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Supply or Demand? Politics and the 3x1 Program for Migrants

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Abstract

Collective remittances are the money flows sent by hometown associations (HTAs) to their communities of origin. In Mexico, the 3x1 Program for Migrants matches by three the amounts that HTAs send back to their localities to invest in public projects. In previous quantitative research, we found that PAN-ruled municipalities were more likely to participate in the program, controlling for a number of predictors. Once selected into the Program, political strongholds of any municipal party receive more funds per capita. The political bias in participation and fund allocation may be due to two possible mechanisms: HTAs decisions to invest in some municipalities but not others may reflect migrants' preferences (a demand driven bias). On the other hand, government officials may use the Program to direct funds according to their own political objectives (a supply-driven bias). To disentangle which of these two mechanisms is at work, we studied a 2x2 matrix of statistically selected cases of high migration municipalities in the state of Guanajuato. We carried out over 60 semi-structured interviews to state and municipal Program administrators, local politicians, and migrant leaders from these municipalities. Our qualitative study indicates that, even though migrant leaders are clearly pragmatic, the political bias of the Program is more likely to be driven by politicians' preferences. Moreover, these biases are reinforced by the program's coordination requirements. This study raises obvious concerns about the ability of this kind of programs to reach the areas where public resources are needed the most.

Keywords: migration, collective remittances, 3x1 Program, hometown associations, distributive politics.

Resumen

Las remesas colectivas son las transferencias enviadas por las asociaciones de migrantes hacia sus comunidades de origen. En México, el Programa 3x1 para Migrantes multiplica por tres las cantidades que estas asociaciones envían a sus localidades para invertirlas en proyectos públicos. En un análisis estadístico previo, encontramos que los municipios gobernados por el PAN tienen una mayor probabilidad de participar en el programa, controlando por otros factores. Una vez dentro del programa, los bastiones políticos de cualquier partido reciben mayores recursos per cápita. Este sesgo político en la participación y asignación de recursos se debe a dos posibles mecanismos: las decisiones de las asociaciones de migrantes de

invertir en ciertos municipios y no en otros pueden reflejar las preferencias de los migrantes (un sesgo por parte de la demanda). Por otro lado, los funcionarios públicos pueden usar el programa para asignar recursos en función de sus objetivos políticos (un sesgo por parte de la oferta). Para esclarecer cuál de estos dos mecanismos funciona estudiamos una matriz 2x2 de casos estadísticamente seleccionados en municipios de alta migración en el estado de Guanajuato. Llevamos a cabo más de 60 entrevistas semiestructuradas a los funcionarios estatales y municipales responsables del programa, políticos locales y líderes migrantes de esos municipios. Nuestro estudio cualitativo indica que, a pesar de que los líderes migrantes son claramente pragmáticos, el sesgo político del programa se debe a las preferencias de los funcionarios públicos. Además, estos sesgos son reforzados por los requisitos de coordinación del programa. Este estudio plantea preocupaciones obvias sobre la capacidad de este tipo de programas para allegar recursos a las zonas donde más se requieren.

Palabras clave: migración, remesas colectivas, Programa 3x1, asociaciones de migrantes, política distributiva.

Introduction

Remittances in general and collective remittances in particular have recently attracted the attention of policy makers in developing countries. Given the absolute and relative weight of remittances in such countries (World Bank, 2006; OECD, 2007), these flows are believed to have a great potential to promote community driven development. Parallel to this phenomenon, policymakers have introduced specific policies to sustain the flow of remittances, and to influence the way in which they are used (Spector and de Graauw, 2006; Adida and Girod, 2011).

The Mexican 3x1 Program for Migrants is one such policy. Indeed, it is usually regarded as international reference in the cooperation between diasporas abroad and their communities of origin (World Bank, 2006; Fernández, García and Vila, 2006). The Program matches each dollar sent by hometown associations (HTAs) to finance local projects with one extra dollar from municipal, state and federal governments. Typical projects include electrification, water, road paving and maintenance, housing infrastructure, educational and health projects, and town beautification, among others. Since 2002, and following the impulse of the ruling Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN), the Program has been implemented at the federal level, and today it involves more than 1,000 HTAs abroad. As any other public policy, the program may also be used politically. The involvement of the three levels of government (municipal, state and federal) as well as of migrants themselves raises coordination problems that may benefit some political parties at the expense of others. Besides, the collusion of state and municipal governments may be used to benefit partisan strongholds or to target politically competitive localities.

In previous empirical work, we found that municipal strongholds governed by the party of the presidency were more likely to participate in the program than their PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) and PRD (Partido de la Revolución Democrática) counterparts. Our statistical regression analysis provided evidence of a significant association between political variables and fund allocation by the program; but to precisely understand the mechanisms underlying these correlations, a more qualitative approach is required.

The political bias that we found might be the result of the political strategies of federal, state, and municipal politicians deliberately seeking to benefit PAN municipalities—a supply-driven bias. Conversely, if migrants and HTAs are more likely to propose projects in PAN localities, then the observed bias might actually be driven by migrants' political preferences—a demand-driven bias.

