

COLLECTIVE REMITTANCES AS MOBILE POLICY: INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF
MEXICO'S 3X1 PROGRAM AND THE EVOLUTION OF DIASPORA DEVELOPMENT

by

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Collective Remittances as Mobile Policy: Institutionalization of Mexico's 3x1 Program and the evolution of diaspora development

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ABSTRACT: In recent decades, origin country governments have shown increased interest in migration as remittances become central to less developed nations' economies. Countries deploy a growing assortment of migration-and-development or diaspora policies designed to enroll migrants as benefactors and development actors, as well as (re)producing notions of an extended, extra-territorial nation in which migrants are re-inscribed as members. I examine the confluence of migrant organizing, state outreach, and circulating diaspora policies. I work to understand how states and migrants engage in projects of development and how the mobilization and circulation of diaspora policies re-shapes both the policies themselves and their influences on migrants' engagements with their origin communities and governments. I engage these topics through analysis of the institutionalization and expansion of a particular diaspora policy, Mexico's *Programa Tres por Uno para Migrantes*, or 3x1 Program for Migrants. The program engages migrants as development actors by offering matching funds to multiply the impact of collective remittances, which are group donations that migrant organizations make to sponsor community projects in their origin areas. I examine how the 3x1 Program is put into practice in both traditional and non-traditional contexts, how migrants engage with the state and their home communities, how state actors and policy structures influence migrants' participation, and how the policy model itself has been transformed along the way.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Introduction.....	1
1.2. Diaspora Policies and Mexico's 3x1 Program.....	16
1.3. Analytical Frameworks.....	21
1.4. The 3x1 Program as Mobile Policy	25
2. ZACATECAS CASE STUDY	33
2.1. Introduction.....	33
2.2. Background and Literature	34
2.3. Data and Methods	40
2.4. Institutionalization Effects in Zacatecas.....	43
2.5. Bureaucracy Effects.....	44
2.6. Mediated Empowerment.....	53
2.7. Conclusion	63
3. YUCATÁN CASE STUDY	65
3.1. Introduction.....	66
3.2. Migration from Yucatán in Context	73
3.3. Framing the 3x1 Program	78
3.4. Re-grounding the 3x1 Program in Yucatán.....	82
3.5. Conclusion	93
4. <i>PROYECTOS DE AVAL</i> CASE COMPARISON	95
4.1. Introduction.....	96
4.2. Simulation Projects.....	105

4.3. Approaches to Simulation Projects.....	111
4.4. Examples of Each Approach	114
4.5. Simulation as Policy Mutation.....	138
4.6. Campeche Case Brief	142
4.7. Conclusion	147
5. SPACES OF DIASPORA POLICY	151
5.1. Introduction.....	151
5.2. Framing and Literature Review	155
5.3. Metaphors and Materiality of Transnational Space.....	159
5.4. Creation of Spaces: Scales and Engagements	164
5.5. Creation of Spaces: Times and Places	173
5.6. Conclusion	180
6. CONCLUSION.....	184
6.1. Diaspora Policy.....	184
6.2. Policy Mobilities.....	186
6.3. The Future of the 3x1 Program.....	188
REFERENCES	195

TABLES

Table

1.1 Key themes for focused coding.....	15
4.1 Summary by state of hometown associations active in the 3x1 Program in just one municipality or in multiple municipalities; 2004 and 2014	137

FIGURES

Figure

1.1 Fieldwork / Case Study Sites	8
1.2 International Migration Intensity by State, 2010	9
1.3 Per Capita Expenditures in the 3x1 Program by State, 2002 – 2017	10
1.4 Municipal Participation in the 3x1 Program, Annual and cumulative percentages.....	30
1.5 Total Expenditures in the 3x1 Program, 2002 – 2017	30
1.6 Year of First 3x1 Program Activity, municipal scale, by presidential administration	31
3.1 Migration Intensity Index for Municipalities in Yucatán, 2010	76
3.2 Trends in 3x1 Program Activity in Yucatán State, 2004 – 2010	87
5.1 Conceptual diagram, continuum of types of participatory spaces	157

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

On a sunny Saturday in 2015, I joined a crowd numbering in the hundreds who were gathered in a suburban park to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Chicago Federation of Zacatecan Clubs (FCUZI, for its initials in Spanish), an organization comprised of migrants from the Mexican state of Zacatecas (Fieldnotes 18 July 2015). Dignitaries including the governor, bishop, university president, and multiple mayors traveled from Zacatecas for the event, and officials from the Chicago branch of the Mexican consulate also attended. These officials joined the migrant organization to commemorate the numerous community development projects the migrants have supported in their hometowns in Mexico. In doing so, they embodied the close ties that have been cultivated between migrant organizations and all levels of the Mexican state. As I chatted with one of the group's leaders, he called attention to the status and connections that migrant organizations have built. "In Zacatecas it's difficult and rare to meet the governor, but here we can walk right up and talk to him, and he comes every year" (Fieldnotes 18 July 2015). His comment highlighted a dynamic that various authors have conceptualized using Hirschman's classic formulation, arguing that migrants have somewhat paradoxically gained voice after exiting (Fox and Bada 2008; Burgess 2012; Iskander 2015).

This dynamic of migrant voice and participation is central to my dissertation, but rather than addressing it through an abstract or generalized examination of transnationalism, I focus on its relation to what has become a growing assortment of migration-and-development or diaspora policies (Gamlen, Cummings, and Vaaler 2019). These policies are designed to enroll migrants

as benefactors and development actors, as well as (re)producing notions of an extended, extra-territorial nation in which migrants are re-inscribed as members (Kunz 2011; Mullings 2011; Collyer and King 2015). Diaspora policies have become normalized as a standard element of governance regimes (Gamlen 2014a) and a range of “best practices” have been identified and promoted (Délano 2014; Ragazzi 2014; Bakker 2015; Hickey et al. 2015; Ho et al. 2015a; Boyle and Ho 2017). This confluence of migrant organizing, state outreach, and circulating diaspora policies is the focus of the dissertation. I work to understand how states enroll migrants into projects of development and how the mobilization and circulation of diaspora policies re-shapes both the policies themselves and their influences on migrants’ engagements with their origin communities and governments.

I engage these topics through analysis of the institutionalization and expansion of a particular diaspora policy, Mexico’s *Programa Tres por Uno para Migrantes*, or 3x1 Program for Migrants. The program engages migrants as development actors by offering matching funds to multiply the impact of collective remittances, which are group donations that migrant organizations make to sponsor community projects in their origin areas. The program’s name, three-for-one, comes from the matching structure – migrant donations are matched by the federal, state, and municipal governments, so migrants only need to donate 25% of the final project cost. This collective remittance program emerged over time from a series of tentative collaborations between a small number of pioneering migrant groups and government officials, but it has been institutionalized as a policy package and expanded throughout Mexico (Iskander 2010). Outreach by government officials and the availability of matching funds has catalyzed many new migrant groups to form, spanning traditional and “new” origins and destinations (Duquette-Rury and Bada 2013).

Existing literature on the 3x1 Program has focused on a few pioneering groups or on quantitative overviews, leaving a gap in empirical knowledge regarding how the model functions outside its original contexts. This research addresses that gap by asking how Mexico's collective remittance model solidified and evolved through institutionalization and implementation in new contexts. The growing geography literature of policy mobilities provides a key analytical framework, with its focus on how policies are assembled in places, drawing on and internalizing specific resources and contexts, how they are packaged and mobilized, and how they are mutated in the process of movement and through re-grounding in new contexts (Peck and Theodore 2010; McCann and Ward 2013; Temenos and McCann 2015; Baker and Temenos 2015). This approach requires careful attention to contextual factors, particularly the social and economic realities of migration, debates around transnationalism and belonging, discourses employed by various actors, and the important shifts in both internal politics in Mexico and the state's interactions with emigrants.

1.1.1 Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is comprised of this introduction, four body chapters, and a conclusion. Throughout the project, I examine how the 3x1 Program is put into practice in both traditional and non-traditional contexts, how migrants engage with the state and their home communities, how state actors and policy structures influence migrants' engagements, and how the policy model itself has been transformed along the way. I begin with two case studies, one from the hallmark context where the policy model emerged and one from a replication in a "new" migration region, to highlight how context and practice are intertwined and explore the roles played by migrant and state actors. I follow the case studies with two chapters that examine gaps between policy and practice, the first analyzing a prominent mutation that is reshaping the

application of the model and the second asking what kinds of spaces for participation diaspora policies open for migrants to exercise agency. A brief conclusion highlights how the project advances debates around migration-and-development and diaspora policy, re-emphasizes the importance of analyzing mutation within the policy mobilities framework, and reflects on the future of the 3x1 Program.

Chapter 2 is a case study of current practices of collective remittances and migrant organizing in the transnational Zacatecan arena. The state of Zacatecas in Mexico's historic migration region is widely considered the point of origin for the 3x1 Program and Zacatecan migrant organizations have built substantial political capital and strong traditions over decades of activity. Around the time the 3x1 Program was formalized in 2002, numerous studies were conducted in Zacatecas to understand the model's origins and trajectory. Now more than fifteen years later, this chapter takes stock of the situation in this hallmark context, drawing on periodic research in the state over multiple years as well as an in-depth examination of one specific Zacatecan migrant organization. The chapter asks how institutionalization of previously informal practices has influenced the pioneering migrant organizations. Two broad trends emerge: First, bureaucratization of the program at the federal level has strained the capacity of participating migrant groups, which are volunteer-managed clubs not professional NGOs. They have been forced to find informal workarounds and rely on help from government officials, which has the potential to tokenize their participation. Second, however, I find that established migrant organizations have nonetheless continued a pattern of what I term mediated empowerment. They are interdependent with the state government and constrained in some ways, but they also are able to build and exercise agency to influence how diaspora policy is enacted in their origin areas. I conclude that the proliferation of diaspora policies has been a mixed bag for the pioneering migrant organizations, in different ways both empowering and marginalizing them.

Chapter 3 is a case study from the southeastern state of Yucatán, a “new” origin area with low intensity and short history of international migration by Mexican standards. In contrast to the Zacatecan case, migrant organizations from Yucatán are relatively young and are not prominent actors. Despite the non-traditional context, the state has rapidly embraced the migrant-centered 3x1 Program. Tracing the re-grounding in Yucatán, I show that the program initially followed expectations, but within a few years devolved into a pattern of “simulation” projects¹ that are controlled by municipal officials and minimize migrant involvement. The projects are simulations in the sense that migrant organizations merely sign the paperwork, but in reality the municipal governments select, fund, and manage the projects. Once this practice became normalized in the state, the already tenuous voice of migrant organizations was further weakened and traditional patterns of corruption and clientelism became apparent within the program. Simulation projects have existed since the program’s inception, even in the pioneering contexts, but this case study shows how replicating the model in a non-traditional context led to the mainstreaming of a previously marginal problem.

Chapter 4 builds from the Yucatecan case study and brings in additional examples to engage in a more detailed, cross-context analysis of simulation projects. Drawing from the policy mobilities literature and the concept of mutation, I analyze simulations as a specific type of mutation – an amplification, in which a practice that remained minor within the origin contexts was mutated into a dominant practice in new replications. To understand why this mutation has occurred, I examine the roles and perspectives of key actors and the influence of differences in transnational and translocal contexts. I describe a typology consisting of purists who have resisted the trend toward simulations, pragmatists who selectively engage with and partially

¹ In Spanish, the projects are typically referred to as “*proyectos de aval*”.

justify simulations, and reliant actors who have made simulations their standard approach. These different perspectives on simulation projects are linked to different contexts, most notably with the purist perspective mostly found among the strongest and oldest migrant organizations, while the reliant perspective is associated with new and non-traditional contexts. However, I also show that this mutation of the model in new replications has reverberated back to the origin contexts, where simulations are also being amplified. By focusing on mutation and bridging origin and replication examples, this chapter also helps refine the policy mobilities approach. Whereas most work centers on the mobilization facet, I emphasize mutation and show how it is tightly intertwined with assemblage.

Chapter 5 returns to the theme of participation that was introduced in the Zacatecas case study and asks what kinds of spaces for participation do diaspora policies create. Development institutions have embraced participatory practices on the global scale, but critics argue that this structured participation has become a hollow shell that does not allow true voice for community actors. They argue that this model results in “invited spaces” for participation that limit and condition agency, in contrast to the “autonomous spaces” that were initially envisioned in more radical conceptions of participatory development. Diaspora policies are often structured as participatory programs, as is the 3x1 Program, and thus create invited spaces for migrant engagement. However, reflecting on the example of simulation projects from Chapter 4, I argue that invited spaces – spaces with real if constrained opportunities for agency – have been replaced by simulated spaces. That is to say, in many cases spaces are not being created for migrant participation, but the creation of those spaces is being simulated to secure access to the 3x1 Program’s resources. In order to make sense of this trend, I use a scalar analysis to show how mismatches between the transnationally oriented federal bureaucracy and the translocally structured 3x1 Program have allowed municipal officials to dominate the practical

implementation of the program, opening the door for simulations. I also explore temporal shifts to show how expansion of the 3x1 Program nationwide and the escalation of simulation projects undermined the model's participatory elements.

1.1.2 Case Study and Site Selection

This project examines diaspora policy through a case study of the 3x1 Program for Migrants in Mexico. That case study, in turn, is composed of fieldwork and case studies of how the program has been implemented in multiple contexts within Mexico and with migrants and migrant organizations in the US. My site selection strategy was driven by the overall goal of understanding how different translocal contexts shape implementation of diaspora policies. I prioritized fieldwork in origin areas that differ in migration histories, dynamics, and patterns. My goal was to capture three key dynamics: the pioneering / historic contexts within which Mexico's 3x1 Program emerged; middling or "typical" examples of replication dynamics; and replication dynamics in unusual or decidedly non-traditional settings. Figure 1.1 shows the six states in Mexico within which I conducted substantial fieldwork. Research in the US was driven by connections from fieldwork in Mexico or from other networking with migrant organizations, rather than an independent site-selection strategy focusing on US destination contexts as a key variable.

I selected case study locations based on prior knowledge and literature review, logistical considerations, and data on migration and 3x1 Program participation. Figures 1.2 and 1.3 show two of the key factors for site selection: international migration intensity, as calculated by the Mexican government's Population Bureau (CONAPO, for its initials in Spanish), and data on 3x1 Program participation from the program's creation in 2002 through the present. The figures show this data at the state scale. In both maps, Mexico's historic migration region is clearly

visible as a cluster central states with very high migration intensity and significant activity within the 3x1 Program. Zacatecas is the example *par excellence* of the 3x1 Program, first because it is widely acknowledged as the source of the model, and second because on a per capita basis Zacatecas has seen three times as much 3x1 Program expenditures as the next highest state -- MX\$1,800 per capita (from 2002 through 2017) versus MX\$600 per capita.

Figure 1.1: Fieldwork / Case Study Sites

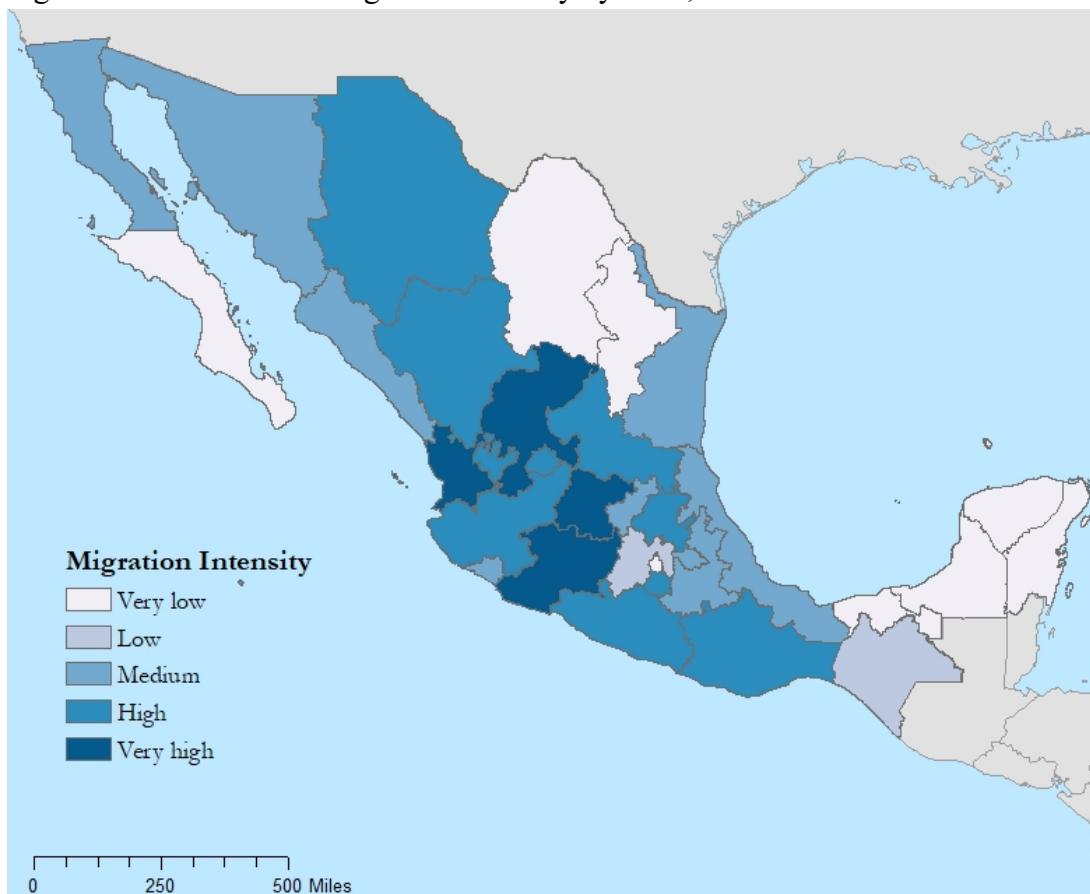


Source: Map by author.

If the first study site, Zacatecas, stands out because it has high levels of both migration and 3x1 Program activity, the second study site, Yucatán, was selected because it has a dramatic mismatch between migration intensity and 3x1 Program activity. The state ranked 27th out of 32

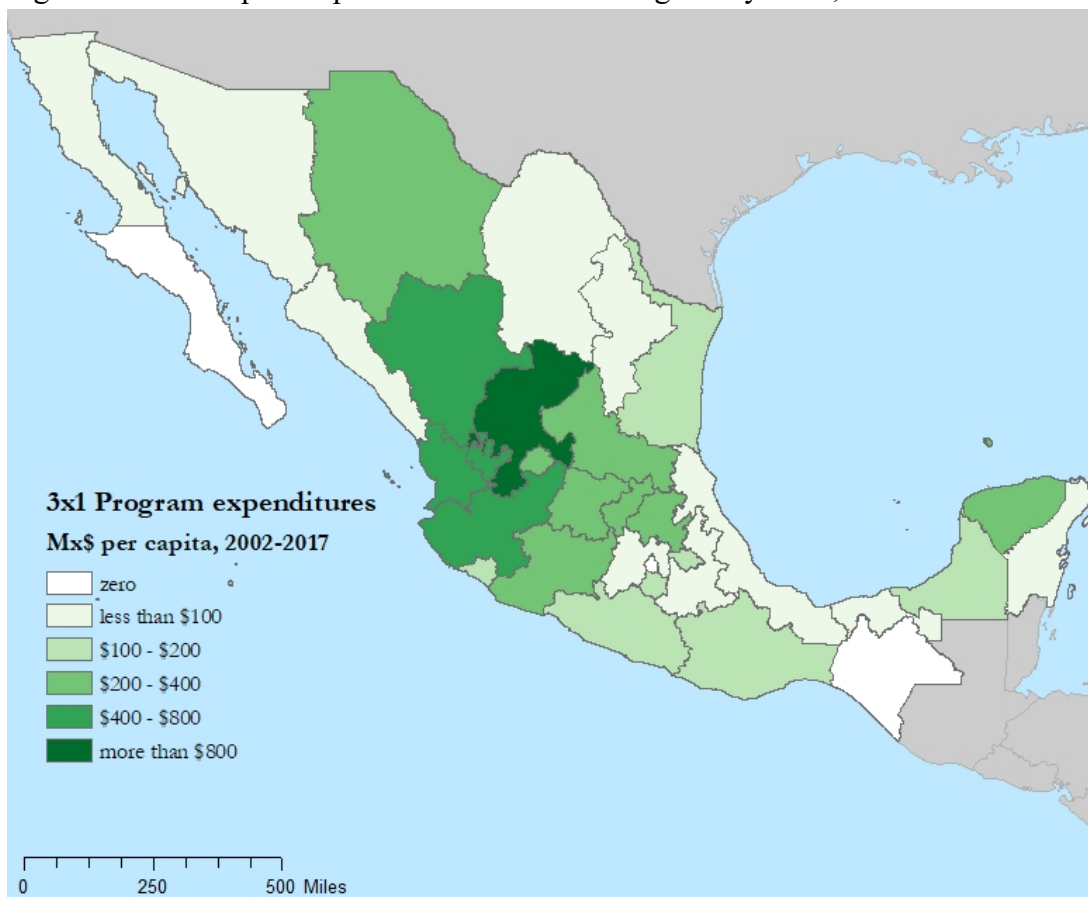
states in 2010, near the very bottom in international migration intensity. In contrast, it stood out with the 11th highest per capita 3x1 Program expenditures, in the top third of states. This mismatch, as well as Yucatán’s status as a “new” migration origin area, led me to select it as a site for research on the model’s replication in an unusual or non-traditional context. I also engaged in more limited fieldwork in the neighboring state of Campeche, which is near the bottom in both migration intensity and 3x1 Program activity, and as such represented a marginal or minor replication example.

Figure 1.2: International Migration Intensity by State, 2010



Source: Map by author, data from CONAPO (*Consejo Nacional de Población*).

Figure 1.3: Per Capita Expenditures in the 3x1 Program by State, 2002 – 2017



Source: Map by author, data from SEDESOL (*Secretaría de Desarrollo Social*). (Note: Data reflects total project expenditures, including migrant, federal, state and municipal contributions.)

The cluster of study sites in central Mexico, Puebla, Querétaro, and Tlaxcala, represent more “typical” replication contexts. These states are of medium migration intensity and also have significant, but not remarkable levels of activity in the 3x1 Program. They also are all centrally located within a half-day’s travel from Mexico City, which was a key logistical consideration for selecting this set of case study sites.

Finally, selection of the Denver Federation of Zacatecan Clubs for an extended case study on the US side was driven both by the research questions and logistical considerations. A case study of this depth, extending over multiple years of consistent participation and interactions, necessitated an accessible organization close to home. Within the greater Denver area, the

Zacatecan Federation is by far the biggest and most active hometown organization. It is also linked to the state of Zacatecas, where I already had longstanding research ties, which facilitated connecting and building rapport and trust with the group. The inclusion of a significant US-side engagement with Zacatecan migrant organizations complimented the extensive research I have done in Zacatecas and with various other Zacatecan migrant organizations across the US.

1.1.3 Fieldwork and Data Collection

The foundation for this project was established during a period of exploratory and preliminary research in Zacatecas during the 2010-2011 academic year, before enrolling in the PhD program. That work was funded by a Fulbright-García Robles fellowship that allowed me to spend the year as a visiting researcher in the Development Studies Department at the Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas (UAZ), under the supervision of Dr. Rodolfo García Zamora. My research on the 3x1 Program included 20 semi-structured interviews and visits to 22 completed or ongoing projects, as well as participant observation in workshops and meetings of migrant leaders. Results from this project were published in an edited volume from the UAZ Press (Malone 2012).

The primary dissertation research consisted of transnational fieldwork in multiple locations within Mexico and the US. The research was approved by the University of Colorado Institutional Review Board (IRB), protocol 14-0294. Data collection in Mexico occurred in two blocks. I conducted preliminary fieldwork in the summer of 2014, including interviews with officials in the states of Durango, Jalisco, and Zacatecas, as well as with the federal 3x1 Program director in Mexico City. This work was funded by the Social Science Research Council's Dissertation Proposal Development Fellowship. I conducted the bulk of international fieldwork during the spring semester of 2016, including interviews, observation, and project visits in the

states of Campeche, Puebla, Tlaxcala, Querétaro, Yucatán, and Zacatecas, in addition to interviews with the program director and federal staff in Mexico City. In total, I conducted thirty-seven interviews with Mexican federal, state, and local officials and attended four public events organized by government entities (training events for the 3x1 Program, project evaluation COVAM meetings, etc.). I also conducted phone interviews with Inter-American Development Bank and World Bank officials who have been involved with the 3x1 Program on behalf of those institutions.

I also collected data in the US intermittently from 2014 through 2019. This included fieldwork in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Denver, in addition to telephone interviews with migrant leaders from various locations. In total, I conducted twenty-four interviews with migrant leaders and attended two public events organized by migrant organizations – the Chicago Zacatecan Federation (FCUZI, for its initials in Spanish) banquet and events in 2015 and Federation of Zacatecan Clubs in Southern California (FCZSC, for its initials in Spanish) banquet and events in 2017. This does not include extended research I conducted with the Denver Federation of Zacatecan Clubs from 2016 through 2019, which is detailed below. The dissertation fieldwork was funded by various grants from the University of Colorado, including a Ray Hauser Award from the Graduate School, a graduate fellow grant from the Center to Advance Research and Teaching in the Social Sciences, a field research grant from the Tinker Foundation via the CU Latin American Studies Center, and a Dinaburg Fellowship from the Geography Department. The Geography Department also supported dissertation writing with a Gilbert White Doctoral Award.

Initial plans called for the US research phase to include a telephone survey of newly-formed HTAs. The survey was terminated due to low response rates and concerns about participant reactions. The information used to identify and reach HTAs was drawn from a public

database from the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (IME, for its initials in Spanish). Many of the club presidents we cold-called were skeptical and suspicious of how we had obtained their contact information, and a few asked how they could remove their information from the directory. In light of the reluctance and suspicion of potential respondents, I decided not to pursue HTA contacts harvested from the IME directory and instead focus on snowball sampling and networking connections. The abortive effort nonetheless yielded four complete surveys and two follow-up interviews with HTA leaders. The survey work was aided by Kimberly Mendez, who worked as a research assistant during the summer of 2015 through the CU-Boulder Undergrad Research Opportunities Program (UROP).

The final research segment was an extended case-study of one migrant organization, the Denver Federation of Zacatecan Clubs. The Denver Federation is an umbrella organization comprised of about a dozen member HTAs – the number fluctuated over the course of my research as new clubs joined and others dissolved. In total, I have worked closely with the Denver Federation for nearly three years, from 2016 through 2019. During this time, I recorded detailed fieldnotes from more than 50 events, including regular monthly meetings, individual meetings and interviews with group leaders, recruitment meetings for new members and clubs, conference calls with other Zacatecan Federations, periodic large events such as fundraiser picnics and the group's annual banquet, and meetings between the Denver Federation's leaders and government officials. I also made two multi-day trips accompanying the Federation's leaders to events in Zacatecas and California. The first year of this research was funded by a Community Based Research (CBR) fellowship from the CU-Boulder Engage Center and I sought to incorporate CBR elements into the project (e.g. Torres and Carte 2013; Escala Rabadán and Rivera-Salgado 2016). Some topics included here were pursued at the suggestion of the Federation's leaders, such as examining the impacts of the new online management system for

the 3x1 Program (see Chapter 2, sections 2.5.1 and 2). A co-authored article with the Federation's ex-president is in the planning stages. During the latter half of this engagement, I also became a member of the Denver Zacatecan Federation's board of directors and continue in that role. At the time of writing, I am working with the Federation to *finally* pursue nonprofit registration (see Chapter 2, section 2.5.4) with help from the Community and Economic Development Law Clinic at the University of Denver.

In addition to my own data collection and fieldwork, I drew on public and administrative data for analysis and as background information. I obtained complete records of projects completed through the 3x1 Program nationwide from its inception in 2002 through 2017 from data requests via the Mexican government's National Transparency Platform online at www.InfoMex.org.mx. Relevant data was obtained from folios 0002000001617113, 00020000078315, 00020000074715, 00020000040314, 00020000038218, and 0002000005519 – including my own data requests and files posted in response to other peoples' requests. All other data was obtained from publicly available sources.

1.1.4 Analysis and Methods

Interviews were conducted using handwritten notes, which were typed immediately after. I made the decision to forego audio recording of interviews after reviewing the methodological literature (e.g. Dunn 2005). I wanted to prioritize establishing rapport and setting interviewees at ease, particularly because many of the people I interviewed I met only once, giving me no opportunity to build trust before requesting a recorded interview. This decision was also motivated in part by the perceived sensitivity of some of the subjects probed, including the topic of migration generally, the relations and dynamics between actors and groups with large power differentials (e.g. migrants and government officials), and specific questions about unintended or

illicit practices within the 3x1 Program. I tried as much as possible to capture interviewees' language and phrasing in short quotes, but the tradeoff is felt in the absence of detailed block quotes. The majority of interviews were conducted in Spanish; quotes are my own translation.

I analyzed interview, observation, and field notes, together with program documents, using Nvivo qualitative analysis software (Peace and van Hoven 2005). I performed focused coding to identify and analyze material related to key themes, as well as an open coding exercise to identify important themes that were not initially included, followed by re-coding (Cope 2005). A representative sample of key themes for coding are displayed in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Key themes for focused coding

Code	Sub-codes
- Bureaucracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Institutionalization ○ Rule changes ○ Technology / Procedure
- Clientelism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clientelism ● Corruption
- Discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Critical perspectives ○ Migrant centrality ○ Origin myth
- Motives / Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development ● Diaspora organizing ● Remittances ● Political / partisan ● Standing / membership ● Non-interest / un-motivators
- Mutation / Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aval / simulation ○ Ghost clubs ○ Loaned documents ○ Recession of 2008
- Power dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brokerage ● Competition for funds ● Federations / scale politics ● Gatekeeping ● Government dominance ● Migrant agency

1.2 Diaspora Policies and Mexico's 3x1 Program

Amid growing recognition of the huge sums of money remitted by international migrants, sending country governments and development organizations have rushed to embrace migrant and diaspora populations and enact policy to facilitate and encourage remittances and investments (Délano 2014; Bakker 2015; Gamlen, Cummings, and Vaaler 2019). This has been accompanied by a discursive shift away from brain drain narratives of migrants as deserters and toward discourses of migrant heroes, loyal and generous contributors to the homeland (Durand 2004; Fitzgerald 2009; Raghuram 2009). Development organizations have promoted migration-led development policies and programs ranging from collateralizing future remittance flows to enable government and private borrowing (Ratha 2007, 2013; Akkoyunlu and Stern 2018) to engaging diaspora as sources of capital, ideas, and expertise gained abroad (Newland and Plaza 2013; van Ewijk 2014) and as transnational entrepreneurs (Zapata-Barrero and Rezaei 2019). Policies are differentiated to target so-called “elite” and “low-skilled” migrants, with particular roles identified for each (Hickey 2015). Hickey (2015) highlights a division between “migration-and-development” policies, which seek to maximize the impact of low-skilled workers’ remittances, and “diaspora strategies,” which focus on elite migrants as potential investors or benefactors. I use the term “diaspora policy” as a broader category that encompasses both, in part because the 3x1 Program in Mexico that is my focus is hard to categorize – many of its participants are “low-skilled” migrants, but they are engaged as benefactors, investors, and political actors.

Within this wider shift toward optimism about the potential for migration to act as a catalyst for development (de Haas 2010; Gamlen 2014a), migrant organizations and collective remittances have garnered considerable attention (e.g. Orozco 2005; Vargas-Lundius and Villareal 2008; McKenzie and Yang 2015). In the case of Mexico, organizations often take the

form of hometown associations (HTAs)² that bring together individuals from a common origin (Portes, Escobar, and Walton Radford 2007; Bada 2014). Hometown associations are also prevalent in other global contexts (Orozco and Rouse 2007), though the pattern of town-scale orientation is not universal (Portes, Escobar, and Walton Radford 2007; Mercer, Page, and Evans 2009), nor are HTAs limited to international migrants (Fitzgerald 2008).

Hometown associations are organizations of migrants from a common origin and residing in a common destination. Mexican migrants have established hundreds of HTAs in the U.S., representing communities from traditional migrant sending states, as well as newer and less traditional areas (Orozco and García-Zanillo 2009). Fitzgerald (2008) traces the origin of modern, international HTAs, seeing their antecedent in domestic HTAs formed in large Mexican cities by rural-to-urban migrants in the first half of the 20th century. As international migration networks have become established, and groups of migrants from particular villages or regions concentrate in specific destinations, social activities such as religious groups, sports teams, or festival organizing often form the foundations for HTAs (Bada 2003; Goldring 2004).

Historically, Mexican migrant organizations and HTAs centered on social functions and mutual aid in destination cities in the US (García Zamora 2005; Fitzgerald 2009; Bada 2014; Minian 2017). The emergence of government matching support for hometown charitable projects, eventually becoming the official 3x1 Program, contributed to existing groups' shift toward a focus on development projects (García Zamora 2005) and new HTAs now often form specifically to engage in collective remittance projects through the matching program (Goldring 2004; Fitzgerald 2009; Duquette-Rury and Bada 2013). While much of the organizations'

² I use the term HTA and hometown association interchangeably with the more generic term "clubs," as well as referring to "migrant organizations" which could include HTAs as well as other types of migrant groups, particularly federations of HTAs.

budgets comes from direct donations, clubs also fundraise through events like dances, picnics, festivals, rodeos, raffles, and beauty pageants (Bada 2003).

Research on government programs that match or otherwise support migrants' collective remittances has produced a varied set of conclusions. Some work has supported the view of collective remittances as a source of capital and ideas that will contribute to development, possibly helping unlock the latent economic potential of the much larger flows of household remittances by addressing structural deficiencies (e.g. Orozco and Welle 2005; Inter-American Development Bank 2012). Statistical analyses have found significant increases in access to public goods like water and sewer, paved roads, and health services in communities receiving collective remittances (Beauchemin and Schoumaker 2009; Kijima and Gonzalez-Ramirez 2012; Duquette-Rury 2014), but have also revealed patterns of partisan manipulation to direct matching funds toward party strongholds and to align project timing with election cycles (Meseguer and Aparicio 2012; Waddell 2015; Simpser et al. 2015). On a more fundamental level, critics argue that programs built around collective remittances shift responsibility for development onto precarious migrants (Delgado Wise, Márquez Covarrubias, and Rodríguez Ramírez 2009; Márquez Covarrubias 2010), problematically give migrants greater voice in some decisions than actual current residents (Faist 2009; Bada 2015), and play into broader trends of neoliberal government roll-back by letting governments off the hook for failure to provide basic public goods and services (Bakker 2007).

Extending beyond collective remittances, many migration and development scholars have been circumspect about the idea that migration can be used as a springboard for development. They are wary of what they see as a "migration development mantra" (Kapur 2003) that has brought increasing efforts to influence how migrants, their families and communities spend personal and collective remittances (Glick Schiller and Faist 2009; Skeldon 2008; de Haas 2010)

and casts migrants in the role of modernizing agents (Faist 2009). Even as officials position the state as a supporting rather than leading actor, they use their influence to foreclose efforts at systemic change, and exert pressure on migrants, community members, and other officials to act within neoliberal norms (Bakker 2007; Kunz 2011; Page and Mercer 2012; Boyle and Ho 2017). In this sense, migrants are constructed as subjects of governance at a distance, with diaspora policies playing a role in the apparatus of governmentality (Larner 2007; Kunz 2011; Mullings 2011; Boyle and Ho 2017).

Critics argue that recent optimism about migration-to-development has been underwritten by “third-way” ideology, with its celebratory embrace of public-private partnerships, civil society, and government accountability within a market framework (Gamlen 2014a), amounting to “roll-out” neoliberalism (Peck and Tickell 2002). These authors have brought critical views back to the forefront of academic writing, in what has come to resemble a pendulum swing between migration and development optimism and pessimism (de Haas 2012; Gamlen 2014a). Increasingly, analyses of collective remittances are tracing a similar path, with critiques converging from a variety of sources (e.g. Ratha 2007; Sedesol 2014; Bada 2015; McKenzie and Yang 2015). These paired shifts raise important questions about collective remittances and how the evolution of the phenomenon and analyses of it have been embedded in wider trends in migration and development thinking.

Research on migrant organization and the institutionalization of the 3x1 Program also must engage with Mexico’s transition from clientelism to more democratic forms of participation, though incomplete and uneven. During seventy years of rule by the PRI party, the state maintained control through a mix of cooptation and repression (Fox 1994; Morton 2010). Much has been made of Mexico’s transition to democracy, encapsulated in the PRI’s loss in the 2000 presidential election, as a harbinger of the end of clientelism. However, one cannot assume

a natural evolution of autonomous civil society and “true” democracy, even though many facets of the old authoritarian clientelism have weakened or collapsed owing to these shifts (Fox 1994; Otero 2004; Shefner 2008).

Some authors have argued that migrant organizations could play an important role in the reform of the old system by diminishing the power of local elites, drawing government funds to underserved areas, increasing demands for accountability, and strengthening norms of community participation (Burgess 2005; García Zamora 2007; Fox and Bada 2008; Fitzgerald 2009). However, possible avenues for transformation and the benefits that HTAs gain through interactions with the state are paralleled by concerns that migrant organizations could fall within Mexico’s long tradition of clientelist politics and cooptation of civil society groups (Portes, Escobar, and Walton Radford 2007; Villacres 2008; M.P. Smith and Bakker 2008; González Hernández and González Hernández 2011; Meseguer and Aparicio 2012). Indeed, even before programs were fully institutionalized, interactions with government played a key role in reinforcing and formalizing pioneering HTAs, problematizing the narrative of the groups as grassroots actors (Goldring 2002; Iskander 2010). As noted in the opening vignette, organized migrants gain voice by partnering with state actors for collective remittance projects. But the same state structures that contribute to their empowerment might also coopt and influence their voices to serve particular interests or maintain elements of the status quo. Analysis of collective remittances, then, must consider not only the ways officials and policies have influenced migrant organizing, but also how migrant organizing influences the state.

1.3 Analytical Frameworks

1.3.1 Diaspora Policy and Critical Development Studies

The present project is grounded in two key literatures that provide analytical frameworks. The first is the established tradition of critical development studies and the second is the policy mobilities framework that has recently emerged within urban and economic geography. The development literature is too extensive to summarize here, so I will highlight just two elements here that are key to my analysis. The first is an examination of the ways “participation” has been incorporated as a mainstream practice of the development industry. This concept is key to my analysis because the 3x1 Program that I examine is constructed as a participatory model. Second, I will highlight how development scholars have taken a disaggregated view of the state to make sense of the actual implementation and effects of policy models.

