

# Conclusion

## *The Paradox of Cross-Border Politics*

In places where roads are not paved, few sidewalks exist, and drainage and sanitation are in short supply, citizens gain better access to these and other public goods when nonstate actors step in to complement and substitute for state action. In developing countries and transition regimes, citizens often have to rely on nonstate actors such as faith-based associations, private companies, nongovernmental organizations, neighborhood associations, sectarian groups, and migrant hometown associations to fill the gap in public goods provision. As this book shows, migrants and their organized social groups abroad pool their resources to invest in public goods provision in places in which they maintain shared connections and attachments. In doing so, this practice enabled by international migration creates a mechanism by which citizens can enjoy better access to public goods but it also produces unintended, yet profound political consequences for local democracy.

When migrants organize partnerships with public agencies in the sending state to improve local development, cross-border collective action also changes who participates, and how they participate, in local democracy. Under certain conditions, the process scales up civic and political engagement and strengthens government responsiveness. Under other conditions, though, transnational partnerships reinforce elite power relations, social and political cleavages, and political disenchantment. Mobilizing collective remittance resources for development projects back home creates political opportunities for migrants to participate and make decisions in local public affairs. But exercising the privilege of speaking with and for a community in which some members no longer physically reside raises fundamental social and political questions about who belongs and which voices should shape decisions that impact everyone in a political jurisdiction. Examining

the transnational practice of providing public goods generates new insights into the ways in which international migration changes how citizens participate in local democracy, meanings of citizenship, and belonging in a world with millions of people on the move.

While there are several different kinds of nonstate actors involved in public goods provision, this book places the politics of migrant actors and the intermediary institutions of transnational public-private partnerships front and center. Public goods provision is a core function of subnational government in decentralized political systems like Mexico; therefore, when migrant social actors become involved in decisions that concern public welfare and resources, it blurs the boundaries between public and private spheres. The blurring of boundaries between who provides public goods and how they are provided is not a neutral, technocratic policy issue.<sup>1</sup> Rather, it is substantially consequential for political life in ways that have been poorly understood.

I attend to the political consequences of transnational partnerships in the strategic case of Mexico. Specifically, I study the process of coordinating public goods provision across the public-private divide, that is, between migrant hometown associations and public officials in the sending state, and highlight the ramifications of the process for three important political outcomes that bear directly on the quality of local democracy: civic and political participation, government responsiveness, and state-society relations. There are many dimensions of local democracy that transnational migration is likely to affect, but in the previous chapters, I examine democratic engagement at the local level and government officials' responses to transnational forms of collective action.

The book tackles the emergence, variation, and effect of migrant transnational partnerships at multiple levels of analysis, using original data collection and a mixed methodological approach. I find that while migrant resources create vertical links to sending states keen on courting resources earned abroad for public projects back home, the structure of migrant social ties and migrants' ability to negotiate meanings of belonging and membership in the hometown is also a critical determinant of democratic effects. By focusing much-needed attention on the intersection of social and political actors and institutions, I show how migrants' horizontal and vertical ties in the origin community create new modes of political participation. Social and political relations in the migrant transnational network shape the organization of cross-border collective action and the political consequences that result.

Specifically, migrant social embeddedness and political institutions at origin organize transnational partnerships differently. When partnerships are inclusive of the local citizenry and local government is engaged, the process of public goods provision creates more participatory governance. But when migrant groups are no longer embedded in the social fabric of the hometown or fail to forge ties to key stakeholders in the community and recruit them into the decision-making

process, social exclusion stokes inequalities and sometimes depresses local political engagement. How migrants navigate the boundaries of social and cultural membership in their hometowns (when membership is no longer based on territorial residence) has different implications for democratic governance or what Dahl refers to as polyarchy.<sup>2</sup>

When countries experience substantial emigration, paying close attention to how existing local democracies function requires looking beyond domestic political borders and the messy space between the artificial walls of the “public” and “private.”<sup>3</sup> Transnational actors, especially migrants and their organized social groups, transform how citizens engage the local government by inserting themselves back in local democracy, especially when newfound resources acquired abroad grant them decision-making opportunities in local politics not afforded to those without them. Aiming analytic attention at migrants’ cross-border practices shows how decentralized democracies with substantial emigration actually work. We see with new lenses how migrant intervention in the hometown after departure upsets, reinforces, and transforms the ways in which citizens engage in local democracies and interface with elected representatives. We also see the ways in which acquiring a bargaining voice in democratic politics is enabled by remittances and not by territorial residence alone, which complicates traditional ideas of citizenship that are circumscribed by the political boundaries of the nation-state.