To adjudicate between these two possible mechanisms, we conducted fieldwork in four municipalities in the state of Guanajuato and in the state of

Zacatecas. We used a propensity score matching procedure to identify a 2x2 matrix of cases where we carried out more than 60 semi-structured interviews. We interviewed local politicians, state, and municipal program operators and migrant leaders in these four municipalities and in Dallas, Texas.

Our findings can be summarized as follows. The interviews evidenced, first, the central role of municipalities in promoting migrant organizations and therefore, program participation. Second, municipalities target localities politically aligned with the municipality, both as a way to reduce transaction costs and as a deliberate political strategy. And third, migrants are very pragmatic and non-partisan. As it turns out, the political bias found in the statistical analysis is most likely to be a supply-driven bias .

These findings are relevant for several theoretical debates. First, from the point of view of the distributive politics literature, we are interested in exploring the sort of political biases more likely to occur when policy makers do not have the full monopoly of resources. Contrary to other public and social programs, the public-private character of the 3x1 requires active cooperation among municipalities, HTAs, and local beneficiaries. This has consequences for the expected sort of political discretion that it is most likely to occur. We posit that the bias in favour of political strongholds that we find in the statistical tests is as much a political strategy of rewarding loyal voters as it is the side effect of a policy design with high coordination demands.

Secondly, this paper contributes to the recent and growing literature that studies the political impact of migration in countries with high levels of out-migration (Bravo, 2007; Goodman and Hiskey, 2008; Pérez-Armendáriz and Crow, 2010). Scholars report decreasing levels of political engagement among those left behind having connections with migrants, remittances being one of those connections. This finding questions the virtuous influence that the migrants' experience in their democratic host countries may exert upon returning home (Levitt, 1998). Our research aligns with the "not too optimistic" view of the consequences of emigration, too: we find that policy interventions supposedly designed to target collective remittances toward developmental purposes are politically biased. The provision of public goods under the 3x1 Program serves to reward political strongholds of the ruling party regardless of the objective needs of these localities. This finding crucially questions whether migrant involvement in their communities via this type of interventions helps improving local governance and development.

The paper proceeds as follows. In section 1, we provide a background of the 3x1 Program and of our previous empirical findings. We also discuss our hypotheses. In section 2, we describe the empirical strategy and explain the case selection strategy. In section 3, we present the findings of our fieldwork, distinguishing two different moments in the decision making process: first, we study the relationship between migrants, their localities, and municipalities,

both in participating and not participating municipalities. Second, we move up the ladder in the decision making process to explore how decisions take place at the state and the federal level. Section 4 concludes with the theoretical and policy implications of this study.

1. Program background and previous findings

Mexico has been an active country in the promotion of its relationships with its diaspora. Since the 1990s, consular activity and official programs to assist migrants abroad have multiplied. Starting in 1997, Mexico allowed for dual nationality. In 2006 Mexicans abroad were allowed to vote in the presidential election. From 2002, under the US-Mexico Partnership for Prosperity Program, Mexicans could use the so-called *matrícula consular* to open bank accounts in the United States and transfer money, regardless of their legal migration status. And state and federal administrations have courted the Mexican diaspora, seeking its help in improving the living conditions of its communities of origin (Goldring, 2002; Burgess, 2005; Alarcón, 2006; Spector and De Grauw, 2006; World Bank, 2006; Fernández, García and Vila, 2006).

The purpose of the 3x1 Program for Migrants is to increase the coverage and the quality of basic social infrastructure in localities a high proportion of whose populations suffer from poverty or social backwardness or experience high levels of emigration. It follows the investment initiatives of migrants living abroad (Soto and Velázquez, 2006). This is not the only objective of the program, which also aims to strengthen the links between migrants and their communities through collaborative development projects and the organization of migrants abroad.

The precedents of the current 3x1 Program for Migrants are found in the state of Zacatecas, which is the state with the strongest and oldest migratory tradition in Mexico. The Federation of Zacatecan Clubs started in the early 1960s to raise funds to help expatriates abroad and to fund social and recreational projects back home. Building on these spontaneous initiatives, in 1986 the 1x1 Program was born under the auspices of PRI state governor Genaro Borrego. In its initial design, the program envisaged support from the state alone to double the amount of money sent by migrant associations. Parallel to President Carlos Salinas's (1988-1994) interest in courting migrants, the Zacatecan initiative received further support under Borrego's successor, Arturo Romo (PRI), resulting in the program of International Solidarity among Mexicans, also known as the 2x1 Program. Under this scheme not only the state but also the federation matched the contributions of HTAs. Under Governor Ricardo Monreal, a member of the PRD, the program gathered momentum. In the meantime, the initiative had been replicated by the state governments of Jalisco, Durango, and Guanajuato (Goldring, 2002; Burgess, 2005; Iskander, 2010).

When the panista Vicente Fox came to power in 2000, he set up the Institute for Mexicans Abroad, and gave impulse to the matching-grant program with federal support. The 3x1 Program-Citizen Initiative started in 2002. In 2005 it became the 3x1 Program for Migrants. Under the pressure of Zacatecan migrant federations, this new version restricted program participation to registered HTAs only.