The 3x1 Program in Mexico and indeed many diaspora policies can be interpreted as descendants of the now-mainstream participatory model for development. The concepts of participation and empowerment in community and international development have radical roots but have been coopted in service of a neoliberal agenda. Participation and empowerment became development buzzwords, but in the process were divorced from radical meanings around social justice or redistribution and instead linked to neoliberal notions like responsibility and self-reliance (Cornwall and Brock 2005; Leal 2007). This re-engineered participation has become “tyrannical” (Cooke and Kothari 2001), as participation in development projects is demanded of marginalized people, but the bounds of those projects are pre-determined by the same elites and experts who have always controlled the development apparatus (Kapoor 2005). Participatory projects are localized and delimited in ways that exclude consideration of power relations and economic structures and preclude demands for fundamental change (Mohan and Stokke 2000). Critiques of circumscribed participation mirror analyses of structural flaws in the development

industry more generally, where real change is undermined as projects are rendered technical and de-politicized (e.g. Ferguson 1994; Li 2007). The poor are made responsible for their own situations while the systemic forces and power dynamics that structure their marginalization are left unexamined and unchanged.

These critiques are important to my analysis of Mexico's diaspora policies and the associated transnational migrant organizing, which have been linked to fuzzy buzzwords like "public-private partnership" and "participatory development." Diaspora policies might be merely another in the never-ending parade of development fads (M.P. Smith and Bakker 2008), but they nonetheless have important "instrument effects" (see Ferguson 1994). A central aim of this paper is to analyze how Mexico's 3x1 Program shapes migrants' engagements – what kinds of participation it elicits and/or abides – including intended and unintended outcomes. Even as the program enrolls migrants and migrant organizations into neoliberal subject positions and conditions recognition upon particular behaviors – organizing, remitting, philanthropy – it also opens possibilities for migrants to push their own agendas and exercise agency (Kunz 2011). Participatory development programs, including diaspora policies like Mexico's 3x1 Program, both compel and corral participation – they circumscribe and control but also create some openings for agency and voice.

The second point I highlight is the way critical scholars have analyzed the workings of the developmental state, and in particular the analytical value of "disaggregating" the state rather than treating it as a coherent thing or unitary actor. "A disaggregated view of the state makes it possible to open up the black box of unintended outcomes by showing how they are systematically produced by the friction between agendas, bureaus, levels, and spaces that make up the state" (Gupta 2012, p.47). This disaggregated view of the state helps make sense of examples like the 3x1 Program, which on one hand forms part of a coordinated national policy of

engagement with the diaspora, but on the other hand is produced through a complex process with particular roles for migrants, community members, and local, state, and national government officials and bureaucracies. The project becomes one of institutional ethnography and ethnography of policy circulation (Roy 2012).

Recognizing the internal complexity of the state opens opportunities to engage with the interactions between individual actors and multiple levels of government. For example, Gupta (2012) emphasizes how even within a national bureaucracy, there are important gaps between central-office policymakers and branch-office bureaucrats tasked with implementing policies. Larner and Laurie (2010) draw our attention to “middling technocrats” as key figures in the actual practice of policy, the actors who bring global policy models to the ground (see also Roy 2012). Policies are not fixed, definitive guides for action, but rather are frameworks within which this diversity of actors operate and find ways to frame and justify actual practices (Mosse 2005). In the case of the 3x1 Program, migrants and officials across the three levels of government bring substantially different interests and perspectives, not to mention habits and practices, into their engagements. Only by digging into this complexity can I make sense of the gaps between policy and practice.

1.3.2 Policy Mobilities and Diaspora Policy

My approach to analyzing collective remittances is framed within the growing critical geography literature on policy mobilities, which examines how policies are *assembled* in places and draw on local resources and context, how they are *mobilized* and packaged, and how they are *mutated* in the process of movement and through application in new contexts (McCann and Ward 2013). Peck and Theodore describe “a condition of deepening transnational interconnectedness, in which local policy experiments exist in relation to near and far relatives, to traveling models

and technocratic designs, and to a host of financial, technical, social, and symbolic networks that invariably loop through centers of power and persuasion” (Peck and Theodore 2015, p.xxxi). Drawing attention to the interconnections between assemblage and mobilization, Roy describes the approach as “the study of the practices through which policy is made mobile, of how a parochial idea, rooted in time and place, is rendered universal or at least transnational” (Roy 2012, p.35). Bakker (2015), Délano (2014), and Gamlen (2014a) have made the first push to incorporate the policy mobilities framework specifically in research on migration and development, a task to which the current project contributes.

Policy mobilities research links to the larger body of critical development studies by highlighting the vastly uneven political and economic terrains on which expertise and policy are legitimated and implemented. Because policy is packaged and mobilized through abstractions and incomplete histories and because it is re-grounded and re-negotiated in each place, it is imperative to consider the agency of a multiplicity of actors and the substantial scope for variation and repurposing beyond what might be envisioned by the policy entrepreneurs and institutions that do much of the mobilizing – echoing the earlier emphasis on taking a disaggregated view of the state. This is particularly so in the case of the 3x1 Program, which mandates the participation of migrant organizations and all three levels of Mexican government. I return to the policy mobilities framework throughout the dissertation, including more specific discussions of the existing literature and explanations of how this work intervenes in these conversations. As a first cut at applying this lens, in the following section I reinterpret the emergence of the 3x1 Program through a policy mobilities framework and lay out some of the directions I will follow.

1.4 The 3x1 Program as Mobile Policy

The following paragraphs provide a brief history and overview of the 3x1 Program, interpreted through the lens of policy mobilities. I draw from the literature on the program to explain its assemblage and mobilization, setting the stage for the focus throughout the dissertation on the mutation of the policy. As I discuss later, these facets of policy mobility are not distinct or separable stages, but rather are intertwined and remain in flux.

Histories of the 3x1 Program often point to 1986 as the moment when the collective remittances matching model began to take shape. The incoming governor of Zacatecas, Genaro Borrego, made a point of visiting and engaging with migrants in California and inaugurated the first agreements to partner with migrant organizations on infrastructure projects (Alarcón 2002; M.P. Smith 2003; R.C. Smith 2003; Fernández de Castro et al. 2006; Iskander 2010). Iskander emphasizes the paramount role interactions with the state had on solidifying migrant organizations and establishing them as development actors. “(Migrants) remember the governor’s explicit recognition of settler migrants and their needs as a watershed moment. They became visible to the government as a constituency, but even more important they became visible to themselves as a group that could have a hand in creating new futures for themselves and their families on both sides of the border” (Iskander 2010, p.252). This moment of engagement set off a chain of events that culminated with the institutionalization of the 3x1 Program as a federal policy in 2002, but that process was not a simple, linear progression. It was a messy and uncertain process of assemblage.

1.4.1 Assemblage of Collective Remittance Policy

Iskander and others have provided detailed and insightful accounts of the model’s beginnings, including numerous false-starts and dead ends, and it is beyond the scope of this

project to recount that history here. Instead, I want to briefly draw attention to the elements that were brought together in this assemblage – the histories and contexts and ideas that were assembled. As McCann and Ward note, “policies and governance practices are gatherings, or relational assemblages of elements and resources – fixed and mobile pieces of expertise, regulation, institutional capacities, etc. – from close by and far away. They are assembled in particular ways and for particular interests and purposes” (McCann and Ward 2013, p.8).

Numerous elements went into the assembly of a model for governments to partner with migrant organizations to fund origin community projects. Amidst a broader pattern of neoliberalization in Mexico, various government programs were being managed under a participatory rubric, with community councils or committees established ostensibly to direct and monitor projects (Fox 2007). This structure was familiar and convenient, so early federal engagements with collective remittances were routed through a pre-existing program within this vein, known as the National Solidarity Program, or Pronasol (Goldring 2002; Burgess 2005; Iskander 2010). The policy also emerged within an important context of increased electoral competition and decentralization of governance, which incentivized municipal officials to proactively pursue new funding sources, bringing them to the table (Simpser et al. 2015). The national regime was also in a state of ongoing crisis, leading some members of the dominant PRI party to see migrants as a new constituency to be cultivated, or perhaps just coopted and controlled (Goldring 2002; R.C. Smith 2003; M.P. Smith and Bakker 2008). All of these historical-institutional factors were part of the context within which the model was assembled.

Migrant organizations themselves also were importantly (re)shaped through the process of assemblage. Hometown associations and other Mexican migrant organizations have long histories in both international and internal migration (e.g. Fitzgerald 2008), but historically were focused on social functions and mutual aid for migrants in the destination area (García Zamora

2005; Fitzgerald 2009; Bada 2014; Minian 2017). These groups engaged in small philanthropic projects, but it was not their focus. The emergence of government matching support for hometown charitable projects contributed to existing groups' shift toward a focus on development projects (García Zamora 2005) and new HTAs now often form specifically to engage in philanthropy and collective remittance projects (Goldring 2004; Fitzgerald 2009; Duquette-Rury and Bada 2013). The process of assemblage not only shaped the policy model, but also re-created HTAs as philanthropy-centered organizations.

1.4.2 Mobilization of Collective Remittance Policy

Mirroring the complexities of assemblage, and recognizing that clear lines cannot be drawn to separate the two, the mobilization of the policy model also has been achieved through a complex set of interactions, rather than a simple transfer process. One of the key contexts for mobilization of the model was the global resurgence of optimism that migration could be a catalyst for development, particularly ascendant in the 1990s and 2000s (de Haas 2012; Gamlen 2014b). Major development institutions were actively seeking out, evaluating, and promoting migration-and-development policy models, and Mexico's early attempts at collective remittance policy caught their attention. The World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, USAID, Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation, and Western Union have all been involved in some way (Goldring 2004; García Zamora 2006; Iskander 2010). These organizations played a key role in mobilizing and promoting the model. For example, USAID commissioned an early evaluation that was widely circulated and helped establish Mexico's approach to collective remittances as a model (Orozco 2003). This process of mobilization entailed discursive work to elevate the model as a success story, as well as to establish a narrative of the program as migrant-

centered, grassroots, and participatory. This origin myth and discourse played an important role in solidifying the policy assemblage and making it mobile.

The participation of international organizations and major foundations was key to mobilizing the policy model and boosting its visibility, but also heralded important changes, including an amplified emphasis on “productive” projects like investments in agriculture, small businesses, and entrepreneurship (Iskander 2010). The foundations also invested in efforts to professionalize and transform leading migrant organizations to be more like traditional nonprofits and promoted the emergence of a few prominent migrant leaders as spokesmen for the model (Cappelletti 2018).

The mobilization of the policy model did lead to some international replications, including a short-lived program in El Salvador (Nosthas 2006; Burgess 2012), but more than direct replications the policy was mobilized as an example, as a piece of evidence incorporated into a wider project of positioning migration as a development opportunity. Policy-centered accounts nearly always list collective remittances amongst the menu of policy options, reinforcing the notion of migration-and-development as a proven approach (e.g. Orozco 2005; Vargas-Lundius and Villareal 2008; Agunias and Newland 2012; Newland and Plaza 2013; McKenzie and Yang 2015).

While the role of international organizations and demonstration cases fits more closely with the policy mobilities framework, in this particular case mobilization was most importantly driven by the Mexican government’s decision to institutionalize the model as national policy. Once established nationally in 2002, the 3x1 Program began a process of dramatic internal mobilization. The various informal iterations of the model had only been active in a few key states in Mexico’s historic migration region, what I refer to throughout the dissertation as the

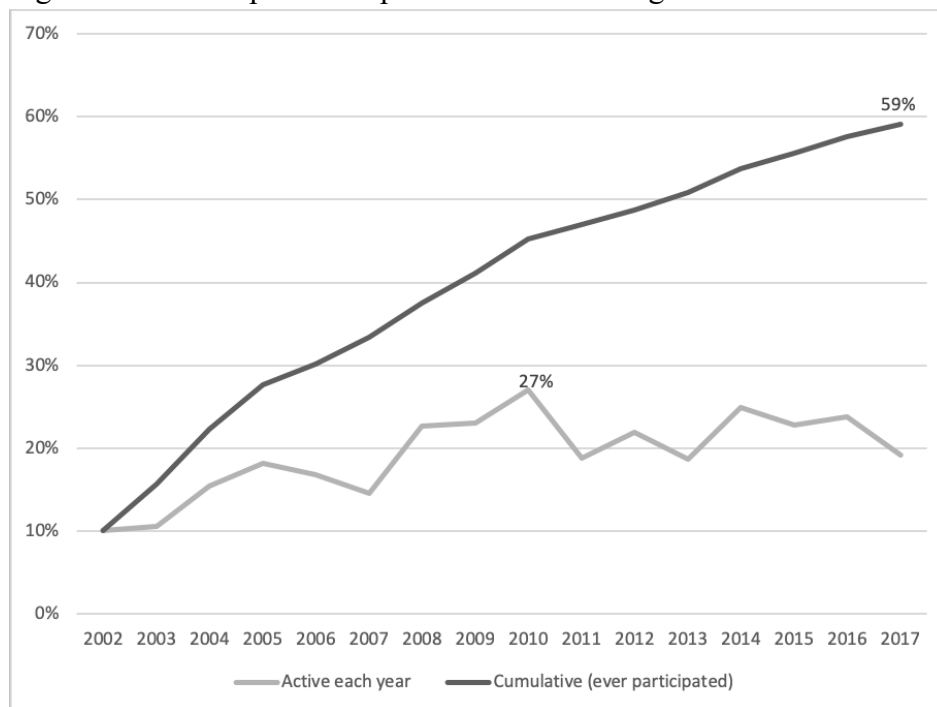
pioneering cases. Once institutionalized, the policy and its associated funds were available to municipal officials and migrants from many new areas.

1.4.3 Mutation of Collective Remittance Policy

As with any policy, the 3x1 Program has continued to mutate and change over time, both in its original contexts and in new re-groundings. These mutations and the way they relate to the model itself are a major focus of this dissertation. I examine the ways the program has been re-grounded and re-assembled in new contexts, many of which vary dramatically from the pioneering contexts. Specifically, I undertake detailed analyses of mutations in Chapter 3 through a case study from the “new” migration state of Yucatán and in Chapter 4 through examination of a specific mutation that has become increasingly central to the model’s functioning. Leaving those detailed discussions for later, in the following paragraphs I lay out some of the reasons for this focus on mutations.

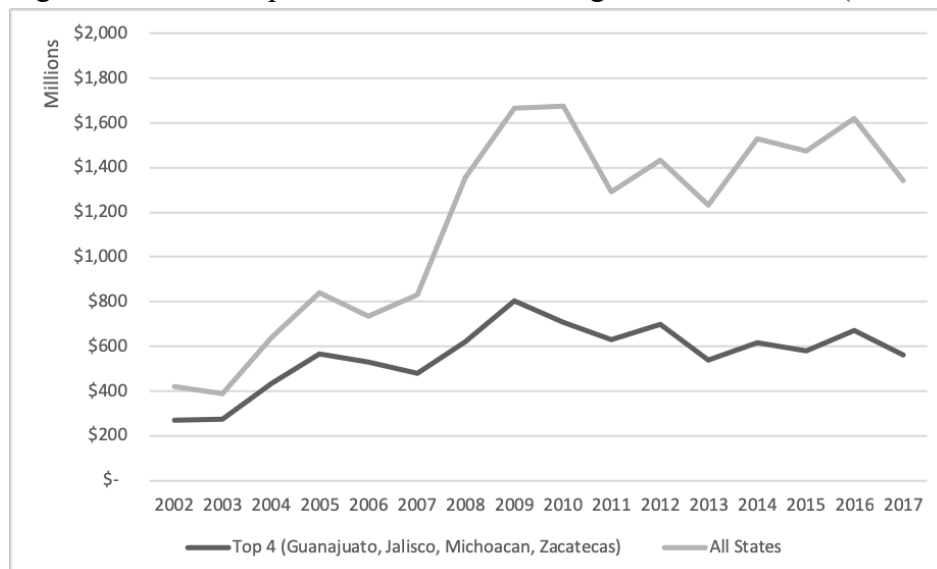
My perspective is that the diversification of the 3x1 Program to new areas in Mexico and new migrant organizations in the US has been the main driver for recent mutations in the model. The expansion and diversification of the 3x1 Program can be seen clearly from its administrative data. The inaugural year of 2002 saw just 10% of municipalities complete projects, but that figure climbed steadily over the following years, to a peak of 27% in 2010 (Figure 1.4). The share of municipalities completing a project in any given year has since leveled off at around one-fifth, but the cumulative figure shows that by 2017, a full 59% of Mexican municipalities had completed at least one project over the years.

Figure 1.4: Municipal Participation in the 3x1 Program: Annual and cumulative percentages



Data source: SEDESOL (*Secretaría de Desarrollo Social*).

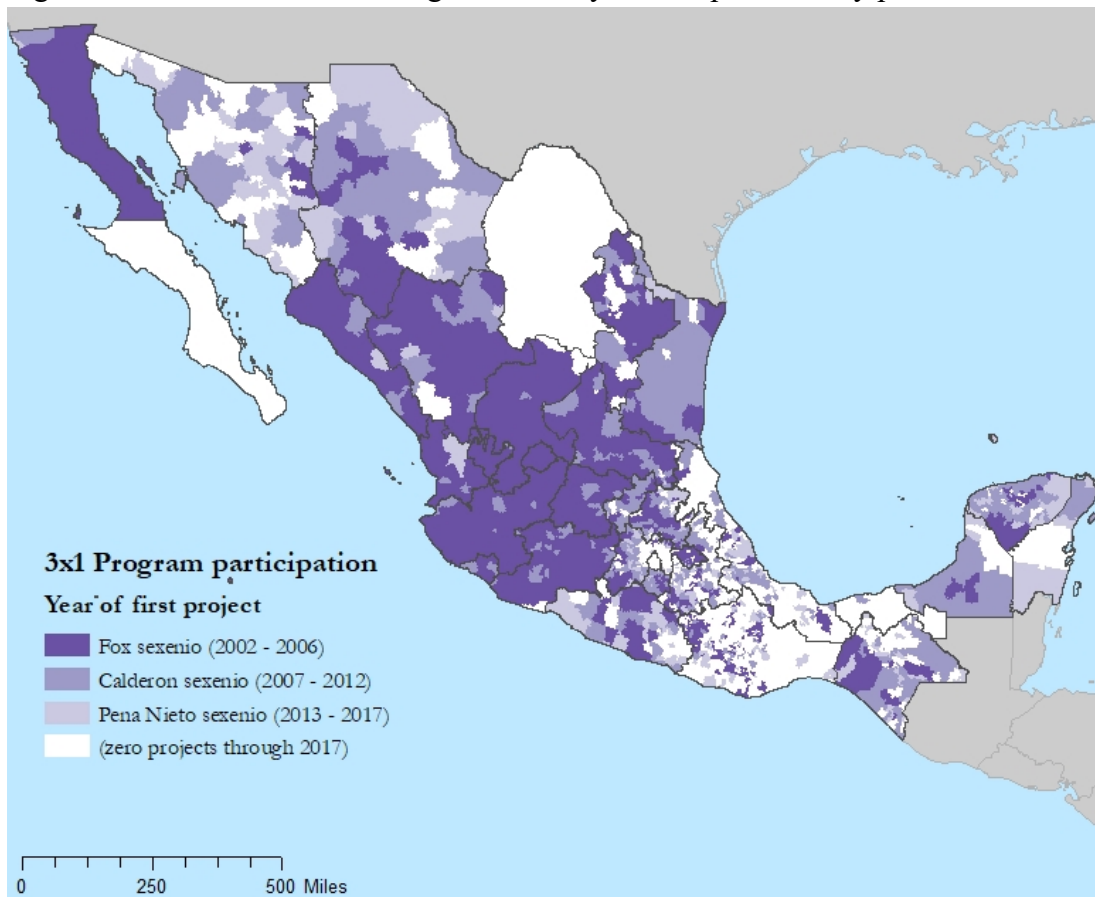
Figure 1.5: Total Expenditures in the 3x1 Program, 2002 – 2017 (including all four parties)



Data source: SEDESOL (*Secretaría de Desarrollo Social*).³

³ The official data provided in response to public record requests showed huge drops for Zacatecas and Jalisco, two of the most active states, in 2007 and huge jumps in 2008. Comparing to state-level records, it was clear that many 2007 projects were incorrectly listed as 2008 projects in the official federal data. It was not practical to re-classify each individual project, so this chart replaces the erroneous Zacatecas and

Figure 1.6: Year of First 3x1 Program Activity, municipal scale, by presidential administration.



Source: Map by author, data from SEDESOL (*Secretaría de Desarrollo Social*).

As more state and municipal governments joined the program, the pioneering areas continue to play an outsized role, but are no longer the whole story. The four highest-spending states, all in the historic migration region, accounted for two-thirds of expenditures in each of the 3x1 Program's first five years, peaking at 72% in 2006 (Figure 1.5). As more states and municipalities began participating in the program, the percent of the budget absorbed by the leading four states dropped to a low of 39% in 2015. The geographic diversification of the 3x1 Program over time can be clearly seen in Figure 1.6, which shows municipal-scale data on the

Jalisco numbers for 2007 and 2008 with two-year averages (i.e. the total of their 2007 and 2008 projects are divided evenly over the two years).

year of first 3x1 Program project. The map shows that most municipalities in the historic migration region began participating in the 3x1 Program within its first few years – indeed, many of these areas had already been active in the program’s informal precursors. The mixed pattern outside the historic region demonstrates the geographic diversification of the 3x1 Program. The historic migration region remains the center of activity for 3x1, but over time a much broader and more diverse spectrum of locations became active within the program.

Examining the diversification of the 3x1 Program is important for multiple reasons. First, the model’s portrayal as a mobile, replicable policy is based almost exclusively on the experiences of pioneering migrants and areas. Case studies have primarily engaged with pioneering groups and areas (e.g. Iskander 2010; Bada 2014), while national statistical analyses (e.g. Aparicio and Meseguer 2012; Duquette-Rury 2014; Simpser et al. 2015) have limited ability to reveal different practices across contexts. I take a comparative case study approach to analyze the model’s re-grounding in diverse contexts. Second, by focusing on mutations of the policy, I contribute to the literature on policy mobilities. While this framework is generally summarized as an analysis of assemblage, mobilization, and mutation (e.g. McCann and Ward 2013), I have found that mutation often receives relatively little attention. Scholarship has focused most closely on the ways policies are mobilized, tracing the circulation and global convergence of policy models, and secondarily on the assemblages within which those mobile policies emerged. Comparatively less attention is paid to the ways policies are mutated through new re-groundings. As I discuss in more detail in Chapter 4, I believe placing more emphasis on mutation as an integral piece of the picture will strengthen our overall conceptualizations of the life-cycles of mobile policies.

Chapter 2

Zacatecas Case Study

Diaspora policy's impact on migrant organizations: Fifteen years of the *Tres por Uno* Program in Zacatecas, Mexico.

2.1 Introduction

We are in the midst of a rapid proliferation of diaspora policies that seek to embrace and tap into emigrant communities. This trend is driven by a wave of optimism that migration can be a catalyst for development, as well as emergent international norms that countries with substantial emigration *should* engage their diasporas (Gamlen 2014a). Academics have examined this trend from multiple angles, including substantial analysis of emigrants' participation and belonging and their influence on origin country politics (e.g. Collyer 2014; Waldinger 2014; Délano and Mylonas 2019), and vigorous debates around the developmental and economic impact and potential of diaspora policy (e.g. Skeldon 2008; McKenzie and Yang 2015). This paper shifts the focus to ask what the expansion of diaspora policy has meant for organized migrant and diaspora groups and their relations with the state.

It has been common across many contexts for migrants to connect with co-nationals and form organizations, but until recently migrant organizations were of little interest to origin area governments. With the rise of diaspora policy, these groups have been thrust into the spotlight. Courting migrant organizations as representatives of and entry points to the emigrant community has become a common facet of diaspora policies, with states channeling outreach and programming through the organizations (Portes and Fernández-Kelly 2015). The impact that this newfound attention has on migrant organizations remains largely unexamined.

To analyze how incorporation into diaspora policies affects migrant organizations, I focus particularly on longstanding groups that predate the current trend of diaspora policy, but which have been brought into a central position within the trend. Are they able to leverage and benefit from their participation in diaspora programs, or are they overwhelmed and disempowered? Put another way, do diaspora policies create space for migrants and migrant organizations to exercise agency, or are they instead drawn into subordinate positions as clients or worn down by the bureaucratic weight of official programs?

To engage these questions, I examine Mexico's 3x1 Program, which offers matching funds to migrant organizations that sponsor community projects in their hometowns. I focus on migrants from the historic emigration state of Zacatecas, who pioneered the model before its formalization as a federal program, to ask how institutionalization of this participatory diaspora policy has affected their organizations and their relations with origin area governments.

2.2 Background and Literature

2.2.1 Diaspora Policies

Debates over the relationship between migration and economic development in migrants' areas of origin have shifted between optimism and pessimism: Is migration a self-perpetuating drain or a vital source of capital and ideas? (Faist 2008; de Haas 2010, 2012; Gamlen 2014b). Since the 1990s a wave of optimism – motivated in large part by growing awareness of the enormity of migrants' financial remittances (Bakker 2015) – coalesced into a new migration-and-development “mantra” (Kapur 2003). This resurgent optimism has led many countries to include outreach and engagement with emigrants abroad – captured under the increasingly broad term of

diaspora⁴ – into their development policies (Raghuram 2009; Délano and Gamlen 2014). More than half of countries now have official diaspora institutions, up from less than 10% in 1980 (Gamlen et al. 2019).

Diaspora policy is not only growing, it is also converging globally.⁵ Favored policies and “best practices” have emerged and spread between countries, with international organizations actively promoting their adoption (Délano 2014; Gamlen 2014a; Ragazzi 2014; Bakker 2015; Hickey, Ho, and Yeoh 2015; Ho, Hickey, and Yeoh 2015; Boyle and Ho 2017). Migrants are encouraged to remit, invest, transfer skills, and possibly return or circulate, while states implement policies intended to maximize the developmental impacts of these activities (e.g. Agunias and Newland 2012). In return, governments have made concessions or overtures such as expanding consular services, liberalizing dual citizenship rules, and extending expatriate voting rights, with concomitant discursive shifts to embrace and celebrate migrants (M.P. Smith and Bakker 2008; Raghuram 2009; Délano 2011, 2018).

Mexico has been a leading player in the emergence of diaspora policies, using multiple strategies to embrace emigrants and tap them as resources, and marking a sharp reversal of its previous practice of ignoring and rejecting migrants (M.P. Smith and Bakker 2008; Fitzgerald 2009; Délano 2018). Other countries, particularly around Latin America, have emulated Mexico’s approach to diaspora policy (Délano 2014). Many of these policies are not explicitly focused on development, but rather employ a logic that helping migrants succeed abroad while

⁴ See Délano 2011 p.1-4 for a discussion of the use of “diaspora” in reference to Mexican migrants.

⁵ Hickey (2015) highlights a division between “migration-and-development” policies, which seek to maximize the impact of low-skilled workers’ remittances, and “diaspora strategies,” which focus on elite migrants as potential investors or benefactors. I use the term “diaspora policy” as a broader category that encompasses both, in part because the 3x1 Program in Mexico that is my focus is hard to categorize – many of its participants are “low-skilled” migrants, but they are engaged as benefactors, investors, and political actors.

also staying connected to Mexico will ultimately yield more remittances and benefits (Délano 2018).

2.2.2 Mexico's 3x1 Program

Among Mexico's diaspora policies, one of the most explicitly and directly development focused is the *Programa Tres por Uno para Migrantes*, the 3x1 Program for Migrants. Through 3x1, the Mexican government courts migrant organizations by offering to match contributions the organizations make for community projects. The 3x1 name comes from the matching structure – the federal, state, and municipal governments each match the migrant organizations' contributions. Uniquely, however, the model for the 3x1 Program was not a top-down creation as part of the recent flurry of diaspora policies. Rather, a set of practices that had evolved informally between migrants and officials in the country's historic migration region were institutionalized as part of Mexico's broader embrace of diaspora policies.

The 3x1 Program centers on the involvement of migrant organizations known as HTAs and group donations referred to as collective remittances. For Mexican migrants, the basic unit of organizing is the hometown association or HTA (Portes, Escobar, and Walton Radford 2007). HTAs are clubs of migrants who share a common origin community and destination area – they are translocal organizations that connect a hometown and a destination, reflecting the density and highly-networked character of Mexican migration as well as migrants' strong identification with the hometown or "*patria chica*" (little motherland) (FitzGerald 2008; Bada 2014; Minian 2017). Collective remittances are group donations that HTAs send to sponsor community projects. The funds are typically gathered through fundraising events, raffles, and donations.

Instituted as national policy in 2002, the 3x1 Program formalized the government's role in migrants' hometown projects. A spate of research around that time documented the pre-history

and early years of the program. Much of this research focused on Zacatecas, a state in the historical heartland region of Mexico-U.S. migration, where the model emerged and was most intensively employed (e.g. Goldring 2002; R.C. Smith 2003; Fernández de Castro et al. 2006; García Zamora 2007; M.P. Smith and Bakker 2008; Iskander 2010). These authors broadly agree that the emergence of the 3x1 model resulted from years of complex interactions between migrant organizations and Zacatecan officials. Early relations seemed to replicate the corporatism endemic to Mexican politics, with the dominant PRI party attempting to capture migrant organizations. Over time, however, migrant organizations were able to re-orient their relationship toward the state government rather than a political party, setting the stage to gain more autonomy without losing financial support from the state (Goldring 2002; R.C. Smith 2003; Iskander 2010).

The 3x1 Program is framed as a participatory program, a variety of public-private partnership through which migrants aid in the development of their hometowns. The dominant discourse presents migrant organizations as the central players, regarding them as uniquely qualified actors because of their hometown ties and insider knowledge.⁶ In 2015, an explicit reference to participation was inserted into the official objective of the program. The program's general objective is to “*strengthen social participation* to boost community development through investment in (development) projects” (emphasis added).⁷

⁶ Critics have questioned why migrants, many of whom have not lived in the origin community for decades, are assumed to be experts on local needs (Faist 2008), problematizing the special emphasis on migrants to the exclusion of hometown-based groups or local residents (Bada 2014). Bolstering these critiques, an evaluation of 3x1 projects concluded that HTAs' attempts at oversight are often counterproductive if not paired with active home community civil society partners (Burgess 2016).

⁷ Diario Oficial de la Federación (México), 27 diciembre 2014. Reglas de Operación del Programa 3x1 para Migrantes, para el ejercicio fiscal 2015. 2.1. Objetivo General.

2.2.3 Participation and Empowerment

The participatory framing of the 3x1 Program is not unique, but rather is a common element in many diaspora policies. The policies call for emigrants to remain engaged in the life of origin areas and encourage ongoing contributions of various types. This facet of diaspora policy echoes the now-mainstream model of participatory development programs. For the development industry, calls for participation began as a radical challenge linked to ideas of social justice and redistribution, but over time “participatory development” was reinvested with neoliberal meanings to reinforce demands of self-reliance and to transfer responsibility onto marginalized people and communities (Cornwall and Brock 2005). The neoliberalized version of participation was incorporated into the development mainstream, but real power remained in the hands of the same elites and experts who have always controlled the development apparatus (Mohan and Stokke 2000).

As in the broader development arena, it is unclear whether diaspora policies create genuine openings for migrants to exercise agency, or if calls for participation instead reinforce the power of elites and the state. Prominent critics of diaspora policies apply a Foucauldian governmentality lens to show how migrants are drawn into neoliberal subject positions to be governed at a distance and expected to act in particular ways, including securing their own futures and remitting in support of family and communities of origin (Larner 2007; Kunz 2011; Boyle and Ho 2017). “The diaspora” (Kunz 2012) and “the migrant” (M.P. Smith and Bakker 2008) are created as population categories which can then be managed and optimized. The enlistment of diaspora as development actors and benefactors, in concert with broader patterns of neoliberal governance, re-casts the responsibility for development and public goods away from the state and onto migrants, even as basic structural constraints remain unaddressed (Cuernavaca

Declaration 2005; Pellerin and Mullings 2013). Rather than a radical opening, participatory programs can become a component of neoliberal state withdrawal.

Still, an ethnographic approach reveals how even faux-participation models can create real openings for marginalized people to exercise agency (e.g. Mosse 2005; Li 2007). Specific to diaspora policy, past work has documented that migrants do not passively receive Mexico's neoliberal plans, but instead insist that migrants' contributions should not displace the state's basic responsibility for development nor absolve it of providing public goods and maintaining a social safety net (Goldring 2002; Bakker 2007; M.P. Smith and Bakker 2008; Bada 2014).

2.2.4 Interpretive Engagement and Mediated Empowerment

The 3x1 Program provides a compelling window through which to consider participation and diaspora policies. As noted above, the program's origins were somewhat grassroots, with both migrants and the state playing significant roles in the model's organic emergence. The key question of this chapter is whether institutionalization of the program solidified and expanded openings for migrants to exercise agency, or whether it calcified the model and decreased true participation.

Studies of the 3x1 Program's origins have emphasized that migrant participation and government outreach cannot be separated. Iskander (2010) uses the term *interpretive engagement* to emphasize the importance of an unscripted, iterative process that through trial and error, relationship building, and exchange of ideas and understandings led to a mutual strengthening between the state and migrant organizations. She argues that engagement with the state government was key in the solidification of Zacatecan migrant organizations into powerful actors, carefully tracing the ways politicians and migrants engaged in mutually beneficial dialogues and projects.

I find interpretive engagement to be a useful shorthand for the iterative and evolutionary processes that have shaped state-migrant relations in Zacatecas. However, while interpretive engagement aptly describes the interactions between pioneering migrant organizations and government officials, I find that this process-centered term does not adequately capture the results of the process. I propose the term *mediated empowerment* to describe the concrete results of engagement between the state and migrant organizations, as the migrants build, maintain, and use agency *and* simultaneously have their actions and organizational forms conditioned and influenced by the state.

The literature on the 3x1 Program's pre-history and formalization in Zacatecas show clear evidence of mediated empowerment through the solidification of migrant organizations and the concomitant emergence of the collective remittance matching model. My project in this chapter is to analyze how the pattern of mediated empowerment has fared in the fifteen years since the 3x1 Program was institutionalized at the national scale. In particular, I ask whether this diaspora policy, once formalized, continued to facilitate migrants' genuine participation in hometown development?

2.3 Data and Methods

This chapter is based on qualitative research including interviews and participant observation, consisting of two main data collection components. All interviews and fieldwork were conducted in Spanish; quotes are my own translation. Transcripts and fieldnotes were analyzed through focused coding using NVivo software.

For the first component, I conducted nine months of fieldwork in Zacatecas from 2010 to 2011, including 20 semi-structured interviews and visits to 22 completed or ongoing 3x1 Program projects, and participant observation in workshops and meetings of migrant leaders. I

attended Zacatecan migrant organizations' events and conducted follow-up interviews periodically between 2014 and 2016, including in Chicago, Los Angeles, Mexico City, and Zacatecas.

The second research component was two-plus years of participant observation with the Denver Federation of Zacatecan Clubs, from 2016 to 2019. During this time, I recorded detailed fieldnotes from more than 50 events, including regular monthly meetings, individual meetings and interviews with group leaders, recruitment meetings for new members and clubs, periodic large events such as fundraiser picnics and the group's annual banquet, and meetings between Federation leaders and government officials. I also made two multi-day trips accompanying Federation leaders to events in Zacatecas and California. This research component was funded by a Community Based Research (CBR) fellowship and I sought to incorporate CBR elements into the project (e.g. Torres and Carte 2013; Escala Rabadán and Rivera-Salgado 2016). Some topics included here were pursued at the suggestion of the Federation's leaders, such as examining the impacts of the new online management system for the 3x1 Program. During the latter half of this engagement, I also became a member of the Denver Zacatecan Federation's board of directors.

The selection of Zacatecas as a key research site was based on its preeminent position as *the* hallmark example of the 3x1 Program and collective remittances as a development model. As noted in Chapter 1, Zacatecas has roughly three times as much 3x1 activity as the next-leading state, based on total expenditures from institutionalization in 2002 through the most recent data from 2017, standardized on a per capita basis by the home state population. The state also ranks at the top of the Mexican Population Bureau's (CONAPO) index of international migration intensity, most recently calculated from the 2010 census, which incorporates various measures of

migration including the percent of households receiving remittances – a figure on which Zacatecas also leads the nation at 11%.

The selection of Denver as a study site was driven largely by logistical concerns, as the kind of in-depth, long-term community based research envisioned was only possible close to home. However, the Denver Federation of Zacatecan Clubs and the Denver region are ideal research topics in a variety of ways. Denver itself presents an interesting backdrop, as the focal point of a region that has reemerged as a destination for Mexican migration. The city's Hispanic population has roughly doubled from 1970 to 2010 (now 30%), while the foreign-born population quadrupled to 16% (Census QuickFacts). The growing Mexican-origin and Mexican-American populations in Denver create fertile ground for migrant organizing, yet differ substantially from the traditional gateway destinations. In Denver, the Zacatecan Federation is the only group of its type and most other Mexican-origin populations are not represented by any formal organizations. The Denver Zacatecan Federation has existed for around twenty years, but has waxed and waned over that time, and has operated relatively independently compared to Zacatecan Federations in places like Los Angeles, Dallas-Ft. Worth, and Chicago that regularly interact with dense local networks of migrant organizations.

This chapter, then, focuses on a traditional, pioneering origin context in Zacatecas, paired with a variety of destination contexts in the US. My research included significant interactions with the leading Zacatecan organizations in traditional destination gateways like Los Angeles and Chicago, but also draws substantially from my in-depth engagement with the Zacatecan Federation in Denver, a non-traditional, though reemerging destination context.

2.4 Institutionalization Effects in Zacatecas

The 3x1 Program's roots have been traced from informal practices through smaller precursor programs and finally to institutionalization as a federal program in 2002. On one hand, institutionalization opened a new chapter for the model, as it was rapidly expanded into new contexts around Mexico and spurred formation of many new migrant groups (Duquette-Rury and Bada 2013). On the other hand, institutionalization forced an effective stasis in the model itself. Whereas practices had evolved and changed during the pre-3x1 informal era, the federal operating rules for the program have changed little in their fifteen years of existence. In a sense, the 3x1 Program created a snapshot in time that froze and packaged policy that previously had been fluid.

By and large, pioneering migrant leaders were (and remain) supportive of the institutionalization of the 3x1 Program, seeing it as a major accomplishment (Fieldnotes 11 September 2016). With institutionalization of the 3x1 Program, a consistent federal allocation replaced the prior challenges of ad hoc funding mechanisms. Institutionalization also created formal rules to govern the processes of project submission, approval, and funding, replacing a case-by-case approach that migrants complained was opaque and open to favoritism and clientelist manipulation (Goldring 2002; Iskander 2015). In addition, institutionalization brought added recognition to the pioneering migrant organizations, who have been widely lauded by politicians, in the media, and in academic research (M.P. Smith and Bakker 2008). For all these reasons, the pioneering migrant organizations whose collective remittance activities predate the formal 3x1 Program welcomed the institutionalization of the model.

However, institutionalization of the 3x1 Program has also impacted migrant-state interactions in unintended and unforeseen ways. This paper focuses specifically on the state of Zacatecas, which both historically and currently is the most central example of the model.