When migrants leave their countries seeking political freedom, economic opportunities, and family reunification, the people and places they leave behind rarely fall completely out of view. Certainly not all migrants are “transmigrants” taking action, making decisions, and developing subjectivities and identities in two or more nation-states.<sup>4</sup> All people everywhere do not lead transnational lives, and among those who do there is considerable variation in the sources and types of practices they engage in across borders. As important research shows, individuals and foreign-born groups embrace different “ways of being” and “ways of belonging” in transnational social fields.<sup>5</sup> But despite exit from the places of their birth, migrants continue to participate in quotidian and revolutionary practices in their places of origin that affect social, political, and economic life at home.<sup>6</sup>

## CORE FINDINGS

The empirical heart of the book examines when, why, and how transnational partnerships emerge and transform local democratic governance. I find in the Mexican case that since the 1980s, neoliberal market reforms advocated by development banks including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund prescribed a reduced role for the state in social safety nets and decentralization reforms that offloaded the responsibility of public goods to subnational levels of government.<sup>7</sup> Concurrently, state retrenchment and decentering administrative authority opened up opportunities for domestic, international, and transnational nonstate

actors and organizations to step in and assume a greater role in social welfare and public infrastructure provision. Political openings in former authoritarian states like Mexico meant more freedom for civic associations, including those in transnational civil society, to solve local problems through collective action without fear of state reprisal. Additionally, fiercer political competition meant more opportunities for opposition political parties to wrangle power and authority away from dominant parties such as the PRI and represent new constituencies, including migrant constituencies abroad.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, since the late 1990s and early 2000s supranational organizations including the United Nations have sponsored migration and development initiatives in which government stakeholders, business elites, migrant organizations, and policy experts exchange best practices and the practical challenges of economic development. Directing increasing attention at the migration-development nexus, supranational organizations identified family and collective remittances as possible sources to fight poverty and fuel income-generating enterprises.<sup>9</sup> State retrenchment and decentralization efforts coupled with the rise in a “migration-development” discursive agenda encouraged policymakers to look to their diasporas for much-needed financial and human capital.

While the analysis in chapter 2 shows that macrostructural factors created the conditions of possibility for migrant cross-border involvement in local development, it also revealed that transnational partnerships are not necessarily automatic outgrowths of international migration. Rather, organized Mexican migrant groups’ grassroots mobilization preceded the coordination of public policies to channel collective remittance resources for community development. Country-specific historic factors were critical antecedents to the creation of transnational public-private partnerships. But migrant hometown associations’ bottom-up organizing and the sending state’s top-down outreach to migrants during a period of democratization and decentralization produced feedback effects that facilitated the widespread adoption of coproduction partnerships as a strategy for public goods provision at the local level.

While a majority of municipalities participate in the 3x1 Program, a closer look at transnational partnerships using surveys, interviews, and comparative fieldwork shows that they are organized differently from place to place and over time. Partnerships vary in the degree to which local citizens are involved and local government engages in the coproduction process. Understanding this organizational variation provides a key window into why the political consequences also vary across and within migrant hometown communities.

The case studies show how migrants are embedded in varying degrees in the social bases of their origin communities after departure. The structure of pre-migration social networks determines, in part, the nature of the partnerships they build across international borders because migrant social networks vary in the extent to which they maintain bonding and bridging ties. More heterogeneous

social ties reflect more social resources. They also reflect the variation of societal interests represented in negotiations, interactions, and decisions made between political officials and the local citizenry. When migrant social bases include both bonding and bridging ties in the hometown community, transnational coproduction is more likely to be inclusive and more egalitarian because it represents more of a plurality of societal interests. Since migrants are physically absent, they must draw on a wide array of social resources in the community for the coprovision of public goods to be most successful.

Although local government is administratively and politically responsible for provision, not all local government officials respond to coproduction opportunities with the same interest and engagement. The political institutional context creates different incentives for local political officials' engagement in partnerships with migrants. Moreover, in the Mexican context, municipal presidents (equivalent to mayors) are barred from individual reelection after serving a three-year term. Political incentives to participate in transnational partnerships reflect political parties' strategies for winning and maintaining office, and disruptions in party representation at the local level during periods of electoral transition interrupt how partnerships continue. The case of Telepi shows how this process unfolds through the change in political party in municipal office.

It is the dynamic interaction between community inclusion and government engagement that organizes coproduction partnerships differently, making them more synergetic, fragmented, corporatist, and substitutive. These four ideal typical forms of coproduction emerge from the interaction of migrant social networks and local political context. This is why migrant social groups that are otherwise similar, with the same resources, same size club, organizational capacity, and destination locale in the U.S., produce different consequences for local democracy.