Although collective remittances are small in magnitude when compared to individual remittances, the program is crucial for many municipalities where HTAs' money can supplement the meager finances of local governments (Goldring, 2002; Valenzuela, 2006). Thus, migrants have been actively courted by municipal and state politicians seeking to obtain extra resources for municipal public works.

Figure 1 shows the different actors involved in the 3x1 Program. It also summarizes the different steps in the process leading to participation. The Mexican Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL) and state representatives promote the program among migrants and in the municipalities. In turn, municipalities establish contacts with localities and their HTAs. Migrant HTAs propose a particular project through the municipality to be carried out in their locality. Very frequently, local beneficiaries of projects also contribute with their own funds or work, and therefore they are important actors. They also take responsibility for the supervision of projects via mirror clubs (Fox and Bada, 2008: 448).

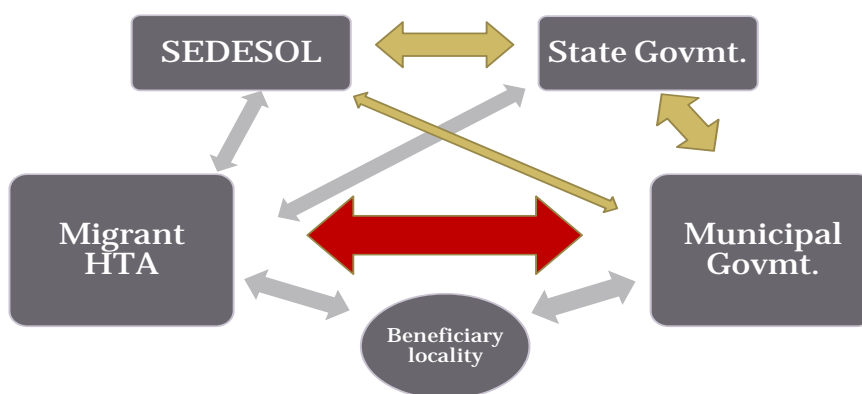
In the localities, the delegate is another important actor. Delegates are representatives elected in community assemblies shortly after the municipal president takes office. Although not explicitly running under a particular party label, we could observe that delegates' political leanings were common knowledge. Delegates are important actors because very frequently they act as intermediaries between migrants (and their representatives in the locality) and the municipality. As the current municipal president in Tarimoro put it, the municipality gives information to the delegates and then the delegates disseminate this information in the communities. Delegates help identifying clubs and intervene as mediators and facilitators.

In its current design, the 3x1 Program for Migrants is administered by SEDESOL and every single project has to be approved by state "Committees of Validation and Attention to Migrants" (COVAMs), depicted in Figure 2 below. COVAMs take place in each state. They include three representatives of the four actors involved (migrants via a HTA, municipal, state, and federal governments via SEDESOL), for a total of 12 members, and it decides by majority vote which projects are to be funded. In most cases, each of the four actors involved contributes 25% of the total cost of the approved project albeit the financial mix can vary somewhat.

All project applications have to include a technical file assessing its viability, showing, for instance, that projects have the necessary permits. This

file is typically elaborated by the municipality. Upon reception at the state offices, the technical file is evaluated as well as the project observation of the rules of operation. If it is deemed to be not technically viable or if it contravenes the rules of operation, the file is returned to the municipality and it does not make it to the COVAM meeting. SEDESOL does not keep such thing as a systematic record of these returned files. Once a project is technically validated, it is voted in state COVAMs and it is approved with the majority of the votes. Note that in Mexican states ruled by the PAN, with a partisan collusion between the state and the federal government, it only takes one more vote from a major or HTA to get the majority of votes required for approving a project. On the other hand, if the state is not ruled by the PAN, the federal government would find it more difficult to build a winning coalition towards its preferences.

FIGURE 1. 3x1 PROGRAM ACTORS AND DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURES



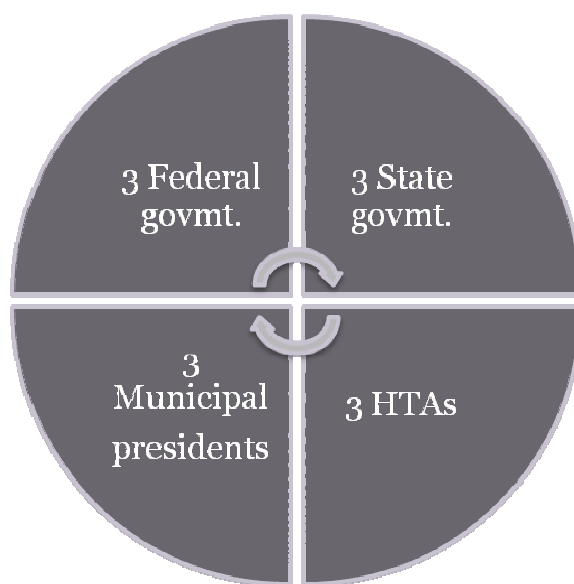
Note: Arrow width denotes linkage strength among actors. Grey arrows denote actors promoting the program. Darker arrows denote government levels coordination.