Zacatecas' per capita spending on 3x1 is nearly three times higher than any other state, and half of the twenty highest-spending municipalities within 3x1 are in Zacatecas.⁸ Studies of migrant organizing and collective remittances in Zacatecas analyzed the transition from informal to formal, but less has been written about the effects of institutionalization after the initial formalization period. The existing literature captures the formalization process but does not reveal how the model has changed and mutated since. Now that the federal 3x1 Program has been in place for fifteen years, I examine the current state of affairs in Zacatecas and with Zacatecan migrant organizations. I begin by examining how the program's federal bureaucracy influences and occupies migrant organizations, but also show in later sections how the Zacatecans have continued to incorporate new practices and further their pattern of mediated empowerment despite the static federal version of the model.

2.5 Bureaucracy Effects

The federal institutionalization of the 3x1 Program locked in funding and clarified operational guidelines, but also created new challenges and requirements for migrant organizations. Participation requires substantial investments of time, effort, and money on the part of hometown associations, not just to fundraise and manage their actual community development projects but also to meet the program's rules and requirements. Furthermore, the program's federal managers have introduced operational changes which, though intended as process improvements, create substantial new barriers for participants. In my work with the Denver Zacatecan Federation, I saw that much of the group's effort was absorbed in meeting

⁸ My calculations from 3x1 Program administrative data for 2002 through 2017.

bureaucratic requirements and learning to navigate management systems. For them, “capacity building” was largely limited to keeping up with the 3x1 Program bureaucracy.

The examples in this section highlight how bureaucratization of the program has diluted and complicated migrant participation even as migrants and their organizations are more deeply inscribed as subjects of governmentality. The insistence on bureaucratic control and accounting within the 3x1 Program is justified as a good governance initiative, the need to protect and ensure proper use of public funds. However, irrespective of whether good governance goals are met, bureaucratization effectively shifts power back to the state and away from migrant organizations, and in the process re-positions migrants within the orbit of origin-state bureaucratic systems. The migrant organizations have always been intertwined with the state, but increasing bureaucratic hurdles absorb their time and energy and shape the contours of their decision making. The organizations become beholden to their government partners and tailor their activities to meet government requirements and expectations.

2.5.1 Going Digital

In this section, I examine in detail a recent change that exemplifies how the government bureaucracy that has built up around collective remittances complicates and influences the activities of migrant organizations. As is often the case, the change in question – implementation of a new online project management system – was intended to solve problems and simplify operations, but it also created new problems and deepened the (unequal) relationship between migrants and the state.

The 3x1 Program has always required completion of numerous forms and fulfilment of a suite of bureaucratic requirements, including the basic constraint that only HTAs registered with the Mexican government may participate. Over the last few years, efforts have been made to

streamline the process by reducing the use of paper forms and standardizing operations and record keeping. As the centerpiece of this effort, Social Development (Sedesol), the federal agency in charge of the program, used a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (ME-L1115) to develop an online project management system for the 3x1 Program.

In training events to update participants on program changes, Sedesol staff described the new system as “innovative” and explained that it “completely automates the Program’s transactions and processes, which makes its management more efficient and strengthens transparency” (Fieldnotes 11 February 2016; 19 February 2016). In the training presentations and in a subsequent interview with the 3x1 Program director in Mexico City (Interview 1 April 2016), Sedesol staff listed numerous problems that the new system will solve. It standardizes HTA registration, which previously depended on a patchwork of consular offices and migrant federations, creating problems of unreliable or missing documentation (for an example of this problem, see Chapter 4, footnote 14). It also creates uniform documentation of proposals and projects, facilitating more robust analysis of the program. It allows HTAs and government agencies to track each project through proposal, approval, implementation, and finalization. The officials who manage the program from Sedesol’s central offices in Mexico City clearly consider the new system to be a major improvement. For this group of young, educated professionals – and for their IADB funders – the online management system represents precisely the type of modernization and good governance that is needed.

In contrast, the migrant leaders I interviewed and worked with see the online management system much differently. For them, it creates a new series of obstacles to participation in the 3x1 Program, forcing them to find workarounds or rely on technical support from government officials. The new system is presented as a simple process improvement, but

for migrant organizations that struggle with its practical and technical requirements, it has had a disempowering effect.

Merely accessing and navigating the system is a substantial and recurring obstacle for many migrant organizations. HTA leaders often do not have easy access to computers and many also lack general computer literacy. Instead, they primarily use the internet on their smartphones – but the 3x1 Program’s online system is not mobile device friendly. Over the two-plus years that I worked with the Denver Federation of Zacatecan Clubs, I was regularly asked to complete tasks within the system on behalf of HTA leaders who did not have access to or familiarity with computers. For example, to help a new hometown association register via the system, the Federation’s president and I met the group’s leaders at a restaurant one evening after work (Fieldnotes 3 November 2017). I brought my laptop and while the Federation president answered questions and talked with the group, I went from person to person entering their information into the system’s HTA registration portal. All told, the registration process took about two hours – even for a computer literate person like myself – and could only be completed with access to a computer and internet connection. The system has also proven to be unstable, with frequent interruptions and downtime that further frustrate its users. These practical realities complicate Sedesol’s presentation of the system as an innovative process improvement – while in some respects that is a fair characterization, the system has also been a substantial obstacle for many participants.

The new online management system was not only an irritant for migrant organizations, but also deepened their reliance on government officials. In the case of the Denver Federation, the local Mexican Consulate branch became their de facto tech support. An example from my fieldwork epitomizes the situation (Fieldnotes 31 January 2018). While attempting to renew the Federation’s registration, we encountered a system error. After failing to solve the issue on our

own, I went with the Federation's president to the consulate branch for help. The community affairs liaison worked with us to troubleshoot the problem, but before long we had to call an official from Sedesol for further assistance, who finally had to log in as a system administrator and manually fix the issue we had encountered. As we were leaving the consulate, frustrated with the system but with our immediate issue resolved, the Federation president and the consular liaison reflected that even with the help of an academic researcher and a government professional, we had not been able to navigate the system on our own. They agreed that most HTAs do not have as much help and likely struggle even more. This is the common story of bureaucracy – new processes and procedures are introduced in the name of good governance, in practice the new requirements are burdensome or unforeseen problems arise, and through it all participants are more securely inscribed as subjects of the state (in this case, the state of origin, despite residing abroad).

2.5.2 Not Password Protected

A further example rounds out the case and reveals an even more problematic consequence of the mismatch between the bureaucratic requirements of the new online system and migrant organizations' capacity to meet them. For each 3x1 project, the migrant organization is expected to submit the official proposal within the online management system, including completing forms and uploading technical documents that are typically prepared by engineers and planners working for the municipal government that will receive the project. In practice, however, these tasks are burdensome at best or impossible at worst for HTA leaders to complete. Instead, I found that many HTA leaders choose to give municipal officials their login information and passwords for the 3x1 Program online system. This allows the municipal staff to log in on behalf of the HTA (as if they were the HTA) and directly complete the cumbersome

project solicitation process. Leaders of even the highest-capacity migrant organizations engaged in this workaround and described it as a practical necessity (Phone interview 1 November 2017; Fieldnotes 11 November 2017).

The disconnect between the technical-bureaucratic capacity of HTAs and the expectations made of them effectively compromises their agency. Rather than miss out on matching funds from the 3x1 Program, migrant leaders who are unable to navigate the requirements of the online system choose to hand over their passwords. Even if most municipal officials use the passwords in good faith to complete migrants' projects, sharing passwords compromises the integrity of the HTAs' accounts in the online management system and opens the door for unscrupulous actors to abuse the migrants' trust. I interviewed club leaders with complaints ranging from municipal officials altering the scope of a project without informing the club to cases of projects being submitted in a club's name (using their system login) without their knowledge (Fieldnotes 24 September 2017; 11 November 2017; 10 March 2018). Prior to the online management system, similar complaints centered on forged paperwork or photocopied signatures (Phone interview 1 November 2017; see also Bada 2014), but the common practice of sharing clubs' passwords for the new system seems to have exacerbated the problem rather than solving it.

Institutionalization of collective remittance practices into the 3x1 Program has yielded a steady stream of bureaucratic requirements that respond to administrative logics but also burden, influence, and entangle migrant organizations. To briefly cite other recent examples, in 2018 program managers abruptly changed the online system to require each club member to register their CURP (*clave única de registro de población*), roughly equivalent to a US social security number. The intent was to confirm participants' identities and avoid abuse of the program, but many migrants lack proper documentation to verify their CURP (Fieldnotes 31 January 2018).

Also in 2018, the federal government announced a new requirement that migrant organizations' deposits for projects be accompanied by a CFDI (*comprobante fiscal digital por internet*), a tax verification system intended for businesses. Hearing of this complicated requirement, the president of a relatively new Denver HTA lamented that, "I believe many of us might choose to withdraw from (doing 3x1 projects) because those would be very difficult requirements to meet" (Text message, 29 May 2018). Both changes will again influence migrant organizations to build particular types of capacity, centered on bureaucratic requirements, or find new workarounds.

2.5.3 HTAs Are Not NGOs⁹

Bureaucratic changes to the 3x1 Program's operating systems were intended to modernize the program, strengthen internal controls, and facilitate better tracking and management of HTAs and projects. As currently structured, however, the systems are inaccessible and burdensome for migrant organizations and instead leave them reliant on outside assistance and workarounds that compromise their autonomy. Few would argue that going back to paper forms is the best solution, and technical fixes could be found for some of the problems described here – such as making the system mobile device friendly or shifting the responsibility to municipal officials to upload technical documents. However, my purpose is not to propose process improvements, but to make the more fundamental point that participating in the 3x1 Program requires migrant organizations to build particular types of bureaucratic-institutional capacity and to rely on (and cede control to) intermediaries when they lack that capacity.

Underlying each of these examples is a persistent mismatch between the expectations made of migrant organizations and their practical capabilities. Officials treat migrant

⁹ Thanks to Xóchitl Bada for comments on a previous version of the paper that inspired this reframing.

organizations as if they were professional nonprofits or non-governmental organizations (NGOs), but in reality HTAs are grassroots entities that depend entirely on the volunteered time and efforts of migrants. Below I highlight how Zacatecan migrants have banded together to maximize their influence, but this scalar politics notwithstanding, even the strongest and largest of these organizations are not professional nonprofits in a traditional sense.

Analyses of the 3x1 Program regularly point to HTAs' limited capacity as a major impediment rather than questioning the demands made of them or the lack of accommodations and support (e.g. Orozco and Lapointe 2004; Sedesol 2014). On some level, limited institutional capacity is an important and fair criticism – HTAs struggle to achieve their desired ends, rely on volunteered time during evenings and weekends, and often lack clear plans for their activities – yet most talk of bolstering the capacity of HTAs centers on their ability to fulfil bureaucratic requirements. These critiques reproduce the Mexican government's implicit view, demonstrated through the program's rules and requirements, that HTAs should become more like NGOs. True capacity building would foster development of migrant organizations into multi-faceted organizations, instead of “simply transforming migrant-led associations into organizations that can merely manage government and foundation projects and funds” (Escala Rabadán et al. 2011 p.67). Escala Rabadán, Rivera-Salgado, and Rodriguez (2011) provide a template for what meaningful intervention might look like, documenting a series of workshops they held with Los Angeles migrant leaders focused on building leadership, communication, and organizational strength in their HTAs.

2.5.4 The Bureaucracy Trap

The time, attention, and resources spent navigating the program bureaucracy also has important opportunity costs for the organizations, decreasing their ability to achieve other goals

or build other types of institutional capacities. Returning to the example of the Denver Federation of Zacatecan Clubs, the 3x1 Program and its precursors have always been their central focus, and the resources absorbed by keeping up with it have displaced other group goals. Completing procedural and administrative activities for 3x1 projects occupies most of the evening and weekend time the group's volunteer leaders are able to devote to the organization. This resource drain creates a feedback loop that reinforces the centrality of 3x1, as other possible activities are continually delayed or neglected to keep up with 3x1. The group has no substantial initiatives focusing on its members' lives in the US,¹⁰ and despite existing as a US-based community-philanthropic organization for two decades, the Federation has not managed to register for official non-profit status.

Non-profit registration in the US has been a longstanding goal of the group and would bring substantial benefits, such as allowing them to solicit corporate donations and making contributions tax deductible (Fieldnotes 1 July 2014). Registering as a non-profit would open new possibilities for the group without sacrificing their core focus on community projects via the 3x1 Program – indeed, it would likely strengthen that work by attracting new and larger funding streams. Instead, the continual short-term demands of the 3x1 Program bureaucracy have absorbed the group's entire energies and thus foreclosed other possible activities. Their interactions with the Mexican state and with its bureaucratic systems continue to structure the evolution of migrant organizations – not only shaping their activity within the 3x1 Program, but also influencing the internal structure and focus of the organizations.

¹⁰ This nearly complete focus on 3x1 is typical of Zacatecan HTAs and Federations. A few of the largest and strongest federations stand as exceptions, including the FCZSC in Los Angeles and FCUZI in Chicago, which have robust portfolios of US-centered activities (e.g. Fieldnotes 20 April 2015).

Participation in the program requires migrants to behave in certain ways and become proficient in bureaucratic systems, re-inscribing them as subjects at a distance. Iskander (2015) points to similar examples from Zacatecas to argue that the government functionally co-produces the migrant organizations themselves, not just co-producing their participatory development projects. Recognition by and interactions with the state strengthen migrant organizations, but at the same time influence and condition the organizations' evolution. Institutionalization of the 3x1 Program and its increasingly bureaucratic management have continued this pattern, as migrant organizations must "build capacity" in specific ways to meet the program's requirements. The hometown projects achieved through 3x1 have always been the central focus of HTAs and their reason for existence, and the administrative burden the program places on HTAs creates a feedback effect by crowding out other potential activities. The institutionalized 3x1 Program solidifies migrant organizations in their role as community benefactors but also complicates their potential evolution in other directions.

2.6 Mediated Empowerment

The previous section showed how increasing bureaucratization of the 3x1 Program over fifteen years has created substantial hurdles and costs for migrants, impacting their day-to-day activities and even shaping the character of their organizations. While those examples might suggest that bureaucratization is strangling the migrant agency that made the program noteworthy, in this section I present new evidence that the collective remittance model continues to foster mediated empowerment of migrant organizations, at least in Zacatecas. I focus particularly on interactions between migrant organizations and the Zacatecan state government, arguing that an ongoing pattern of interpretive engagement has allowed this unique state-migrant system to continue evolving and developing in new directions despite the rigidity introduced by

federal institutionalization of the 3x1 Program. The following sub-sections present a collection of examples to support these arguments.

2.6.1 Federations and Supplemental Rules

As described previously, the quintessential Mexican migrant organization is the hometown association (HTA), a semi-formal grouping of migrants from a common community of origin. These translocal organizations, narrowly focused on a particular town or municipality of origin, are the primary sponsors of 3x1 projects. In Zacatecas, since before the formalization of the 3x1 Program individual HTAs have been eclipsed in importance by federations, which are umbrella organizations that unite multiple HTAs. Federations of HTAs are not unique to Zacatecas, but the pattern is most developed and widespread there.¹¹ Federations are typically organized by state of origin in Mexico and by area of residence in the US – for example, the most famous is the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California (FCZSC, for its initials in Spanish), which has existed in various forms for more than forty years and represents dozens of member clubs, totaling thousands of individual migrants. As of 2017, there are nineteen Zacatecan federations, located in California (9), Texas (6), Illinois (2), Colorado (1), and Georgia (1), encompassing a total of 214 HTAs (Fieldnotes 11 November 2017).

Hometown associations joining together into federations is an effective form of scale politics (N. Smith 1993; MacKinnon 2011). Individual HTAs are linked to specific municipalities, which naturally situates the municipal government as the point of connection and

¹¹ I compiled an unofficial list of federations from the 3x1 Program's online management system as of April 2018. There was a total of 115 registered federations, including from Zacatecas - 19 (17%), Michoacan - 12, Jalisco - 10, Guerrero - 10, Guanajuato - 8, Hidalgo - 8, Puebla - 6, Durango - 5, and Yucatan - 5. In total, 23 states and the Federal District had at least one registered federation, though it is likely that some appearing in the system are inactive.

thus a powerful gatekeeper (Aparicio and Meseguer 2012). By uniting into federations of clubs, migrant organizations have re-created themselves as actors at the state and federal scales, enhancing their standing to interface directly with the higher levels of government and in the process shifting the power dynamic with their municipal counterparts (Goldring 2002; González Hernández and González Hernández 2011; Moctezuma 2011; Bada 2014; Minian 2017).¹²

However, the role of federations in enhancing the functional agency of Zacatecan migrant organizations is not solely a result migrants' scalar politics, but also flows from the state government's recognition of and interactions with the federations. The Zacatecan state government treats the federations as representatives of the Zacatecan migrant community living in the US, contributing to their perceived standing and legitimacy. For example, recent Zacatecan governors have regularly travelled to the US to participate in federations' banquets, and at the annual state "Migrant Day" celebration the federation presidents are prominently seated on the stage together with the governor and other dignitaries (Fieldnotes 9 September 2016).

With regard to the 3x1 Program, the state government has since the program's origins abided by a handshake agreement with the federations that only federation-affiliated HTAs can participate in 3x1 in Zacatecas (Goldring 2002; R.C. Smith 2003; Iskander 2015). Despite increasing formalization of federal program rules, this Zacatecas-only supplemental practice has remained in effect (Fieldnotes 4 May 2018). Because the 3x1 Program is the central focus of most HTAs, the affiliation requirement effectively compels Zacatecan clubs to join federations. In acquiescing to this demand and enforcing the unwritten rule, the state government further reinforces the importance of federations. This unique arrangement has been the subject of much

¹² Iskander (2010, p.24) describes a nearly inverse scalar politics in an earlier era, as migrants in both Mexico and Morocco shifted down to local (municipal and state) engagements when early interactions with the national governments were not fruitful. Only after achieving local successes were they able to scale back up to engage with the national governments.

debate, including criticisms that it reproduces clientelist models and situates federation leaders as new gatekeepers (Goldring 2002; Fox 2007; González Hernández and González Hernández 2011; Villela 2014) – not to mention forcing clubs to pay federation dues (Iskander 2015), but also that federation membership can be beneficial by allowing HTAs to learn from each other and build strength in numbers (Moctezuma 2011). Regardless of one's view of this debate, the informal federation requirement is a remarkable example of the state government effectively underwriting the centrality and viability of federations within the transnational Zacatecan arena.

The unique strength and relevance of Zacatecan federations is also reinforced through the regular coordination between federations. The Zacatecan federations from different parts of the US have long communicated and cooperated, allowing them to identify common problems or goals and to remain united in their relations with the state and federal governments (Fieldnotes 9 September 2016). Since 2016, the Zacatecan federations have formalized their relations by creating an umbrella Council of Zacatecan Federations (Cofezac, for its initials in Spanish). Representatives of the various federations meet in person once or more per year under the auspices of Cofezac, but perhaps more importantly engage in nearly constant communication via a group messaging thread on WhatsApp. When a consensus or agreement can be reached, the resultant suggestions and requests coming from Cofezac carry the weight of a unified front of 19 federations representing hundreds of HTAs. In a later example, I show how this clout was put to use in the selection of the state's Secretary of Migrant Affairs. Like the formation of federations from HTAs, the formation of a council of federations is a form of scalar politics that has enhanced Zacatecan migrant organizations' standing. The leaders of Cofezac, in their role as representatives of Zacatecan migrant organizations broadly, maintain regular communication and advocate directly with state and federal officials.

In Zacatecas, the organization of migrant clubs into federations and confederations, together with the government's recognition of these organizations, have clearly contributed to the empowerment of migrant leaders as viable actors able to advance their agendas for community development.¹³ Their agency has limits – it is conditioned by their interdependent relationship with the state government (and to a lesser extent federal and municipal governments) and is contingent upon migrants playing the role of benefactor – but is indeed real. In short, it is an example of mediated empowerment.

2.6.2 Interest rebates

Another example shows how Zacatecan migrant organizations leveraged their relationships with the state government to resolve a longstanding complaint and in the process bolster their own solvency. Migrant organizations from Zacatecas and other states have long complained that they are given strict deadlines by which to deposit their contributions for 3x1 projects, only to subsequently wait because the government partners do not contribute their share of funds on time. The HTA's funds might languish in an account for months while the project is delayed. For example, the hometown representative for a Zacatecan club in Chicago voiced a typical complaint:

There are almost always delays...the (government) funds don't arrive on time. Often projects are just getting started in December, when they were supposed to be completed in December. ...That is the reason for project delays, because the (government) funds don't arrive on time, in general. And always, always, always there is some delay.
(Interview 10 February 2011)

¹³ Iskander (2015) contrasts the organization and strength of Zacatecan federations against the situation in Guanajuato, another pioneering state in the collective remittance model, where federations have not formed and migrants have remained minor players.

Yielding to pressure from migrant organizations, the state government in Zacatecas has adopted the practice of making interest payments in recognition that HTAs' contributions often sit waiting while government deposits are delayed. Through an informal agreement, the state government pays each federation a rebate equivalent to 1.3% of its 3x1 Program contributions. In 2016, rebates averaged MX\$61,500 or about US\$3,000 (Fieldnotes 4 May 2018). The interest refunds are paid to the federations rather than to individual HTAs and each federation has discretion over how to use the funds. For the Denver Federation, the interest refunds allow its leaders to travel to meetings and events without needing to charge annual dues from their member HTAs. This financial support is particularly important for the Denver group, which in contrast to the central role successful businesspeople play in many federations, has a mostly working-class leadership (Fieldnotes 7 September 2016; cf. M.P. Smith and Bakker 2008). Attending these events helps the Denver Federation and its president maintain their connections and status among Zacatecan migrant federations and with government officials.

Here again, the support of the state government – won by migrant leaders through negotiation – strengthens migrant organizations in ways that help make the organizations viable partners for the state, creating a feedback loop. Migrant leaders successfully lobbied for the state government to pay interest on the deposits that HTAs contribute to 3x1 projects, in recognition of pervasive delays. This rebate has become an important funding source for federations, which simultaneously reinforces their interdependence with the state and contributes to their financial stability in ways that support the federations' ability to exercise agency. In 2017, the Zacatecan federations agreed to contribute 15% of their rebates to Cofezac, giving the Council its own small budget and thus reinforcing its viability also.

2.6.3 Migrant Secretary

The previous examples focused on the ways Zacatecan migrant organizations have built power through their interactions with the state government, often in ways that also deepen their interdependence with the state. Zacatecas-specific practices like the federation affiliation requirement and interest rebates rely on informal agreements, but other practices have been formalized and institutionalized. Formal changes include state legislation to allow Zacatecans abroad to vote for governor, run for state and local office, and the establishment of an official state Migrant Affairs agency (Sezami, for its initials in Spanish) headed by a cabinet-level Secretary of Migrant Affairs. These changes were the result of requests and pressure from migrant leaders and provide concrete evidence of the political capital they have built (Fieldnotes 11 September 2016).

The establishment of Sezami was an important step for the Zacatecan government that has created openings for migrants to build and exercise agency, but it was not guaranteed to have that outcome. Initially, the elevation of Migrant Affairs to a cabinet-level agency was not accompanied by a substantial budget allocation nor were migrant organizations centrally involved in the process. The first Secretary of Migrant Affairs, Rigoberto Castañeda Espinosa, was himself a migrant with deep ties to the California Zacatecan community, but then-governor Miguel Alonso Reyes (2010-2016) picked Castañeda for the post without substantive input from the migrant community (Fieldnotes 11 September 2016; 4 May 2018).

With the next electoral cycle, Cofezac and the various Zacatecan federations endeavored to shift the dynamic of Sezami and deepen its migrant-centeredness. Before Alejandro Tello Cristerna (2016-2021) was inaugurated as governor, the federation leaders agreed amongst themselves to make a unified appeal for their own chosen candidate to be named as the new Secretary of Migrant Affairs. Potential nominees were put forward and the federation presidents

voted to determine their choice. They agreed to nominate José Juan Estrada Hernández, a young migrant leader who was just finishing a term as president of the Chicago federation. Governor Tello assented to their request and named Estrada as the new Secretary (Fieldnotes 7-11 September 2016).

The successful nomination of one of their own leaders to the post of Secretary of Migrant Affairs is a clear demonstration of the political capital Zacatecan migrant organizations have built through decades of engagement with the state government. It shows that they feel a sense of ownership and continue to take initiative, not only in the 3x1 Program, but in their broader dealings with the state. The state government's acquiescence in the choice of Secretary reveals a participatory relationship in which the state takes seriously the input of migrant organizations and respects their agency in migration-related affairs.

2.6.4 New Practices – Corazón de Plata

The previous examples of mediated empowerment centered on migrant-driven modifications and evolutions in diaspora policy, but the trend also includes wholly new practices that have emerged in Zacatecas in recent years. The most notable example is the state government's *Corazón de Plata* program, which shows that the institutionalization of the 3x1 Program did not halt experimentation or innovation among Zacatecan migrants and state officials. It furthermore demonstrates how migrants have used their accumulated power and connections to bring more diverse practices within the purview of their engagement with the state government, reflecting a transnational vision of "development" that goes beyond brick and mortar projects – and beyond the federal 3x1 Program.

Corazón de Plata is a collaborative project between migrant organizations and the Zacatecan state that helps senior citizens travel to the US to visit their migrant children – the

name “Silver Heart” is a play on words referring to the participants’ age.¹⁴ The main beneficiaries are families with undocumented migrant members who in the era of heightened border security are unable to travel back and forth to Mexico. In many cases, the families reunited through Corazón de Plata had not seen each other for many years, even decades, and often grandparents and grandchildren meet in person for the first time. The multiple Corazón de Plata reunions I observed with the Denver Federation have been easily the most impactful moments of my research, witnessing as the bus arrives and the crowd of assembled families erupt in shouts and tears of joy (Fieldnotes 10 February 2017; 18 June 2017).

The program was the brainchild of the Federation of United Zacatecan Clubs in Illinois (FCUZI, for its initials in Spanish) and a Zacatecan government liaison in Chicago (Fieldnotes 20 April 2015; Cappalletti 2018). Through the program, the state government and migrant federations work together to organize groups of elderly parents of migrants and help them apply for US visitor visas, including providing invitations and support letters and transporting them as a group to the US consulate branch in Monterrey for interviews. According to official statistics, from its origins in 2012 through the end of 2018 the Corazón de Plata program has helped 3,221 senior citizens successfully obtain US tourist visas. The US government is not officially party to the program, but Zacatecan officials reported that Corazón de Plata visa applications are more likely to be approved than if these individuals were to apply independently (Fieldnotes 22 July 2017).¹⁵ Some participating families told me that their parents, who received visas through

¹⁴ See Bada 2014, p.157 regarding a similar “*abuelita*” (grandmother) visa program sponsored by a U.S. Congressman to reunite families in his district.

¹⁵ The Secretary of Migrant Affairs stated that the visa approval rate through Corazón de Plata was 85% (Fieldnotes 22 July 2017), though summary data included in the 2019 operating rules for the program showed the approval rate to be 85% only in 2017, the highest approval rate on record, while on aggregate between 2012 and 2018 (the program’s full history) the rate was 67%. These numbers must be contextualized against non-program visa approval rates. Officially, the approval rate for temporary visa applications by Mexican nationals is 78%, but this number includes all tourist and business visa

Corazón de Plata, had been rejected multiple times in previous independent applications for a US visitor visa (Fieldnotes 22 May 2016).

Corazón de Plata has been extremely popular among members of migrant organizations and the broader migrant community, and it has reinforced the standing of and showcased the partnership between the migrant organizations and the Zacatecan state. Other Mexican states have begun to replicate the model, while media coverage of the program has attracted new members to Zacatecan HTAs and spurred formation of new clubs (Fieldnotes 12 November 2016; 26 June 2017; 3 November 2017).

Corazón de Plata exemplifies the kind of innovative practices that can emerge precisely because of the strong relationships between Zacatecan migrant organizations and the state government. Though the program is not directly related to the 3x1 Program, the relationships and capacities built through 3x1 created the foundation that made Corazón de Plata possible. Migrants expended some of the political capital they had accumulated through decades of partnership on infrastructure projects to solicit a new type of partnership with more humanistic goals – reuniting migrant families. The state government in turn fortified its engagement with the migrant organizations by supporting this initiative despite its lack of a clear developmental purpose. This example shows that even as the 3x1 Program has become more bureaucratic and migrant influence over the program has been diluted, the mediated empowerment that migrant organizations achieved through 3x1 continues to yield positive results via participatory channels.

applications, obscuring any more detailed accounting that might reveal the likelihood for poor, rural applicants – the typical profile of beneficiaries – to be approved (Bureau of Consular Affairs 2018). It is safe to assume approval rates for the rural poor are substantially lower, though no firm conclusions can be drawn regarding the state government's claims that individuals are more likely to be approved when applying through the program. (2019 Operating Rules for Corazón de Plata: Suplemento 4 al No.17 del Periódico Oficial del Gobierno del Estado de Zacatecas, 27 Feb. 2019).

2.7 Conclusion

The example of the 3x1 Program in Mexico shows how the rush to enact diaspora policies has influenced state-diaspora relations and migrant organizing. Institutionalization of the previously-informal model brought bureaucratic impositions into the participatory framework. Government systems are designed as though migrant organizations were professional nonprofits, creating mismatches that forced migrants to rely more upon help from officials, thereby ceding some agency. The channeling of migrant engagement through bureaucratized diaspora policies has the potential to limit migrant influence and tokenize participation.

However, in established emigration regions like Zacatecas where longstanding migrant organizations have built substantial transnational social and political capital, the strictures of institutionalization have not halted evolution nor foreclosed opportunities for influence. Particularly in their interactions with the state government, Zacatecan migrant organizations have continued to build and exercise agency through a process of mediated empowerment. They remain interdependent with the state, as they have always been, but they nonetheless are able to influence how diaspora policies are implemented in their origin areas. Institutionalization of the 3x1 Program created a static model at the federal level and its bureaucracy substantially influences migrant-state engagements, yet experimentation and evolution continue in the transnational Zacatecan arena.

This example shows that participatory diaspora policies can help maintain migrants' connections to their origin areas and create space for migrants to exercise agency in local development. However, it also presents cautionary evidence that diaspora policies can be diluted and debased in ways that disempower migrant participants. Indeed, analysis of the 3x1 Program's expansion into non-traditional migration regions in Mexico found that migrants were sidelined and the program coopted by local elites (Malone and Durden 2018). At the risk of

stating the obvious, participatory diaspora policies only function properly with legitimate migrant participation.

Finally, the evidence presented above suggests that origin countries interested in leveraging migration for development would be well served to take a broad view of “development” and maintain a flexible approach. When governments seek to extract resources from emigrants without engaging them as participants with agency, they risk undermining the human connections that make diaspora policy viable (Ho et al. 2015b). In contrast, examples like Corazón de Plata show how broadening diaspora policies to include more humanistic goals can reinforce migrants’ homeland ties and willingness to contribute to community projects, in the process indirectly strengthening more explicitly developmental projects.

Chapter 3

Yucatán Case Study

Who Drives Diaspora Development? Replication of Mexico's 3x1 Program in Yucatán

I arrived in a small village in northern Yucatán on a hot early-summer day and parked in a dusty lot beside the town hall. As I waited for my appointment with the mayor, I sat under the porticoes overlooking the plaza and chatted with a group of elderly people gathering to make piñatas for an upcoming holiday. When the mayor arrived, he greeted everyone by name before ushering me across the plaza to a shady spot for our interview. In this sleepy setting, the mayor explained how he and previous leaders had worked with a group of migrants from the town now living in Los Angeles, California to renovate the town plaza and build a cafeteria at the elementary school. The migrants contribute funds toward these projects and work with the mayor to qualify for matching funds through the federal 3x1 Program. We visited the school, where the principal explained that the new cafeteria will allow them to run a full-day schedule for the first time – previously students only went to school for half-days because they could not offer lunch on site. The mayor expressed satisfaction with the impact these projects have made, but he also noted that they have come at a cost. Although the official 3x1 Program model calls for the US-based migrant association to contribute 25% and the municipal government 25% with the state and federal governments contributing the other half, he conceded that the migrants had not been able to raise their full share. Not many residents have moved to the US recently and the migrant club partnering on the projects is small. The municipal government took out a loan to cover the rest of the migrant share, and although the first project was completed six years earlier, they still had two years of payments left to make on the loan (Fieldnotes 27 April 2016).

Conundrums like this are common with the 3x1 Program. Institutionalization and expansion have opened participation by new actors operating in new transnational contexts, including migrants and officials from non-traditional origin areas. Many migrants or local leaders learn about the program and want to participate but cannot quite meet the program's expectations. Rather than give up, often they look for ways to bend or circumvent the rules to get projects approved and access matching funds, as in the example above. This chapter uses an in-depth case study of the state of Yucatán, a relatively new migration state in southeastern Mexico, to explore the ways the 3x1 Program has been adapted and mutated through the process of re-grounding and replication in non-traditional contexts.

3.1 Introduction

In recent decades, origin country governments have shown increased interest in migration as remittances become central to less developed nations' economies (Bakker 2015). By the mid-1990s, remittances to developing countries surpassed official development aid, and by 2015 remittances were triple the value of aid (World Bank 2015). Even in Mexico, a country with more than a century of notable and sustained migration history, remittances have garnered increased attention in recent years as volumes grow and data improves. For the first time in 2015, remittances surpassed petroleum as Mexico's leading source of foreign exchange, drawing still greater attention to their economic centrality (Esteves 2016). The value of remittances continues to grow although migration from Mexico has slowed, demonstrating the durability of this transfer pattern and quashing any doubts about its continued importance, at least in the short to medium term (Orozco 2017).

Governments increasingly attempt to leverage their diasporas as development resources by implementing policies to bolster transnational ties and encourage migrants' contributions not

only to their families but also to infrastructure and other community projects (Portes and Fernández-Kelly 2015). Mexico has formalized efforts to attract collective remittances through its *Tres Por Uno*, or 3x1 Program for Migrants. The program is a form of public-private partnership between the Mexican government and U.S.-based hometown associations (HTAs). The 3x1 Program is hailed as a policy model whose relevance is not limited to the contexts in which it emerged, but rather extends throughout Mexico and beyond. The remittance strategy is commonly cited in discussions of global diaspora or migration-linked development policy (e.g. Orozco 2013; McKenzie and Yang 2015), various foreign governments have sent study teams to see the program in action (Fieldnotes 1 April 2016), and its visibility has been boosted by involvement from international organizations, including the World Bank, USAID, and the Inter-American Development Bank (Iskander, 2010).

Expansion of the model took it from its informal origins among migrants from the traditional migrant origin regions in central Mexico, to formalization as the 3x1 Program, to expansion throughout the country. Replication in other countries with sizable numbers of migrants is possible, given the program's visibility and positioning as a diaspora development best practice, yet few studies have examined how the program functions outside its original contexts in Mexico's historic migration region. One of the overarching goals of the dissertation is to evaluate this positioning of the 3x1 Program as a policy model by examining empirical evidence from its most significant replication to date – the internal replication created by institutionalizing it as a federal program throughout Mexico. This chapter specifically examines replication in Yucatán.

Yucatán is one of the three states of the Yucatán Peninsula in southeastern Mexico. It has only recently been incorporated into the country's migratory tradition as one of the "new sending areas" of Mexican migrants to the United States. For a new emigration area, Yucatán has been

remarkably active in the migrant-driven 3x1 Program. Many new Yucatecan hometown associations have been formed and more than a hundred rural villages have benefitted from 3x1 projects. Yucatán's total expenditures within the 3x1 Program are eleventh highest of Mexico's thirty-two states.

At first blush, this rapid uptake of the migrant-led development program appears to be a success story. Upon closer examination, however, the growth – often in municipalities with very low migration intensity – raises questions about mutations of the model and outright corruption. Indeed, though Yucatán is eleventh highest in 3x1 participation, the state ranks twenty-seventh in migration intensity, near the bottom of Mexico's thirty-two states. This mismatch raises questions about the 3x1 Program's replication and implementation in Yucatán. This chapter examines 3x1 projects in Yucatán to understand how place and context influence the application of the policy model. This kind of comparative analysis of implementation across multiple contexts yields deeper insights about the policy itself, which is of particular value in this case given its status as an international model for diaspora development, as well as allowing reflection on the processes of policy mobilization and mutation.

3.1.1 Migration and Development Nexus

Scholars have long debated whether migration is more likely to spur development in origin areas and countries or perpetuate underdevelopment. Optimistic views have dominated in some eras and pessimistic views in others (Faist 2008; de Haas 2012; Gamlen 2014b). Optimism has been resurgent since the late 1990s, amid growing recognition and better accounting of the huge sums of money remitted by international migrants. Scholars and officials increasingly see migrants as transnational actors who can contribute and participate, even from a distance (Levitt 1998; Vertovec 2009). This has been accompanied by a discursive shift away from narratives of

migrants as deserters and toward discourses of migrant heroes, loyal and generous contributors to the homeland (Durand 2004). Origin country governments and international organizations have rushed to embrace migrant and diaspora populations and enact policies to facilitate and encourage remittances and investments, often converging on common ideas and policies (Délano 2014; Bakker 2015; Price 2017). A technocratic air pervades the current optimism about migration as a win-win process, with officials emphasizing policy solutions and arguing that “migration benefits everyone *as long as the policies are right*” (Gamlen 2014a, p. 198, emphasis added). This perspective acknowledges that migration has not always benefitted origin areas, but assumes that best practices exist or can be developed to produce desired outcomes. I argue that to the extent migration policy ignores context – both contexts from which policies emerge and contexts in which they are to be re-grounded – these assumptions are problematic. A policy mobilities lens can help correct this problem.

Mexico has been at the center of diaspora development and migration policy trends, particularly its famed 3x1 Program (Orozco 2013; McKenzie and Yang 2015). Mexico’s posture toward emigrants and diaspora has shifted seismically since the 1980s, and especially since the early 2000s, with several diaspora outreach programs unveiled and expatriates’ rights expanded (Délano 2011). The changes have garnered attention from governments in Latin America and beyond that look to Mexico as a model for diaspora policies (Délano 2014). It is in this context of ascendant optimism and technocratic policy convergence that I examine Mexico’s 3x1 Program, analyzing its mobilization and replication within Mexico and discussing its implications more broadly.

3.1.2 The 3x1 Program

Research on the 3x1 Program has documented improvements in infrastructure and provision of public goods in beneficiary communities (Orozco and Lapointe 2004; Duquette-Rury 2014), and diversification of public investment away from municipal seats and toward rural areas (Burgess 2005; Fox and Bada 2008). Authors have also emphasized that migrants' financial stake can enable them to check the power of traditional elites and pressure government actors for transparency and efficient use of program resources (Bakker 2007; García Zamora 2007), a point I will discuss in more detail later. Evaluations have not been entirely positive, however, as studies also have revealed patterns of partisan manipulation to direct matching funds toward party strongholds or to align project timing with election cycles (Meseguer and Aparicio 2012; Waddell 2015; Simpser et al. 2015).