The survey cluster analysis and statistical analysis using the Mexican Family Life Survey and panel data in chapter 6 provide a closer look into how partnerships vary and how emergent variation is associated with different short- and long-term effects on democratic functioning and state-society relations. When we telescope away from the organizational variation to assess the systematic effects of partnerships, the key finding is that repeated, continuous participation leads to more citizen participation in municipal elections and engagement in community activities such as neighborhood associations, religious groups, and social and civic associations like the Rotary and Lions clubs.

Finally, the panel analysis shows that transnational partnerships that occur in locales with preexisting endowments of social capital have more pronounced effects on democratic governance. In places where citizens are more engaged in community civic activities, local government devotes more public resources to social welfare spending. But preexisting bridging ties that enable more trust and cooperation between migrants and stay-at-homes are not a necessary condition for partnerships to succeed. Rather, the data shows that migrants who renegotiate

their membership in the hometown and construct social ties to key community stakeholders learn how to effectively deliberate and cooperate through repeated interactions over multiple projects. The social learning process that accompanies doing development projects with migrant and state partners helps scale up citizen interest and engagement in local democracy, giving more marginalized groups new avenues to discuss and make demands on their political representatives.

In places where transnational partnerships are more erratic and have less community involvement, transnational partnerships subsidize and substitute for government social welfare spending. Continuous participation in coproduction activities that draw on the social resources and assets of origin communities experiences the highest gains in democratic engagement and responsive government. By focusing on multiple dimensions of local democratic quality and the organizational variation in transnational partnerships, empirical results from both qualitative and quantitative data provide compelling evidence that migrant partnerships not only improve citizens' access to public goods, they also enhance participatory governance when migrants' social ties are multiplex.<sup>10</sup>

#### EMIGRANT CITIZENSHIP

Migrant involvement in public goods provision decouples substantive citizenship—that is, forms of civic and political participation—from territorial residence. Political and civic participation without territorial residence challenges neat conceptions of the nation-state as a bounded political territory with fixed populations<sup>11</sup> because migrant collective action complicates membership and belonging in the political community. These questions about membership, belonging, and ultimately citizenship emerge because the foray by migrants into collective action for development is in the public domain of the hometown and substantive, legitimate participation in the public, political sphere is predicated on belonging.<sup>12</sup>

As Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) argue, there are differences between “ways of being”—ongoing cross-border activities—and “ways of belonging”—practices signaling an identity with another people or place. The results of this book reveal the need to pay careful attention to how particular kinds of transnational practices take belonging for granted. Membership in the hometown political community is not guaranteed after exit. International migration involves connections that cross territorial units, and while immigrants may be oriented toward their hometowns and those immigrants have an affiliation and affection with it, connectivity and social collectivity are analytically and practically distinct.<sup>13</sup> Migrants have the power and legitimacy to use collective voice in political life in origin communities in which they no longer continuously reside when they renegotiate their cultural membership in the hometown community. When migrants are no longer perceived as members of the social and political community, but participate in public, political life as if they were territorial residents, nonmigrant citizens react

to migrants' intervention either by struggling for recognition through democratic channels of participation or, in some cases, by retreating from political life and becoming more disengaged from civil society and politics. Exclusion often makes people stop trying to be relevant actors in local political affairs.

In some instances, as the case of Atitlan shows, the competition for recognition between extraterritorial migrants and territorial citizens can result in new social divisions and sources of political inequality that mobilize political activism in the short run, but ultimately displace nonmigrants' interest and engagement in local politics as coproduction activities become more corporatist and, often, clientelistic. But when migrants renegotiate their social membership by constructing social ties with local stakeholders, recruiting residents into the coproduction process, and practicing cultural repertoires of community, these inclusive practices affirm social solidarity between migrant and nonmigrant citizens and legitimate migrants' local authority. The case of El Cerrito provides compelling evidence of these processes taking shape over time.

Cross-border social solidarity between migrant and nonmigrant citizens enables substantive participation in the public sphere of decision-making around public goods provision. While these struggles for group recognition and boundary-making can occur when organized migrant groups wield resources to be used in the local public domain, the sending state's emigrant policies facilitate and foreclose migrant groups' entrance into local political processes. The Mexican sending state, for example, does not allow extraterritorial citizens to vote in local elections, and although such citizens maintain certain rights and protections from the sending state while abroad (dual nationality, expatriate voting in national elections), their rights to participate and affect *local* politics are otherwise limited relative to Mexican territorial nationals.<sup>14</sup> Mobilizing their collective remittances resources for development projects is one way in which migrants channel their interests and ambitions and affect the democratic process, even if the political effects are unintended.