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FIGURE 2. COVAM STRUCTURE (12 MEMBERS, DECISIONS ARE MADE BY MAJORITY RULE)



In a previous paper based on a panel dataset of the 3x1 Program for over 2,400 municipalities in the 2002 to 2007 period, we explored the political economy of the program (Author, forthcoming). Since the funding of projects is not granted according to any pre-established formula, or in light of any observable criterion other than the technical viability of the proposals, it opens the door to its political manipulation. Moreover, the involvement of the three levels of government (municipal, state and federal) as well as of migrants themselves, raises coordination problems that may benefit some political parties or localities at the expense of others.

Our previous empirical analyses revealed that municipalities in states ruled by the PAN were more likely to participate in the program than their PRI and PRD counterparts (see Table AI in the Appendix, model 1). Similarly, municipalities with greater PAN electoral support were also more likely to

participate (Table A1, model 3). In other words, PAN strongholds have a greater probability of being selected into the program. This result holds even after controlling for a number of predictors of program participation such as population, migration and poverty levels as well as state and year effects.

As mentioned in the introduction, the political bias in favor of PAN strongholds that we found in the empirical analysis might be supply driven – that is, the result of the political strategies of federal, state, and municipal politicians deliberately seeking to benefit PAN municipalities. Yet, if migrants and HTAs are more likely to propose projects in PAN localities, the observed bias might actually be demand-driven. Indeed, recent studies have suggested that migrants’ demographic characteristics make them likely to hold anti-PRI political preferences (Bravo, 2007). If this is the case, the mechanism behind our statistical finding would not be one of PAN politicians biasing the selection of projects in favor of their strongholds; rather, it would be one of migrants selecting PAN municipalities for their investments.

There are several observable implications that derive from the demand-driven (H1) and the supply-driven (H2) hypotheses. If the demand-driven hypothesis holds, we should observe that migrant HTAs are reluctant to propose projects in municipalities not ruled by the PAN, and that this is the main reason for non participation. However, if we observe that migrant HTAs are willing to make investments in municipalities regardless of party label, then we have good evidence against migrants’ political preferences as the mechanism driving our statistical findings .

The partisan bias that our statistical analysis reports could, in turn, be supply- driven. As with any other political or social policy, politicians may try to address particular groups with the public and social projects that the program finances. Models 3 and 5 in Table A1 reveal that municipalities that are political strongholds of the PAN (those in which the PAN wins with large margins of victory) are more likely to be selected into the program. This is an interesting finding. According to the predictions of the distributive politics literature, the local public and social infrastructure that the program provides could be used to tilt the balance in competitive jurisdictions rather than to reward voters that have already shown their support (Cox and McCubbins, 1986; Dixit and Londregan, 1996; Stokes, 2005; Magaloni, 2006; Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007; Díaz Cayeros *et al.*, 2007). However, note that contrary to other public or social programs, the 3x1 Program for Migrants is a public-private partnership. This implies that politicians are not completely free to decide how to allocate the program resources because a successful participation requires the cooperation of at least migrants and the municipality. As the fieldwork makes clear, the side effect of these high coordination demands is that it is easier to propose partnerships and projects in political strongholds than in competed municipalities.

If the supply driven hypothesis holds (H2), it also has some observable implications: First, we should observe that PAN localities and municipalities are clearly favored during the decision making process leading to project selection . This has to be especially evident in states ruled by the PAN, as opposed to states ruled by other parties where the decision making process is politically fragmented . Additionally, we should observe that the main reason for not or less participation in the case of high migration municipalities ruled by parties not under PAN control is that they get punished during the decision making process leading to project adjudication .

Of course, in municipalities, a lack of migrant organization may also be causing non participation. Recall that having the signature of a Club registered at the corresponding Mexican Consulate is a prerequisite for participation. This is a background condition that we have to consider, too .

Note that empirically testing these hypotheses and the observable implications that derive from them demands exploring the operation of the program in participant and non participant municipalities, under and not under the control of the ruling PAN. It is to the selection of cases that we now turn.

2. Empirical Strategy and Case Selection

There are three reasons that motivate the fieldwork research that we report in this paper. First, there is no systematic data on HTAs regarding their size, economic capacity, history, or political preferences, etc., which could be incorporated into our regression analysis. Lacking this information, we relied on a migration intensity index, based on census data, as a proxy of migrants' organizational capacity. But as it will be made clear in what follows, this is an inexact measure because some high migration communities may not be as well organized as others.

Second, even though we have data for each single project, we aggregated the 3x1 Program data at the municipal level to match it with the election returns data that are only available at that same level. Since local elections are organized by different state authorities, precinct or locality level returns for municipal races are not available for our entire sample period. However, many projects and HTAs originate in smaller Mexican localities. Therefore much of the action of the program takes place at the local level and in the relationship between localities and the municipalities they belong to. As Burgess shows (2006: 113), a very high percentage of the Program investments occur in outlying villages and hamlets outside of municipal centers or *cabeceras*. In the states of Guanajuato, Guerrero and Michoacán these percentages are as high as 82, 84 and 73% respectively. Fieldwork allowed us to incorporate the level of the *locality* to our study. This level of analysis turned out to be particularly rich in understanding that the correlation found

in favor of political strongholds is in part the result of a deliberate electoral strategy; but it is also in part the unintended consequence of the high coordination requirements the Program design imposes. In a program requiring the coordination of three government levels and some HTAs, politicians are not completely free to decide the allocation of the resources. As it will be made clear, matching grants demand the contribution and coordination of so many actors that relying on your known political friends and allies may be a guarantee of successful participation.