The literature on the 3x1 Program includes overviews and quantitative analyses at the national scale, but qualitative and case study research has been limited to the experiences of pioneering migrant organizations and examples from states in the historic migration heartland (e.g. Fernández et al. 2006; García Zamora 2007; Iskander 2010; Bada 2014).¹⁶ The limited engagement with nontraditional contexts obscures the diversifying range of experiences within the 3x1 Program. The program has been widely adopted in the fifteen years since it was institutionalized nationwide, with more than half (54%) of all municipalities in Mexico completing at least one project and all but two states participating. The portion of the program budget absorbed by the four leading states (Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, and Zacatecas) decreased from 70% over the first five years to 40% by 2014.¹⁷ A survey of Mexican HTAs

¹⁶ Exceptions include studies in Hidalgo and Oaxaca (Fernández et al. 2006), Yucatán (Gomez Hernandez 2014), and an unidentified "central" state (Smyth 2017).

¹⁷ My calculations, based on administrative data obtained from Mexico's National Transparency Institute (INAI) at www.infomex.org.mx.

found that three-quarters had been founded since 2002, the year the 3x1 Program was established, and that many new clubs form at the invitation of municipal officials specifically to participate in the program (Duquette-Rury and Bada 2013; also see Goldring 2004). Research on the 3x1 Program needs to be expanded beyond the pioneering cases to capture more experiences.

3.1.3 Policy Mobilities Approach

My analysis of the replication of the 3x1 Program outside of its original contexts is grounded in the emerging policy mobilities theoretical framework. This framework takes a critical approach to policy, focusing on questions of power to understand how policies emerge and spread, the effects they have, and the ways people and groups interact with policy (Shore et al. 2011; McCann and Ward 2012). A key starting point is the problematization of the idea of best practices. Success and failure are not objectively determined, but instead are shaped by the ideological and methodological orientations of networks of experts with the power to designate success and failure (Prince 2012; McCann and Ward 2015). Peck and Theodore (2015) emphasize the interplay of evaluation and marketing in the technocratic positioning of policies as best practices with salience beyond their place of origin.

A second focus of policy mobilities research is the importance of place and context, both for assessing the extent to which policies reflect the contexts from which they emerge and for analyzing the re-grounding of mobilized policies in diverse contexts. Policies are assembled in places, absorbing local influences together with more diffuse elements, but mobilization is often partial, with only some parts of the model moving (McCann and Ward 2015). Again, power is central both in the mobilization of policy and in its uneven reproduction in new contexts. These insights become particularly important as policymaking is increasingly globalized and decisions reflect influences and expertise from diverse contexts.

This study also contributes a new perspective within policy mobilities research. The majority of work using this approach focuses on interurban or translocal mobilities linking cities around the world. The key players in these accounts are urban officials and the traveling policy experts, consultants, and organizations with whom they interact (Temenos and McCann 2013). The focus is urban and global, with national governments rarely factoring into these analyses (Lovell 2017). This study includes migrant and municipal policy entrepreneurs who more or less fit the typical city-centric mold, but the example also shows that the Mexican federal government has played a key mobilizing role. The federal government's early engagement helped solidify the fledgling program in the original contexts and shaped its institutionalization, which made the policy mobile and introduced it in numerous new contexts around Mexico. Other studies of policy mobilities in Latin America similarly note the importance of national governments (Délano 2014; Jajamovich 2016).

3.1.4 Methods and Data

This chapter draws on interviews and field observations in the state of Yucatán, Mexico, as well as analysis of national-scale administrative data from the 3x1 Program. I conducted two blocks of research in Yucatán in early 2016 totaling four weeks, including multi-day fieldwork trips in both southern and northern parts of the state. I also visited and talked by phone with Yucatecan migrant leaders in California. The research included semi-structured interviews with three federal or state officials, six municipal officials, and three leaders of migrant hometown associations from Yucatán, including three separate interviews totaling more than six hours with one key informant. My analysis of 3x1 Program trends in Yucatán and beyond are based on administrative data for all projects completed nationwide from 2002 to 2014, obtained from Mexico's National Transparency Institute (INAI) at www.infomex.org.mx.

3.2 Migration from Yucatán in Context

Emigration from Mexico has traditionally been dominated by individuals leaving rural communities in the historic heartland of west-central Mexico, particularly the states of Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacan, and Zacatecas and neighboring areas, and going to principal destinations that include California, Texas, and Chicago (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2003). Those patterns have diversified significantly in recent decades to include many new origins and destinations (Zuñiga and Hernandez-Leon 2005; Riosmena and Massey 2012), including more migrants from urban areas (Hernandez-Leon 2008) and more indigenous migrants (Fox and Rivera-Salgado 2004). The southeastern region of Mexico is among the most recent to make a substantial contribution to migration flows. This chapter focuses on the southeastern state of Yucatán, where emigration has been limited and recent by Mexican standards, but nonetheless has made a noticeable impact and has increased rapidly since the 1990s (Cornelius, FitzGerald, and Lewin Fischer 2007). As a new region of international migration, the scholarly attention to migration from Yucatán is limited but growing (e.g. Adler 2004; Burke 2004; Cornelius, FitzGerald, and Lewin Fischer 2007; Piacenti 2009, 2012; Solís Lizama and Fortuny 2010; Iglesias 2011). To examine how the 3x1 Program and ideas of diaspora development have been incorporated in Yucatán, it is necessary to understand the local context and history of migration. The following paragraphs describe and analyze Yucatecan migration patterns.

3.2.1 *Yucatecan Migration Landscapes*

Traversing Yucatan, one encounters an evolving landscape with a mix of colonial and modern elements, with its large rural hinterland still grounded in small-scale agriculture but increasingly influenced by both domestic and international migration and the growing tourism industry. Yucatán has a large indigenous population, with the second-highest proportion of

indigenous language speakers among Mexican states.¹⁸ In the flat northern areas, Mayan pyramids like the one in Izamal afford expansive views over miles of former henequen and sugar cane plantations now lying fallow or given over to a patchwork of small farms and cattle grazing. Farther south, a landscape of rolling hills is dotted with citrus orchards and villages are interspersed with colonial-era remnants and pre-Hispanic Mayan ruins. The landscape changes dramatically approaching the peninsula's east coast and the tourist conglomeration of Cancún, Cozumel, and the Riviera Maya in the state of Quintana Roo. Beachfront developments of every description line the coast while the city of Cancún continues to grow at an exponential pace.

Change in Yucatán state and across the peninsula has been driven by the twin forces of tourism development and agricultural collapse. Henequen, an agave variety used to make rope and twine, formed the basis of a semi-feudal hacienda economy that dominated northern Yucatán from the mid-19th century through the 1960s. The 1970s and 80s saw a precipitous decline as the industry was battered by foreign competition, changing internal dynamics, and the shift to synthetic fibers (Wells 2006). The collapse of the plantation-style henequen economy created major disruption and drove migration out of rural communities, accelerating in the post-NAFTA era of declining state support for small-scale and *ejido* agriculture (Schmook and Radel 2008; Carte et al. 2010; Iglesias 2011). The state government courted *maquiladoras* in the wake of the henequen collapse, with substantial success in attracting factories to the Mérida area (Navarrete 2008). Mérida, the capital city and historic hub of the region more than tripled in population from 1970 to 2000, with a substantial influx of rural-to-urban migrants (Cornelius, FitzGerald, and Lewin Fischer 2007).

¹⁸ Data from the Mexican Population Bureau (CONAPO), at <https://www.gob.mx/conapo/documentos/infografia-de-la-poblacion-indigena-2015>

The crises in the rural areas coincided with the beginning of concerted efforts to create a new tourism destination in the Yucatán peninsula. Government-initiated development in Cancún began in the 1970s and the expanding tourist zone became a powerful draw for both permanent and circular migrations in the region (Cornelius, FitzGerald, and Lewin Fischer 2007). Cornelius, FitzGerald, and Lewin Fischer (2007) note that migration to Cancún initially forestalled international migration but in many cases became a sort of “migration school” where rural and indigenous migrants gained experiences and skills that made the option of migration to the USA more visible and viable. Even as rural-to-urban migrations created exponential growth in Mérida and Cancún, a secondary trend emerged of international migration from Yucatán to the USA.

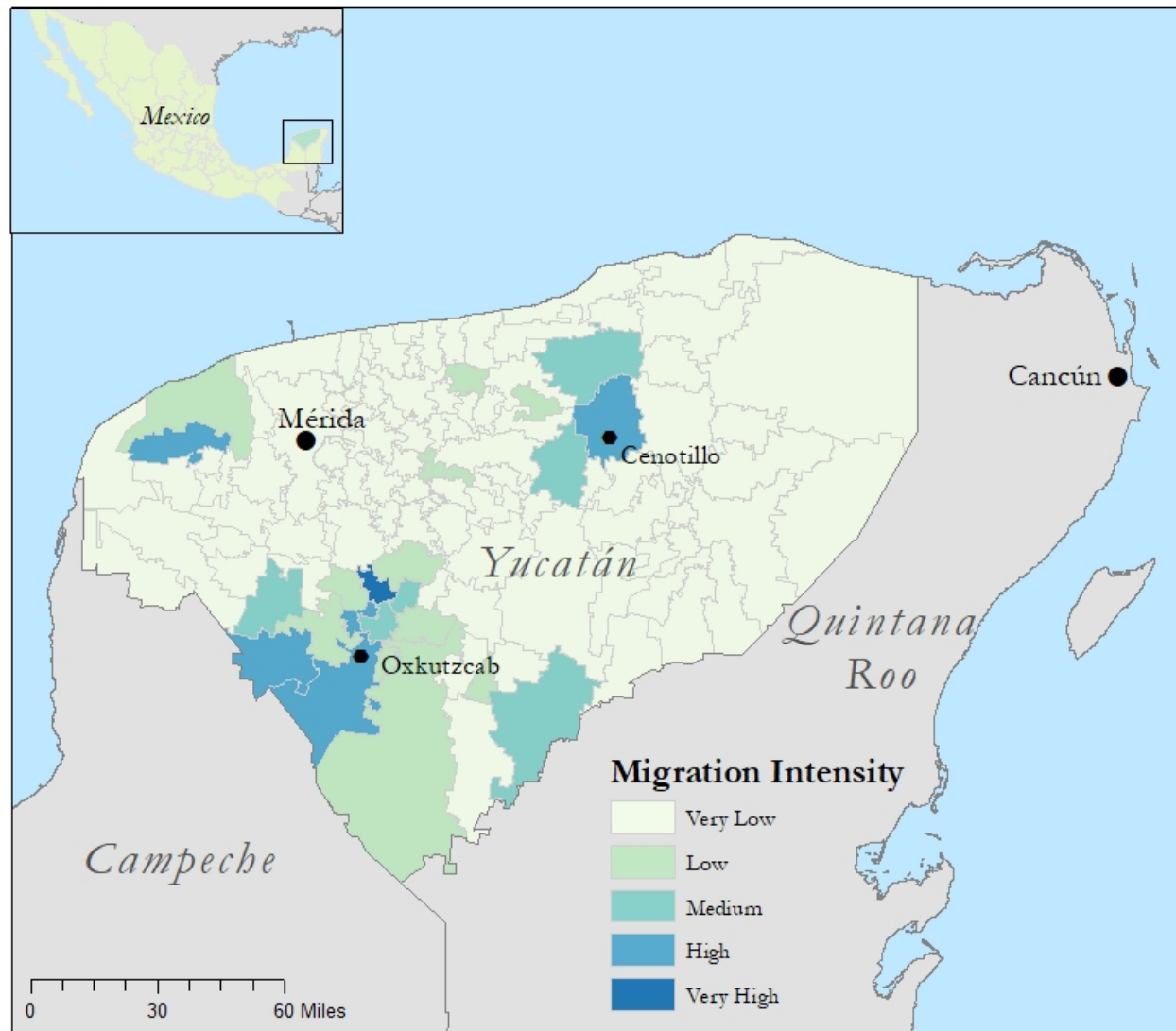
Increasing international migration has made a noticeable impact in Yucatán but remains much more limited and recent than migrations from many other parts of Mexico. The short history of migration from Yucatán means few people can draw on family or other networks to obtain legal status in the USA. A state official with extensive knowledge of local migration patterns estimated that as much as 90% of Yucatecans currently in the USA are undocumented (Interview 25 January 2016). He estimated that about 70% live in California, principally the San Francisco and Los Angeles areas, with smaller clusters in Portland, Dallas, and Denver.

Matricula consular records confirm these trends, showing that from 2011 to 2013, 36% of Yucatecan matriculas were issued from the San Francisco consular branch and 20% from Los Angeles, followed by Oxnard, CA (7%), Portland, OR (6%), Dallas (4%) and Denver (3%).¹⁹

¹⁹ The *matricula consular* is an identification card offered by Mexican consulates and primarily used by undocumented migrants who are unable to obtain government-issued identification in many parts of the USA. Calculations are my own.

The majority of the state's municipalities are rated as very low international migration intensity (87%), though a few areas rate higher (Figure 3.1).²⁰

Figure 3.1: Migration Intensity Index for Municipalities in Yucatán, 2010.



Source: Map by author,²¹ data from CONAPO (*Consejo Nacional de Población*).

²⁰ The migration index, calculated by Mexico's population bureau (CONAPO), includes data on remittances, emigration, circular migration, and return migration. The classification (high, medium, low, etc.) is done on a national scale, rather than each state having its own relative migration intensity rankings. This makes the rankings comparable across states, but can also mask the impact of migration in areas that are low by national standards.

²¹ Thanks to Eric Lovell for assistance and suggestions in the preparation of this map.

Within Yucatecan international migration, two key clusters stand out. The first migration cluster links the former henequen and sugarcane zones of rural northern Yucatán primarily to the Los Angeles area in California and dates from the 1970s and 80s.²² This migration cluster centers on the town of Cenotillo and a few surrounding municipalities that are rated as medium or high international migration intensity. Established networks in these communities provide resources and momentum for continued migration. In contrast, interviewees in nearby low migration areas suggested that international migration has nearly died out due to the increasing difficulty, danger, and expense of undocumented border crossings as well as the protracted economic recession in recent years (Fieldnotes 27 April 2016). In addition to the main cluster in Los Angeles, there are smaller concentrations of migrants from northern Yucatán in the Dallas and Denver areas.

The second migration cluster is larger but newer, centered on Oxkutzcab in the southern corner of the state where eight municipalities are rated medium, high, or very high international migration intensity. This region is characterized by low hills that contrast the flat topography typical of the northern areas of the peninsula and small-scale citrus production is the most notable industry (Fieldnotes 24 January 2016). Migration from the area increased conspicuously in the years around 2000 and continues to be active today, with the great majority of migrants lacking legal documents in the US. The primary destination for southern Yucatecan migrants is the San Francisco Bay Area, where many work in the restaurant and service industries, followed by secondary clusters in Portland and Seattle (Interview 25 January 2016).

Despite being latecomers to international migration, Yucatecan communities have engaged extensively with the 3x1 Program. The first projects in the state were completed in

²²A series of books from the Mexican Migration Field Research and Training Program (MMFRP) provide the most extensive analyses of migration from northern Yucatan, with primary research in the town of Tunkás (Cornelius et al. 2007, 2010, 2015).

2004, the program's third year, with just five of the state's 106 municipalities participating. By 2014, eighty-seven municipalities (82%) had participated in 3x1, completing an average of five projects each over ten years. Yucatán's total 3x1 Program expenditures of Mex\$390 million since the federal program began rank eleventh highest out of thirty-two states – a remarkable statistic for a state that consistently ranks among the lowest in migration intensity and where just 1% of households receive family remittances (Zamora and Gonzalez 2014). Yucatán's higher-migration municipalities are the most active in the program, but the majority of the participating municipalities are classified as low or very low migration intensity. This mix of nontraditional characteristics and strong program participation bolsters my position that research on 3x1 must extend beyond the pioneering examples from the high-migration heartland region. My goal in this chapter is to analyze how this federal program to support and encourage diaspora contributions has been adapted in the distinct context of Yucatán. Examining replications of 3x1 in new contexts allows me to examine the policy's positioning as a model, analyze the importance of context for replications, and discuss implications for the general ideas of diaspora development.

3.3 Framing the 3x1 Program

From its earliest iterations, the 3x1 Program and its informal precursors have been celebrated as groundbreaking examples of migrant initiative and diaspora-led development. The air of perceived success was solidified in part by a positive evaluation commissioned by USAID (Orozco 2003) and by support from the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank (Iskander 2010). It also helped that the model could be framed as a version of public-private partnership, in line with dominant neoliberal thinking at these international institutions and within Mexico's federal bureaucracy.

The standard discourse of the program emphasizes that it is a *grassroots* phenomenon; that migrants began organizing and completing projects on their own and the government only got involved later. This stylized origin story is epitomized by frequent reference to the “0x1” era, when migrants’ collective remittances were not matched or supported by government involvement. At that time, migrant organizations were completing public projects to address unmet needs without any help from the government. The *cero por uno* era is indeed foundational for the 3x1 Program, and it is true that government involvement came as a response to the initial stimulus provided by migrant groups. Yet the constant invocation of this grassroots origin story by both migrants and government officials emphasizes only some elements of the program’s origins, and has the potential to distract from the important ways it has since evolved.

In contrast to the grassroots discourse, academic analyses have produced more nuanced interpretations that complicate the narrative. Some of the most consequential analyses to date of Mexican HTAs converge on the conclusion that interactions with various levels of government have long played a fundamental role in strengthening migrant organizations and influencing the evolution of the collective remittance phenomenon (Goldring 2002; Iskander 2010; Bada 2014). These authors convincingly argue that the evolution, growth, and solidification of the extensive network of Mexican HTAs, and the evolution of the associated 3x1 matching program, would not have happened without early engagement between migrant groups and government actors that provided support and recognition to the fledgling groups.

The conclusions these authors draw stand in sharp contrast to the myth-making that centers *grassroots* as the defining characteristic of the 3x1 model. Rather than grassroots migrants going it alone, Iskander (2010) documents a history of evolving and iterative cooperation, coordination, and occasional conflict between migrant organizations and government actors in the pioneering Zacatecan example. She uses the term “interpretive

engagement” to describe the dense web of interactions and relationships that she identifies as the most important factor in the evolution of a strong and functional program in Zacatecas – the basis for the creation of a federal program. She points to the interpretive engagement itself as the true best practice to be emulated. Bada (2014) studied Michoacano HTAs and emphasizes similar relational processes as a key element. In both cases, translocally successful approaches were established not because grassroots migrant organizations went it alone, but because they participated in a productive learning process together with government and community actors. The types of engagement identified as fundamental to early successes were not necessarily replicated, however, as the institutionalization of the 3x1 Program packaged and exported a mechanical formula or policy model to be implemented with or without substantial engagement and cooperation (Iskander 2015). I will return to this point in the discussion of the Yucatecan case.

My purpose in critically analyzing the discourse of grassroots origins is not to minimize or discount the truly impressive efforts of migrants and migrant organizations, but rather to assess how the policy was assembled and mobilized, identify gaps in the origin myth, and consider the importance of the original context. The long history of emigration from the historic heartland region, its extensive networks of migrants abroad, and a particular focus on local ties all contributed to a strong pattern of hometown association formation (Portes, Escobar, and Walton Radford 2007). “The migrant” became a figure associated with development and progress; migrants and migrant organizations were accorded status and legitimacy as social and political actors (M.P. Smith and Bakker 2008; Iskander 2010). Migrants and migrant organizations have gained a higher profile in Zacatecas than perhaps any other state, befitting the area’s migration history. In Zacatecas, half of all municipalities are classified as very high or high migration intensity (Zamora Ramos and Gonzalez 2014). In Guanajuato the figure is 39%

and in Michoacan 35% (in Yucatán just 2% are high or very high migration intensity). The emergence of the 3x1 Program was heavily influenced by this historic heartland context and was intertwined with the rise to prominence of migrants and migrant organizations.

The pioneering examples from the historic heartland region are important not only as the contexts in which the 3x1 Program emerged, but also as the cases that serve as points of reference and legitimization for the model. Migrants from a few pioneering states engage in lighthearted debates about who should get credit for instigating the first precursor projects that led to the creation of 3x1, but in most accounts Zacatecan migrant groups have become the face of the program – the pioneering “brand” of collective remittances (see the discussion of policy brands in Temenos and McCann 2013). Even within Mexico, Zacatecas stands out as a high migration area and has become inextricably linked to the 3x1 Program and ideas of migrant-led development. The pioneering Zacatecan case is fundamental to the branding and mythologizing of the program, both as a success and as a grassroots, migrant-led model. In interviews, federal officials and officials in other states nearly always referenced the Zacatecan case in positioning and justifying the program’s replication in new contexts. Zacatecas takes on the status of a brand, standing in for the pioneering experiences across the historic migration region that were central in the model’s emergence.

The empirical focus of this chapter, the replication of the 3x1 Program in the nontraditional origin state of Yucatán, presents a starkly different context from the historic migration region. Yet institutionalization of the program at the national level allowed the model to be replicated and re-grounded there. In the following pages, I document the results of the 3x1 Program in Yucatán and compare them to the pioneering examples, using a policy mobilities framework to analyze and situate the case.

3.4 Re-grounding the 3x1 Program in Yucatán

3.4.1 Hurricane Isadore and the Beginnings of 3x1 in Yucatán

The first hometown associations representing Yucatán organized in response to Hurricane Isadore, which struck the peninsula in 2002, causing extensive damage. Interviewed by phone in September 2016, the leader of the first Yucatecan HTA to join the 3x1 Program noted that after the hurricane, many people wanted to do something to help. There had been a growing number of people from the same hometown living in the Los Angeles area, but they were not in regular contact. Responding to the hurricane was the first time they were motivated to organize. They coalesced as a group and raised funds through raffles and small events, and donated it directly to needy, hurricane-affected families in their Yucatecan hometown.

The process of organizing relief donations brought the group into contact with other Yucatecan migrants and laid the foundation for further organizing. They also began to establish links with existing Mexican migrant groups in the Los Angeles area, including Zacatecan and Michoacano hometown associations, which introduced them to the 3x1 Program that had just been formalized and expanded nationwide that year. Upon learning of the matching grant program, the young Yucatecan groups reoriented their efforts to work within the program. The club leader recounted:

There had not been any [3x1] projects yet in Yucatán. . . I explained [to the group] that the program could be a big benefit for Yucatecan communities. If we put in a dollar, the others [three levels of government] put in the same. To get the program going, I talked to my group and we did the first project, rehabilitating a kindergarten (Phone interview 21 September 2016).

A handful of hometown associations representing Yucatecan communities organized, researched the 3x1 Program, established contact with officials back home, and began submitting projects. The first projects were approved during the 2004 funding cycle, with Mex\$1.1 million

in migrant contributions and Mex\$4.4 million total expenditure in Yucatán for the kindergarten, a senior center, residential water service, church renovations, and two ambulances. The program caught on quickly in Yucatán, expanding to eighteen projects with Mex\$2.2 million in migrant contributions in 2005, and twenty-three projects with Mex\$4.5 million in migrant contributions in 2006.²³ Migrant leaders and government officials uniformly reported in interviews that 3x1 projects in Yucatán during these early years were initiated and funded by the nascent migrant organizations, with government officials playing a supporting role (e.g. Interviews 25 January 2016, 29 January 2016, 21 September 2016).

The direction of early Yucatecan hometown associations was shaped by the nontraditional origin context of Yucatán, as migrants were organizing for the first time and working to forge new connections with one another and with their origin community governments. Yucatán's low migration intensity meant they had smaller communities of hometown emigres from which to draw. The shorter history and lower intensity of migration also meant that migrants did not have the same status and visibility in the origin communities as do their counterparts from the historic migration region. These differences are important as I analyze the replication of the 3x1 program in this new context.

However, in addition to the nontraditional origin context, the Yucatecan HTAs were also influenced by the traditional destination of Los Angeles and communication with and mentoring from established migrant organizations in the area (e.g. Phone interview 21 September 2016). A well-connected Yucatecan migrant leader said the Zacatecan organizations in California were

²³ The exchange rate for Mexican pesos to U.S. dollars was approximately Mex\$10 to US\$1 from 2002 to 2008. From 2009 to 2014 it fluctuated around Mex\$14 to US\$1. The migrant share of a project budget is generally one-fourth of the total expenditure, due to the 3x1 matching structure, but in Yucatán the state government declined to contribute or only contributed to a few projects in 2010, 2012, 2013, and 2014, creating a functional 2x1 match. Migrant share data are presented instead of total expenditure to allow easy comparison between years with 3x1 and 2x1 matching structures and to avoid confusion.

like big brothers who passed along their knowledge to the fledgling groups (Interview 2 May 2016). Migrant leaders and officials from Zacatecas put on a 3x1 Program workshop for new HTAs from other states and took them on a tour of projects in Zacatecas. Zacatecan migrant leaders also visited Yucatán to help jump-start the program there (Interview 2 May 2016). These influences fit the classic policy mobilities model, as the program's innovators promoted the model to prospective emulators and led study tours to show successful examples.

The early experiences in Yucatán mirror the pioneering model and the grassroots discourse of the program to a remarkable degree, despite notable differences in context. Summarizing, migrants living in the U.S. began organizing independently, then found out about the 3x1 Program and rechanneled their activity through it. Government actors were involved from an early stage, but their initial roles can reasonably be characterized as reactive and supportive rather than driving the initiative. The policy model that had been packaged and mobilized was re-grounded in Yucatán with little if any mutation. Early examples followed both the letter of the policy and the spirit of the model.

3.4.2 Recession, Mutation, and “Simulation” Projects

The earliest applications of the 3x1 Program in Yucatán closely approximated the pioneering examples, but within a few years the story diverged from this auspicious start. The grassroots variety of 3x1 in Yucatán was supplanted by so-called simulation projects, representing a significant mutation of the model – as might be expected, given the substantial differences in context relative to the policy's origins. Simulation projects, most commonly referred to as *aval* projects in Spanish,²⁴ are initiated and funded by municipal governments, with

²⁴ From the verb *aval*, meaning to endorse or cosign, *proyectos de aval* are ones in which an HTA signs the necessary documents to submit a project but does not contribute funds. The 3x1 Program head at

migrant groups providing only their signature on the project paperwork. The project is a simulation in the sense that HTA money and engagement exist only on paper, while in reality the municipal government manages everything and covers the migrant share of the cost. Given the three-for-one matching structure, even contributing its own share plus the intended migrant organization share in a simulation project, a municipal government can double its money by capturing the state and federal matching funds.

The economic recession of 2008 was an important catalyst for the shift from slow growth driven by migrant initiative to a pattern of simulation projects with minimal migrant involvement. Migrants' incomes and financial security in the USA were battered by the recession; household remittances, which often remain steady during recessions, dropped in Yucatán by 20 percent from 2008 to 2009.²⁵ Yucatecan HTAs were no longer able to fund projects in the same ways or to the same extent that they had before the recession (Interview 30 August 2016). Paradoxically, the decreased availability of migrant contributions opened the floodgates as municipalities shifted to simulation projects. The modest fundraising capacity of the handful of new Yucatecan HTAs had been the limiting factor for program growth, but with simulation projects that was no longer the case. Municipal governments could submit as many projects as they could fund, covering their own designated contribution and the intended migrant part, as long as a migrant organization would sign off on the paperwork. Mayors and even entrepreneurial migrant "leaders" began recruiting migrants to register new HTAs specifically to

Sedesol mentioned in an interview that his central office staff refers to the projects as *simulaciones*, and I adopted the term because of its better translation to English (Interview 22 April 2016).

²⁵ Remittance data from Banco de Mexico, <http://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet>.

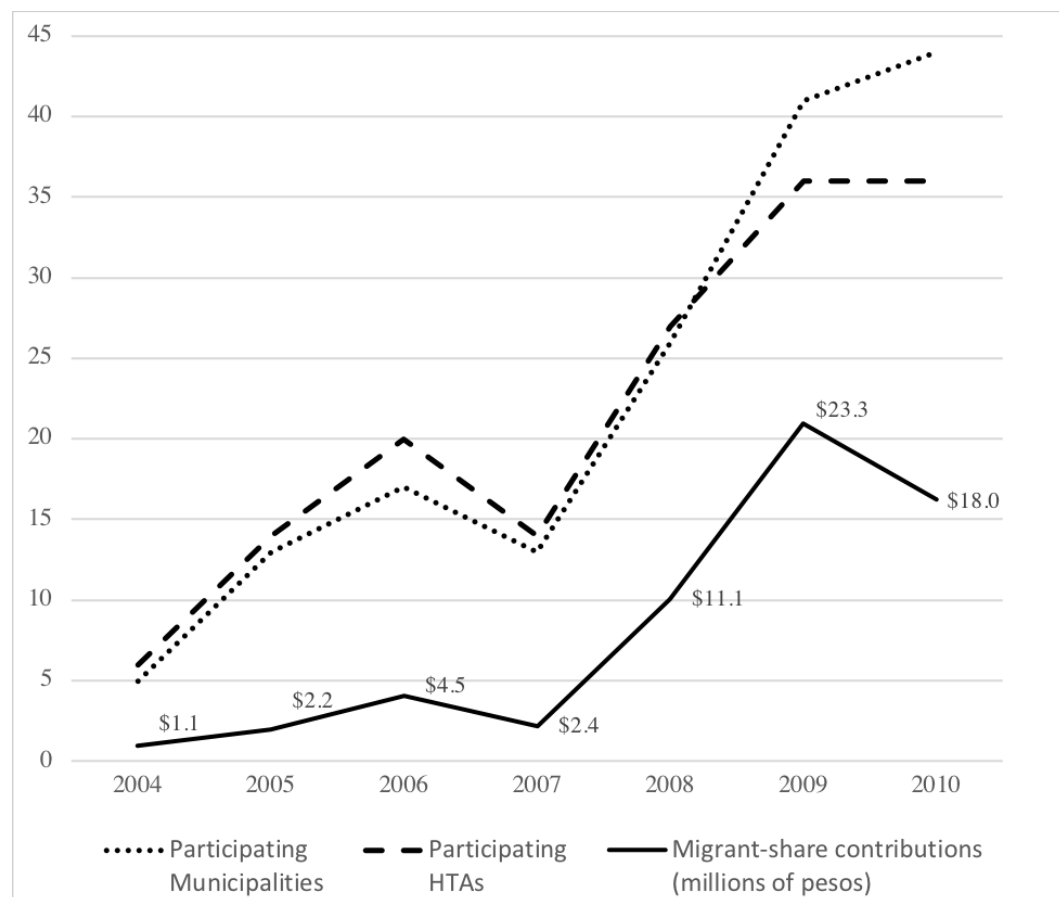
enable simulation projects, in some cases creating phantom clubs that exist only on paper (Burgess, 2016).²⁶

Reliance on simulation projects quickly became the default approach in Yucatán. Speaking frankly, migrant leaders and government officials alike conceded that nearly all Yucatecan 3x1 projects in recent years have been simulations (e.g. Interviews 18 January 2016, 25 January 2016, 28 April 2016; see also Gomez Hernandez 2014). My key informant in California quipped that they would be surprised if Yucatecan migrant groups put in even 1% of the 3x1 Program funds attributed to them (Interview 30 April 2016).

Three trends in the program’s administrative data would be counter-intuitive during a recession but make sense as evidence of a shift to simulation projects, helping corroborate interviewees’ claims. First, as seen in Figure 3.2, supposed migrant contributions to the 3x1 Program in Yucatán ballooned from Mex\$4.5 million in 2006 to a peak of Mex\$23 million in 2009, despite the recession—recall that household remittances *decreased* during this time. Second, the number of participating municipalities and HTAs increased rapidly during the depths of the recession. In addition, for the first time in 2009, individual clubs began sponsoring projects in multiple municipalities and working with municipalities other than their own – “loaning their registration documents, discussed further in Chapter 4 – a notable anomaly in a program premised on migrants working to benefit their own communities of origin. The shift to simulation projects allowed the 3x1 Program to scale up in Yucatán – 82% of municipalities have benefited from at least one project – despite the economic recession and despite the context of relatively limited and recent emigration.

²⁶ Only HTAs registered with the Mexican government or authorized by an existing HTA federation may sponsor 3x1 projects. A club must be made up of at least ten adult members living outside of Mexico.

Figure 3.2: Trends in 3x1 Program Activity in Yucatán State, 2004 to 2010



Data source: SEDESOL (*Secretaría de Desarrollo Social*).

Simulation projects are not unique to Yucatán, but the prevalence of the pattern is noteworthy. Simulations have been identified in numerous contexts, including in pioneering areas and dating back to the early years of the official program (e.g. Valenzuela 2006; Villela 2014; Burgess 2016). The key distinction is that simulation projects are generally considered to account for a fraction of program activity and are often vigorously challenged by established migrant organizations. My conclusion is that Yucatán’s nearly complete reliance on simulation projects is not a difference of kind but rather of degree. The program mutated over time in Yucatán to amplify and normalize a practice that existed in the original contexts but was marginal and contested.

I argue that the 2008 recession was a decisive moment and the response to it crystallized the simulation mutation.²⁷ The recession was the first major obstacle in Yucatán's replication of the 3x1 Program. In the pioneering cases, Iskander (2010) and others highlighted how migrants and officials worked through problems and breakdowns along the way – including debates about what constitutes a legitimate migrant organization, about how much the state should influence project selection, and about how to deal with failed projects – through interpretive engagement and ongoing cooperation and collaboration. In contrast, in Yucatán, the first major roadblock derailed engagement rather than deepening it. Shifting to simulation projects might have been intended as a stopgap measure to keep the program afloat as HTA donations dried up during the recession, but in the long run the change seems to have demonstrated to key government actors in Yucatán that the program could run without HTA contributions or substantial migrant involvement. Instead of migrants and officials working through the setback iteratively and collaboratively, the existence of a fully formed policy with a dedicated funding stream opened the door for officials to manage the program as they would any other and step away from the difficulty and limitations of partnering with migrant organizations. The migrant groups, meanwhile, did not have the organizational strength nor the political clout to challenge this shift – even the oldest of Yucatecan HTAs had existed just five years when the recession began. Thus, the practices of interpretive engagement failed to materialize and government officials were centered while migrants were relegated to the margins. Despite initially appearing to be a close replica of the pioneering model, the 3x1 Program in Yucatán was diverted at this key juncture and went to scale as a simulation model. This mutation toward simulation projects also opened the door for customary practices of clientelism and corruption to gain a foothold in the 3x1

²⁷ See Chapter 4 for additional discussion of the 2008 recession's impact on the 3x1 Program, as well as Malone 2012.

Program, outlined in the following section, contrary to expectations of increased transparency and pressure for good governance.

Why did the policy mutate so significantly in Yucatán, despite the early parallels in organizing and migrant initiative? Context is a central factor. The policy model emerged in the distinctive context of the migration heartland, with its sustained history of intensive migration and extensive migrant organizing, and the outcomes the policy boosters have encouraged everyone to expect are derived from that unique example. The contextual factors in Yucatán are very different. The state has emerged as a new emigration area, but the intensity of migration remains very low relative to other parts of Mexico. The short history also means migration networks are less established, which contributes to the high incidence of undocumented status among Yucatecan migrants, in turn fostering a culture of secrecy around migration (Interview 25 January 2016). These factors help account for the much lower profile and limited power of migrants and migrant organizations in Yucatán. In contrast to Zacatecas and the pioneering contexts where HTAs have become powerful actors who work to advance their own agendas, in Yucatán's less-than-extreme migration context, the lower visibility and power of migrant groups left them unable to resist coopting of the model.²⁸

3.4.3 Grassroots Democracy to Elite Corruption

The Yucatán case presents a cautionary tale that good governance effects often associated with the 3x1 Program and transnational migrant organizing cannot be taken for granted. Previous research has been optimistic about the transformative power of migrant organizing, engaged

²⁸ I make this comment with some ambivalence, as even within the community of Yucatecan migrant organizations, frustration with the simulation model and resistance against it is not uniform, with some individuals taking more pragmatic or opportunistic approaches.

transnational citizens, and collective remittances (e.g. Burgess 2005; Moctezuma 2011).

Hometown associations are seen as venues for political and civic action that cultivate transnational solidarity by engaging community members as well as local, state, and national governments to address community needs and, ideally, herald a new period of political transparency and responsiveness (Orozco and Lapointe 2004; García Zamora 2007; Smyth 2017). The 3x1 Program is assumed to nurture and support these trends, despite being a government program, because it is portrayed as independent and grassroots.

In Mexico broadly, there is a long and pernicious history of clientelism (Fox 1994; Seffer 2015) and corruption (Morris 1999; Warf and Stewart 2016). The country's much discussed democratic transition has not eradicated these patterns; as some types of corruption and clientelism diminish, new forms have emerged (Seffer 2015). Even within Mexico, the state of Yucatán stands out for its pervasive and entrenched systems of political and economic control that have remained largely unchecked since the colonial and hacienda eras (Goodman 1974). Goodman (1974, p.150) remarked on the ubiquitous corruption, noting that "everyone in the state, from the highest government officials, to the richest merchants, to the lowest peasants, is fully aware of this."

Although migrant organizations have been discussed as a countervailing force with the potential to upend historic patterns of corruption and elite power, that has not always been the case in Yucatán. The examples in the following paragraphs highlight problems that emerged from the re-grounding of the 3x1 Program in this particular context, and that also reflect on the program's structure. In sharp contrast to the association between diaspora development and good governance, these examples illustrate how the 3x1 Program can become a medium for new corruption to flourish or old corruption to evolve.

As discussed earlier, the transition to simulation projects that cut out the participation and leadership of migrants underscores the mutation of the 3x1 Program policy. Within the Yucatecan case, the migrant as the true motor and origin of the hometown association has become a myth. For example, discussing a Portland, Oregon, organization that is considered one of the most successful Yucatecan HTAs, a Yucatán state official admitted that it was the municipal president who initiated the formation of the HTA. The migrants who comprise the organization had to be convinced by state and local officials to go along with the arrangement. The official related:

We asked them to see it as an opportunity to help improve their community. We also told them that if we did not do it [form an HTA and participate in 3x1] in their community, we would do it in some other municipality anyway because it was a resource the federal government had given and we had to make use of it. That is how we got this group involved. (Interview* 11 December 2012).²⁹

The state official's comment highlights an unintended consequence of institutionalizing the 3x1 Program: Officials began to see it as money that would be left on the table if they did not find a way to claim it. This perspective reinforced the growth of simulation projects, and, as noted in the quote, was often convincing to migrants. Even if they could not follow the intended model of the program by initiating and funding their own projects, migrants could help out their hometowns by going along with municipal governments' schemes to qualify for the funds. This perspective is discussed further in Chapter 4.