*De jure* citizenship or legal status citizenship is a guarantee extended by the country of origin to its nationals abroad. Even after departure the state promises emigrants that should they want or need to return and remain, they have indefinite permission to do so in the territorial space of the homeland. But while emigrants maintain the right to return, their substantive citizenship, and their ability to participate as full rather than nominal citizens in the public and political life of the home country, remains predicated on political belonging.<sup>15</sup> When migrants use collective resources and voice in the political affairs of their hometowns, they practice not just *de jure* citizenship but *substantive* citizenship as well. Legal scholar Kim Barry argues: "Citizenship is embedded in, as well as constitutive of, community, and its legitimacy depends on that community's approval."<sup>16</sup> The findings in this book buttress Barry's theoretical contention and explore the implications of migrant *transnational* public goods provision across borders for meanings and practices of emigrant citizenship.

Migrant membership in the hometown political community is a question that is contested, negotiated, and defined when migrants contribute resources and help make decisions about public goods provision from beyond national borders. Migrants' legitimate participation in development processes in countries of origin is predicated on being socially embedded after exit because the structure of social ties and practices of solidarity effectuate membership in the political community.

#### THE PARADOX AND POLITICS OF CROSS-BORDER COLLECTIVE ACTION

Understanding the conditions under which citizens use voice, loyalty, and exit tells us a great deal about the quality of local democratic institutions as mechanisms of political and social accountability in places beset by significant emigration. How citizens respond to government performance reveals the likelihood that government officials will respond to citizen dissatisfaction or lose out to the competition. Albert Hirschman explored these processes through his seminal exit-voice-loyalty triptych.

In Hirschman's framework, exit and voice are mutually exclusive options and loyalty reflects citizens' efforts to preserve the status quo. Either people "exit" the political system and take their support elsewhere or they use "voice" to try and change the behavior of the target, in this case the state. In the context of international migration, exit is a physical act. Migrants leave their countries of origin for greener pastures when the state has failed them. For migrants, it is exit that creates the condition of possibility for voice. By emigrating and voting with their feet abroad, migrants are able to save and send remittances. Migrants' collective resources create opportunities to participate in local government affairs from abroad. But to understand migrant cross-border collective action in the hometown, Hirschman's "loyalty" concept must be refashioned to capture not just the preservation of the status quo of loyal citizens remaining behind, but as a necessary precondition for migrants' cross-border engagement.

As scores of studies in the transnational migration literature show, not all migrants maintain the same level of attachment to homeplace nor do they sustain the same kinds of transnational and translocal practices and passions across international borders. Those migrants who do choose to engage in cross-border conversations, information sharing, remittance sending, and public goods provision, for example, are those for whom loyalty is a given or has been cultivated by the sending state through outreach initiatives. The goal of this book is not to explain who is loyal and how much loyalty they have for the people and places they leave behind in Mexico or other countries of origin. Rather, I argue that loyalty is a precondition for cross-border collective action. The migrants I study in this book are loyal to their hometowns, even if the use of voice and exit may be mired in conflict in some places and received with more open arms in others. The starting point for



this book is based on migrants' shared connections and loyalty to their places of origin. The variation I explain is focused, instead, on how migrant groups' ability to exercise voice and exit *simultaneously* is enabled and constrained by the social and political relationships that preexist in hometowns and is transformed by the process of cross-border collective action.

I posed a question at the beginning of this book. Can loyal migrants exercise voice and exit simultaneously? The answer this book provides is, well, yes and no. Although migrants form hometown clubs, pool resources, and work together to provide public goods projects in their places of origin, they are no longer territorial residents yet maintain legal personhood. Territorial citizens are ascribed full membership status regardless of whether they participate in the political and social affairs of their town because they are denizens. Citizenship grants migrants certain rights to substantively participate in home country affairs from beyond national borders even though they are not directly subject to the policies they help enact precisely because they left and migrated abroad for a chance at a better life. But emigration constrains migrants' collective participation in local public affairs when they are no longer socially embedded in the hometown nor perceived as members who still belong in the political community. Feeling socially connected to a hometown does not necessarily evoke consensus over meanings of belonging and membership and legitimate voice is contingent on renegotiating cultural membership after exit.<sup>17</sup> This is the paradox of cross-border collective action in local democracy and development.

Although many immigrants lack full membership in the destination country because they lack legal status citizenship, exercising voice in the home country may be one of only a handful of ways in which those who want to can engage in political life. For immigrants who wish to feel part of a polity, to be valued, to be included in a political and social community, investing in hometown development with remittances gives them an opportunity to participate in a political system as if they had never left. In many ways, migrants channel their political, social, and economic grievances in the destination country to the homeland where their substantive citizenship is not completely barred.<sup>18</sup> But when voice in public affairs is materially conditioned by remittances and exit, some migrants are met with opposition from local residents who no longer identify them and their groups as legitimate members of the local political community with the authority to speak with and for the citizenry.