Third, SEDESOL data on the 3x1 Program only has information concerning successful projects. SEDESOL does not systematically collect information about the entire pool of project applications. This means that we lack information about the characteristics of “unsuccessful” HTAs, unsuccessful localities or municipalities, or projects that were rejected for technical or procedural reasons. Thus, another goal of the fieldwork we carried out was to collect information from non participating HTAs, non participating localities, and non participating municipalities. By doing so, we gained an important understanding about the causes of not participation or projects being rejected.¹

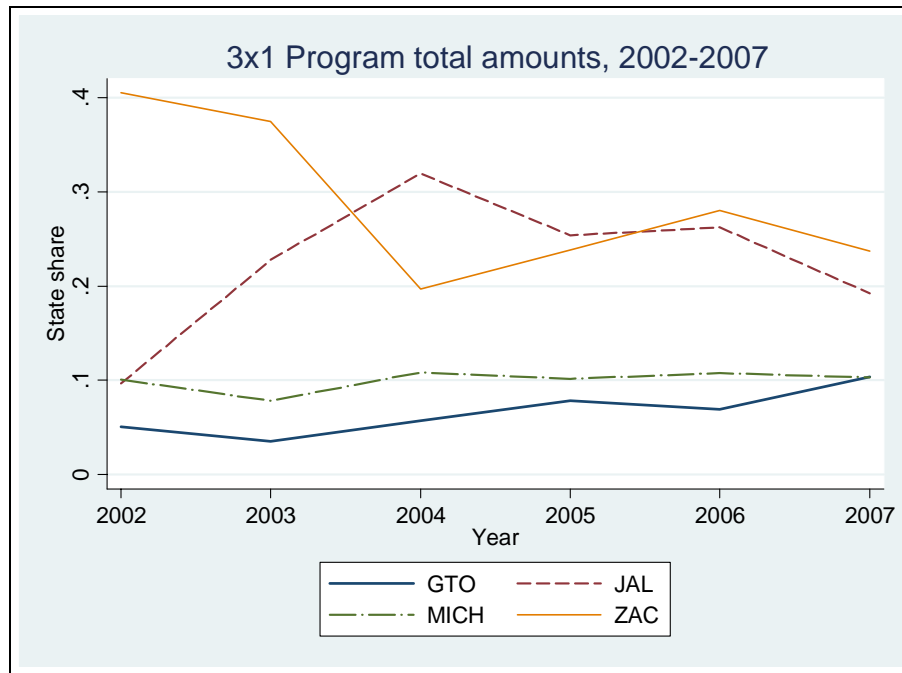
With quite a few actors and levels of government involved –migrants, localities, municipalities, state government, and the federation– and no quantitative information to operationalize crucial variables, such as migrant organization or municipal capabilities, fieldwork and qualitative research are essential to understand how the 3x1 Program actually works. There are a number of case studies about the 3x1 Program (see, for instance the collection in Fernández de Castro et. al. 2007). Yet, the selection of cases is usually not well justified: sometimes they cover municipalities with a high number of projects only, with no comparison with non-participant municipalities; or sometimes they deal with high migration localities or those with highly organized HTAs, again without comparing with similar counterfactual cases. This raises obvious concerns about selection bias and therefore about the external validity of their findings.

Our first decision concerned which Mexican state to study. As mentioned above, there are four states with high and long standing migration tradition in México, all of them located in the central area: Jalisco (ruled by the PAN), Zacatecas (PRD), Guanajuato (PAN), and Michoacán (PRD). These states alone received 63.6% of the Program resources and accumulated 69.5% of the projects in 2007, the final year of our sample period. As Figure 3 indicates, at the beginning of the Program in 2002, Zacatecas had a head start with 40.5% of the Program total outlays but in recent years Jalisco’s relative share has

¹ However, rejection is frequent. Between 2002 and 2004, 192 3x1 Program Projects were rejected in the state of Michoacán, of which 73% were projects outside the *cabecera* (Fox and Bada, 2008: 452). In 2010, at SEPLADER Zacatecas almost 50% of the projects presented were rejected, and about 60% of projects lacked a technical file (SEDESOL Zacatecas).

come to par with them. Michoacán and Guanajuato receive fewer funds but their participation has also increased steadily. For instance, Guanajuato's participation in the program has risen from 5% in 2002 to 10.3% in 2007.

FIGURE 3. 3x1 PROGRAM RELATIVE AMOUNTS IN SELECTED STATES



Fieldwork in Michoacán municipalities was ruled out due to the current insecurity situation in the region. Since we were looking for variation in participation (participant and non-participant municipalities) in line with PAN ruled municipalities, we ruled out Zacatecas, where only 14% of the municipal-year observations are under PAN rule –thereby providing little variation in partisanship. Jalisco, on the other hand, has enough variation in municipal partisanship but more than 90% of its municipalities participate in the Program in recent years: therefore, this state had little variation in participation rates.