Beyond simulation projects and phantom organizations, signs of corruption and clientelism are clear in the 3x1 Program in Yucatán. Migrant leaders allege that government officials now routinely collude with contractors to receive kickbacks. One complained, "I love

²⁹ This quote comes from an interview conducted by Elizabeth Durden, my co-author for a version of this chapter that was published in the *Journal of Latin American Geography*. See Malone and Durden 2018.

this program but it makes me sick and gives me a headache because I have to deal with these crooks,” later adding, “At this point they could rename the program instead of ‘Program 3x1 for Migrants’ to ‘Program 3x1 for Contractors and Government Employees’” (Phone interview 25 April 2016). Project budgets are inflated and materials and workmanship are shortchanged to maximize profits and graft, often at the expense of project quality. Unfortunately, in Yucatán the allegations of corruption extend beyond the usual suspects. The migrant leader quoted above also accused other migrants of “learning” from the way government officials take advantage of the program and beginning to demand payments from mayors in exchange for signing off for simulation projects – effectively using the HTAs they control to sell access to the program (Interview 30 April 2016).

It is worthwhile to question whether the transnational economic and political activities by migrants actually promote change. Are migrants involved in altering the status quo of the political order, finding new forms of visibility and participation as transmigrants that they had not achieved prior to migration? While HTAs can be seen as agents of change that usurp the power of elites and long ingrained political machines, the partnership of the state and federal governments with migrants could also be seen as perpetuating the status quo (Itzigsohn 2000). Although many examples exist of hometown associations pressuring for accountability and transparency in their communities of origin, the evidence from Yucatán demonstrates that is not always the case. I found that the presence of simulation projects and the formation of phantom HTAs often went hand in hand with corruption and clientelism in the execution of projects. In these examples, a program designed to empower diasporas and support their engagement was captured by local officials and existing elites to pursue their own interests, rather than challenging the status quo or promoting good governance.

3.5 Conclusion

The pioneering examples of the 3x1 Program from Zacatecas and the historic heartland region are used to brand the policy model and legitimize its expansion. However, as I have shown, replication of the program in new contexts will not always recreate those perceived successes. The model assumes strong and respected migrant organizations that are treated as full partners alongside government actors – an assumption based on the context in which the program emerged. In Yucatán, however, the expectations the program makes of migrant groups were too much for the state's fledgling HTAs. Lacking the ability to operate as equals with government actors, the migrant organizations were displaced from any meaningful role.

The peripheral issue of simulation projects became a mainstream and normalized practice in Yucatán as municipal officials became the true drivers of activity. They learned to manage the program like any other, in some cases leading to corruption and graft of project funds. This is an example of a policy being mutated through its application in a new context – a common outcome of mobilization. It is not inevitable that mutations will be negative, but it is nearly certain that a policy will function differently as it is re-grounded in new contexts with different power structures. In this case, the most significant mutation was not the introduction of a new element, but rather an amplification of a preexisting, but previously marginal, problem.

One interpretation of this example is that the policy model has significant weaknesses, but that they did not become fully manifest in the pioneering cases because of the uncommon strength, dedication, capacity, and political clout of the pioneering migrant organizations. Once the model was applied in new contexts where migrants had not attained such power, the policy's faults emerged more clearly. This implies that it is not the 3x1 Program model itself that was successful in the pioneering areas, but rather that strong migrant organizations (and their government counterparts) succeeded, with the program being a conduit for their activity. This

mirrors Iskander's (2010) conclusion that the pattern of interpretive engagement is the best practice to be emulated, not the 3x1 Program's specific mechanics. This conclusion should serve as a cautionary example for other governments considering replicating the 3x1 Program: Not that it is fundamentally flawed and cannot succeed, but rather that it is not a foolproof model, impervious to context.

As this example of the expansion of the 3x1 Program within Mexico demonstrates, strong and capable migrant organizations are essential for the policy to function as expected. I join other researchers in critiquing the Mexican federal government for focusing on expansion of the 3x1 Program and formation of new HTAs with little concern for the groups' strength or capacity to participate (Escala Rabadán, Rivera-Salgado, and Rodriguez 2011; Escala Rabadán 2014). While recognizing that there are significant limitations and potential drawbacks to government efforts to strengthen HTAs, I still conclude that more could be done to facilitate and support migrants' own efforts at organizing. Escala Rabadán, Rivera-Salgado, and Rodriguez (2011, p. 66) conclude that "simply creating more organizations and asking them to take on more activities will probably not translate into better or more projects." The example from Yucatán confirms these fears, finding that the 3x1 Program spurred the formation of numerous Yucatecan hometown associations, but because these HTAs lacked capacity, institutional strength, and social standing, they were quickly pushed aside by municipal officials and marginalized from their own program.

Chapter 4

Proyectos de Aval Case Comparison

Simulation Projects and Mutation of the Collective Remittance Model

“The migrant club ‘Ticuitaco’ has agreed to sponsor other communities so they could also benefit from the federal ‘3x1 Program for Migrants,’ noted Jose Reyes Quiroz Gutierrez, the director of the International Connections Office for La Piedad. The club will loan its *toma de nota*, which is the document that the Mexican Consulate in the United States issues to migrant clubs when they register. This would allow communities that do not have a migrant club to access the program ‘3x1 for Migrants,’ for social projects that contribute to the development of migrants’ communities of origin... (Quiroz Gutierrez) invites anyone interested in the program to visit the municipal International Connections office...”

Andrea Verdín, *Periódico AM*, La Piedad edition online, April 9, 2016 (accessed April 14, 2016, my translation).

In the example above from a newspaper article about the municipality of La Piedad in Michoacan, a local official advertises that a registered migrant club is willing to “lend” their documents to individuals or communities who want to access the 3x1 Program. Individuals or communities within the municipality could approach the local government to coordinate a project, which would be filed under the club’s name but which would not truly be the club’s project, nor the club’s money. The loaning of the club registration would allow simulation of the required migrant involvement, while in reality the money would be raised by the beneficiary community or by the municipal government. I highlight this example from Michoacan not because it is exceptional – it is not – but rather because the newspaper article presents an exceptionally frank discussion of the usually-hidden mechanics of simulation projects.

This chapter focuses on simulation projects as a way to think about the mutation of a policy model. The previous chapter showed how simulation projects have become the

mainstream practice in Yucatán, analyzing the program's local history and the ways contextual factors influenced the normalization of simulations. In this chapter, I bring in material from across my research – including Yucatán and Zacatecas, as well as examples from other contexts and brief cases from the states of Tlaxcala and Campeche. Examining simulations across different examples sheds light on ways the practical implementation of the 3x1 Program diverges from expectations, engaging the idea of mutations as a key facet of policy mobilities.

4.1 Introduction

The community development model of collective remittances supported by government matching funds emerged within the unique dynamics of Zacatecas and the transnational contexts linked to Mexico's historic migration region, where migrant organizations have long histories and have built substantial transnational political capital. Assumptions and expectations based on the pioneering contexts were embedded into the model when it was formalized as the 3x1 Program. These expectations are not met in the vast majority of replications, setting off a plethora of unplanned variations. There are divergences large and small, common and unique, that appear across the diverse geographies of the 3x1 Program. Furthermore, changes can be isolated, appearing in and affecting just one or a few places, or can spread and feed back into the model, mutating the standard application of the policy. The policy model evolves as it is replicated, re-grounded in new contexts with unique characteristics and diverse power dynamics. To understand these processes, this research “follows the policy” (Peck and Theodore 2012), engaging its practical application and discursive justification across various settings.

The 3x1 Program is premised on a translocal partnership between migrants living abroad and the municipal government of their hometown in Mexico, with a structuring and support role for the Mexican federal and state governments. Migrants organize themselves into a hometown

association, register with the Mexican Consulate to verify their club's legitimacy, and fundraise by hosting events or soliciting donations among the community of *paisanos*.³⁰ The HTA must coordinate with the municipal government to agree on a project that fits within the program rules, then each entity – hometown association, municipal, state, and federal governments – contributes one-quarter of the overall budget. The municipal government then constructs or executes the project, with monitoring by a local representative of the migrant club.

This is the basic premise of the 3x1 Program model, but the program does not always function as assumed. The institutionalization and expansion of the 3x1 Program has yielded various examples of mutations, various reconfigurations of elements and practices across contexts. I focus on a single, hallmark example – “simulation” or *aval* projects – to ground the analysis. Simulation projects, discussed in more detail below, occur when the intended involvement of a migrant organization does not actually take place and is instead simulated. That is, migrant organizations are minimally involved or not involved at all, but in order to qualify for the 3x1 Program the required migrant participation is falsified.

Clearly, simulation projects are not *allowed*, the practice is an evasion of the rules, yet they have existed in almost every context in which the 3x1 Program has been applied. The key point, however, the reason they are my central focus in this chapter, is that simulation projects have been dramatically amplified over the course of the institutionalization and expansion of collective remittances into the national 3x1 Program. Simulations exist in the pioneering areas

³⁰ *Paisano* in Spanish literally means someone from the same country, though it is also commonly used to refer to people from common origins on various scales, including people from the same hometown. Hometown associations are organized among *paisanos* from the same town, while their fundraising events might draw in *paisanos* more broadly. One will occasionally encounter the more precise word *oriundo* – someone native to a specific location, as in *clubes de oriundos* (hometown associations) (see R.C. Smith 1998, p.202) – but in common usage *paisano* is the dominant term, and I follow that tradition here.

and have since the program's early years (e.g. García Zamora 2005; Valenzuela 2006), but in those contexts they long remained peripheral and contested. In many new contexts, simulations have been normalized as standard practice – they have been *amplified*. In turn, this amplification has reverberated back to the pioneering contexts, where simulation projects are also becoming more common and problematic. In this sense, the amplification of simulation projects is not only a localized issue in non-traditional contexts where the program is being replicated, but in fact is mutating the “normal” operation of the policy even in the pioneering contexts. This raises important questions about how and why simulation projects exist. Whose interests or goals are met through simulation projects and why are they proliferating? On the other hand, whose interests might be compromised or set back by simulations? How does the simulation pattern reflect the varying interests of different actors, and how do perspectives and practices vary over time and between contexts?

4.1.1 Policy Mobilities and Mutations

Throughout the dissertation I build upon the policy mobilities framework, a growing body of work within geography and related fields that applies a critical lens to the formation and movement of policy ideas in a globalizing world (Baker and Temenos 2015). Key elements of this approach include a focus on *assemblage*, the contingent and embedded interactions of diverse policy elements, contexts, and circuits and flows that shape specific examples of policy (McFarlane 2009; Anderson and McFarlane 2011; McCann 2011; Baker and McGuirk 2016); *mobilization*, the actions and processes that cause policies to move, including the ways ideas are packaged and marketed and the networks of consultants and policy boosters who do the mobilizing (Ward 2007; Peck and Theodore 2010; McCann and Ward 2013); and *mutation* or translation, the recognition that policies change as they move, emphasizing the context-

specificity of packaging and re-grounding and the variable and incomplete ways policies move (Peck 2011; Freeman 2012; Peck and Theodore 2015). Policy mobilities scholars scrutinize common sense notions of the rational transfer of “best practices” (McCann and Ward 2012, 2013; Cook 2015).

The policy mobilities framework centers on a constructivist view, emphasizing the ways policymaking and mobilization play out across uneven terrains of power, knowledge, and meaning (Baker et al. 2016). The packaging and marketing of policies renders them “myths” – decontextualized and functionally polyvalent, able to interface with and legitimize varied practices and existing ideas, rather than specify or dictate a uniform program (Lieto 2015). Reflecting on the development industry, Mosse comes to a similar conclusion, that “policy primarily functions...to legitimize rather than to orientate practice” (Mosse 2005, p.14). That polyvalence is a focus in this chapter – how are multiple and varied practices accommodated within a single policy? Drawing from the policy mobilities framework, I center the idea of mutation, asking how and why each new re-grounding of a policy yields a mix of unique and common practices, and how these replications affect the evolution of the policy itself.

To understand the process of policy mutation, I drill down into the example of simulation projects within the 3x1 Program. As noted above, simulation projects have been amplified rather than being novel or unique to replications of the model – this type of mutation is a reconfiguration of the relative importance or centrality of specific elements. To analyze mutation by amplification, then, I identify and examine why simulation projects vary in their importance, application, and interpretation across contexts and over time. Although my focus is on mutations, I also find it relevant to include a brief discussion of assemblage, as it has been incorporated within studies of policy mobility, and argue that assemblage and mutation are fundamentally connected processes.

Anderson and McFarlane loosely define assemblages as “composition(s) of diverse elements into some form of provisional socio-spatial formation” (Anderson and McFarlane 2011, p.124). Elements of temporality and spatiality are key – assemblages are semi-stable but not permanent and are inherently territorialized or embedded in specific places (McCann 2011). Assemblages are “realized through ongoing processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, such that assemblages are continually in the process of being made and remade” (Baker and McGuirk 2016). McFarlane (2009) highlights that assemblages are not only territorialized and temporal configurations, but importantly must be brought together and made sense of through work (see also McCann 2011). Assemblage is a process or project, necessarily a product of labor. The examples in this chapter highlight the importance of active work in the formation of assemblages, which in turn furthers our conceptualization of mutations. The literature broadly discusses mutations as a result of contextual differences in re-groundings, of partial incorporation, or of changes that happen through the process of mobilization (McCann and Ward 2013). Without ignoring any of these factors or processes, this chapter focuses on how the *work* of re-grounding a policy in turn creates mutations and yields new or amplified practices. This is an explicitly active conceptualization of context that centers the agency of locally-active actors, while also acknowledging that these actors are inseparable from the other elements of context noted above – history, structures, place.

Re-grounding a mobile policy takes work. To replicate a policy in line with its original uses and goals requires the labor of learning the model’s history, understanding its creators’ intentions, engaging with lessons from application elsewhere, and framing and promoting the model to establish its local legitimacy. Replicating a policy *not* in line with its origins is no less the product of labor – learning the mechanics of the policy, searching for overlaps or complementarities with other programs and goals, testing the limits and malleability of the

justifying discourses, and generally finding ways to make the policy work towards new, possibly unforeseen ends. All of this labor is part of a process of assemblage. Even if we're not talking about a "new" assemblage in the creation of a new policy model, we should still think about a process of assemblage to re-territorialize an existing policy.

Taking this perspective on assemblage and re-grounding helps illuminate links between assemblage and mutation. Each replication of a policy sets off a new, localized process of assemblage, which in turn becomes a potential source of mutations. As noted above, this assemblage process is specific to the time and place, and also is the product of labor carried out by actors who are active in that time and place. A distinction can be drawn, however, in cases in which no local actor is shepherding the policy, when it does not have buy in, or when it arrives uninvited and unannounced. In these situations, we can imagine that a policy will not become the center of a new process of assemblage. That is, it will not become the center of a novel, localized assemblage *of that policy*. It instead will be brought within existing assemblages as a (minor) new element to be incorporated, accommodated, and made useful.

On its face, this seems to be a clear departure from the prototypical case of globetrotting consultants peddling a policy to new audiences, but in reality many of the same dynamics pertain. Even in those cases in which a policy is being actively brought in, there will always be actors within the re-grounding context who see the policy as irrelevant or inapplicable or inappropriate and either will not engage or will engage with the goal of finding ways to make the policy useful or bend it to further their interests. Indeed, as noted above, we can think of this divergence among actors as a facet of the local context into which a policy is re-grounded, re-assembled, and mutated.

Returning to the key point here, in any re-grounding or replication of a policy, there will be locally-engaged actors who do not work to incorporate the policy as intended or generally

understood, but rather work to make use of the policy – or components of the policy, or aspects of its discourse, or just its funds, etc. – toward other ends or in unforeseen directions. These actors and their engagements with the policy are potential sources of mutations. When actors of this type far outnumber and overpower actors working for a high-fidelity replication, it is likely that significant mutations will occur relative to an original or standard application of the policy. This should not be read as a value statement – I am not arguing that the original interpretation of a model is necessarily “correct” or better than other uses, nor that unforeseen or unintended uses of a policy should be assumed to be problematic – but rather that it is important to identify and understand how and why mutations come about.

In the case of the 3x1 Program, migrant organizations and government officials together worked through the process of assemblage to create the policy and push for its institutionalization. The practical mobilization of the model, however, was accomplished by federal government fiat. The 3x1 Program for Migrants was legislated and rolled out nationwide. It landed on state and municipal governments’ doorsteps as a pre-existing model with a dedicated funding stream. The practical results of this mobilization were a plethora of replications driven not by true-believers in the model, but rather by local actors focused on other priorities. This spawned a plethora of mutations of the policy, some specific and limited and others reverberating out and feeding back into the model itself. The use of simulations was chief among these, and includes numerous sub-mutations and variations, as detailed throughout this chapter.

4.1.2 Framing the 3x1 Program

Institutionalization of the 3x1 Program crystalized a set of practices into a policy model. The program is not static, but the fundamental framework has remained remarkably stable. And that fundamental framework is one that very clearly reflects the contexts in which the model was

assembled. The process of assemblage was grounded in the transnational spaces of Mexico's historic migration heartland region, which has a long history of migration, extensive networks of migrants abroad, and a strong tradition of hometown-specific affinity (*patrias chicas*), all of which contributed to a strong pattern of hometown association formation (Portes, Escobar, and Walton Radford 2007; Bada 2014).³¹ Within this transnational context, "the migrant" became a figure associated with development and progress; migrants and migrant organizations are accorded status and legitimacy as social and political actors (M.P. Smith and Bakker 2008; Iskander 2010; Moctezuma 2011). The emergence of the 3x1 Program was heavily influenced by this historic heartland context and was intertwined with the rise to prominence of migrants and migrant organizations.

Even in the original contexts the policy model is not the result of a clear consensus or unanimity about the form the program should take and how it should operate. There were and continue to be debates and differences of opinion within these contexts, and to some extent these debates and dynamics were incorporated into the 3x1 Program as it was formalized. One dynamic seems inseparable from the model – the competition for influence and control between the key stakeholders including internal dynamics of migrant organizations and relations between migrant leaders and government officials at various levels. In the pioneering contexts, this dynamic is characterized by a semblance of balance, as migrant organizations and government officials each have particular strengths and leverages. This is not to say that the relationship is wholly comfortable, nor is it without moments of drama and contention. But on the whole, these dynamics have created a productive tension that incentivizes all parties to be flexible and

³¹ Current Mexican migrant organizations are predominantly hometown focused, though other Latin American migrant groups (Portes, Escobar, and Walton Radford 2007) and earlier eras of Mexican migrants (Bada 2014) have been more likely to organize into country-of-origin or pan-Latino groups.

negotiate to resolve differences and appreciate different perspectives. This tension is captured in Iskander's (2010) analysis of the program's evolution in Zacatecas. In Chapter 2, I took stock of the current situation within the Zacatecan transnational arena and concluded that a pattern of *mediated empowerment* of migrant leaders and organizations continues.

However, the productive tension that characterizes pioneering contexts depends on the existence of strong and engaged migrant organizations. In their absence, the balance of power inevitably shifts toward government actors (e.g. Moctezuma 2011). This should not be conceptualized automatically as a problem, and we should not succumb to romanticism and fall into the trap of assuming that all migrant actors are noble and disinterested nor that all government actors are partisan or self-serving or corrupt. Neither group is monolithic. Still, it is important to acknowledge that in the absence of strong migrant players, there is no countervailing power to act as a counterpart for government actors, much less as a check on them when priorities diverge. In this situation, the decisions and perspectives of the key government stakeholders drive the re-grounding and re-assemblage of the program – and the unscrupulous among their ranks are able to act opportunistically.

I want to highlight again that it is important to avoid romanticizing migrants and migrant organizations. However, part of my argument, implicit in the description above, is that the 3x1 Program itself internalizes romanticized views of migrants and creates a situation in which unreasonable expectations are placed upon them. The rules were written for the pioneering contexts of Zacatecas and the historic migration heartland,³² where strong and well-organized migrants have earned respect and a delicate balance of power with officials. Even in that unique

³² A history of the 3x1 Program written by two high-level Sedesol officials states: “In 2002, the federal government explicitly created a program that, *starting from the Zacatecan formula*, is gradually being reproduced at the national level” (Soto and Velazquez 2006, p.12, my translation, emphasis added).

case, the balance is precarious and dedicated migrant leaders continuously and jealously defend their interests, examples of which I discuss below and in Chapter 2. In addition, “the migrants” are not a unified group with unanimous opinions about how to manage their affairs (Bakker 2007). The dynamic of power sharing between migrants and officials has emerged in few if any other contexts, yet the program is designed with precisely this kind of balance of power in mind. The program structure is built upon assumptions that migrants will play organizing and monitoring roles that in most cases are beyond their capacity. Meanwhile, municipal officials face little scrutiny and discover that the rules perversely incentivize them to game the system. In these ways, the program design sets up migrants and officials from other states to fail if they cannot match the remarkable pioneering example, or worse yet the exaggerated characterization of the pioneering example that further romanticizes an already exceptional case.

4.2 Simulation Projects

Simulation projects are initiated and funded by municipal governments with migrant groups only providing their signature on the project paperwork. The project is a simulation in the sense that HTA money and engagement exist only on paper, while in reality the municipal government manages everything and covers the migrant share of the cost. Given the three-for-one matching structure, a municipal government can double its money by capturing the state and federal matching funds, even when it is contributing its own share plus the intended migrant organization share.

Although I use the term simulation, the dominant nomenclature in Spanish is *proyectos de aval*. The root of this term is the verb *avalar*, meaning to endorse or co-sign. *Proyectos de aval* are ones in which an HTA signs the necessary documents to submit a project but otherwise do not play a prominent role. Throughout my research, I consistently heard the terminology of

aval projects from both migrants and officials – it is without question *the* way these projects are talked about in common conversation. However, the 3x1 Program head at Sedesol mentioned that his central-office staff refers to the projects as *simulaciones*, simulations (Interview 22 April 2016), and I adopted the term because of its better translation to English. Using the term simulations clearly communicates that a process is being feigned, though it loses some of the indeterminacy communicated by the more common term of aval. As I will discuss below, aval or simulation projects are generally understood to be ones in which migrants are not active nor contributing money, but there are grey areas in defining whether a project is or is not an aval – for example, in the common occurrence of migrants contributing part of their expected share but needing the municipal government to complete the “migrant” contribution. Adopting the term simulation risks papering over some of the nuance around these practices, adopting a bureaucrat’s view of how the program should or should not be implemented. I work to avoid this potential pitfall, focusing on the complexity and indeterminacy of simulation / aval projects, but nonetheless choose to employ the term simulation as the best available option writing for an English-speaking audience.

Within the 3x1 Program, simulation projects are paradoxically widespread yet overlooked, criticized yet embraced, and somehow both ignored and much-discussed. This mixed treatment extends to all levels – migrants, officials, media, and academics. Across every group, simulation projects have at times been acknowledged, yet are left out or minimized in the majority of accounts and remain absent from the discourse of the program. They are often mentioned as a footnote or minor point in discussions of the program (for exceptions, see Frias et al. 2006; Villela 2014; Cappelletti 2018). Simulation is treated as an anomaly that occasionally occurs but does not reflect on the policy’s fundamental nature. I am sympathetic to this

perspective, but I find that more detailed examination of the phenomenon is merited, in part because simulation projects are becoming both more common and more widespread.

I diverge from the typical treatment of the topic by centering simulations as a prime example of the ways institutionalization has reshaped the collective remittance model. To understand what I describe as mutation by amplification, I first explore how simulations work, including ways the policy accommodates simulation and ways actors evade the strictures of the policy to achieve simulations. Second, I analyze how different actors and groups engage with and make sense of simulations. I develop a typology of perspectives on simulations – purist, pragmatic, and reliant – to structure the analysis. I identify important connections between context and perspectives on simulation, showing that purists in the pioneering contexts have fought to minimize simulations while the most extreme examples of amplification have occurred in non-traditional contexts where migrants were effectively marginalized and simulations became the norm. Throughout, I engage the key question of how mutations are shaped by the interplay between the letter of the policy, the transnational contexts where it is applied, and the power dynamics and diverse actors that exist in each case.

4.2.1 Simulation Mechanisms

As alluded to earlier, simulations are a circumvention of the rules – they unequivocally are *not* anticipated within the letter nor the spirit of the 3x1 Program. And yet, they occur frequently across many contexts. Before exploring the dynamics and interests that have allowed simulations to proliferate, it is important to provide a brief examination of the practical mechanics of how and why simulations can occur. Given their commonness across many contexts, it is clear that the factors that enable simulations are structural within the policy – the

prevalence of simulations varies across contexts, but their possibility is created by the policy structure and uniform aspects of implementation, despite being illicit.

At the most basic level, simulation projects are possible because the logistics of transnational public-private cooperation require significant flexibility. The basic premise of the 3x1 Program is that it combines collective donations from organized migrants living abroad with Mexican government funds to complete projects in migrants' hometowns. This is a transnational and translocal process linking migrant organizations – already connected with the origin community – to government officials in the national, state, and municipal capitals. Two key aspects of this partnership require flexibility; first, the migrant organizations are independent from the Mexican government and exist outside the national territory, and thus cannot be fully subjected to its accounting and control mechanisms. Second, the migrant hometown associations are often informal, run by volunteers and lacking institutional capacity, further limiting the accounting demands that can be made of them. Officials recognize that trying to impose strict standards could jeopardize the program's existence, if migrants were overwhelmed by bureaucratic intrusions or annoyed by scrutiny of their fundraising and declined to participate. A Sedesol representative in the US told me that in light of this reality, they “don't ask questions” about the sources of HTA funds for 3x1 Projects (Interview 17 July 2015).

A flexible approach to imposing accounting requirements on migrant clubs can be justified given these realities, yet that flexibility also creates the opening through which simulation projects can be inserted. The expectation is that migrant organizations are raising funds for each project and donating them, but when that is not the case, the flexible accounting approach undermines the ability to detect and exclude simulation projects. Multiple federal officials working on the program conceded that there were no formal mechanisms in place to detect and exclude simulation projects (Interviews 26 January 2016, 22 April 2016). Officials

anyway have shown little appetite for combating simulation projects, preferring to treat them as an inevitable – but hopefully minor – problem rather than taking steps to root out the problem, steps they worry could endanger the 3x1 Program.

Meanwhile, calls for flexibility and a permissive approach to accommodate informal migrant organizations have become intertwined with or provide cover for more nefarious motivations and strategies. When the municipal government provides the intended migrant share of funding and the migrant organization's only contribution is its signature, they are much less likely to monitor the project's implementation. This makes it easier for officials to bend projects and expenditures to personal or partisan ends – fulfilling campaign promises, prioritizing projects to benefit party strongholds, channeling work through politically-connected businesses, crafting projects to obtain kickbacks, etc. It is hard to estimate the prevalence of these corrupt and clientelist practices, but they are clearly part of the simulation phenomenon.

In addition to the structural factors and habitual practices that make simulations possible, there is also an important historical precedent that contributed to building inertia around simulation projects. With the economic recession of 2008, many migrant organizations' capacity to contribute funds for hometown projects diminished. Fearing that the 3x1 Program could shrivel and disappear before the recession abated and migrants' incomes recovered, officials embraced a temporary shift officially to allow the migrant share of a 3x1 Project to be contributed by the beneficiary community. The program's national operating rules for 2011 included a new clause: "To promote the co-responsibility of the beneficiary communities and support the migrant clubs...the 25% of funds contributed by the migrants may be composed of collective remittances, complemented by funds contributed by the community."³³

³³ Diario Oficial de la Federación (México), 30 diciembre 2010. Reglas de Operación del Programa 3x1 para Migrantes, para el ejercicio fiscal 2011. Section 3.5.

This clause only appeared in the operating rules for 2011 and 2012,³⁴ but I argue that it had a longer-lasting impact by creating inertia around simulation projects. The official rule change only allowed for community contributions, not explicitly permitting municipal funds to cover the migrant share, but the practical impact was more sweeping. For example, a federal official explained the change to me in broad terms, making clear that in practice they were accepting municipal simulation projects. “We hope it is a temporary change, when a club can’t contribute 100% and somehow the municipal government or the local community helps them out” (Interview 27 April 2011). During my fieldwork in Zacatecas in 2011, multiple interviewees noted that due to the recession the 3x1 Program was being stilted up by an influx of municipal funds replacing migrant contributions (e.g. Interviews 9 February 2011, 19 April 2011, 4 May 2011; see also Malone 2012). Similar to the shift the recession caused in Yucatán, described in Chapter 3, opening the doors for non-migrant money to cover the migrant share of 3x1 projects set a precedent and inculcated new habits. While technically only allowing community contributions to replace migrant funds, given the program’s lax accounting and flexible attitudes, the actual effect was to multiply simulations and habituate local officials to the model. This temporary change continues to reverberate in the actual practice of the 3x1 Program.

Another logistical point bears brief examination. The practice of simulation projects is often described as the municipal government covering the migrant share – I also use this explanation as a sort of shorthand. In practical terms, this can happen in a number of ways. Perhaps most common is that the municipal government simply shifts around funds and pays the intended migrant share without making any particular effort to cover their tracks. Project implementation is managed by local officials through municipal-controlled accounts, reducing

³⁴ Cappelletti (2018) provides a useful table summarizing changes over time in the program’s operating rules, p.55-58.

the likelihood of scrutiny of the funds' origins. In other cases, municipal officials use budgetary sleight-of-hand or other illicit approaches to be able to pay the intended migrant share covertly. An experienced migrant leader explained that the fictitious migrant contribution often comes from loans that municipal officials take out and then repay from the project budget (or leave on the books for the next mayor to deal with) or that the contractor who will be awarded the project fronts the migrant share with the expectation to recover it as profits from the contract (Phone interview 1 November 2017, see also Simpser et al. 2015).

There is an element of willful ignorance as federal and state officials decline to scrutinize the sources of migrant club contributions. Their motives might be in good faith to enable flexibility, out of pragmatism to facilitate projects getting done via unauthorized means, or more nefariously to accommodate clientelist or corrupt elements. Whatever the case, state and federal officials *do know* that their don't-ask-don't-tell approach leaves openings for unauthorized practices.³⁵ Through interviews with migrant leaders and officials at all levels of government, I confirmed that nearly all stakeholders know simulation projects occur. The question then, given that simulations are common and not-quite-hidden, is why changes have not been made to exclude them. The next section engages this question by examining different perspectives on simulation projects. The section also analyzes how perspectives on simulations are shaped by different contexts and power dynamics.

4.3 Approaches to Simulation Projects

In the following paragraphs, I develop a typology of the prevalent postures toward simulation projects, each of which has relevance for migrant actors and government officials,

³⁵ And in some cases, migrant leaders allege that state and federal officials are themselves engaged in corrupt practices involving simulation projects and kickbacks.

and each of which is associated with certain contexts. I begin by defining the approaches – purist, pragmatic, and reliant – before working back through each with examples and analysis. The typology is purely instrumental; I developed it as a tool to help draw out and examine the complex dynamics around simulation projects and the relationships between policy, practice, context, and power. Together with the above discussion of how simulation projects fit within the structure and mechanics of the 3x1 Program, thinking through different perspectives on the practice also helps elucidate why this mutation has occurred in some contexts more than others and why its prevalence and patterning has shifted over time.

4.3.1 The Purist Approach

The first position, the *purist approach* is a total rejection of simulation projects. Purists view simulations as a dilution of the 3x1 Program that undermines its functioning. They argue that simulation projects create a slippery slope that erodes migrant agency within the model and that simulations crowd out real projects, given a finite matching budget. These individuals point to the foundational role migrants played in the origins of the 3x1 Program and argue that any practices that de-center migrants within the program are unacceptable. They insist that the 3x1 Program belongs to the migrants as much as or more than the government, and that government actors should play a supportive and reactive role following the migrants' lead.

The purist approach is given lip service by nearly all actors, in large part because it anchors the narrative that justifies and legitimizes the existence of the 3x1 Program. However, it has few ardent adherents. Chief among the true-believer purists are a small number of highly engaged and dedicated migrant leaders from the pioneering areas.

4.3.2 *The Pragmatic Approach*

The *pragmatic approach* takes on many forms but in general accepts a reality in which “real” and “simulated” collective remittance projects can and do co-exist within the 3x1 Program. My experience shows the pragmatic approach to be the most common among all actors. It is also a position that encompasses the widest diversity of perspectives and practices. For migrant leaders, pragmatism toward simulation projects means negotiating with officials, most importantly with municipal presidents, over priorities and funding mechanisms. Often this means individual hometown associations will fundraise and initiate their own projects while also signing off for simulation projects that are driven by the municipal president, or that individual projects will mix funds from an HTA, community members, and the municipal government.

There is a give-and-take between migrant leaders and municipal officials, each of whom have financial considerations and preferences about project selection, and each of whom have leverage because both must support a project for it to be accepted. Migrants have substantial agency in this scenario, but also must contend with the power of municipal and other officials. Migrant organizations often find it strategic to indulge municipal officials with simulations projects, but in so doing do not forfeit their ability to influence the direction of projects and to initiate and control their own projects when desired. For migrant organizations as a group and for individual hometown associations (and for their government counterparts), simulations do not have to be an all-or-nothing decision. The pragmatic approach is a middle ground between the purists’ complete rejection of simulation projects and a resigned acceptance of simulations becoming the norm. In many cases, this arrangement is seen by both migrants and officials as an ideal arrangement that is mutually beneficial.

4.3.3 *The Reliant Approach*

Finally, the *reliant approach*, is one in which simulation projects become normalized as the exclusive or dominant practice. This is a case in which the 3x1 Program is actively engaged, projects are being approved and funded, but the actors involved rely on simulations rather than migrant initiative. Migrants are de-centered and projects are done without their involvement or financial contributions. Reliance on simulation projects is accompanied by an acceptance that municipal governments, together with state and federal officials, will dominate the 3x1 Program within a given domain. The 3x1 Program loses its transnational character and becomes just another government program.

Reliance on simulations can occur at different scales – a specific municipality can rely on simulations, they can become standard practice within a state, or even at the scale of a migrant club or federation. Examples of each are discussed below. Practice and perspective can also vary temporally, with simulations gaining or losing prominence in specific contexts for various reasons. These temporal and scalar points hold equally for each perspective on simulation projects, though as I show below, particular perspectives tend to dominate in specific contexts. In this case, the reliant approach is most likely to emerge in areas with fewer and less organized migrants – in addition to becoming more common in recent years.

4.4 Examples of Each Approach

4.4.1 *In Pursuit of Purity*

The purist perspective insists on a prioritization of migrant agency within the 3x1 Program. As such, it is a position most commonly held by migrant leaders, particularly those associated with strong federations and the pioneering areas. For some of these leaders, an early confrontation solidified their perspective that seemingly small dilutions can eventually

undermine the program and must be resisted. When the 3x1 Program was first institutionalized at the national scale in 2002, federal officials announced it would be called “3x1 Program for Citizen Initiatives” and that any community group could submit projects – migrant organizations but also groups within Mexico. The migrant leaders who had pioneered the model before its formalization saw this as an existential threat. They worried that if the program was not explicitly centered on migrant organizations, they would lose the standing and agency they had built up over years of informal partnerships. The pioneering migrant federations successfully resisted the change, convincing the government to restrict the program to only migrant organizations and to rechristen it as the “3x1 Program *for Migrants*” (M.P. Smith and Bakker 2008; Iskander 2010; Moctezuma 2011; Bada 2014).³⁶ For the cohort of migrant leaders who engaged in this episode, the experience cemented their perspective that institutionalization of the model, while it brought substantial benefits and formalized their engagements, also carried risks of dilution or denaturing. The purists became vigilant and resolute in defending their ownership over the program and demanding it remain migrant centered. In recent years, the fight against simulation projects has become an increasingly central preoccupation. It is worth noting, as a corollary, that this hardline position against the Citizen Initiative model (and now against simulation projects) draws a firm distinction between migrants and community members. On the one hand, migrant associations are assumed to be closer or more in touch with the needs of the origin community than are government officials, but on the other hand, the insistence that only migrant-driven projects can fall under the 3x1 Program demonstrates a practical interpretation that migrants are a distinct group, no longer fully part of the origin community.

³⁶ Iskander argues that the federal government fundamentally misunderstood the partnership approach that migrants had pioneered with state officials, and that the “citizen initiative” formulation of 3x1 reflected Sedesol’s perspective that migrants were just another citizen group like any other, replicating their approach under the National Solidarity Program (Pronasol).

Migrant leaders who take the purist approach also point to competition for funds as a major reason for their stance. Sedesol does not collect or publish data on rejected or non-funded projects, but interviewees generally agreed that the 3x1 Program demand outstrips supply – that the full federal allocation is spent each year and additional projects are excluded due to lack of funds. In this condition of scarcity, purists argue that simulation projects are crowding out club-funded projects (Fieldnotes 24 September 2017, 14 September 2018). Furthermore, they argue that this is a significant de-motivating factor. Migrant groups working on their own projects are demoralized when they are not able to secure funding, especially when they can see that other groups are getting funding for simulation projects. Purists argue that tolerating simulations undermines the motivations for real projects and thus creates a negative feedback loop (Phone Interview 1 November 2017, see also Iskander 2010 p.289).

The purist position is epitomized by the dynamics linked to Zacatecas, where a vocal cohort of migrant leaders has waged an ongoing campaign to exclude and regulate simulation projects. Their primary approach has been to urge other migrant leaders within the state to adopt a unified front against simulations. One way they do this is by challenging simulation projects within the COVAM (Comité de Validación y Atención a Migrantes), the state-level committee charged with vetting and approving projects. At a COVAM meeting I attended in Zacatecas in 2011, debate was dominated by the topic of simulations. Migrant leaders protested that “the program is being abused” (Fieldnotes 16 April 2011). State officials in attendance also condemned simulation projects, but as noted above – and as suggested by the ongoing reality of simulations in the state – this public statement reproduced the official discourse around 3x1 rather than representing a truly-held belief or signaling an intention to exclude simulations.

In Zacatecas, migrants have successfully pressured the state to adopt special rules, above and beyond the federal operating rules that officially govern the program, requiring that only

hometown associations that belong to a federation of clubs may participate in 3x1. Some have argued that this requirement is a power grab within the migrant community, allowing federation officials to usurp and concentrate the power away from individual HTAs (Villela 2014). While not discounting this critique, I take a different view. I interpret the creation of federations as an effort to shift power toward migrants and away from municipal presidents, which is accomplished in part by the scaling up that federations allow. Rather than each club dealing exclusively and individually with their municipal government, uniting in a federation allows the clubs to combine and enhance their standing to interact directly with state and federal officials (González Hernández and González Hernández 2011; Bada 2014). This scale jumping or scalar politics (N. Smith 1993; MacKinnon 2011), as hometown associations band together in federations to re-create themselves as state- and national-scale actors, has been central in their efforts to build agency and escape domination by municipal officials. In the pioneering areas like Zacatecas, migrants have attempted to use their power as federations to keep simulations in check and thus maintain the centrality and agency of migrant organizations within the program. For example, Zacatecan federations used their collective agency to push for bureaucratic changes intended to combat simulations – such as requiring HTAs to be registered and show proof of having at least ten members before qualifying for matching funds through the 3x1 Program (Iskander 2015).