The "right" combination of exit, voice, and loyalty is difficult to achieve and transnational partnerships between migrants, states, and local citizens often fail, exacerbate inequalities, and reinforce elite power relations. It is not enough for migrants to be socially connected; they must also be able to overcome perceived status differences that arise when migrants leave their places of origin for richer countries abroad. Examining the process of coordinating public goods across the public-private divide reinforces how nonstate actors,<sup>19</sup> be they nongovernmental

organizations (NGOs), sectarian and religious organizations, or migrant clubs, can nurture trust and cooperation and scale up local participation when they build on social assets and work through preexisting institutions in project recipient communities. But negotiating the complex terrain of local politics and the transnational social network to make local democracy work from abroad is a high bar for migrants and their groups to clear.

#### MOVING BEYOND THE MEXICAN CASE

The findings of this research underscore the importance of studying the sources of variation in transnational practices across geography and time. How migrants engage in hometown development is unlikely to be the same in Mexico as it is in China or Ghana or the Philippines and beyond.<sup>20</sup> This variation is rooted in differences in the nature and composition of migratory streams, social networks, and other factors that are endemic to origin and sending states. Origin countries vary in the intensity of ethnolinguistic fractionalization, state capacity, sociodemographic characteristics of emigrants, and political regime dynamics, for example. Moreover, destination countries vary in the degree of civil liberties and freedom to associate into collective groups. And sending states develop vastly different emigrant incorporation strategies to their diasporas abroad. Migrant social ties are a key factor in explaining the kinds of migrant cross-border partnerships that prevail, but they are also determined, in part, by the ways in which sending and destination states make room for nonstate migrant actors to intervene.

The findings of this book illustrate the importance of unpacking the role of “the state” and migrant transnational social network ties simultaneously to better understand the roots and feedback effects and organizational dynamics of transnational public-private partnerships. When considering migrant development practices and the emigrant outreach initiatives of sending states across countries, researchers would be wise to heed sociologist David FitzGerald’s call to analyze from a neopluralist perspective; that is, one in which “the state” is disaggregated into multi-level constituent units wherein political actors at different levels of government compete for their interests.<sup>21</sup> When researchers unpack sending states’ competing interests in this way, more variation across and within emigrant outreach policies may be explained. For example, Gamlen and colleagues have begun to typologize sending states’ “diaspora engagement” policies according to whether they are more aimed at discursively producing a state-centric diaspora, extending rights to the diaspora that legitimate sending-state sovereignty, and extracting obligations from loyal emigrants abroad.<sup>22</sup>

Disaggregating (local, state, national) state interests according to these three categories eventuates the identification of patterns across diverse sending states according to whether emigration policies are more exploitative, generous, or engaged in extracting obligations with or without also granting social and political

rights to the diaspora living abroad.<sup>23</sup> As researchers identify the emigrant/diaspora engagement policies that differentially enable and constrain migrants' interest in developing their countries of origin through the extension of social rights, representation, national belonging and citizenship, what Bhagwati has called the "web of rights and obligations,"<sup>24</sup> we can more easily compare and contrast transnational partnerships across more diverse institutional terrains.

The neopluralist state perspective will also necessitate a closer evaluation of the domestic political environment across sending countries. This should include assessing the extent to which political systems are decentralized, institutions consolidated, and state capacity sufficiently coherent bureaucratically to enable public-private partnership with organized migrant groups to bloom and succeed. And as this book shows, a neopluralist state approach will also need to consider the nature of social relations in and across migrant hometowns. In doing so, researchers are likely to gain new insights into why some governments have been able to formally engage their organized diasporas abroad in various matching grants and co-development policies with grassroots migrant associations, and why other sending states are more likely to partner with more elite business and nongovernment organizations. A neopluralist, comparative approach would also shed additional light on why some country cases pursue a more *laissez-faire* approach to emigrant outreach and home country development.<sup>25</sup>

Beyond Mexico, how migrants pursue public goods initiatives with minimal or no material or symbolic support from public agencies in sending or destination countries continues to be an area ripe for further study. There is also very little accumulated knowledge concerning how migrant intervention in public goods provision across diverse countries of origin produces political and development consequences at the subnational and national levels. Research shows that migrant HTAs have worked independently and oftentimes at cross-purposes with local and state governments, and with the tacit support of sending states in the production of infrastructure and social welfare. But how well the theoretical framework I present here explains political consequences beyond the Mexican case to other country cases with (and without) cofinancing programs is as yet unknown.

I hope future scholarship will assess the external validity of the framework I offer in other country contexts. In testing the theory across more (or less) democratic sending and receiving country contexts, ethnically heterogeneous groups and migrant classes, for example, the theory may need to be amended to reflect a wider constellation of political and social incentives and network ties that govern cross-border public-private partnerships. The comparative framework may also be used to classify more hybrid forms of transnational public-private partnership for development beyond migrant hometown associations to include other kinds of migrant actors such as business elites and entrepreneurs and transnational sectarian and religious-based organizations with migrant leadership in countries with

substantial emigration and engaged diasporas as diverse as India, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Lebanon, Syria, and the Philippines.