We chose the state of Guanajuato, a PAN state located in the centre of the country comprising 46 municipalities. The selection of Guanajuato allowed us to control for the collusion at the state and the federal level (both *panistas*). We then allowed variation at the municipal level along two binary dimensions of interest: program participation and partisanship. This resulted in a 2x2 matrix design with two municipalities ruled under the PAN and two more under non-PAN rule on one dimension, and two participating municipalities and two non-participating cases on the other dimension. As our fieldwork later on revealed, there is a further source of political variation at the level of the

locality, which was more relevant than we had initially expected. In particular, the locality level turned out to be very enlightening to understand the coordination problems that the program entailed and the political consequences derived from these coordination demands.

The next issue was to select the municipalities to be studied. In order to identify four municipalities that were relatively similar but with two of them ruled by the PAN, and two of them ruled by the PRI, we used propensity score matching. The idea underlying propensity score matching is to adjust multiple case comparisons for their pre-treatment observable differences. In our case, we want to identify cases that were otherwise similar in a series of observable characteristics that predict being under PAN rule, but with the exception that some will in fact be observed as *panistas*, and some others will not. To do so, our first step was to estimate a probit regression model to predict the probability of a given municipality of being under PAN rule, which is our treatment variable of interest, conditional on a series of covariates. Our probit model has the following general form:

$$Pr(\text{PANmunicip}_{ijt} = 1 | \mathbf{X}) = F(\beta \text{MIGRATION}_{ij} + \chi \text{POVERTY}_{ijt} + \phi \text{MIGxPOVERTY}_{ijt} + \text{SOCIODEMOG}_{ijt} \delta + \mu_j + \nu_t)$$

Where i , j and t , denotes municipalities, states and years, respectively. The model controlled for migration intensity, poverty intensity, poverty squared, an interaction between migration and poverty, log population, public services coverage, as well as state and year effects. Once the model is estimated, we obtain the predicted probability of being under PAN rule, conditional on the covariates included in the model—that is, the propensity scores for each municipality. Some of the cases predicted as *panistas* (treated) were in fact observed as *panistas*, but some other cases also predicted as *panistas*, will not be so (untreated). Figure 4 below illustrates the distribution of our propensity scores, that is, the probability of being under PAN rule, estimated for all Mexican municipalities in our sample period.

FIGURE 4

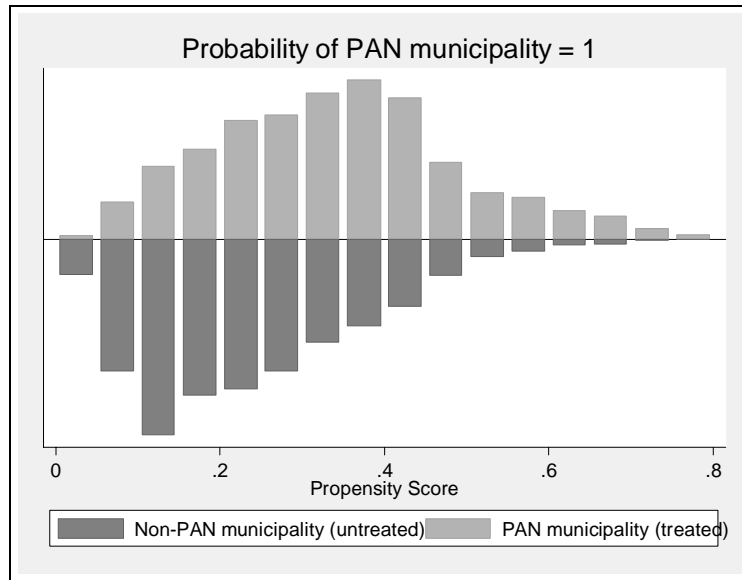


Table 1 shows our selection of treated and non-treated municipalities for the year 2007. All of these municipalities are high migration municipalities with a similar propensity to be PAN-ruled according to their observable characteristics. According to our previous statistical research, PAN municipalities have a higher probability of participating in the 3x1 Program. This means that, on average, high migration PAN municipalities are predicted to participate more often in the program than high migration non-PAN municipalities. The PAN municipalities we chose are Tarimoro (a municipality with high program participation) and Cuéramaro (a non-participating municipality).

We also explored the workings of the Program in two cases “off the regression line”, that is to say, two cases badly predicted by our statistical model: one case would be a PAN ruled, high migration municipality that does not participate in the Program (Huanímaro). The fourth case would be a non-PAN ruled, high migration municipality that did participate nonetheless (Santiago Maravatío). If the program is indeed used as an instrument of the federal government to benefit PAN political strongholds in PAN states, cases such as Huanímaro and Santiago Maravatío should be rather rare. Indeed, they are atypical. Still, studying how the Program worked or did not work in these municipalities is very informative, and it actually helps us to identify alternative factors in play.