It bears emphasizing that the small cohort of true-believer purists are disproportionately members of strong migrant organizations linked to the historic heartland region. The transnational context is important to understanding how purists have been able to contest and marginalize simulation projects and other perceived threats to the model. The long history of intensive migration, the networked pattern of destinations, the tradition of organizing into hometown associations, the affiliation of HTAs into state-scale federations – all of these factors

helped create a transnational context in which migrants and migrant organizations are legitimized and powerful actors (see Chapter 2).³⁷ Key migrant leaders within this context, determined to safeguard the integrity of the model as they understand it, have employed their significant power to challenge and attempt to exclude simulations.

However, even in Zacatecas where the purist perspective is the most established, purists have not succeeded in eradicating simulations. Fieldwork through early 2019 showed that simulations remain a consistent preoccupation of migrant leaders from the state (e.g. Fieldnotes 10 September 2016, 24 September 2017, 2 November 2018, 9 January 2019). Indeed, it seems likely that simulations have become significantly *more* common in Zacatecas in recent years. This perception is shared by Cappelletti (2018), who notes in the introduction to her dissertation that simulation projects became an inescapable topic that led her to reframe the study around them. She estimated as many as 60 to 70% of projects *in Zacatecas* might be simulations (Cappelletti 2018, p.79). An earlier study examining projects in Zacatecas and Michoacan between 2002 and 2005 estimated 25% simulation projects (Burgess 2016). Definitive data on the prevalence of simulation projects are not available due to their illicit nature, though later in the chapter I show that some types of simulation projects can be detected in the administrative data and appear to be increasing over time (see Table 4.1).

The mediated empowerment of migrant organizations in Zacatecas and other pioneering contexts has not been sufficient to enforce the purist perspective and end simulations – both because they are logistically difficult to exclude and also because the majority of actors (including migrants and officials) have found simulations advantageous in particular instances.

³⁷ Even in the historic migration region this context is not uniform. Iskander (2015) notes that HTAs from Guanajuato, which rival Zacatecas in terms of longevity and 3x1 activity, have tended not to form federations and as a consequence have not built nearly as much agency or standing.

The persistence and expansion of simulations reflects the limitations of the purists' agency as well as the diversity of perspectives on the simulation question, even among migrant organizations themselves. The following section examines how more pragmatic approaches to simulations shape common practices and implementations.

4.4.2 Pragmatism in Practice

Many actors embrace and repeat the purist narrative, centering migrants as a way of justifying the program's existence, while in practice they take a pragmatic approach. For example, the purist narrative is often repeated by officials who deny that simulations are common, declaring that they go against the nature of the program and should not be permitted. The head of the 3x1 Program at Sedesol told me that the program can only be justified if there are indeed migrant contributions and involvement. He told me in no uncertain terms that he considers simulation projects to be "exceptional cases," stating, "don't be fooled, they are very infrequent." He claimed that 99% of projects have legitimate migrant participation and funding (Interview 22 April 2016).

Still, he admitted simulation projects do exist and said his staff in Sedesol's Mexico City headquarters are divided on how to respond. Some are purists who want to root out all simulations, while others, including himself, accept that the program mechanics make it infeasible to preclude simulations completely and that anyway the recipient communities still benefit from completed projects, even simulations. This discussion with the program director was representative of how many officials engaged the question, repeating purist narratives while adopting a more pragmatic approach in practice (e.g. Phone Interview 4 December 2017). The bureaucratic ambivalence about the role of simulations within the 3x1 Program, particularly among federal officials, helps explain their proliferation.

Villela (2014) described a similar dynamic among Zacatecan migrant leaders in California, with the same individuals making public statements demanding the full exclusion of simulations, before admitting in private that they also have signed for simulation projects that their municipal government would fund without migrant help. I also found that nearly everyone I interviewed, migrants and officials, would rehearse the purist narrative, but also have participated in simulations at some point. For most officials and migrants alike, the purist narrative is a rhetorical device rather than a literal interpretation, just like the director's 99% claim. In practice, they are pragmatists.

For pragmatists, the purist narrative is often appealing and intuitive, but it is not an absolute truth nor a self-contained logic. They often take a permissive approach that finds room, depending on the situation, for “real” migrant-funded projects, simulations, and projects that combine elements of both. For example, in the context of a recent struggle over simulation projects displacing club-funded projects, a migrant federation leader sent a rallying message to his fellow club leaders that, “hopefully if we stay united, we can make (the government officials) see that it's not so easy to mess with the migrants” (WhatsApp message 10 October 2017, my translation). He took a stand against simulations in that moment because he shared others' perception that simulations were crowding out real projects. However, this same migrant leader's own organization regularly participates in both simulations and “real” projects. He is not reliant on simulations to the exclusion of migrant-funded projects, but neither is he a purist opponent of simulations; he joined the fight against them in one moment, but goes along with them in others. This is emblematic of the pragmatic approach.

The pragmatic approach also reflects structural pressures and incentives that are created by the policy itself, though unintentionally. The most consequential of these are the incentives created by the existence of a designated budget allocation for the program and by the practices

by which it is distributed. Migrant leaders and municipal officials are often united by a desire to avoid what they see as “leaving money on the table” (Interview 1 July 2014).

For municipal officials, the 3x1 Program is an attractive avenue through which to obtain extra resources that can be deployed flexibly. Officials see the federal and state matching funds allocated to the program as free money, and often consider not claiming “their share” to be equivalent to leaving money on the table. A former municipal president explained that securing extra funding streams through programs like 3x1 was the most important part of the job (Interview 28 April 2016). The 3x1 Program is particularly attractive to local officials because the criteria for obtaining and disbursing the funds are more permissive than for most federal allocations (e.g. Interviews 27 April 2016). This makes the funds politically valuable, as they can be used to complete campaign promises or for high-profile projects that enhance the standing of the mayor and his or her party. Mayors might even prefer simulation projects over “real” projects despite needing to cover the intended migrant contribution, because they have more freedom to select the project according to their own political logics and to take sole credit (though mayors often take credit regardless).

The “leaving money on the table” perspective also helps explain why migrants agree to sign for simulation projects. Mayors or other officials will often make a pitch to migrants, either existing HTAs or non-organized migrants they are inviting to form a club, explaining that a certain quantity of funds have been allocated for the 3x1 Program and that their municipality can only get a share if the migrants help. If they decline, the officials emphasize, other municipalities will get the money instead. This argument is highly convincing to many individual migrants and migrant groups – by simply signing for simulation projects, they can help bring needed resources to their communities of origin (Interview 27 March 2016, see also Malone and Durden 2018; Villela 2014). Some HTAs do this in addition to their own projects while others exclusively exist

to enable simulations and do not raise funds and initiate projects at all. Among many migrants, this pragmatic embrace of simulations is also palatable because they see basic infrastructure provision as a government responsibility (Fieldnotes 25 April 2016). They are content to enable simulation projects for things like roads or water and to focus their independent efforts and funds on cultural and religious projects – renovating the church, sponsoring the town festival, or improving recreation facilities (Bada 2014, 2015).

The perspective of leaving money on the table does not directly apply for federal or state officials, yet they still have structural incentives to allow or encourage simulations in some cases. The program's federal administrators know that if they do not find a way to spend the full program budget, it will get less money the next year. The 3x1 Program's national director explained this half in jest, noting that for a bureaucrat, failing to spend one's entire budget is the gravest sin one can commit (Interview 18 July 2014). From this perspective, tacit acceptance of simulation projects can be a strategy to ensure the budget is spent down and thus to protect the program's continued viability. State officials adopt the same position, knowing that historically there is strong inertia in the division of the federal 3x1 Program budget between the states, so the best way to guarantee future allocations is to spend down the current budget in its entirety (and to have backup projects ready in case a second funding installment is allocated later in the year, as is often the case). A hardline rejection of simulations is at odds with state and federal bureaucrats' need to approve and complete a steady stream of projects. This reality incentivizes officials to turn a blind eye to simulations or even encourage them in situations in which the officials perceive a need for more projects. As discussed above, this often takes the form of willful ignorance as state and federal officials do not take steps that might allow them to identify or exclude simulation projects. Once established, however, the practice builds inertia and can take on a life of its own, as discussed below.

Across each example, the existence of a formal, institutionalized program shapes actors' perceived incentives. Altruistic motivations still feature prominently as projects are intended to improve quality of life in beneficiary communities, but bureaucratic logics and opportunistic calculations also play a central role. For migrants especially, who are participating in community development voluntarily and on an ad-hoc basis, the existence of the program has in many cases fundamentally altered their perspectives.

One conversation stands out as particularly illustrative of how the structures and bureaucracies of the formal program have influenced migrant participants' thinking and relationship to hometown projects. I was sitting in on a meeting of the Denver Federation of Zacatecan Clubs, listening as the group's leader explained the 3x1 Program to the members of a newly forming club. He talked through the informal origins of collective remittances, the matching structure and evolution of the formal program, and the basic logistics of sponsoring a project for their hometown. Toward the end of the summary, he explained that each club is entitled to four projects per year for up to \$1 million pesos.³⁸ The members of the newly forming club quickly demurred that they could not possibly do that many projects or raise that much money, at which point the migrant leader explained that any surplus beyond their practical capacity could still be accessed to benefit their hometown. He proceeded to explain how they could work with the municipal government for simulation projects to fulfil the number of projects they were "allocated." He also noted that the prospect of access to simulation projects would give them leverage with the municipal officials to make sure their real projects were supported (Fieldnotes 3 November 2017; similar discussions noted in 27 March 2016; 14 September 2018).

³⁸ Approximately USD \$50,000. This refers to the club contribution only – so the total value of the projects in this scenario would be \$4 million pesos / USD \$200,000.

This conversation was striking for multiple reasons. On the most basic level, I knew that the “allocation” of four projects per club was in fact a cap, a maximum limit that in no way was intended as an allocation per club. Although the rule was intended to limit individual clubs from absorbing a disproportionate share of the overall budget – most likely in an attempt to limit simulation projects – here it was being interpreted in a way that actually triggered more simulations. It is another example of the money-on-the-table mindset. Mayors and migrants began to see the \$1 million peso limit as a goal or even an entitlement, but for most HTAs it is a high bar that can only be met with simulation projects. Few clubs have the capacity to organize and fund multiple projects in a single year, let alone *every* year.

This unforeseen interpretation of the bureaucratic structure had re-shaped the migrant leader’s perception of how the program works and was now shaping the first impressions for new hometown association leaders. The approach remains pragmatic, the migrant leader was not advocating for a total reliance on simulation projects but rather for a strategic mix of real and simulated projects that in his view maximized their hometown impact and their leverage with local officials. Regardless, the internalization of the mindset of not leaving money on the table all but guarantees that simulation projects will play a central role in the 3x1 Program.

It is noteworthy that this story comes from the Denver Zacatecan Federation, a longstanding migrant organization linked to the pioneering region. We must bear in mind that although the main proponents of the purist approach are migrant leaders from the pioneering areas, the group is not monolithic and many within these organizations take a more pragmatic approach. The pragmatic approach, with its mix of simulation and migrant-driven projects, is widespread across numerous contexts. Whereas the purist approach is primarily associated with the pioneering areas and the resigned approach is most common in non-traditional migrant-

sending areas, the pragmatic approach has a much more diverse geography – including coexisting with the other approaches in many places and transnational contexts.

The role of simulation projects in the pioneering areas also has important temporal dimensions. Many vociferous opponents of simulation projects had previously taken more pragmatic perspectives. The same actors now advocating for a complete elimination of simulations previously subscribed to the perspective that facilitating simulations *in addition to* funding “real” projects could be a valuable point of leverage in their relations with municipal officials. This was often described as a stylized one-for-one model, in which the HTA would pick and fund their priority project and the mayor would support it in exchange for the club’s signature (but not money) for her own chosen project (e.g. Interview 17 July 2015). The town would get two projects and both migrants and local officials would exercise agency in a cooperative process. With time and the multiplication of simulation projects, however, the (now) purist migrant leaders’ perspective shifted. They began to see simulation projects as uncontrollable, as a tool that had escaped their grasp and could only be reigned back in through complete elimination. After noting that his club had historically supported both simulation and “real” migrant-funded projects, one leader opined that given the competition for funds and the loss of migrant control, he had reconsidered and no longer supports simulation projects (Fieldnotes 14 September 2018).

The perspectives among Zacatecan leaders seems to be shifting from pragmatic toward more purist rejection of simulations, but even there the pragmatic, permissive approach has established an inertia that will be difficult to overcome. In a conference call among Zacatecan federation presidents, a longstanding opponent of simulations challenged the other leaders, asking, “will we really take charge and stop simulations?” He continued, “if we want to see a change in Mexico, we have to start with ourselves” (Fieldnotes 9 January 2019). The other

leaders agreed and committed to stop simulation projects, but some still voiced concerns indicative of an ingrained pragmatic perspective. They worried that if they really did cut out all simulation projects in Zacatecas, the 3x1 Program expenditures for the state would drop dramatically, perhaps by more than half. They also worried that simulation-dependent clubs would quit their federations and look for other ways to keep doing simulations, potentially fracturing the longstanding agreement that only federation-aligned clubs could participate in 3x1 in the state. This conversation revealed the limitations of purists' ability to resist simulations and highlighted the potential fragility of the alliances and networks that migrants from the state have built. There is substantial inertia around both the practice of simulation projects and the pragmatic perspective that accepts them, suggesting that the renewed calls for a purist stance on the question are likely to remain in the realm of rhetoric while simulations continue unabated, even in the pioneering areas.

Finally, it is important to recognize that even defining a "simulation" versus a "real" project can be tenuous given the commonness of a mixed funding scenario. Although I have focused on pure simulations, with zero money coming from an HTA, or pure classic projects, with the entire migrant share coming from an HTA, in reality projects commonly mix migrant, beneficiary, and municipal government funds within the designated migrant share. In the common parlance of the program's participants, municipal governments will "complete" the migrant share when funds are short. One migrant leader justified the practice by saying, "it's fine for municipal governments to contribute, as long as the clubs are also contributing" (Fieldnotes 24 September 2017). He suggested the ideal situation is for the HTA to raise as much as it can, and if that's not enough to ask the hometown community to contribute, and finally if the migrant share is still short, to have the municipal government complete the amount.

The above example highlights another common practice, allowing or requiring the hometown beneficiaries of projects to contribute. Migrants and officials both claim the practice gives beneficiaries a sense of ownership and cultivates civic engagement in the non-migrant community (Interview 17 July 2015; Phone interview 1 November 2017). They furthermore contend that only an artificial separation can be made between migrant and beneficiary community contributions. A municipal official in Zacatecas explained, “I say it’s the same thing. Because, for example if we look at (X) community, they do a project and maybe the money comes from here. But later, the family, they have their kids in the US... to make a contribution they draw on those resources from the US” (Interview 11 February 2011). A Zacatecan migrant I interviewed similarly stated that the community funds often come indirectly from migrants in the form of family remittances, thus claiming a sort of equivalence (Fieldnotes 18 July 2015).

These examples demonstrate the complex and fluid interpretations of what roles are proper and just for migrants, community members, and the government. Often, the question actors face is not simply whether or not to engage in a simulation project, but whether a project is a “simulation” or “real.” If the HTA raises funds but falls short of the 25% required, do they take a pragmatic approach and ask the mayor to complete their share? Do they take a purist approach and wait another year to raise more funds? Might they ask hometown residents to help raise the migrant share – and in this case, is it a simulation or real? The fact that the majority of actors take a pragmatic approach to questions around simulation projects in part reflects that following both the rules and the spirit of the collective remittance model is not always black and white.

4.4.3 Reliance on the Rise

Simulation projects were an unforeseen and unintended practice within the 3x1 Program,

a mutation that emerged early on and has existed within the program across numerous iterations. Nowhere have simulations been eradicated, but in those areas where migrants are strong actors and are motivated to contest and limit simulations, the practice remains somewhat marginal. In contrast, there are many cases in which simulated projects have become the norm for the 3x1 Program. This pattern is associated with contexts in which the balance of power is tilted toward officials and away from migrants, or in which migrants are not organized and have no effective power. These dynamics are often found in areas with small or recent migration flows, typically outside of Mexico's traditional migration heartland region.

In this section, I discuss examples in which simulations have become the norm, where the 3x1 Program's application has become reliant on simulations. I analyze the contextual factors and power dynamics that facilitated the solidification of a reliant approach. This section builds from the detailed exploration in Chapter 3 of how and why simulations came to dominate in the state of Yucatán. The main examples are discussed at the scale of Mexican states, but as noted elsewhere, patterns in practical application can emerge at various scales. For example, even within the pioneering areas there are particular translocal pairs of municipality and club that rely exclusively on simulation projects despite being in states where simulations are not the norm. In my fieldwork with the Denver Zacatecan Federation, some member clubs held frequent fundraisers and collected donations to sponsor projects, while another club exclusively signed for simulation projects and was linked to a municipal government within Zacatecas that had established simulations as the local norm (e.g. Fieldnotes 5 March 2017; 9 January 2018).

Localized municipality-club reliance on simulation projects is often associated with a particular history and relationship between migrants and local officials. With the institutionalization of the 3x1 Program, its profile within Mexico was elevated and many officials learned about the program and aspired to introduce it in their jurisdictions. Given the

program's structure, this led municipal officials to seek out and cultivate connections with *paisanos* living in the US, inviting them to register hometown associations to access 3x1. A survey showed that these invited clubs are now more common than independently formed groups (Duquette-Rury and Bada 2013). There are certainly examples of invited clubs that evolve and mature into strong, independent HTAs (e.g. Interviews 12 April 2016, 4 December 2017), but in many cases the result is a weak organization with limited organizational or fundraising capacity that mostly serves as a rubber stamp for simulation projects. In extreme cases, the clubs cannot truly be said to exist – they are “ghost” or “phantom” clubs that exist only on paper and solely to facilitate simulation projects. There is very little, if any, migrant agency in this scenario; instead mayors and municipal officials are the driving forces behind projects. Phantom clubs are an example of the reliant approach to simulation projects becoming dominant at the municipal scale, which can occur within states where simulations are the norm or where they are marginal. For example, studies in pioneering states like Michoacan and Zacatecas found evidence of phantom clubs and examples of localized reliance on simulations (e.g. Moctezuma 2011; Bada 2014; Burgess 2016; Cappelletti 2018).

Reliance on simulations can emerge at different scales, but I focus on two examples from my research that demonstrate the centrality of simulations in particular states. First, in Chapter 3 focusing on Yucatán, I found that simulation projects have been normalized throughout the state. Through a confluence of factors, implementation of the 3x1 Program in Yucatán went from a faithful, grassroots replication to a nearly complete reliance on simulation projects within just a few years. Mirroring the rhetorical exaggeration of the federal official quoted above, a Yucatecan migrant leader complained that simulations now account for 99% of 3x1 projects in the state (Interview 30 April 2016). In Chapter 3, I explored the Yucatán example in detail and analyzed how the simulation pattern emerged and how the transnational and translocal contexts

shaped the program's re-grounding. One key observation is that as simulations became normalized, and as migrant agency in the state declined, the door was opened for further mutations of the model. The same Yucatecan migrant leader alleged that with simulations firmly in place as the standard approach, corrupt migrants in the US have begun selling access to the program – creating phantom clubs and offering to sign for projects in exchange for a kickback (Phone interview 25 April 2016).

In a second example, a resigned reliance on simulations also dominates in the state of Tlaxcala, where the “loaning” of documents became common practice. Similar to the example in the newspaper clipping that introduced this chapter, registered clubs in Tlaxcala routinely allow others to use their status to access the program. The pattern in recent years is that a few clubs will lend their signatures to vouch for projects across the state. These are still simulation projects, with the municipal government (or less frequently the beneficiary community) providing the intended migrant share of funding, but with the added twist that the club signing for the project is not otherwise connected to that municipality. In a classic simulation, migrants are helping bend the rules to enable projects for their own community, whereas in loaned projects they are helping officials from a different place illicitly access the program.³⁹ This practice is not unique to Tlaxcala, as will be demonstrated below. One study made passing reference to the practice occurring in Zacatecas and Michoacan, describing it as HTAs “sponsoring” projects for communities lacking their own club (Burgess 2016, p.154). In the following paragraphs, I refer to clubs that facilitate projects across multiple municipalities as

³⁹ It is likely that the clubs loaning their signatures receive some form of benefit – monetary or otherwise – though in Tlaxcala I did not hear any specific allegations of “selling” access. A brief discussion of loaned signatures in Campeche state did include explicit mention of HTA leaders and municipal officials “reaching an agreement” in exchange for loaned signatures to access the program (Fieldnotes 26 January 2016).

polylocal HTAs, while the classic single-site HTAs are by contrast monolocal. It is important to emphasize that these polylocal HTAs are loaning documents to facilitate projects in multiple areas, but are not substantively connected to these multiple places – that is, they are not “polylocal” in the sense of being made up of members from all of the communities in which they are signing for projects.

I first became aware of the existence of polylocal loaning of documents to sponsor projects while doing fieldwork in Tlaxcala in early 2016. As I chatted with a municipal staff person on the sidelines of a training event that Sedesol put on for local officials, she mentioned that her municipality does not have any registered migrant clubs, so in order to participate in the 3x1 Program they “borrow” the registration from another club (Fieldnotes 19 February 2016). She explained that there are a lot of migrants from her area and the municipal government has encouraged them to form a hometown association, but it has not happened. The town’s migrants go to many different places and most are undocumented, so getting them to organize has been a challenge. In addition, most migrants from Tlaxcala go to East Coast destinations like New York and New Jersey, as do migrants from the neighboring state of Puebla (see R.C. Smith 2005), and thus do not encounter the dense, pre-existing HTA networks that migrants to places like California and Texas find. The confluence of non-traditional destinations, dispersed migration patterns, and undocumented status thwarted municipal officials’ attempts to invite a club to form.

Having failed to create an invited HTA of their own, the official found an existing club from another municipality who were willing to loan their registration documents to allow her municipality to access the 3x1 Program. At the time of our conversation, the municipality had done 3x1 Projects as simulations using loaned documents – that is, with municipal funds and with the signature of a polylocal HTA that is otherwise not connected to the place – each of the previous three years and was preparing to do the same for a fourth year.

The municipal official's story of loaned documents and simulation projects was not an anomaly, but rather turned out to be common practice in Tlaxcala. I confirmed the prevalence of simulation-by-loan in later interviews with staff from the Sedesol branch office (Interview 5 April 2016), local officials in charge of public works in two rural municipalities (Interviews 6 April 2016), and a prominent Tlaxcalan migrant leader in the US (Interview 4 May 2016). Mirroring the earlier conversation, one of the municipal project coordinators explained that his community also has many migrants but no registered clubs, so they too had been participating for the last three years using borrowed documents. When we spoke, he was searching for a new club through which to route their projects because the club that loaned documents to the municipal government the previous year had not renewed its registration. "We're almost at risk of losing this resource if we don't manage to find a club's registration (to borrow)" (Interview 6 April 2016). The public works director in another municipality I visited, which also has participated in the 3x1 Program with simulation projects and loaned documents, said that from her perspective coordinating with migrants is "not very necessary." Managing 3x1 projects is "really no different than any other public works project," and they leave the migrant engagement aspect in the hands of the state's Sedesol branch (Interview 6 April 2016). The 3x1 projects in these examples are simulations, without any engagement or financial contribution from migrants, in which the municipal government borrows documents from an unrelated HTA to gain access to the program and then directly selects, plans, funds, and executes the projects.

Administrative data also corroborates the prevalence of the loaned document pattern in Tlaxcala. From 2014 through 2017, *every* HTA active in the 3x1 Program in the state worked in more than one municipality; all were polylocal. Over those four years, twenty-three Tlaxcalan

municipalities had 3x1 projects but only six distinct clubs were active in the state.⁴⁰ The club that loaned its registration to the project coordinator mentioned in the first example above did the same in three other municipalities. One HTA signed off for projects in *eleven* municipalities – putting the lie to its description as a *hometown* association. In the most extreme example, in 2014 and 2015, a single club lent its name to projects across three different states – Tlaxcala, Puebla, and Veracruz.⁴¹

These examples clearly show that within the state of Tlaxcala, a reliant approach to simulation projects dominates, with loaned documents allowing a small number of polylocal clubs to facilitate simulated projects in a large number of municipalities. Local officials justified this (illicit) practice by noting that their municipalities really do have emigrants – and thus, by implication, deserve access to the 3x1 Program – but the emigrants are not organized and do not contribute for community projects, so municipal officials instead borrow documents and do simulation projects. Similar to the prior example of the “leaving money on the table” mindset, the simulation-by-loan trend shows that the existence of a federally-institutionalized program provoked opportunistic reactions from local officials who are determined to access these funds. Officials from the state branch of Sedesol were fully aware of this reality, describing it as less than ideal and noting that they are trying to encourage more genuine engagement between municipal officials and migrants, but in practice going along with and approving simulation projects and loaned paperwork (Interview 5 April 2016).

⁴⁰ The only exception is a club that sponsored a single personal productive project (expansion of a convenience store) in 2016 and does not appear anywhere else in the records. Because they did not sponsor any community benefit projects, I have excluded them from the calculation.

⁴¹ Based on the 3x1 Program’s administrative records, but also confirmed in conversation with program officials (Fieldnotes 19 February 2016).

Although none of my other study sites matched the blatant dominance of loaned documents observed in Tlaxcala, curious trends in the national program data suggest that it is happening in other areas as well. Although it is impossible to detect cases of loaned documents definitively in the program's administrative data (or definitively identify simulation projects more generally), I estimate the prevalence by proxy by identifying HTAs that are working in multiple municipalities. Hometown associations, as the name implies, are typically organized around a single place of origin – at least in the case of Mexico, most commonly at the municipal or sub-municipal level (e.g. *ranchos* or small communities that fall within a municipality, called “localities” in the official Mexican government terminology). Given the specific hometown orientation of classic Mexican HTAs, it is reasonable to imagine that all or most polylocal HTAs that appear on paper to sponsor projects in multiple municipalities are in fact loaning their registration and signing for simulation projects in the non-home communities. Put another way, it is unlikely that hometown associations are raising and donating funds for projects in *someone else's* hometown.⁴²

Identifying polylocal clubs is not a perfect measure of loaned documents. For example, in a few cases clubs are oriented to a larger-scale conception of “hometown” or are organized around a common destination rather than a common origin, which could explain doing projects in multiple municipalities. For example, an official from Sedesol noted that migrants participating in Canada's temporary farmworker program have begun to register HTAs made up

⁴² While here I discuss HTAs loaning their signature for projects in multiple municipalities, there is a parallel to other versions of simulation projects. In the example described earlier of Zacatecan clubs leveraging simulation projects to ensure their migrant-funded projects were also approved, it is common to see a smaller-scale version of the “loan” phenomenon. Recalling that HTAs are often aligned with a sub-municipal locality, the simulation projects municipal officials ask them to sign for are often in a different locality within the municipality. Thus, a sort of intra-municipal “loaning” of HTA documents is common in Zacatecan simulation projects.

of migrants who work together in Canada but are from all over Mexico. In this case, the clubs do not fund community projects, in part because they do not share a hometown, but instead are used to access support for personal productive investments that are available to HTA members (Interview 5 April 2016). However, this example is quite unique and the reality remains that the vast majority of HTAs are indeed linked to a single hometown. There are also questions of data quality, especially in the early years of the program when the recording of club names into the federal project database was haphazard, making matching difficult.⁴³ Notwithstanding these issues, based on my field experience and detailed review of program databases, I am confident in arguing that these are minor issues and that identifying polylocal HTAs is a good proxy for simulation-by-loan projects. (The inverse does not necessarily hold – monolocal HTAs might very well engage in simulations, just not via loaned documents across municipal lines.)

As demonstrated above for Tlaxcala, the prevalence of loaned documents can also be discerned in the program data for other states. Table 4.1 summarizes data from the 3x1 Program's third year of operation (2004) and from a decade later (2014). The table shows the number of active HTAs in each state (groups that completed at least one 3x1 Project during the year), the percent of active HTAs that registered project(s) in only a single municipality (monolocal HTAs), and the corresponding percent of active HTAs that were linked to projects in multiple municipalities (polylocal HTAs). The states are grouped into geographic regions that reflect migration trends, following Durand and Massey (2003).

The table reveals a few important trends. First, there are obvious regional differences in the prevalence of clubs active in multiple municipalities, my proxy for simulation-as-loan

⁴³ Sedesol staff at each branch office were responsible for data entry and many did a poor job. For example, for 2004 the Tlaxcala entries list the club president's name instead of the club name, while the Guanajuato data just list a US state of residence instead of any identifying information about the club (thus the need to exclude 2004 Guanajuato data from Table 4.1).

projects. The Historical region, which includes most of the pioneering migrant organizations and states, had fewer polylocal HTAs than the national average in both time periods. The state of Zacatecas remained below both the national and Historical region averages in both time periods, as did Jalisco which is the state that absorbs the largest share of the 3x1 budget. Other states with strong migrant organizing traditions, including Oaxaca and Guerrero in the South-Central region, also have a clear dominance of monolocal HTAs.

In contrast, the Border region saw its percent of multi-municipality activity balloon to more than 40% of clubs in 2014. In addition, in 2014 the states of Tlaxcala, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Tamaulipas, Sonora, and Estado de México – mostly non-traditional migration states – had half or more of active HTAs working in multiple municipalities instead of a single hometown. The regional and state data reinforces the conclusion that the loaned document pattern exists beyond just Tlaxcala, and it appears to be more prevalent in non-traditional migration contexts.

Second, the table shows a clear shift over time toward greater reliance on simulation-as-loan projects. In 2004, only 5% of clubs nationwide were polylocal. By 2014, the figure had more than tripled, to 17%. This increase coincided with the diversifying geography of the 3x1 Program as it expanded out from the pioneering areas to the rest of the country. The prevalent multi-municipality clubs in non-traditional areas are highly likely to be cases of loaned documents enabling simulation projects. The key states in the Historical region maintained high rates of monolocal HTAs in both time periods, meaning the shift was largely driven by increased participation in non-traditional areas. My extensive fieldwork in Zacatecas and with Zacatecan migrant organizations provide qualitative support for this reading of the data. My research did not turn up any examples of polylocal clubs in Zacatecas. Simulation projects are present in the state, though sometimes contested and subject of controversy, but loaning documents to sponsor projects outside a club's home municipality seems a bridge too far for Zacatecan HTAs. This is

Table 4.1: Summary by state of hometown associations active in the 3x1 Program in just one municipality or in multiple municipalities; 2004 and 2014.

		2004			2014		
Region	State	Active HTAs (count)	Mono-local HTAs (%)	Poly-local HTAs (%)	Active HTAs (count)	Mono-local HTAs (%)	Poly-local HTAs (%)
Historical	Aguascalientes	17	100	0	9	67	33
Historical	Colima	2	50	50	6	67	33
Historical	Durango	--	--	--	27	89	11
Historical	Guanajuato	50	--	--	56	89	11
Historical	Jalisco	151	99	1	68	93	7
Historical	Michoacan	95	93	7	63	83	17
Historical	Nayarit	17	100	0	10	100	0
Historical	San Luis Potosi	43	100	0	12	75	25
Historical	Zacatecas	80	94	6	91	92	8
	Historical region	405	96.6	3.4	342	88.4	11.6
Border	Baja California	1	100	0	10	90	10
Border	Baja Calif. Sur	--	--	--	--	--	--
Border	Chihuahua	2	100	0	5	0	100
Border	Coahuila	--	--	--	--	--	--
Border	Nuevo Leon	9	100	0	11	55	45
Border	Sinaloa	4	100	0	7	100	0
Border	Sonora	--	--	--	11	45	55
Border	Tamaulipas	1	0	100	5	40	60
	Border region	17	94.1	5.9	49	59.2	40.8
Southeast	Campeche	--	--	--	6	67	33
Southeast	Chiapas	6	100	0	8	0	100
Southeast	Quintana Roo	--	--	--	2	100	0
Southeast	Veracruz	2	100	0	10	80	20
Southeast	Yucatan	6	100	0	32	88	12
Southeast	Tabasco	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Southeast region	14	100	0.0	58	72.7	27.3
South-Central	Distrito Federal	--	--	--	--	--	--
South-Central	Guerrero	10	40	60	83	88	12
South-Central	Hidalgo	14	93	7	36	64	36
South-Central	Mexico	6	67	33	11	45	55
South-Central	Morelos	3	100	0	11	91	9
South-Central	Oaxaca	26	100	0	29	93	7
South-Central	Puebla	4	100	0	15	73	27
South-Central	Queretaro	--	--	--	44	98	2
South-Central	Tlaxcala	51	100	0	3	0	100
	South-Central	114	92.1	7.9	232	82.8	17.2
	All States	570	95	5	680	83	17

Data source: SEDESOL (*Secretaría de Desarrollo Social*).

likely a result of the scrutiny that strong migrant organizations apply to the 3x1 Program's functioning in Zacatecas – given the known affiliations between HTAs and specific hometowns, it would be extremely obvious that a project somewhere else was a simulation, which would attract unwanted attention and likely result in rejection of the project.

As demonstrated in this section, in some areas simulated projects and loaned documents have become the norm, especially in states outside the pioneering region. Polylocal HTAs and loaned documents are a specific sub-set of the wider phenomenon of simulation projects. Whether achieved with phantom clubs, polylocal clubs and loaned documents, or through other means, the reality is that simulation projects have become the normal procedure in many contexts. The reliance on simulation projects demonstrates the depth of mutation of the collective remittance model. In these cases, the 3x1 Program truly is “above all, a program for municipal presidents” (Meseguer and Aparicio 2012, p.173).

4.5 Simulation as Policy Mutation

This chapter focuses on simulation / aval projects, an illicit yet widespread practice within the 3x1 Program, with the goal of better understanding how mutations of the collective remittance matching model are influenced by its re-grounding in diverse contexts and dynamics across multiple scales. Simulations exist in almost every context where the 3x1 Program has operated, eliciting a range of responses – the stylized purist, pragmatic, and reliant perspectives outlined above. The prevalence of simulations also varies greatly between cases. Strong migrant leaders in the pioneering areas have vigorously contested the practice and kept it marginal, while in many non-traditional contexts the practice has been amplified and has become the norm. As I demonstrated in the previous sections, there are regular patterns running through differences in

context and power dynamics to arrive at different approaches to simulation projects and different levels of reliance on the practice.

In the case of the 3x1 Program, power and context are inextricably intertwined through the migration histories and patterns of each place, including the translocal and transnational connections that might exist. Migration intensity alone is not a direct determinant of migrant voice and agency in the program (or in the place more generally), but logical links between the two are borne out empirically, at least on an anecdotal level. Experience suggests that more migration over a longer timespan increases the likelihood of migrant organizing, especially given the frequent reality that migration is highly networked and migrants from a particular community often concentrate in one or a few prevalent destinations. Migrant organizing does not automatically materialize once a threshold of migration intensity or concentration is met, but these trends certainly facilitate organizing – which is a key element for migrants to develop as legitimate actors in relation to their home towns and regions. Similarly, strong migrant organizations do not necessarily take a purist perspective against simulations, but there do seem to be clear links between context, organizing patterns, and perspectives on simulations.

The agency of migrant actors is an important factor in understanding their imbrication into power structures, including political dynamics and patterns of clientelism or accountability. The mutation of the program, the dynamics of re-grounding in a new place, is shaped in large part by these questions of context and power. Who gets a say in how the program is implemented? How are competing goals and interests negotiated and accommodated within the program structure? Does the 3x1 Program operate under different power dynamics than other government programs in the place, or is its governance the same as always – is it just another program? Put another way, does the 3x1 Program become the center of a distinct assemblage, or is it incorporated as a minor element in existing local governance structures?

The logic of the model assumes a dynamic in which migrants and government actors engage in a partnership with shared, if unequal, agency. When this is not the case, when migrants lack agency or the power differentials are too great, mutations are inevitable because the underlying assumptions do not hold. Likewise when migrant actors do not make the demands for “good governance” and transparency that are expected of them. This is the situation under which simulation projects became amplified. The inapplicability of program assumptions opens the door for mutations, and simulations arose as a hallmark mutation because they can be accommodated within the program requirements and are compatible with existing power structures. In short, the mutation is precipitated by the ability of municipal presidents and other government officials to assert dominance and bend the program to their needs. The policy model assumes migrants will possess and exercise agency sufficient to foreclose this cooptation, but that is often not the case.

The policy mobilities framework emphasizes analysis of assemblage, mobilization, and mutation. In much of the literature, mobilization takes center stage, emphasizing the power to designate success or failure and to initiate or direct the mobilization of policy models. The globetrotting consultant or policy “guru” is the archetypal lead in these examples focused on the mobilization phase (Larner and Laurie 2010; Ward 2011). Consultants and policy boosters did indeed play a key role in mobilizing the 3x1 Program as a model of success, but its expansion is best understood by focusing on how it is being replicated and reproduced. In the present analysis, the primary focus is instead on assemblage and mutation – emphasizing the contexts in which the model was developed and reproduced. Power remains central, but the paramount dynamic is over who controls and shapes the re-grounding of the policy in each new context.

The chapter showed that where migrant organizations have built social and political capital and exert it to challenge simulations, the practice can be kept in check. Where migrants

are marginalized and exercise little influence, or where they have embraced the simulation model, simulations have been amplified and become the norm. On a basic level, there is a power struggle between migrant organizations and government officials over whether migrants can demand their own program and insist that it be managed differently than normal. As noted earlier in the chapter, this power struggle is ingrained in the model. The emergence of the 3x1 Program in Zacatecas and the transnational communities of the historic migration heartland represented a crystallization of migrant agency – not that they were displacing or overpowering government officials or traditional power players, but that they were laying claim to some degree of agency and voice (M.P. Smith and Bakker 2008; Moctezuma 2011). Institutionalizing the 3x1 Program was a way of officially recognizing, and in the process (re)creating and reinforcing, the migrant agency that had been developed and negotiated over years of informal interactions, organizing efforts, and scale politics (Iskander 2010).

In new contexts where those processes had not occurred, the arrival of the 3x1 Program did not inherently or automatically shift dynamics to empower migrants as actors. Instead, where migrants had little power and were unorganized, the existing power holders found ways to access the resources available through 3x1 without inviting new power sharing dynamics. Simulation projects became the most important and widespread mechanism for this goal. Simulations allowed municipal officials and local power players to incorporate migrants into a subordinate and inactive role that unlocked resources without losing control. The policy model assumes migrant hometown associations playing a lynchpin role, but as we have seen, the existence of the program has spurred a flurry of HTA formation that exists only on paper or only in the loosest sense of the term. Migrant organizations of the type assumed in the model simply have not emerged in large numbers. Meanwhile, phantom clubs and polylocal HTAs and other unexpected forms have emerged and proliferated.

