have known to look for it in the large-*n* data had I used that method alone. Without the large-*n* data, I would not be able to say with confidence that the political consequences I observed on the ground were not confounded by other factors I could not

account for in the field. The integrative multi-method design allowed each method to complement the other methods and each was crucial to the demonstration of how transnational partnerships shape and transform local democratic participation through the process of public goods provision in migrant places of origin.

#### THE CHAPTERS AHEAD

In chapter 1, I describe why coproduction has different organizational forms and how this variation affects political and civic participation and government responsiveness. This part of the book provides a foundation upon which to then analyze the process and effects of transnational partnerships across and within Mexican communities. In chapter 2, I use a historical institutional approach, original qualitative interviews, and secondary data to present the evolution of the Mexican 3x1 Program and sending-state outreach policies with the Mexican migrant population in the U.S. The goal of this chapter is to present a macrostructural analysis of why and how transnational partnerships emerge.

The next four chapters comprise the empirical heart of the book. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 provide a bird's-eye view of the social and political contexts that organize partnerships and draw on six comparative case studies in five municipalities in Zacatecas, Jalisco, and Guanajuato. In each of the cases, I trace how community inclusion and government engagement interact to produce four organizational partnership types—synergetic, corporatist, fragmented, and substitutive—and the associated political consequences. In chapter 6, I scale up from micro-analysis to the meso-level of the migrant association. Here, I draw on original survey data to describe how partnerships vary across survey respondents using cluster analysis. Using the transnational survey data, I also test how club-specific factors affect the organization of partnerships. I next turn back to the hometown community and examine how transnational types observed in the survey data are associated with political changes on the ground in Mexico. The chapter then moves beyond cases in which transnational coproduction is known to occur to assess the systematic effects of partnerships in places with and without them over a 30-plus-year period (1990–2013) using statistical analysis.

The conclusion summarizes the central findings based on the case of Mexico. I situate transnational partnerships in Mexico with contemporary issues related to organized crime and violence spreading into more regions of the country and assess how voluntary return and deportations from the U.S. interior back to Mexico may affect local governance. I also contemplate what remittance-led development means in the globalized world. Finally, I discuss how well the framework I offer may travel beyond Mexico to decentralized democracies and authoritarian countries with substantial emigration.