Note that since the table below refers to the year 2007 only, we made sure that high and low/not participation was not idiosyncratic to this year. In other words, municipalities of high and low participation that are consistently participating or not participating during the years we covered in the database.

For instance, Jaral del Progreso is a PAN municipality of high participation in 2007 (12 projects) and yet it did not participate in the previous years. Note also that we did not have that many options when it came to choosing a comparable non-participating/non-PAN municipality. Only Cuernavaca and Dolores Hidalgo fell in that category. However, Dolores Hidalgo is much more populated than the rest of our selected municipalities. Given the high correlation that exists between municipal resources and population, and the role that municipal finances play in matching the resources migrants invest, we opted for Cuernavaca to avoid extra variation coming from very different budgetary capacities. By the same reasoning, we chose Santiago Maravatío over Abasco as our non-PAN participating municipality.

Table 1. Case selection using Propensity Score Matching in Guanajuato, 2007

MUNICIPALITY	Propensity score	2007		Num. of Projects	Migration index	Poverty index	Population in '000s
		PAN ruled (treated)	Program participation				
SANTA CATERINA	0.498	Yes	No	0	1.029	3.144	4.544
OCAMPO	0.544	Yes	No	0	2.981	2.368	20.579
PUEBLO NUEVO	0.564	Yes	No	0	1.136	2.031	9.750
SAN DIEGO DE LA UNION	0.579	Yes	No	0	1.716	2.684	34.401
TARANDACUAO	0.617	Yes	Yes	5	1.342	1.689	10.252
TARIMORO	0.628	Yes	Yes	7	2.733	1.970	33.014
COMONFORT	0.636	Yes	No	0	1.403	2.230	70.189
SAN LUIS DE LA PAZ	0.649	Yes	Yes	3	1.187	2.205	101.370
ROMITA	0.652	Yes	No	0	1.071	2.114	50.580
HUANIMARO	0.698	Yes	No	0	4.330	1.997	18.456
JARAL DEL PROGRESO	0.703	Yes	Yes	12	1.167	1.553	31.780
ACAMBARO	0.704	Yes	Yes	1	2.194	1.525	101.762
SALVATIERRA	0.713	Yes	Yes	12	1.087	1.626	92.411
MANUEL DOBLADO	0.621	No	Yes	11	2.616	2.075	34.313
CUERAMARO	0.648	No	No	0	2.465	2.065	23.960
DOLORES HIDALGO	0.662	No	No	0	1.011	2.139	134.641
SANTIAGO MARAVATIO	0.668	No	Yes	8	3.660	1.969	6.389
ABASOLO	0.672	No	Yes	6	1.986	2.093	77.094

Figure 5 shows a map with the municipal division of Guanajuato. Our statistically selected municipalities are comparable in the following sense: based on their observable features, they have a very similar propensity to be PAN ruled, which is our key variable of interest (treatment). Thus, these four cases are high migration municipalities with similar levels of poverty, population, public services coverage, and all of them are located in the southern region of the state. This information is summarized in their propensity scores, which range from 0.628 to 0.698.

FIGURE 5. STATISTICALLY SELECTED MUNICIPALITIES IN GUANAJUATO, MEXICO

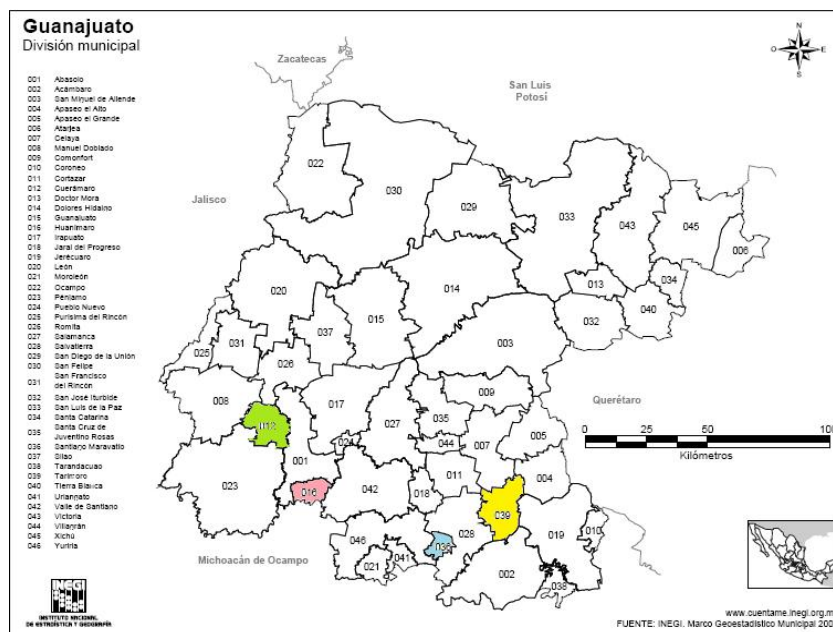


TABLE 2. CASE SELECTION: CASES ON AND OFF THE REGRESSION LINE

PROGRAM PARTICIPANT	PAN MUNICIPALITY	NON PAN MUNICIPALITY
YES	TARIMORO	SANTIAGO MARAVATÍO
	2003-2006: UNDER PRI RULE 2006-2009: UNDER PAN RULE	2003-2009: UNDER PRI RULE 2006-2009: UNDER PRD RULE
NO	HUANÍMARO	CUERNÁMARO
	2003-2006: UNDER PAN RULE 2006-2009: UNDER PAN RULE	2003-2006: UNDER PAN RULE 2006-2009: UNDER PRI RULE

Note: Mexican municipal elections take place every three years but the local electoral calendar is staggered.