In addition, the establishment and normalization of simulation projects across a variety of contexts reverberated back to the pioneering, where the question has been continually reopened, or never quite resolved. Unable to eliminate simulations, and at times engaging with them as a strategic tool in negotiations with officials, migrant leaders from the pioneering groups have in recent years faced a renewed challenge around simulations. With the practice becoming mainstream in many applications of the 3x1 Program, the balance between pragmatic and purist perspectives continues to be debated among pioneering leaders. Could a concerted push succeed in eliminating simulations once and for all? Could and should migrant leaders from the pioneering areas influence practices in other contexts? If simulations continue to exist in the rest of the country, would pioneering leaders be unnecessarily handicapping themselves by refusing the practice? Clearly, the amplification of the simulation mutation cannot be ignored, even by the most powerful and organized migrant leaders. The purists find themselves increasingly operating in a landscape dominated by pragmatism and reliance on simulations. The mutation has perhaps become the mainstream.

4.6 Campeche Case Brief

This chapter focuses on simulation projects as a prime example of policy mutation. To complement the discussion of simulations and further the analysis of mutation, in this section I add a brief case study describing how the 3x1 Program has been employed in Campeche, a state with very little international migration. The application of the policy in Campeche has not been dominated by simulations in the same ways as some other non-traditional contexts, yet other

types of mutations and unexpected practices emerged.⁴⁴ Local actors interpreted the policy in ways that made sense to them and fit the context, but that clearly differ in understanding and intent from the classic case. This brief example contributes to the overall analysis of policy mutation by showing another way the policy has been mutated through re-grounding in divergent contexts.

The Southeastern state of Campeche has the second lowest international migration intensity in Mexico and the third lowest 3x1 Program expenditures among participating states. The inclusion of Campeche in my fieldwork initially was driven by convenience, but in the end became a revealing example in its own right. I had already scheduled fieldwork in the neighboring state of Yucatán and decided to add on a brief sojourn to Campeche to see how the model was functioning in this small, marginal replication. Over two visits, I conducted a handful of interviews and observations with Campeche-based federal officials, municipal officials, migrant leaders who were in Mexico at the time, and community representatives of migrant organizations.

The application of the model in Campeche was idiosyncratic in a variety of ways, but what initially caught my attention was a unique linguistic tic. Rather than speaking of clubs, hometown associations, migrant organizations, or any of the terminologies I had encountered in my diverse fieldwork, the people I interviewed in Campeche consistently talked about the “*toma de nota*” as the descriptor for migrant groups. *Toma de nota* is the bureaucratic term for the registration that a group of migrants must obtain to participate in the 3x1 Program. These forms come up frequently in discussions of the 3x1 Program, but nowhere else had I heard the term

⁴⁴ Interviews in the state did reveal some presence of simulations and loaned documents, but it did not seem to be a dominant practice, at least in the key municipalities that have been most active and account for the majority of Campeche’s 3x1 expenditures.

toma de nota used in reference to the group itself. For example, a migrant leader said, by way of introduction, “I’m the president of the *toma de nota* in (X) community” (Fieldnotes 26 January 2016). My contemporaneous notes from a later interview with a municipal official captured my surprise at repeatedly encountering this strange usage: “Again the language of ‘toma de nota’ dominated – he never spoke about clubs, but rather about tomas de nota” (Notes from a phone interview 8 February 2016).

It is telling that any reference to migrant organizations, the purported protagonists of the 3x1 Program, was being replaced by reference to a registration form merely meant to document clubs’ existence. The bureaucratic requirements were centered, while the idea of migrant *clubs* or *organizations* seemed not to be on anyone’s mind. As I continued examining the Campeche case, it was clear that the actors involved – including officials, migrants, and community members – did not think of migrant organizations as participatory bodies with group agency and a social dimension. Instead, a particularistic model dominated, focused on family and small-group investment projects. The linguistic practice – substituting the bureaucratic term for the more common language of “clubs” – betrayed the reality of an idiosyncratic implementation of the program, a localized mutation.

The 3x1 Program is not an obvious fit in the non-traditional migration contexts found in Campeche, yet when officials from the state’s branch office of Sedesol learned about the program they felt a responsibility to promote it and try to secure some of its funds for the state – another example of the “money on the table” mindset driving uptake of the program when and where it otherwise might not have occurred. Two federal officials I interviewed in Campeche explained that most municipal governments were initially uninterested, until one community in particular took interest, completed numerous successful projects, and thus eventually generated more interest around the state (Fieldnotes 26 January 2016). In my second visit to Campeche, I

traveled to that community in the southern part of the state to interview a local official who is seen as the 3x1 Program expert in the state, see completed and planned projects, and talk with community members who have helped manage 3x1 projects (and who were themselves returned migrants).

The little 3x1 participation that does exist in Campeche has been driven by the initiative of a few small groups of migrants and their families located in the southern part of the state. Many of the families in this area had in decades past migrated internally to Campeche from other parts of Mexico and thus have connections to international migratory networks more typically associated with the historic region (Fieldnotes 26 January 2016, 25 April 2016, see also Schmook and Radel 2008). After learning about the 3x1 Program, they began leveraging it as a resource for investments in small-scale cattle operations, which are the main economic activity in the area. Groups of neighbors and families, including in Mexico and the US, would pool resources into the matching program to complete mutually beneficial projects like drilling wells or installing water tanks in shared pastures. The local official who has helped organize these projects stopped at various places to point out improvements made through the 3x1 Program and explained how these upgrades have allowed local ranchers to increase the quality of their beef and begin selling in more lucrative national markets (Fieldnotes 25 April 2016).

The focus on group productive projects was so dominant that the first traditional community project in Campeche, repaving streets, did not come until the fifth year of program activity in the state. The first four years saw nothing but investment projects.⁴⁵ Migrants and

⁴⁵ The 3x1 Program has a specific “productive project” component, which operates under a 1x1 model (migrant investment is matched by federal funds) and has a distinct set of rules. However, the investment projects described here that have been central in Campeche are being submitted as standard 3x1 Projects. Because they have typically been communal investments among a small group of families or associates, they fall into a grey area – still meeting the requirements for standard 3x1 projects but being closer in character to the 1x1 productive model. The local Sedesol managers reported that the reality that most

community members from Campeche did not have a notion of or ambition for collective remittance projects in the classic sense but rather saw the 3x1 Program as a resource that could be accessed in service to their individual and group financial goals. The individuals I spoke to did not see themselves as members of a transnational club, but rather as families and businesspeople trying to improve their local economy. They ridiculed the way other municipalities in the state have begun using 3x1 for “beautification” projects – the kinds of infrastructure work that is indeed the mainstream and most traditional use of the program nationally. They pointed out that their investments in the cattle industry have allowed them to bring on new employees, contrasting that to what they mocked as the alternative – a frivolous focus on fixing up the town plaza, where unemployed people have a nice place to pass their time (Fieldnotes 25 April 2016).

Beginning with economic investment projects stands in stark contrast to the archetypal trajectory of hometown associations that begin with church renovations, move on to infrastructure projects, then finally target job-creation investments only after many years of community projects, if ever (García Zamora 2006, 2007). It reveals a particular relation to the 3x1 Program borne of localized re-assemblage of the policy. Rather than following the classic model, which in any case they were unfamiliar with, the early adopters in the state saw the policy as a resource and determined how best to make use of it according to their own logics. In this light, the unusual manner of speaking about “tomas de nota” instead of clubs is a symptom of the distinctive ways the model is being used – the unique assemblage that it has been incorporated into.

projects are a form of private investment has led the state government at times to decline to participate in 3x1 projects in Campeche (Interview 26 January 2016).

4.7 Conclusion

The 3x1 Program is a prominent example of a diaspora policy targeting community development in migrants' origin areas. As a policy, it emerged from a specific context of intensive and highly-networked migration and a history of migrant organizing. A policy assemblage was constructed by migrants and officials to solidify the model within a specific transnational context. The policy was mobilized nationwide through the implementation of the 3x1 Program by the federal government. This series of events reinforced the stability and legitimacy of the policy assemblage in the pioneering contexts, but also exported the model to be replicated in numerous new and vastly different contexts. In these replications, the policy was mutated as local actors worked to adapt to the policy, and to adapt the policy to their contexts. One of the most impactful mutations was the amplification of simulation projects, which have been my main focus in this chapter. Simulations were not just a localized mutation, but rather have remade the practical meaning of the policy, including reverberating back to the pioneering contexts. The brief Campeche case study gave an example of how more localized and specific mutations of the model have also occurred as it was re-grounded in new contexts.

This chapter presents an extended analysis of simulation projects, framing the practice as a mutation of the "original" 3x1 Program and the collective remittance matching model. I examine the ebb and flow of simulations, including spatial and temporal patterns and changes, and the ways the practice is shaped by perspectives, contexts, and relationships. Tying back to the policy mobilities framework that structures this analysis, I draw from these examples to argue that assemblage and mutation are two sides of the same coin. Policy models are assembled within specific context(s) and are necessarily mutated when applied in new, different contexts. At the same time, those mutations can feed back into original contexts. The original assemblage is not static nor permanent, but instead mutations of the model become part of the landscape

within which the original policy applications must be maintained and reproduced. Once the policy is mobilized it becomes divorced from its origin contexts. The deterritorialized and mobilized policy, in addition to being reterritorialized in various contexts, must in a sense be periodically / continuously reterritorialized in the origin contexts – due to changes in contextual factors that alter the policy’s relation to the place, and due to mutations in the model that have remade it and require (re)accommodation.

Second, the process of mutation is nothing more than a mobilized policy being messily mashed up in a new assemblage in a new place where context, history, power, etc. again play a key role. That is to say, mutation is an assemblage process in its own right. That we refer to one example as “assemblage” and another as “mutation” reflects the fact that our point of reference is the mobile policy that we are “following” (Peck and Theodore 2012). We conceptualize it as a mutation of the policy because the policy is our object of interest. Were the place of re-grounding our focal point, we would instead ask how this new policy element was incorporated and accommodated within an evolving, localized assemblage. Or indeed, with a different temporal focus we might instead see the re-grounding as an element in the original assemblage of a future policy that was influenced in some way by this one. The line between assemblage and mutation, then, depends on the perspective and aims of the researcher.

From the point of view of replication sites furthest removed from the original milieu, it might not make sense to talk about how the 3x1 Program was mutated. Rather, the analysis that would seem locally relevant is of how some new program was mandated from on high – the 3x1 Program being established as national policy, and state branches of Sedesol pushing municipal governments to find ways to engage it – and how local actors incorporated and put it to use. The example from Campeche demonstrates this perspective. Local actors – including officials, migrants, and non-migrants – used the program in locally-relevant ways, incorporating the

program and its resources into the existing economic-governance assemblage. From this perspective, rather than talking about mutations to the 3x1 Program, one might more logically think of the 3x1 Program as a mutation that required re-stabilizing the local governance assemblage.

The focus on mutations and the deep dive into the specifics of simulation projects allows me to contribute to broader literatures. First, as outlined above, the focus on mutation helps refine the policy mobilities literature. Most work has focused on mobilization, with relatively less focus on the facets of assemblage and mutation. In this chapter, I bring mutation to center stage and sketch some of the links between the different phases of the policy mobility process. In noting that assemblage and mutation are tightly intertwined and often differentiated more by the perspective of the researcher than by the mechanics of the process, I highlight the limited nature of policy – the groundedness in place and time of even the most global, mobile models.

Second, examining the results of replications of a high-profile diaspora policy contributes to debates in the literature and in policymaking. The reach of diaspora policy is rapidly growing and countries are increasingly looking for models or inspirations from elsewhere. Yet as this example shows, the process of designating and replicating “best practices” is fraught.

Replications within Mexico served to emphasize just how extraordinary the origins of the 3x1 Program are, particularly in terms of migrant organization and agency but also in terms of government engagement and coordination. Analyzing the emergence and spread of the simulation pattern could be framed as a story of degradation and corruption of the model, but I think it is more constructive to take it as a caution. Trying to institutionalize and legislate the extraordinary instead serves to reveal the scope of the ordinary. Creating a 3x1 Program around a remarkable and unique translocal assemblage did not result in creation or proliferation of similar contexts. Instead, the replication and re-grounding of the model in quite ordinary contexts has

resulted in mutations that are now rebounding back to the original contexts and threatening the stability of those policy assemblages.

Chapter 5

Spaces of Diaspora Policy

5.1 Introduction

Diaspora policies are broadly positioned as a form of participatory development practice, with migrants being incorporated as actors in economic and community development plans. In the case of the 3x1 Program, the participatory framing has been made explicit. In 2015, the official objective of the program was updated to insert specific mention of participation. The program's general objective now specifies, "to *strengthen social participation* to boost community development through investment in (development) projects" (my translation, emphasis added).⁴⁶ I asked about the modification of the objective during an interview with the Program's federal director, and he stressed that this was not some casual or random change, but instead represented a purposeful and telling emphasis. He talked about the potential of the program to contribute to the shift from people taking a passive view of a clientelist state to instead being involved in meaningful community participation and engagement with the state (Interview 1 April 2016).

The particular form of participatory governance pursued through the 3x1 Program follows an established model in Mexico – the formation of citizen committees to co-manage projects with the local authorities. Jonathan Fox (2007) examines Mexico's various attempts at participatory rural development and governance, noting that dozens of programs have been built around this participatory model with community councils or project committees. The 3x1

⁴⁶ Diario Oficial de la Federación (México), 27 diciembre 2014. Reglas de Operación del Programa 3x1 para Migrantes, para el ejercicio fiscal 2015. 2.1. Objetivo General.

Program is a direct descendant of this institutional lineage (Goldring 2002; Burgess 2005; Iskander 2010). Fox showed that earlier models of participatory management in rural areas only resulted in accountability or community empowerment in a minority of cases, largely where communal traditions and autonomous organizing were pre-existent. In places lacking these conditions, the “invited spaces” created for participation were easily subverted by local elites and incorporated within the status quo (Fox 2007, p.216; see also Fox 1994). The shortcomings of past participatory development policies in Mexico and the broader critiques of a degraded model of participation within the development industry frame my examination of the spaces of diaspora policy. I ask whether the 3x1 Program specifically, and diaspora policy more broadly, can deliver on the promise of creating spaces for migrant participation and empowerment as pathways to community and economic development.

The model of collective remittance matching programs is built around a conception of migration and remittances as having a participatory community element that can be cultivated – there is an expectation of *creating* transnational and/or translocal spaces in which migrants can be active players in community development, together with origin community members and local governments. The 3x1 Program is founded on this assumption and purports to increase participation and strengthen migrants’ connections to Mexico and to their hometowns.

Throughout the dissertation, I investigate these expectations by analyzing how the program functions in different contexts. I ask where and when diaspora policies function as advertised, and in other places and times, what do they do instead and why? In this chapter, I synthesize from the earlier chapters and cases to ask what kinds of participatory spaces are (re)produced by and around the collective remittance model.

The chapter lays out an argument that the expansion of diaspora policies has seldom created spaces of active or autonomous participation. Instead, the created transnational spaces

often are dominated by officials at various levels, with migrants exercising only symbolic or trivial agency. The government invites migrants to become hometown development actors, but this invitation is made based on unrealistic expectations of the ways migrants should act as transnational benefactors. Because this unrealistic expectation cannot be met in the majority of cases, these invited spaces instead are remade as simulations of transnational space, simulations of migrant engagement. In short, the invited spaces opened by the federal policy have become a fertile ground for municipal government machinations *because* the policy is based on unrealistic expectations of replicating an extraordinary example.

The 3x1 Program is an attempt to institutionalize the extraordinary, but instead it succeeds in revealing the ordinary. The extraordinary in this case, which the Program treats as a normal and replicable expectation, is for transnational spaces to be arenas of contestation and cooperation between state and migrant actors who interact on the level of peers. The expectation is for groups of migrants to organize and fund hometown projects on a significant scale and with reliable regularity. Instead, the ordinary, what emerges in the majority of cases, is that migrants are indeed engaged with and interested in contributing to their origin communities but are unable to take on the role of consistent benefactors and agenda-setting actors. This mismatch creates a void that is filled with simulation projects and other mutations, as discussed in Chapter 4, leading ultimately to the simulation of transnational engagement and participatory spaces themselves.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Surveys estimate that between 4% and 15% of Mexican migrants participate in hometown associations (Orozco and Rouse 2007; Orozco and García-Zanillo 2009), yet 60% of Mexican municipalities have participated in the 3x1 Program.

5.1.1 Approach

Previous chapters provide the foundation on which the current analysis builds – including the example of mediated empowerment that has persisted in Zacatecas and the pioneering contexts (Chapter 2), the shift in Yucatan and other new origin areas to a near-complete reliance on simulation projects (Chapter 3), and the more detailed examination of the simulation phenomenon (Chapter 4). In this chapter, I employ a comparative approach to highlight common trends and structural elements within the collective remittance matching model. I draw from diverse case studies from Mexico's 3x1 Program to demonstrate the emergence and evolution of the associated transnational spaces, as well as analyzing how policy features, formal and informal practices, and contextual factors shape the spaces. Focusing on spaces of diaspora engagement through a comparative empirical lens emphasizes regularities and similarities, along with important differences, paying particular attention to the ways institutionalization of the 3x1 Program has shaped these spaces. Comparative analysis examining differences and changes across both space and time reveals the structural effects of the program and allows me to sharpen understanding of the ways migrants exercise agency and voice by detailing the transnational spaces within which they act. Comparison between cases also helps me make sense of changes within the original contexts of this policy, analyzing the ways institutionalization and expansion of the model have (re)shaped these pioneering spaces of diaspora policy.

The chapter begins with a review of the literature and framing, after which it is structured in three sections, each of which reflect on different aspects of the spaces of diaspora policy. First, I highlight elements of concrete materiality and physical mobility that undergird metaphorical transnational spaces. Second, I examine how the distinct motivations and approaches of actors working at different scales interact to structure these spaces. Third, I examine how these transnational spaces have changed over time.

5.2 Framing and Literature Review

5.2.1 *Spaces of Participation*

The explicit employment of the narrative of participation in the 3x1 Program's objective mirrors a similar embrace of participatory practices in the development field more broadly. Across continents and contexts, participation has become a mainstream facet of development policy. The trend to participatory development has been critiqued as a shallow framing that has not brought fundamental shifts in the politics of power and knowledge around development (Cooke and Kothari 2001; Cornwall and Brock 2005). These critiques give us pause regarding the embrace of this discourse by the 3x1 Program's federal managers. What does it mean for the program to be participatory? In practice, who is participating and under what conditions or constraints? And what kinds of spaces are created within which participation can occur?

This chapter builds on the critical development studies literature to discuss participatory models of governance and the spaces they create or influence. In her influential critique of institutionalized participation in development programs, Cornwall (2004; see also Cornwall 2002) formalizes a typology of "invited" and "popular" spaces. In this nomenclature, invited spaces are social arenas established or dominated by the government, international development agencies, or others in positions of power, in which those actors pre-define the boundaries and limits of possibility. In contrast, popular spaces are autonomous and grassroots arenas where fundamental challenges to the status quo are possible. Complicating the picture, Kesby (2007) points out that participatory spaces are not only shaped by state powers, but also by social dynamics that often limit the engagement of women, minorities and other marginalized groups within both invited and popular spaces. Cornwall further notes that the reality of participatory spaces is dynamic. "Boundaries between 'invited' and 'popular' spaces are mutable, rather than fixed; 'popular spaces' can become institutionalized, with statutory backing, and 'invited spaces'

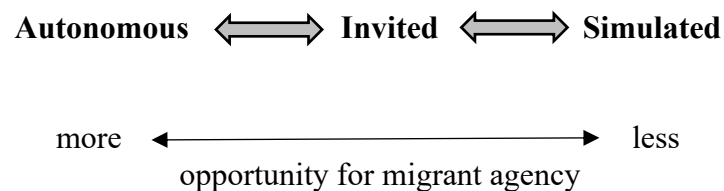
may become sites for the articulation of dissent, as well as for collaboration and compromise” (Cornwall 2004, p.2). Reflecting on this indeterminacy, I conceptualize invited and popular spaces along a continuum rather than as a dichotomy.

Miraftab (2004) describes a similar dynamic in her analysis of spaces of citizenship and political participation, describing a division between “invited” and “invented” spaces. Of invited spaces she notes, “this perspective assigns to the neoliberal state the agency to grant status as civil society, and defines the spaces where citizenship can be practiced” (Miraftab 2004, p.4). In other words, participation is corralled into spaces where the state (or development agencies, etc.) can maintain control and preclude fundamental change or existential challenges. Fox (2007) applies these ideas in his study of local governance and accountability in rural Mexico, shifting to a nomenclature of invited versus autonomous spaces. As noted above, Fox examines participatory governance models that directly influenced (and co-exist beside) the 3x1 Program that is my focus here, concluding that invited spaces created by participatory government programs only rarely evolved into autonomous spaces. These authors provide the foundation upon which I build my analysis of the spaces of diaspora policy. I adopt Fox’s nomenclature of invited and autonomous spaces purely out of stylistic preference, but note that the invited/popular, invited/invented, and invited/autonomous typologies converge on the key ideas.

In this chapter, I add a third category to this model of invited / autonomous spaces, motivated by my empirical work on the 3x1 Program – *simulated spaces*. Carrying over the nomenclature from Chapters 3 and 4, I argue that not only projects are being simulated in the 3x1 Program, but that the very spaces of participation are being simulated. In simulated spaces, there is no substantive participatory element – migrant organizations are enrolled merely to sign off for government-controlled initiatives, or in some cases the very existence of a migrant organization is falsified. This stands in contrast to invited spaces where opportunities for participation are

opened, even if constraints and limitations shape them. Simulated spaces do not truly exist; the transnational spaces of migrant agency that are central to the collective remittance model are not created, their creation is faked. If invited spaces are defined by power imbalances between state and society actors, in simulated spaces this imbalance is intensified to the point that only state actors exercise agency. Simulated spaces can be thought of as an extension along the same continuum as invited and autonomous spaces, as illustrated in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1: Conceptual diagram, continuum of types of participatory spaces.



In simulation projects, migrant organizations are no longer financial contributors and their ability to engage as legitimate actors is severely eroded (not to mention that in many cases their *interest* in engaging is minimal). This reality repositions the migrant organizations, not as benefactors and development actors as envisioned, but rather more like the consultative councils that have proved to be of limited effectiveness in other Mexican examples. Fox warns that “official claims that engagement with government consultative processes will involve actual power-sharing always warrant a high degree of skepticism” (Fox 2007, p.217). In the case of simulation projects, migrant organizations take on *at best* a “consultative” role, or often no active role whatsoever. It is in these scenarios that invited spaces are replaced by simulated spaces – there is no true creation of transnational or translocal arenas within which migrants, officials, and others interactively engage in development interventions.

5.2.2 *Spaces of Diaspora Policy*

States with significant emigration are increasingly seeking to engage with their diasporas. Gamlen (2014a) characterizes the main policy types as “tapping” or “embracing” – focused on extracting resources from migrants or focused on fostering national identity ties and engaging migrants as political subjects. This stands in sharp contrast to earlier eras in which governments often ignored or shunned emigrants and reflects the emergence of a global norm of diaspora governance (Gamlen 2014a; Gamlen, Cummings, and Vaaler 2019). The spread of diaspora policy reflects a resurgence of transnationalism from above (cf. M.P. Smith and Guarnizo 1998). Diaspora policies enroll migrants as particular types of actors and open particular types of spaces for their engagement (Kunz 2011; Mullings 2011). These spaces of participation created through diaspora policies are the focus of this chapter.

Before getting into analysis and application of “spaces of diaspora policy,” the following paragraphs lay out my meaning and use of the term. Spaces of diaspora policy are a specific subset within the broader concept discussed above of spaces of participation. They are transnational social and political arenas in which migrants, officials, and community members act and interact in the process of putting diaspora policies into practice.⁴⁸ My use of the term emphasizes regular or systemic features of diaspora policy, with emphasis on the creation and the nature of the arenas within which the policies are enacted. This conceptualization is predominantly of figurative rather than physical spaces – consisting of relations and transactions between migrants, officials, and community members. These spaces are shaped in important ways by diaspora policies, in this case the 3x1 Program, in addition to the influences of context

⁴⁸ Stephen (2007) emphasizes that because these spaces, which she refers to as “transnational social fields,” are transnational / translocal, non-migrant members of the origin community also become transnational actors.

at multiple scales – including local histories and politics, migration patterns, relations between different levels of government, and influences of destination contexts as well (see Cornwall 2004).

The centering of *policy* in this terminology emphasizes the ways these spaces are fundamentally shaped by and inseparable from states' outreach and engagement with emigrants. The existence of diaspora policies, including their forms and variations of practices, are paramount to understanding the organizations and the spaces created. However, it is just as important to recognize that these spaces are not unilaterally created by the origin state and its diaspora policies. Rather, they are created multilaterally through the interactions of multiple actors and forces, importantly including migrants and migrant organizations themselves. This can include diverse implementations of policy as well, as seemingly unrelated practices seep into and influence the spaces of diaspora policy. In short, diaspora policies are central in these spaces, but the spaces are not simple creations of those policies – they are complex arenas in which policy plays a key but not determinative role.

5.3 Metaphors and Materiality of Transnational Space

The transnational spaces of migration have been of enduring interest to geographers. The broader social science literature on transnationalism centers a metaphorical conceptualization of transnational space, which geographers complicate and refine by emphasizing the material and structural elements that underpin metaphorical transnational spaces (Collyer and King 2015). The concept of transnational spaces encompasses elements from the concrete landscape, like remittance-funded houses that incorporate destination-country architectural influences (Lopez 2015), as well as more abstract elements, like the classic and much-debated notion of a localized culture of migration (Reichert 1981; Kandel and Massey 2002). The spaces of diaspora policy

are another specific type of transnational space, centering the influence of states' increasing and intensifying outreach to emigrants (Gamlen, Cummings, and Vaaler 2019). Although the definition above refers to the spaces of diaspora policy as fundamentally metaphorical, the following paragraphs serve as an aside to highlight some of the ways these spaces are underpinned by elements of materiality and (im)mobility that are fundamental to the creation of these (metaphorical) transnational spaces. Acknowledging and briefly examining these influences sets the stage for further analysis of the changing dynamics of the spaces of diaspora policy across intersecting figurative and literal dimensions.

5.3.1 Buildings and Meeting Places

A prominent example of the materiality of the spaces of migrant transnationalism are a set of dedicated meeting spaces for migrant organizations, including the headquarters buildings of the Zacatecan Federations in Los Angeles (FCZSC) and Chicago (FCUZI) and the “Casas” of migrants from other states (e.g. *Casa Puebla* in New York). These buildings are important places for migrants to gather and engage in diaspora-centered activities. They are physical spaces in which the transnational imaginary is (re)produced, where migrants interact with each other and with hometown and origin country officials, think about hometown issues and discuss interventions, raise funds, and enact and confirm migrant and transnational identities. It bears mentioning that these buildings are often purchased and/or maintained by Mexican state governments to encourage and subsidize diaspora organizing. Mexican consulate branches also serve as important specific locations in the creation of transnational spaces of diaspora policy, functioning as sites for bureaucratic and formalistic consecrations, including the registration of new HTAs to allow participation in the 3x1 Program.

A second example of the materiality of transnational space are the temporary but no less concrete physical spaces of migrant organizations' meetings and conferences. At these face-to-face events, migrants and officials interact and engage in ways that produce, shape, and maintain transnational space. This second physical space is itself transnational, as these face-to-face meetings and conferences take place in a variety of locations on both sides of the border – informal meetings in migrants' homes, visits of hometown mayors to destinations with significant concentrations of *paisanos*, meetings between migrant organizations from different destination areas,⁴⁹ COVAM meetings or 3x1 Program planning sessions in state and federal government offices in Mexico, visits of migrant leaders to inspect or inaugurate hometown projects, etc. These spaces of physical encounter fundamentally underpin the figurative transnational spaces of diaspora policy on which this paper focuses. At the same time, an assortment of non-spatialized practices also supports these transnational spaces – most important among these are Facebook posts and messages, WhatsApp group chats (which through their non-fee structure erase the distinction between domestic and international communications), and cell phone plans that increasingly include unlimited calls between the US and Mexico at no additional charge.

5.3.2 Mobility, Immobility, and Face-to-Face Encounters

The importance of physical encounter in the creation of transnational space also highlights the central role of mobility, and as a corollary the importance of differential (im)mobility regimes. As has been well documented, the profile of the stereotypical migrant

⁴⁹ For example, Zacatecan federations will commonly invite other federations from around the country to attend their annual banquet. These events serve as important venues for leaders of the various Zacatecan federations to communicate and coordinate (e.g. Fieldnotes 22 July 2017, 11 November 2017).

organization leader is a late-middle aged man, well established in the US with legal status (perhaps naturalized citizenship), financial stability or even wealth, and a flexible schedule that allows travel and dedication of time (e.g. Goldring 2002; M.P. Smith and Bakker 2008).⁵⁰ The successful immigrant entrepreneur is the example *par excellence*, taking on the role of jet-setting migrant leader.

In contrast, participation is substantially limited or made difficult for people who cannot afford frequent travel, for those working long hours or with inflexible schedules, for women whose participation and mobility is circumscribed by patriarchal norms, and most especially for undocumented immigrants.⁵¹ Given trends toward illegalization of immigrants (DeGenova 2002), crimmigration policies (Stumpf 2006; García Hernandez 2013), and the multiplication, internalization, and embodiment of the border (Coleman 2007; Johnson et al. 2011), undocumented immigrants face heightened difficulty and risk even to participate in US-based activities. This might be manifested in reluctance to drive more than necessary to attend local group meetings, or to take the risks associated with long distance or air travel to participate in national meetings or conferences. One of the few HTA presidents I met who lacked legal status in the US mentioned his reticence to pass through TSA checkpoints at the airport, especially in the Trump era. This immobility precluded him from participating in many meetings with officials or with migrant leaders from other areas, whether held in the US or Mexico (Fieldnotes 1 July 2018). Whereas the most prominent migrant leaders circulate within broad transnational fields of activity, the scale of agency for undocumented migrants is severely constricted. This

⁵⁰ Duquette-Rury and Bada (2013) surveyed registered HTAs in 2008 and found that leaders of newer organizations are often higher-educated and more recent migrants, suggesting that the profile of migrant leaders might be shifting in the era of institutionalized diaspora policy.

⁵¹ These categories are not mutually exclusive and participation in transnational migrant organizations is significantly impeded for individuals who are immobilized by multiple and intersecting forms of disadvantage.

demonstrates how US-based structures of (im)mobility powerfully shape transnational engagement and spaces. Individuals without legal status do nonetheless participate in the spaces of collective remittances but their transnationalism is “truncated”, to borrow the term Miyares et al. (2003; 2019) applied to migrants living under temporary protected status (see also Vickstrom and Beauchemin 2016).

An important but often overlooked facet of this issue is the pervasive immobilization of origin community residents. Especially in typical rural origin communities of the historic migration heartland, residents are frequently denied even tourist visas to enter the US, which limits their ability to participate in the transnational development activities of which they are the target beneficiaries. In one of the rare treatments of this imbalance in the literature, Cappelletti notes: “The conduct of the 3x1 Program (in Zacatecas) delineates a binational field of activity that compels all the participants, *except the beneficiaries in the communities of origin*, to move between Zacatecas and the United States” (Cappelletti 2018, p.113, my translation, emphasis added). Other commentators have noted the paucity of agency afforded to non-migrant community members in 3x1 (e.g. Bada 2015), a gap that is reinforced by these structures of immobility. The spaces of diaspora policy, then, are spaces in which migrants and officials are (to varying degrees) empowered to act, while non-migrant beneficiaries are (largely) excluded or kept adjacent as inactive recipients – objects rather than subjects.

5.3.3 Topology and Distance

Another material element of subtle but undeniable importance is the physical proximity of Mexico and the US. Accounts of transnationalism often privilege a topological perspective emphasizing the network links between distant places – yet literal distance between sites has not lost relevance. In this case, in addition to being an integral factor in the evolution of the Mexico-

US migration system itself, the proximity between hometowns and destinations is a facilitating factor in the frequent mobility of key actors. Short distances result in manageable travel times and costs. For example, migrant leaders will often attend weekend meetings in Mexico without even missing a day of work. This stands in stark contrast to the realities faced by transnational actors with more distant origins and destinations. Thus, in addition to the intensive and highly networked nature of Mexican migration, the proximity-driven relative ease of travel is another factor that has structured the evolution of the particular practices, like expectations of frequent mobility and circulation, within the transnational spaces of this diaspora policy.

5.4 Creation of Spaces: Scales and Engagements

5.4.1 Diaspora Policy at the Federal Level

Mexico has been at the forefront of diaspora policy, with efforts at both “tapping” and “embracing” migrants (Gamlen 2014a). In the political realm, dual citizenship rules were relaxed and voting rights expanded for citizens living abroad (M.P. Smith and Bakker 2008). Economic engagements center on facilitating remittances and encouraging investment (Délano 2011). The consular system has also rolled out a menu of services to facilitate migrants’ successful incorporation in the destination country (Délano 2018). Taken as a whole, the Mexican government’s policy toward the diaspora mixes embracing and tapping perspectives, but seems fundamentally based on the logic that helping migrants succeed abroad while also staying connected to Mexico will ultimately yield more remittances and benefits (Délano 2018).

Mexico’s assortment of diaspora policies creates a variety of spaces within which Mexican migrants are invited to participate. These range from the political (absentee voting and even running for office) to the cultural (classes on Mexican history and heritage hosted at consulate offices) but all are invited spaces, examples of transnationalism from above. As such,

officials are opening space for particular types of participation and agency, while at the same time closing off other possible engagements. The invited spaces of diaspora policy both open avenues for participation and contain participation within limited realms. The example of absentee voting from abroad is a particularly clear case. It was announced in 2005 to much fanfare as a new opening for the extended Mexican nation to exercise full belonging, in response to migrants' demands. However, even as migrants were invited to participate, the process was made cumbersome and turnout was abysmal. The concession was effectively limited to the symbolic register by officials worried that widespread migrant voting might upset the political status quo (R.C. Smith 2008; Lafleur 2013).⁵² This is a classic example of invited spaces of participation, where the agency of participants is circumscribed by those in power. A similar critique can be made of the 3x1 Program – spaces are opened for migrant organizations to participate in community development, but these spaces also act as containers. Migrants' agency is contingent upon organizing and remitting (Kunz 2011) and their energies are focused on small hometown infrastructure projects rather than channeling those energies toward national politics or systemic change.

The Mexican government's diaspora policies broadly function on a transnational register, promoting a discourse of the extended Mexican nation and prioritizing a macroeconomic focus on remittance flows – Mexico's largest source of foreign exchange. Two interviews confirmed that the 3x1 Program is firmly situated within that broader effort. The 3x1 Program's director stated that it is “part of Mexico's broad strategic vision for diaspora engagement” or “*acercamiento*,” which is their fundamental directive for the program (Interview 1 April 2016).

⁵² The logistics of voting from abroad have been further liberalized since its initial opening, most notably granting the ability to obtain a voter registration card while abroad. Nonetheless, the 2018 presidential election still garnered only 98,470 votes from abroad, according to the National Electoral Institute. <https://computos2018.ine.mx/#/presidencia/entidad/1/1/2/1>

One of Sedesol's representatives in the US, a frontline liaison between the agency and migrants, reflected, "the program's single most important impact is in promoting organization," which she went on to explain means building a sense of belonging and inclusion and maintaining migrants' ties to Mexico (Interview 17 July 2015). This national / transnational orientation of federal officials creates a mismatch with the practical structure of the 3x1 Program, which is fundamentally translocal. The central actor is the *hometown* association and the basic outputs are community development and municipal infrastructure projects. Unlike voting or citizenship, the program is built around engagement with the hometown specifically.

The mismatch between the transnational focus of federal officials and the translocal mechanics of the 3x1 Program is key to understanding how simulation projects and simulated spaces have emerged. Federal officials are oriented toward the broad and abstract goal of strengthening migrants' ties to Mexico. From this perspective, the details of the small community projects being sponsored and the complicated dynamics between municipal officials and migrant organizations are of minimal importance, as long as migrants are being engaged.⁵³ The federal government creates invited spaces for migrant participation by sponsoring the 3x1 Program, but federal officials seem to take only minor interest in what happens within those spaces. My perspective is federal officials' motives and actions around the 3x1 Program have been inconsistent in part because they continue to pursue a fundamentally transnational set of interests that are mismatched with the inescapably translocal collective remittance model. This

⁵³ The program is also relatively small when judged as a national development scheme – total federal expenditure in 2017 was Mex\$438 million, or about US\$22 million. Furthermore, its developmental potential has been called into question because projects are targeted toward migrants' hometowns rather than the places most in need (McKenzie and Yang 2015), a critique that has not been lost on federal officials (e.g. Sedesol 2014).

mismatch helps explain federal officials' tacit acceptance of simulation projects – the projects are not the point, for them strengthening migrants' ties to Mexico is the point.

5.4.2 Diaspora Policy at the State Level

Sub-national state governments within Mexico play an active role in diaspora policy and migrant engagement. As discussed in Chapter 1, within the 3x1 Program states are an important scale for differentiation. In addition to the state government role in the program, most of the hands-on federal management is conducted by semi-autonomous branch offices located in each state. This situation yields clear regularities within states and differences between them. In states like Zacatecas, the state government is far more actively engaged with migrants than the federal government, with the governor himself regularly traveling to migrant federations' events in the US. The Zacatecas state government also played a fundamental role in the creation of diaspora policies and the strengthening of migrant organizations (Iskander 2010). In other states like Yucatán, engagement with migrants is an afterthought, relegated to a small office within *Indemaya*, the indigenous affairs department. In some instances, state officials have even declined to participate in the 3x1 Program altogether, because they do not see emigrant engagement as a priority (Interviews 17 February 2016, 22 April 2016).

The differentiation between states makes characterization of a state role in diaspora policy difficult. Without trying to identify the specific orientation of each state, I can broadly speak of state perspectives ranging from active engagement to passive participation to outright refusal. These state-scale differences help structure the 3x1 Program for migrant and municipal actors within each jurisdiction, within the bounds set by the federal program.

5.4.3 Diaspora Policy at the Municipal Level

Federal diaspora policies create invited spaces for migrant participation and state officials act in a variety of ways that further structure these spaces, but the municipal scale is the primary level of engagement, the scale at which projects are executed, translocal connections are made, and spaces for participation are brought into being. If the federal policy creates an abstract invitation for generic “migrants” to participate as development actors, at the municipal scale this becomes a very real interaction between officials, migrants, and community members. Or that is, it *can* become a very real interaction – the municipal / translocal is a key scale at which the abstract invited spaces are differentiated along the continuum of autonomous, invited, and simulated spaces of diaspora policy.

Above I argued that federal officials are largely focused on national / transnational strategies for maintaining migrants’ ties to Mexico, which is mismatched with the 3x1 Program’s translocal structure. For municipal officials, the translocal structure fits more obviously. The program funds infrastructure and community projects, which is well aligned with municipal officials’ goals. Migrants are organized around the specific hometown and thus naturally expect to interface with the municipal administration. However, there are still gaps and mismatches at the municipal scale that can impact spaces for participation. Generalizing, the motivations of municipal officials can be thought of as the inverse of the federal – abstract notions of migrant belonging and engagement are often of little interest, while the concrete projects that can be achieved through the program are extremely relevant, especially in rural areas where public works budgets are small (e.g. Valenzuela 2006). The decentralization of governance and increased electoral competition also heighten the 3x1 Program’s relevance to municipal politicians, as it can be an important avenue through which to complete visible projects and garner support (Simpser et al. 2015).