As I describe in the introduction, the Mexican case is unique in that the state and federal governments developed a social spending program to match migrants' collective resources for community development ends that other emigration states have attempted to emulate in a variety of ways. It is as yet unclear how an end to the 3x1 Program would affect migrant groups' ability to finance public goods or the extent to which the spillover effects on social capital and civic and political engagement would be able to mobilize collection action for public goods provision, or other objectives, in the absence of the state's involvement. This question will be of importance in the Mexican context as increasing political competition at the national level leaves open the question of whether the federal 3x1 Program will continue through political party representation in the presidency. As of July 2018, the PRD will command the presidency for the first time in Mexican political history, and relative to other major political parties (PAN and PRI) it is underrepresented in coproduction partnerships at the municipal level.

Furthermore, as Hirschman's principle of conservation and mutation of social energy makes clear, collective action in one endeavor, even when it fails, can be mobilized for new purposes and political uses in future time periods.<sup>26</sup> If the 3x1 Program and transnational coproduction partnership ceased to exist, the positive spillovers from more inclusive partnerships such as improved political efficacy and interest in politics could be transformed and used in alternative participatory spheres at a later date and for other purposes. The long-term consequences of migrant partnerships for local democracy remain to be seen.

#### CIVIL SOCIETY, SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, AND TRANSNATIONAL COPRODUCTION

Beyond the role that democracy—narrowly understood as elections—has on government performance, this research shows how nonelectoral modes of engagement affect democratic quality. Political participation, which includes a range of activities that have the intent or effect of influencing government action either directly by affecting the making or implementation of policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies, also improves government responsiveness.<sup>27</sup> Through pestering, protesting, petitioning, and *coproducing public works* with public agencies, resident and extraterritorial citizens work to improve their lot in life. These participatory strategies can be complementary to robust political competition,<sup>28</sup> and these strategies influence local government responsiveness directly when migrant-state coproduction is synergetic and ongoing.<sup>29</sup> When citizens and migrant groups assume more than the “watchdog” function, they break the state's monopoly on the responsibility of public goods provision and directly participate in this core function of local government.<sup>30</sup>

Being open to the role of migrant coproducer explains changes in political and civic participation even in places where we would expect substantial emigration to have more depressing effects.

Coproduction partnerships also serve as an additional collective mechanism in the provision of public goods and services, but when they approximate synergy they also expand the institutional terrain in which citizens and local representatives deliberate to solve local problems through nonelectoral channels. External social groups like migrant hometown associations mobilize new networks of engagement and collective action across the public-private “divide.”<sup>31</sup> These inclusive and engaging public-private partnerships generate alternative locales for negotiations about the distribution of resources. Synergetic migrant-state coproduction improves development, but it also introduces new mechanisms of accountability through social action.

Social accountability refers to a broad range of actions beyond voting that citizens, communities, and civic society organizations can use to hold government officials and bureaucrats accountable.<sup>32</sup> The range of activities include citizen participation in public policy making, participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking, monitoring public service delivery, advisory boards, lobbying, and advocacy campaigns. Citizens’ direct involvement in managing public resources, selecting projects designed to meet their needs, and monitoring the implementation of projects is a novel mode of political participation that can be an effective means of exacting social accountability that is complementary to electoral institutions of formal political accountability, especially when they are weak or absent.<sup>33</sup>

Electoral competition is a major mechanism of organizational “recuperation,” although voice is another significant alternative to this mechanism and can come into play either when political competition is unavailable or as a complement to it. Choosing projects, finalizing budgets, developing technical plans, and obtaining appropriate permits, for example, are not without the normal complications that accompany decision-making among multiple actors—coproduction partnerships are an arena for both contestation and compromise. How migrant clubs position themselves vis-a-vis the state and how the local state positions itself vis-a-vis the citizenry have important consequences for state-society relations. These kinds of messy processes are what we should expect in local democracies where citizens and political representatives are learning to interact in some places for the first time after protracted authoritarian rule. Negotiating mechanisms that incorporate the voices of more marginalized groups is the very essence of democratic decision-making.

But what of migrant sending communities and countries of origin in which a weak state is incapable or unwilling to provide even the most basic public good: public security? I focus exclusively on public infrastructure and social welfare provision and only discuss one case of a failed partnership in which a corrupt, weak local-state apparatus led to the demise of the transnational partnership in

the context of rising violence related to the drug trade. There are many countries around the world in which a weak and predatory state is anathema to external social actors' involvement in state functions and the introduction of new forms of social accountability. What does the transnational public provision of goods and services look like in places where social order is not a given? The Mexican case provides another window into these questions after 2006 in which rising violence spread in the central western plateau states with high levels of migration.

#### RISING VIOLENCE, MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE, AND PUBLIC GOODS PROVISION

On January 2, 2016, Gisela Mota was murdered by four armed gunmen in her home one day after being sworn in as mayor of Temixco, Morelos. Four weeks into her campaign, Aidé Nava González, a mayoral candidate for the municipality of Ahuacuotzingo, Guerrero, was decapitated and left with a *narcomanta*, a warning message, directed at other political candidates. This was after González's husband, Francisco Quiñónez Ramírez, who was the mayor of Ahuacuotzingo from 2009 to 2012, announced his plans to run again and was murdered in 2014 ahead of the election. Three weeks after Rogelio Sánchez Galán won the mayoral election in Jerecuaro, Guanajuato, he was shot dead at a bus stop. The list goes on and on. Over the last decade, hired killers called *sicarios* have killed more than 100 mayors and mayoral candidates, making Mexico the third-highest country with assassinated mayors in the world.<sup>34</sup>

Drug-related violence in Mexico escalated in 2006 after Panista president Calderón announced a militarized war on the drug cartels. Cartels have been competing for territory, fighting for political power, and scouring new sources of revenue throughout Mexico in response to the crackdown on the drug trade. Migratory flows, remittance transfers, and transnational partnerships have not been immune to the rise in drug-related violence throughout the country. Many individuals, families, and HTAs have responded in strategic albeit different ways. In some cases, migrants have diverted their remittance resources earned abroad away from public infrastructure and community development projects and toward financing public security and social order, a different and essential public good. In others, HTAs ceased to invest transnationally in their communities of origin when security concerns became too threatening.

Migrants in the U.S. have had to adapt their investment strategies in Mexico in response to drug-related violence. When the Los Rojos in Morelos, Knights Templar (KTO) in Michoacán, and the Jalisco New Generation cartels, among others, identified municipal government coffers as new opportunities to control resources, cofinancing public goods with migrant groups was imperiled. In addition to extortion, kidnapping for ransom, and the drug trade, criminal organizations started to compete for political control of municipal government. The gangs

that worked for the larger cartel organizations threatened and murdered mayoral candidates and mayors in office were sent somber warnings of what would happen when they do not comply with the cartel's demands.

Additionally, cartels and gangs associated with larger criminal networks forced mayors to yield percentages of their annual budgets to them, which affected their fiscal capacity to provide public goods including public security, public infrastructure, and social welfare independently and in cooperation with migrant HTAs. Cartels have also demanded contracts for building public projects and the selection of municipal police chiefs. Servando "La Tuta" Gómez, former leader of the KTO cartel before his capture in 2015, was known to meet face to face with mayors to make his demands. In other egregious cases, individuals who were directly affiliated with the cartels became municipal mayors. While in office they reportedly ordered the assassinations of individuals of the political opposition and of other individuals with whom they had personal vendettas. The mayors were also alleged to have siphoned public resources to fund the KTO in the municipalities of Parícut, Aguililla, Apatzingán and Tacámbaro, Michoacán.<sup>35</sup> News articles, photos, videos, and eyewitness testimony suggest this also became common practice across municipalities in southern Jalisco and Guanajuato as early as 2012. Cartel competition for political control of local government has sown terror across municipalities in Mexico and disrupted political officials' interest and capacity to provide public works with and without migrant groups.

The rise and horror of *La Violencia* throughout Mexico has direct and indirect effects on the local governance of public goods and migrant transnational partnerships as the case of Santa Catarina shows. Migrant families have been murdered and targeted for kidnappings in which gangs demanded remittances as ransoms. Public insecurity and generalized fear have thwarted civic engagement as citizens have opted to stay safe by keeping low profiles and out of public spaces. This fear has depressed community participation generally and in transnational partnerships, specifically. Migrant leadership of hometown associations in high crime areas has also halted coproduction activities in response to the rise in criminal organizations and violence in hometown communities. Until some migrant leaders feel conditions have improved and their activities will not put residents and paisanos in harm's way, many choose to suspend coproduction partnerships with public agencies.