Finally, while I will discuss temporal dimensions in more depth below, it is worth mentioning here that the municipal political cycle also creates mismatches between the 3x1 Program's structure and municipal officials' incentives. Municipal elections run on a three-year cycle, with no possibility for re-election. Given this timeframe, municipal politics demands a short-term mindset. Cultivating immigrant organizations, if HTAs linked to the municipality do not already exist, is unlikely to come to fruition within a three-year cycle – or at least, invited organizations are unlikely to evolve in that time into groups that can raise thousands of dollars and co-manage infrastructure projects, as envisioned by the model. This brings the short-term, infrastructure project focus of municipal officials into misalignment with the longer-term, engagement focused perspective of federal officials.

5.4.4 Diaspora Policy and Migrant Organizing

This chapter focuses on the ways diaspora policies create and shape spaces for participation. Migrants are enrolled through a market membership model as benefactors, investors, and self-reliant actors whose status depends on contributing for the benefit of their hometowns (Bada 2014). In addition to defining the roles in which migrants may participate, diaspora policies also play an important role structuring migrants' organizing patterns. As noted in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.2), the hometown association is the classic unit of organization for Mexican migrants, owing in part to the intensity and networked nature of migration and to prevalent localized imaginaries of belonging. The 3x1 Program was designed to fit with this pre-existing organizational pattern – the hometown association form pre-dates the program.

However, once institutionalized the 3x1 Program effectively locked in the hometown association as the default scale of organizing and engagement. The 3x1 Program is built for HTAs and thus migrants who want to participate must organize into HTAs. There is nothing

inherently problematic about hometown-scale organizing, but neither is it *the* inherent scale at which migrants would organize or diaspora engage. Bada (2014) notes that in earlier eras Mexican migrants tended to organize in national-origin or pan-Latino groups. Mercer, Page, and Evans (2009) profile “home associations” among Cameroonian and Tanzanian migrants. “Elsewhere they are referred to as ‘hometown associations,’ but our preferred term reflects that the ‘home’ place in Africa to which an association refers is not always a town, but may be a district, region, or even a country” (Mercer, Page, and Evans 2009, p.143). In this sense, hometown associations are a product of the 3x1 Program – the program helps structure and reproduce migrant organizing in the specific model of *hometown* associations. The spaces for participation are thus predominantly translocal, built around a hometown association and a hometown. Migrant organizing has at times surpassed this translocal structuring without losing focus on the 3x1 Program, as in the example of federations of clubs, but in the great majority of cases migrant organizations remain at the level of atomized hometown groups. For these HTAs, the municipal government is the primary or sole point of contact and thus an important gatekeeper and influence.

Diaspora policy structures migrants’ engagements through the creation of spaces for participation, but this influence is not definitive. Just as officials act on a diverse and at times conflicting set of perspectives and priorities, which are further shaped by structural forces and incentives, so too do migrants engage in complex ways. Hometown ties are expected to predominate but that is not universally true, as discussed above. Treating migrant organizations as coherent, unitary entities also obscures the internal dynamics and structures that exist among members (Bakker 2007; Waldinger, Popkin, and Aquiles Magana 2008). Likewise, the philanthropic motives assumed of migrants engaging in collective remittances are intertwined with interests like building status or making self-interested investments or improvements, for

example in the case of migrants who expect to return to the hometown in retirement (Licuanan, Mahmoud, and Steinmayr 2015).⁵⁴ Migrants engage in creation and maintenance of translocal spaces because of their affective ties to people and place (Conradson and McKay 2007; Ho, Boyle, and Yeoh 2015) as well as out of a sense of obligation or social pressure to remain engaged with the “translocal village” (Velayutham and Wise 2005).

5.4.5 Scales and Spaces of Diaspora Policy

The spaces of diaspora policy are created through complex interactions between actors who function on different scales and bring distinct perspectives. The transnational actions and engagement goals of federal bureaucrats are refracted through implementation by state-level branch offices. State governments take widely varying approaches, from dedicated engagement to complete non-participation, and mix transnational and translocal perspectives. Municipal governments focus on tapping migrants for concrete projects, often with little interest in embracing or engaging migrants as an independent goal.

The net effect of this complex policy landscape is that the federal government invites migrants to participate as development actors, while municipal governments play an outsized role in the creation of actual spaces of participation. The result is spaces of participation that are structured by transnationally-oriented federal diaspora policy but brought to life by migrant and municipal actors operating at the translocal scale. This structural / scalar mismatch helps explain the rise of simulation projects, as discussed in Chapter 4. Bringing this example into conversation with the notion of invited and autonomous spaces from the development literature, I argue that simulation projects and other manipulations of the 3x1 Program have shifted the

⁵⁴ See Goldring (2004) for a discussion of logics underpinning family, collective, and investment remittances.

dynamic from one ranging between autonomous and invited spaces to a more complex continuum of autonomous, invited, and simulated spaces.

Autonomous spaces of collective remittances include examples of indigenous migrant communities from Oaxaca whose mistrust of government and pre-existing traditions of communal organizing lead them to undertake community development projects outside of the 3x1 Program and forego its matching funds (García Zamora 2005). Invited spaces include those occupied by HTAs that formed specifically to participate in the 3x1 Program and sponsor community projects together with local officials (Duquette-Rury and Bada 2013). The famous case of Zacatecan migrant organizing falls somewhere on the spectrum between autonomous and invited spaces, as seen in the discussion of mediated empowerment in Chapter 2. Simulated spaces are exemplified by so-called phantom clubs, as well as the related phenomena of polylocal clubs and a more general reliance on simulation projects. In these cases, migrants do not participate or exercise agency in any substantial sense. This goes beyond the critique of invited spaces, where openings allow participation but also contain it within boundaries set by more powerful actors, to a reality in which openings are not being created for migrants to participate. The spaces and the participation are simulated, solely in order to access the 3x1 Program's resources. The expected translocal spaces of participation are replaced by merely local spaces of governance, and migrants are neither enrolled as participants nor empowered as actors.

This section used a scalar lens to analyze the spaces of participation that exist around the 3x1 Program. Federal officials structure the program and in a sense open the invitation for participation, but with their transnational orientation focusing on engagement as the end goal, they have little incentive to scrutinize the details of the small, translocal development projects that are the program's physical output. In contrast, municipal governments are the executors of

the specific projects and their incentives are structured around local infrastructure and development, with little reason to prioritize abstract notions like transnationalism. Exploring the mismatching scales of operation and orientation among the players in the 3x1 Program helps make sense of mutations like simulation projects. Simulations, while clearly not meeting the spirit of the program, have been seen as an acceptable compromise by various actors. Projects were being done and migrants were forming hometown clubs. However, this compromise has not remained stable, becoming more extreme and pervasive and leading to a reality in which migrant organizing and spaces for participation are being simulated. The following section builds on this analysis by examining how these dynamics have played out over time and with concurrent shifts in the geographies of the 3x1 Program.

5.5 Creation of Spaces: Times and Places

Policies are not stable, definitive roadmaps for practice, but rather are context-specific assemblages that evolve over time. Policy assemblages shift and mutate with changing economic and political situations, arrivals or dissolutions of other policies, reinterpretations and reframings, etc. In this section, I will review some of the key changes in the 3x1 Program over time and analyze how these temporal shifts have influenced the program's associated spaces for migrant participation. While the section's focus is temporal, there is an inescapable spatial element as well, due to the 3x1 Program's shifting geographies. The program's dynamics and the spaces for participation are much different now, as a national program active in nearly every state, than they were when it existed as an informal arrangement in just a few key areas. I divide the program's history into three periods to structure the analysis: the early era, technically the pre-history of the official 3x1 Program (roughly 1986 to 2002); the peak era, when the model was formalized and expanded (2002 to around 2008); and the late era, in which simulations and mutations have taken

a central role (from around 2008 to present). I show how the landscape of participation has shifted over these periods, from an autonomous / invited continuum to one of autonomous, invited, and simulated spaces for participation, with autonomous spaces becoming ever rarer.

5.5.1 Early Era

Before anything resembling the 3x1 Program existed and before Mexico began engaging with the emigrants, Mexican migrants had organized in mutual aid societies (Bada 2014) and early hometown associations that operated independently (Minian 2017), not to mention an older tradition of hometown associations among rural-to-urban internal migrants in places like Mexico City and Guadalajara (Hirabayashi 1993; Fitzgerald 2008). These organizations and the spaces they created can generally be thought of as autonomous, though Fitzgerald notes that the church played a structuring role at times.

Most accounts point to the mid 1980s, specifically outreach by Zacatecan Governor Borrego in 1986, as the moment when officials in Mexico's historic migration region began engaging with migrants to support collective remittance projects, laying the foundations for the 3x1 Program (e.g. Burgess 2005; Iskander 2010). Contrary to the grassroots mythology of the program, the first agreements for government funds to match migrant contributions have been interpreted as an effort by the dominant PRI party to extend its corporatist model into the transnational arena and reinforce the party's wavering hegemony at home (Goldring 2002; R.C. Smith 2003; M.P. Smith and Bakker 2008). R.C. Smith described it as a "classic corporatist relationship: real benefits in exchange for real loyalty" (2003, p.314). Over time, the pioneering migrant organizations were able to re-orient their relationships toward the state rather than a political party, setting the stage to gain more independence without losing access to resources (Goldring 2002; R.C. Smith 2003). Across the pioneering examples, engagements between

migrants and officials played a key role in solidifying and strengthening the hometown associations and their umbrella federations. Migrant organizations have established significant agency and voice but have always been interdependent with their state partners.

The spaces of participation created around collective remittances have always existed on a continuum between autonomous and invited space. This brief recap of the pre-history of the 3x1 Program highlights the ways migrants' agency was intertwined with officials' influence from the start. Goldring captures the essence of this era, describing early state-migrant engagements as "a set of negotiations in which the national government has more power and resources but in which transmigrants can make significant gains and help to shape the terms of their membership in the nation" (Goldring 2002, p.94). This era is characterized by an evolving landscape of invited and autonomous spaces for participation in which migrant organizations were simultaneously strengthened and channeled in particular directions. It certainly was not an era of complete autonomy, as suggested by the grassroots myth, but the spaces for migrant participation in this era were indeed further along the spectrum toward autonomy compared to later eras dominated by invited and simulated spaces.

5.5.2 Peak Era

The "peak" era does not refer to the peak of migrant organizations' agency, but rather to the peak of activity and enthusiasm for the 3x1 Program, coinciding with its institutionalization in 2002 and subsequent expansion nationwide. This was an era of rapid growth as the program was applied in numerous new contexts and a flood of new migrant organizations formed specifically to participate in the program (Valenzuela 2006; Duquette-Rury and Bada 2013). It was also an era of ascendant optimism about migration's potential role in development (de Haas 2010, 2012; Gamlen 2014b) and the corresponding emergence of diaspora governance as a

global phenomenon (Gamlen 2014a). Compared to the early era, the role of government actors and of diaspora policy became much more central. The activities of migrant organizations were not only being influenced by officials and policies, but the migrant organizations themselves were being invited into existence by the state.⁵⁵

The peak era also saw a rapid diversification of the geographies of the 3x1 Program, expanding into new states and communities across Mexico and drawing in new migrant organizations across the USA. As noted in Chapter 1 (see Figure 1.2 and 1.6), the portion of the 3x1 Program's budget absorbed by the most active pioneering states (Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, and Zacatecas) dropped from 70% initially to 40% by 2014, as more states began participating. While the pioneering groups remained important players, they were no longer the whole story. The geographic diversification brought non-traditional migration contexts into the mainstream of the 3x1 Program and in the process shifted the dynamic further away from strong and autonomous organizations toward a landscape of predominantly young, invited HTAs.

In a follow-up to her book on the origins of diaspora policy in Mexico, Iskander tellingly refers to typical migrant organizations in the post-institutionalization era not merely as HTAs, but as “3x1 HTAs” (Iskander 2015, p.120). This notion of “3x1 HTAs” – hometown associations that are so inexorably intertwined with the 3x1 Program as to be defined by it – perfectly captures the dynamics of the peak era. The spaces for migrant participation shifted along the spectrum toward a clear predominance of invited spaces. Autonomous spaces became rarer and migrant agency within invited spaces more deeply influenced by the program and the officials with whom migrants interact. Simulated spaces also emerged as a small but significant reality, as

⁵⁵ This was not an entirely new phenomenon, see for example Goldring (2002, 2004) regarding the role of state outreach in formation of migrant organizations pre-3x1, but the trend intensified with the model's institutionalization.

evidenced by mentions of phantom clubs in literature from this era (e.g. Frias et al. 2006; Shannon 2006).

5.5.3 Late Era

What I am referring to as the “late” era of the 3x1 Program begins roughly around 2008 with the onset of the economic recession in the US and Mexico and the temporary rule change in 2011 to officially allow non-migrant funds within the program (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.1). As I argued previously, these events marked a turning point in the prevalence of simulation projects. The changing landscapes of the late era are only partially a product of geographic shifts in the program, as its extension throughout Mexico was well under way during the peak era. Instead, the key factor is the increasing reliance on simulation projects. The proliferation of simulation projects in turn was accompanied by an increase in simulated spaces. The independent HTAs of the early era and the invited HTAs of the peak era are supplanted as the hallmark figure in the late era by phantom and polylocal HTAs. The spaces of diaspora policy continue to exist along a continuum from autonomous to invited to simulated, but the center of gravity has shifted definitively toward a spectrum of invited and simulated spaces for participation – with simulated spaces being in reality non-spaces.

The shifts apparent in the late era are driven by the confluence of actors’ motivations perpendicular to the stated goal of migrant-led development. The federal government’s true interest is in maintaining migrants’ connections to Mexico to keep family remittances high, while the 3x1 Program effectively can be seen as a concession in service of that larger goal. For migrants, the mixed and at times competing motives of philanthropy and status building help explain the shift to acceptance of simulations – the projects are (hopefully) getting done, the hometown association is getting (partial) credit, and the difficulty of raising thousands of dollars

is foregone. For municipal governments, it seems that the calculation has evolved over time. Whereas initially municipal officials placed a high value on the resources migrants could contribute, especially in rural areas with small budgets, it now seems that many make the calculation that doubling their money through easy simulation projects is better than quadrupling their money through difficult, slow, and contentious partnerships with active migrant organizations. Each party's goals and perspectives only partially align with the framework of the 3x1 Program, and in the late era simulation projects became the go-to compromise or workaround.

The invited spaces opened by the existence of the policy are increasingly being subverted into simulated spaces, with no opportunities for migrant organizations to participate meaningfully. This is not only a case of creation of new phantom clubs, but also reflects a sort of contraction among many invited clubs. HTAs formed specifically to participate in 3x1 projects exist in invited spaces where policy structures and officials' interventions control much of the activity but where some openings for autonomy can be found. Part of the shift to simulation projects has been the result of invited HTAs ceasing to raise funds and shifting to purely signing for simulated projects. For these organizations and their migrant members, the invited spaces of participation they initially occupied are closing, replaced by simulation projects and simulated spaces. Reflecting on Fox's (2007) wider analysis of accountability and participatory programs in Mexico, this can be seen as a reversion to the mean – if the early era of collective remittance engagements was characterized by a higher degree of autonomy than usual, the late era fits quite easily into the historical pattern of cooptation and closing spaces for participation.

5.5.4 Eras and Spaces of Diaspora Policy

The continued federal support of the 3x1 Program in its current state requires examination in light of the growing centrality of simulations. There is compelling evidence that creation of transnational space is the Mexican state's primary goal for the Program, toward the ultimate aim that migrants continue to conduct themselves in the desired ways, including ongoing remittances and financial contributions motivated by affective and identity ties to Mexico. My research suggests that as simulation projects expand and morph into the simulation of transnational space itself, the Program's efficacy toward these federal interests is increasingly tenuous. Expansions of the Program into new contexts is increasingly unlikely to be cultivating significant new translocal connections or engagements with migrants. The Program remains an important tissue in the dense web of connections between official actors, hometowns, and particular migrant groups like the Zacatecan federations and clubs – but it is apparent that these types of connections remain the exception and are infrequently replicated in new contexts.

In a full accounting, then, the 3x1 Program appears to function as a central reinforcing mechanism to maintain the transnational spaces of the pioneering contexts, while simultaneously being distorted into a (minor) mechanism to reallocate federal funds to municipalities – specifically those that master the manipulation of the Program's bureaucratic systems – with no effective engagement or creation of transnational spaces. Even that interpretation is arguably generous, as the effects of simulation projects are increasingly felt in pioneering contexts. Leaders of strong migrant organizations, who once felt they could use simulations as a point of leverage or negotiation or to build relationships and goodwill with hometown mayors, have made an about-face and now fear that simulations have escaped their control and threaten the model and the groups themselves (e.g. Fieldnotes 16 December 2018). Just as simulation projects can

crowd out classic projects in the competition for budget allocations, so too are simulated spaces replacing and crowding out more authentic spaces of transnational participation.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter rests on two basic arguments. First, I used a scalar analysis to show how mismatches between the transnationally oriented federal bureaucracy and the translocally structured 3x1 Program have allowed municipal officials to dominate the practical implementation of the program, opening the door for simulations. Second, I explored temporal shifts to show how expansion of the 3x1 Program nationwide and the amplification of simulation projects have undermined the model's participatory elements. Some migrant organizations have been able to build power operating within the invited spaces of diaspora policy, but more often even this mediated empowerment within invited spaces has been jeopardized or foreclosed. I conclude that instead of a continuum between autonomous and invited spaces for migrants to exercise agency as development actors, the reality is dominated by invited and simulated spaces – with autonomous spaces increasingly being crowded out.

Early analyses of collective remittances in Mexico revealed that migrant organizations built spaces for participation and agency through a mix of cooperation and conflict with officials (e.g. Goldring 2002; R.C. Smith 2003). In contrast to that story of evolution and building agency to escape historic clientelist domination of civil society groups, my examination of the current state of collective remittances and the 3x1 Program reveals that the story has come full circle. There appears to be a substantial return to clientelist forms, as municipal governments coopt and dominate the program and federal and state officials turn a blind eye. Invited spaces for participation are replaced by simulated spaces. Migrant participation in the 3x1 Program has been trivialized and the concept of “collective remittances” drained of meaning by a growing

reliance on simulation projects. The reality is that nothing is remitted for these projects, nor are they collective in any substantive sense. In the invited and simulated spaces of Mexico's 3x1 Program, the role for migrants is relegated to little more than a symbolic, ritualized registration of hometown associations that exercise little agency.

This reality, then, goes beyond the standard critique of invited spaces in which participants' agency is pre-limited by the ways powerful actors structure the spaces (Cornwall 2004). That critique certainly applies here, but a further dynamic is also perceptible. Non-migrant actors in Mexico, mostly local government officials, have found ways to falsify migrant participation and thus capture the resources associated with diaspora policy. The end result is that the invited spaces of participation do not live up to even that low expectation of a limited opening for participatory agency. (Recall earlier discussion of the ways that even seemingly foreclosed spaces can at times be re-made into spaces of autonomous agency (see Chapter 2, section 2.2.3).) Instead, the invited spaces ostensibly opened by the diaspora policy are effectively closed by the machinations of local governments. The resources made available through the federal program are accessed while the participation of migrants as development actors, however limited or directed it would otherwise be, is prevented altogether. If invited spaces create a winking hope for autonomous agency, simulated spaces foreclose even that small glimmer.

In addition to the identification of simulated spaces, this analysis has demonstrated the utility of multi-scalar and multi-temporal analysis to understand the spaces for participation that are created by and associated with diaspora policies. I was able to make sense of the changing realities of diaspora engagement by moving beyond the default national scale of analysis for diaspora policies and analyzing the differentiated structural incentives facing officials at each level of government, and how each interact with migrants and migrant organizations (see

Koinova and Tsourapas 2018; Délano and Mylonas 2019). The collective remittance model is not uniformly administered by federal officials, but rather is created in each context by a complex cast of actors with diverse perspectives and goals. The 3x1 Program is perhaps unique for the explicit role it assigns to each level of government, but even when this is not the case, a multi-scalar lens can help make sense of the messy realities of diaspora policy. Migrants' multiple, fragmented, and overlapping identities and connections to "home" interact with complex realities of policy implementation. Peeling back the layers helps reveal the full picture and understand how the parts fit together and how the players interact.

As a final point, examining the spaces of participation also brings this work into conversation with governmentality critiques of diaspora policy. A prominent thread of the literature draws on theories of governmentality to understand the ways diaspora policy enrolls migrants as subjects of governance at a distance and disciplines them to conduct themselves in particular ways that fit with neoliberal ideology (Mullings 2011; Kunz 2011; Boyle and Ho 2017). Individual migrants are constructed as entrepreneurial, self-reliant, and dependable remitters, while migrant organizations are constructed as development agents and benefactors. A governmentality reading can be extended beyond subjects to include spaces; "diaspora strategies not only represent a new geographic imaginary and political-economic field, they also involve the *active constitution of new spaces* and subjects" (Larner 2007, p.332, emphasis added). In this way, the current analysis is complementary to the established governmentality critique. Examining the creation of spaces for participation reveals how the shaping of those invited spaces exerts a strong influence on the ways migrants are enrolled as subjects and actors. Invited spaces are opened for migrant organizations to act as benefactors and as development agents, but not in other roles and only if organized into hometown associations.

While examining the spaces of diaspora policy contributes to a governmentality-inspired understanding of the ways migrants have become enrolled as development actors and subjects at a distance, the emergence of simulated spaces complicates the picture. Invited spaces play an important role in diaspora governance by drawing migrants into spaces that are pre-conditioned to elicit particular behaviors and suppress others. From the perspective of federal officials, the key point is that the whole assemblage around collective remittances draws migrants into the role of connected, committed, self-identified members of an extended Mexican nation. If the invited spaces that function as part of this governmental technique are being supplanted by simulated spaces, if migrants are not being engaged in the collective remittance model, then this subject-forming function is also undermined. The efficacy of this particular diaspora policy as a tool of governmentality has been degraded by the shift from invited to simulated spaces.

From one angle, the shift to simulated spaces removes the possibility for participation by migrants who are no longer being enrolled even within the invited spaces of diaspora policy. However, if federal officials take note of the simulation phenomenon and its implications for the broader projects of diaspora governmentality, it may provoke a rethinking. This could represent an opening for the migrant organizations and actors to push for a re-configuration of the spaces within which they participate.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Diaspora Policy

The central focus of this dissertation has been the relationships and interactions between emigrants and the state, and how those are (re)shaped by diaspora policies. Diaspora policies take many forms, from tapping to embracing to governing migrants (Gamlen 2014a), but all are rooted in the notion that origin states have something to gain from their diasporas. Migrants do indeed have much to offer to both origin and receiving societies, but it is far from certain whether the diaspora policy models now in global circulation are effective in maximizing, channeling, or otherwise augmenting those benefits.

One of the most insightful critiques of diaspora policy has been outlined by Ho, Boyle, and Yeoh (2015), who apply a lens of feminist care ethics to critique the current batch of policy models. They argue that diaspora links are fundamentally affective and that extractive policies, in addition to being ethically questionable, are likely to be counterproductive:

The essential logic underpinning diaspora engagement remains consistent from country to country: overseas communities have resources, moral proclivities and emotional attachments, which if harvested properly, represent the potential to accelerate economic growth and development in the home country. This instrumental approach threatens to damage the proclivity of the diaspora to care for their homelands. (p.208) ... Existing diaspora strategies that approach diaspora-homeland relationships as an opportunity (something to be leveraged) rather than as an invitation to act responsibly (something that demands an ethical response) have limited sustainability. (Ho, Boyle, and Yeoh 2015, p.209)

They argue that diaspora policies should be reconstructed to focus on fortifying and nurturing migrants' relationships to family, home, and community – and that development benefits will follow. In Chapter 5, I argued that the Mexican federal government's primary goal has been reinforcing migrants' hometown and homeland ties, yet this remains a fundamentally extractivist goal, centered on reinforcing political legitimacy and reaping economic benefits. The expanding menu of services offered through the consular network appears a step in the direction of a more holistic engagement with migrants, but has not shifted the fundamental focus (Délano 2018).

My research on the 3x1 Program's institutionalization and expansion leads me to similar conclusions regarding diaspora policy. By analyzing mutations of the model and showing how invited spaces have been replaced by the mere simulation of spaces for participation, I call into question its efficacy as an engagement policy. The collective remittance matching model has historically and continues to strengthen longstanding migrant organizations, and in so doing reinforces their ability to participate in the life and development of their origin areas (see Chapter 2). However, examining new replications to judge the 3x1 Program as a policy *model*, defined as having extra-local salience (Peck and Theodore 2010), I found that it has rarely functioned as intended (see Chapter 3). Instead of opening spaces for migrants to participate, either autonomously or within the bounds set by officials, the policy has been mutated and spaces of participation are not truly being created (see Chapter 5). Whereas Ho et al. argue that overly extractive policies can strain migrants' goodwill, I conclude that policies that fail to open space for migrants to exercise agency will reinforce long-held perceptions of a corrupt and clientelist state and discourage migrants from engaging. Effective diaspora policies should engage migrants as people, not resources, and should open spaces for them to participate meaningfully in the life and development of their origin communities.

Diaspora policies also must be able to meet migrants where they are. In Chapter 4, I concluded that the 3x1 Program has failed in many contexts because it attempts to institutionalize and export a truly extraordinary example. Diaspora policy at its best should recognize and support migrants' engagements with their origin countries and communities, *whether quotidian or extraordinary*. On one hand, policies that require extraordinary efforts from migrants are likely to fail because they ignore everyday reality or only work for a small subset of people. On the other hand, policies that do not make space for extraordinary efforts, however uncommon, are likely to fail because they do not inspire or capture the imagination.

6.2 Policy Mobilities

In addition to the specific discussion of diaspora policy, the project also contributes to the critical policy studies literature on mobility. In my estimation, many of the hallmark works in that tradition center on the mobilization of policy – assemblage and mutation are present but take a back seat to examining the circulation / mobilization of *fast policies*. Furthermore, engagements with mutation often center on the way mobilization causes mutations – policies “are also reshaped in, and through, the process of mobilization itself... Policy consultants, for example, make a business of out abstracting certain elements, or ‘lessons,’ from specific policy contexts, moulding them into a persuasive story and then remoulding that story to fit the needs and aspirations of their clients elsewhere” (McCann and Ward 2013, p.10). While certainly important, this perspective keeps the central focus on the globetrotting consultants who peddle fast policies and treat mutation as something of an effect or remainder rather than a central process in its own right.

Focusing on the mutation stage risks getting lost in the details – indulging in empiricism and specificity to understand each unique re-grounding. However, it also offers the promise of

understanding the full lifecycle of a policy, and in particular how mutations feed back into assemblage and mobilization. Reflecting on the insight that policy assemblages have key aspects of temporality, spatiality, and labor – that they are specific, potentially unstable, and brought or held together through work (McFarlane 2009; McCann 2011; Baker and McGuirk 2016) – mutation then becomes a question not only of how a policy is reproduced and/or altered in each re-grounding, but also a question of how existing assemblages are held together and reproduced in light of mutations and pressures from elsewhere. Beyond the initial “creation” of a policy (a questionable idea, that, considering the ways policies are assembled from local bits and pieces of elsewhere – “origins are not what they seem” (Roy 2011, p.310)), the whole process becomes a loop in which assemblage and mutation, in particular, are tightly intertwined. Indeed, reflecting on Roy’s call to question origins, we can in many cases think of the “origin” of a policy of interest as also being interpretable as a mutation of some other, earlier policy(s). For example, in the case of the 3x1 Program, it could alternatively be interpreted as a mutation of the larger National Solidarity Program (Pronasol) – which was the main social development focus of the federal government during the Salinas administration (1988-1994). The assemblage of 3x1 as a distinct policy included borrowing elements from Pronasol, and indeed for a brief period channeling collective remittance projects through Pronasol before the 3x1 Program existed (Goldring 2002; Burgess 2005; Iskander 2010).

Each new application of a policy, whether partial or slavish, is itself a process of assemblage as the model is incorporated and made sense of (through labor) in relation to the already existing policies, practices, history, and interconnections of the place (territorializing) to create a limited and impermanent formation (temporality). When we consider this new assemblage in relation to the pre-existing policy model, it becomes reinterpreted as a mutation – either a locally-specific repurposing of the model, or perhaps the source of a change that will

reverberate and feed back through the model's applications in other places, maybe even the "origin" places. The original assemblage from which the model emerged likewise remains always unstable, such that mutations of the model happening elsewhere potentially become one of the elements that must be accommodated within the work of holding together the policy as a coherent "thing" within an original context.

In one of the foundational works of policy mobilities scholarship, Peck and Theodore establish the importance of mutation, highlighting that "once released into the wild, policies will often mutate and hybridize in surprising ways" (Peck and Theodore 2010, p.173). Critical policy scholars must continue to incorporate mutation as a key facet of policy mobilities, especially given the interconnections highlighted above between assemblage, mobilization, and mutation. I argue that the relative under-engagement with the question of mutation weakens the broader application of the framework. This study helps fill this gap by focusing on mutation and sketching out its links to assemblage and mobilization and the policy mobilities system as a whole.

6.3 The Future of the 3x1 Program

The institutionalization of collective remittances from informal practice into the 3x1 Program coincided with a dramatic scaling-up of the model. Beyond this internal expansion, the early years of the program saw substantial speculation about international replications, with a few actual attempts that were mostly short lived (e.g. in El Salvador, see Nosthas 2006; Burgess 2012). The international buzz has not completely worn off, as witnessed by continued international study trips and demonstrations (Fieldnotes 1 April 2016). However, the once unthinkable now seems more likely than the imagined globalization of the model – a potential

scaling-down of the model, retreating back to its initial sub-national contexts, possibly coincident with a de-institutionalization and return to the status of informal practice.

Anecdotally, the 3x1 Program's dalliance with simulations has not gone unnoticed. When the Morena party and Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) swept into power on a reform platform, the program's budget was initially slated for a 98% reduction. In private conversations, migrant leaders suggested that this cut might be linked to AMLO's anti-corruption push, because 3x1 was seen as being overrun with corruption (Fieldnotes 9 January 2019). Migrant leaders bemoaned, "the 3x1 Program is practically disappearing," and that it was "walking a tightrope" (Fieldnotes 16 December 2018). Vociferous objections from migrant organizations and their political allies succeeded in tempering the blow, but only somewhat – the budget was still cut in half from 2018 to 2019. Within the migrant organizations, optimists (or AMLO partisans) have suggested that anti-simulation purists have an ally in the Morena administration and might finally be able to push out simulations. Pessimists (or AMLO opponents) are already pointing to the dust-up as proof that Morena does not care about migrants (Fieldnotes 22 January 2019). The true nature of the Morena administration's posture toward the 3x1 Program and diaspora policy more broadly remains to be seen.

The new AMLO / Morena administration have said little publicly about the 3x1 Program, but the available evidence suggests that its long-term survival is legitimately in question. During the frenzied days before the budget was partially restored, as migrant leaders held emergency phone conferences and lobbied any officials they could reach, the state government in Zacatecas suggested it would step in and keep the program going as 2x1 if the federal government ended its participation (Fieldnotes 16 December 2016). If the temporary crisis does indeed foreshadow a federal withdrawal, the state response suggests that the model is destined to live on, if only within a few key states.

6.3.1 Policy Recommendations

Policy evaluation and recommendations have never been the focus of this study, which is at its base an academic endeavor. Like other academics, I have often been reluctant to weigh in with policy prescriptions. However, my perspective is that as a researcher whose work has undeniably been an imposition for participants at least some of the time, I owe it to them to offer practical ideas. Migrant leaders have explicitly told me as much – particularly Zacatecan leaders who have been the subject of numerous studies and have learned from experience that little of practical value often comes from them. It is for these reasons that I cautiously offer the following policy recommendations.

While it is likely to be unwelcome, my most fundamental suggestion is that the existence of the 3x1 Program in its current form should be reevaluated. The program continues to play a key role supporting the initiative of “real” migrant organizations, yet any honest observer must concede that unintended uses of the program now outnumber and crowd out projects that follow the classic path. This is the result of creating a policy model around an extraordinary occurrence and expecting it to be repeated in countless new (ordinary) contexts. This should not be taken as a condemnation of the “ordinary” migrants who participate in simulation projects, nor even necessarily of the municipal officials who have come to see the program as a resource that requires “creative” methods to access. But it is clear that perpetuating a model that elicits widespread manipulation – in which indeed manipulation has become the mainstream – is not in the best interests of these actors. Considering that municipal infrastructure investment is the most widespread outcome of the program, policymakers in Mexico should consider how this goal can be achieved through other means. Earlier analyses have anyway called into question the program’s effectiveness as a development intervention (e.g. McKenzie and Yang 2015). It also bears mentioning that turning a blind eye to simulations reinforces a mindset that rules are meant

to be bent or broken, which perpetuates and creates openings for more nefarious kinds of manipulation that undermine the program, and governance more broadly. Continuing with a simulation-saturated version of the 3x1 Program contributes in its own small way to the perpetuation of mistrust of government, clientelism, and corruption in Mexico.

Finally, even the federal government's broader goal of cultivating the continued engagement of emigrants is arguably undermined by the current trends in the 3x1 Program. I have generally held that the federal government considers the development projects secondary to the formation of clubs and rapprochement with migrants – as evidenced in part by its willingness to continue funding the program despite internal critiques of its effectiveness as a development intervention (e.g. Sedesol 2014). This perspective largely explains federal officials' tacit acceptance of simulation projects – federal officials are willing to accept municipal dominance and manipulation of the project aspect, as long as migrants are being engaged. However, the amplified role of simulation projects calls into question the effectiveness of the model even in this more abstract goal of engaging migrants. In the increasingly common case of phantom clubs and simulation projects, where transnational spaces for migrant agency are not truly created, migrants are not being substantially engaged – and the interactions they do have are limited to fulfilling bureaucratic requirements rather than thoughtfully and meaningfully working with each other or the hometown. This reality leaves migrants likely to see diaspora outreach as just another example of the clientelism and bureaucracy they know and expect from the Mexican state – far from the goal of cultivating migrants' affective ties to home country and town. The blatant sidelining of migrants and the disappearing spaces for active participation threaten rather than strengthen their feelings of attachment (see Ho, Boyle, and Yeoh 2015).

In the second place, this suggestion that the 3x1 Program should be rethought and possibly terminated should not be misread as a suggestion that the extraordinary efforts of

migrants and migrant organizations, where they exist, should not be supported. To the extent that migrants are organizing and acting to benefit their hometowns, it is appropriate and likely effective to support them. The model of transnational hometown activism that underlies the 3x1 Program continues to exist and function in many contexts, ranging from states like Zacatecas (notwithstanding substantial internal variability) to specific origin communities and translocal networks. The trick is finding how to support these “real” examples of collective remittances in such a way that does not also cultivate the unintended and unwelcome simulation phenomenon. As Chapters 3, 4, and 5 amply demonstrate, the current policy and practice of the 3x1 Program miserably fails this test.

Various possibilities could move toward the goal of supporting real projects without catalyzing simulations or other manipulations. One would be to end the matching fund model, and instead limit government involvement to logistical, planning, and implementation support for wholly-migrant-funded projects. This would undoubtedly cure the simulation plague, but would just as certainly reduce the number of projects dramatically. The purist migrant organizations that have been leading the resistance against simulation projects might accept this change as a necessary sacrifice to “save” collective remittances from the 3x1 Program, but a much larger number of groups would likely drop out.

A less drastic option would be to implement new bureaucratic checks to combat simulations, though the devil would be in the details. Iskander (2015) claims that various bureaucratic changes over the years actually *were* designed as anti-simulation mechanisms – including the *toma de nota* registration system for HTAs and formation of hometown “mirror committees.” These efforts clearly did not succeed in halting simulations or manipulations of the program, and new technical fixes are likewise susceptible to failure – whether due to technical flaws, unforeseen outcomes, new workarounds, or simply lack of political will to enforce them.

Especially given the reality of Mexican municipalities gaining more autonomy while remaining relatively free from scrutiny (e.g. Simpser et al. 2015), any technical-bureaucratic attempt to exclude simulations is likely to be skirted and subverted.

That being said, there are some relatively simple administrative steps that could perhaps decrease the prevalence of simulation projects. The simplest action would be to implement a monitoring step to verify that the migrant contribution to a project was indeed transferred from the United States.⁵⁶ Workarounds could still be found – municipal officials could transfer funds to the US to be transferred back – but this is likely to occur in a much smaller number of cases than the current simulation model (i.e. officials would have to trust the migrants signing for their project enough to bear the risk that they might abscond with the money rather than transferring it back). An additional side-effect would be to complicate the common pattern of “hybrid” funding in which the migrant club contribution is in fact a combination of funds from the HTA and from non-migrant community members. While arguments can be made in favor of this funding flexibility, cutting it off seems an acceptable price to pay given the seriousness of the threat simulations currently pose to the model’s integrity.

Regardless of the future of the 3x1 Program, my strongest suggestion is that officials and migrant leaders should recognize the extraordinary efforts of migrants and migrant organizations as just that – extraordinary. These special efforts should be supported, but we should also

⁵⁶ Cofezac, the Council of Zacatecan Federations is currently pursuing this strategy independently, proposing to establish a committee to investigate suspected simulation projects by Zacatecan HTAs, including demanding money transfer receipts, invitations to attend and observe fundraising events, or other proof of legitimate fundraising commensurate with the scope and budget of the proposed project. Perhaps tellingly, the habits of pragmatism were not entirely left behind – the federation presidents agreed that a project should have at least 51% funds from the HTA in the US to count as “real,” with the other 49% or less allowed to come from the beneficiary community, but none from the municipal government (Fieldnotes 22 January 2019).

recognize that “normal” migrant engagement is likely to focus on family remittances, complemented by occasional and small-scale community projects or contributions.

This suggestion brings me full circle, returning to the Chicago Zacatecan Federation’s (FCUZI) twentieth anniversary events that I described on this dissertation’s first page. At a panel discussion a few days before the main festival, Rodolfo García Zamora, a leading scholar of the 3x1 Program and faculty member at the Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas, addressed the assembled migrant leaders. He commended their long tradition of organizing and many contributions to hometown development but raised the rhetorical question of what the end-game would be. Should migrants be expected to come to the rescue forever? He concluded, as others have before, that “the responsibility for development belongs to the government and should not fall on migrants,” and suggested that migrant organizations should begin to diversify their energies and no longer focus entirely on the 3x1 Program (Fieldnotes 14 July 2015). A collective remittance matching policy with long-term viability should be crafted to engage migrants and support their initiatives but should not put them at the center of hometown development.

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