Furthermore, my discussions with migrant leaders of HTAs in Guanajuato and Jalisco reveal that criminal organizations have seized upon the 3x1 Program to extract revenue.<sup>36</sup> Extracting a percentage of the matching funds from migrant, municipal, state, and federal partners, cartels and their gang affiliates have identified the federal program as a lucrative revenue stream. Local gangs require bribes for the completion of 3x1 projects as well as kickbacks from labor and building contractors hired for coproduction projects. In other cases, criminal organizations have required municipal officials and migrants to inflate the cost of 3x1 projects at



the project proposal stage and then skimmed the money directly from the municipal treasury once it has been deposited by coproduction partners. Finally, some municipal administrators have fabricated HTAs, referred to informally as “ghost clubs,” to propose public goods projects and then delivered matching funds directly to criminal organizations. Since 2012 and likely before, the 3x1 Program has been co-opted by criminal organizations in some Mexican municipalities, especially in those in southern Guanajuato, Jalisco, Morelos, Michoacán, and Guerrero, which has discouraged the formation and continuation of many coproduction partnerships. And as the case of Santa Catarina shows, violence has also affected the organization of partnerships through its impact on the level of community inclusion and government engagement in the 3x1 Program.

How drug-related violence and public security concerns systematically impact partnerships is a known unknown. In many cases, HTAs temporarily stop their efforts and take a “wait and see” approach. In one of the synergetic partnerships I present in this book, a municipal official was allegedly extorted by the KTO in 2013, which demanded a percentage of matching funds destined for public works projects through the 3x1 Program. Since gang leadership changed so frequently, paisanos had trouble identifying who the culprit was and the extent to which the continuation of 3x1 projects put members of their club and the public works committee in danger. In response, they decided to “lay low” until a new municipal administration came into power. In the meantime, the club sought out alternative state and federal programs to the 3x1 Program to finance social welfare in the hometown in less conspicuous ways.

By contrast, in other cases, especially in the state of Michoacán where the KTO has savagely attacked municipal authorities and migrant families, citizens have said enough is enough. In hard-hit regions where the state has failed to ensure public security and social order, locals and migrants abroad have taken up arms in the collective struggle against violence and property seizure. HTAs have also diversified their activities to support *autodefensas* in Mexico. *Autodefensas* are self-defense public security forces akin to militias that use violence to challenge criminal organizations themselves. Leaders and members of the *autodefensas* movement have links to migration and hometown associations.<sup>37</sup> For example, the leader of the militia movement in Michoacán, Jose Manuel Mireles, is a former migrant from Sacramento, California, who returned to fight the militias when migrants’ wives and schoolgirls as young as 12 years old were being systematically raped by KTO members. The second in command, Antonio Torres Gonzalez, who is known as “El Americano” because he was born in the U.S., joined Mireles’s militia after he was kidnapped on an annual visit to his hometown and held for \$150,000 ransom. Many members of *autodefensas* are migrants who have returned to their hometowns voluntarily or forcibly by the U.S. government through deportation and taken up arms for income or for revenge against the cartels who have terrorized families in their hometowns.



Many migrant returnees, individuals deported from the U.S., and leaders of hometown associations in conjunction with nonmigrant citizens have mobilized in response to the violence plaguing their communities. Since HTAs are unable to cofinance public security measures through the 3x1 Program, many associations have chosen to fund the militias using collective remittances in lieu of investment in public infrastructure and social welfare projects. Since their formation, these militias have been effective at disrupting the KTO's operations and restoring some social order, efforts the Mexican military and local and state police forces have been unable to do in many high migration areas around the country.

Working together, migrants and residents have been effective at regaining some social order through transnational collective action. In response to the rise in violence and weak state capacity to supply public security and enforcement, migrants have mobilized the skills, remittance resources, and social network connections facilitated by public-private partnerships to invest time, energy, and resources away from public infrastructure and social welfare provision and toward the provision of public security. The role of migrant civic associations, transnational partnerships, and return migration has important implications for the study of public goods provision and state capacity. Researchers must focus attention on how endowments of social capital created by transnational collective action affect state capacity and public insecurity in conflict and postconflict states in Mexico and beyond. And because there is the possibility that armed militia, including *autodefensas*, may "turn bad," researchers will need to better interrogate how international migration and remittances enable and constrain threats to public security and social order.

The Mexican case also calls attention to more general concerns about the likelihood of achieving development and public goods provision that improves citizens' quality of life in weak states. As migrant remittances surpass \$600 billion worldwide with over \$400 billion flowing directly to developing countries in 2016, many in the donor community are celebrating remittance-led development as the next solution to underdevelopment. Additionally, participatory development and cogovernance arrangement made possible by the range of nonstate actors and intermediary institutions involved in public goods provision have filled in where market failures and state provision left many without a modicum of social welfare. But remittance-led participatory development faces extreme obstacles if states cannot even ensure public security and social order. For migration to have positive effects on public goods provision and local democracy through cross-border collective action, the state must be willing and able to restore security. If not, the collective action and financial and social resources mobilized for development may next be used to challenge the state for authority in other public domains. It may also be used for transnational social mobilization to resist home country regimes as migrants from Syria, Yemen, and other countries did with varying levels of success during the Arab Spring.<sup>38</sup>