The main hypotheses to be tested are spelled out below, and they are summarized in Table 3. First, we consider the cases that are well predicted by the statistical model (see Table A2). Tarimoro is a high migration intensity PAN municipality which has successfully participated in our sample period. The political explanation for this success would be a well organized migrant community, with PAN leanings, which finds it easy to coordinate with a PAN municipal president. In turn, the PAN municipality can easily gain the favor of the state and SEDESOL (both under PAN control).

On the contrary, Cuernámaro represents the exact opposite case: a PRI municipality that does not receive 3x1 subsidies. On the one hand, we have to

consider the possibility that, being a high migration intensity municipality, it might not have a well organized migrant community. Recall that being a registered HTA is essential to participate in the program. Alternatively, not participation could be due to political conflicts of different nature along the decision-making timeline: (a) it could be the case the an anti-PRI leaned migrant community strongly disliked the idea of making investments in a PRI municipality or that (b) there is a pragmatic, well organized migrant community willing to present projects with the municipality support. Yet, being a PRI municipality, it gets punished during the selection process at state/federal level.

TABLE 3. CASE SELECTION AND HYPOTHESES

PROGRAM PARTICIPANT	PAN MUNICIPALITY	NON PAN MUNICIPALITY
YES NECESSARY CONDITION FOR SUCCESSFUL PARTICIPATION: MIGRANT ORGANIZATION (CLUBS EXIST AND KNOW ABOUT THE PROGRAM).	TARIMORO H0: COLLUSION BETWEEN MIGRANTS AND THE MUNICIPALITY, AND COLLUSION BETWEEN THE MUNICIPALITY, THE STATE/SEDESOL	SANTIAGO MARAVATÍO H0: NO POLITICAL CONFLICT BETWEEN THE MIGRANTS AND THE MUNICIPALITY AND NO POLITICAL CONFLICT BETWEEN THE MUNICIPALITY AND STATE/SEDESOL
NO	HUANÍMARO H0: NONEXISTENT OR WEAK MIGRANT ORGANIZATION. H1: CONFLICT BETWEEN MIGRANTS' POLITICAL PREFERENCES AND THE MUNICIPALITY.	CUERÁMARO H0: POLITICAL CONFLICT BETWEEN MIGRANTS AND THE MUNICIPALITY AND/OR POLITICAL CONFLICT BETWEEN THE MUNICIPALITY AND STATE/SEDESOL H1: NONEXISTENT OR WEAK MIGRANT ORGANIZATION

Consider now the non typical cases, or the cases badly predicted by the statistical model. Huanímaro is a PAN locality with no program participation. The possible alternative explanations for this outcome are (a) that there is not a well organized migrant community abroad despite being a high migration municipality or (b) an anti-PAN diaspora declines making investments in a PAN municipality. Finally, Santiago Maravatío represents an interesting case: at the time of our study, Santiago was a PRD municipality (previously a PRI municipality) that had successfully and consistently enjoyed the resources of the 3x1 Program for Migrants. This can be explained if (a) a well organized and pragmatic migrant community presents projects that are supported by the municipality and (b) despite being an opposition

municipality it has not been politically punished in the adjudication of projects at the state/federal level.

Our fieldwork consisted of over 60 semi-structured interviews in these municipalities, and in Dallas, TX during the Summer/Fall 2010 and January 2011. We interviewed local politicians, state, and municipal program operators and migrant leaders coming from these municipalities. A large number of HTAs turned out to cluster in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.² Most of the interviews were carried out in person and only a few of them, mostly to migrant leaders, were carried out by phone.

In each municipality, we used personnel directories to identify our sample frame: relevant local politicians and bureaucrats, which were mostly located at the Social Development departments. We took great pains to avoid selection bias in our interviews. Therefore, we interviewed incumbent and opposition local politicians, current majors, and past ones. Concerning migrant leaders, we used as sample frame the directories of Clubs provided by some municipalities, by the SEDESOL office in Guanajuato, the directory of the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (IME), and the directory of the Mexican Consulate in Dallas. In this case, our biggest concern was to make sure that our sample included both participating and not participating HTAs. A good number of interviewees were referred by other interviewees, as we make explicit on our list.

Finally, to increase the external validity of our findings, we carried out interviews at the state/federal level in the widely researched state of Zacatecas. Zacatecas was a PRD stronghold until 2010 and for the entire sample period of our study. By extending our study to Zacatecas, we could understand how adding political variation at the state level and, therefore, having a more fragmented decision making process at COVAMs, can certainly complicate politicians' attempts to target the Program according to their political goals. Moreover, Zacatecas has a very well organized migrant movement, which has been able to shape the rules of the Program so as to avoid any easy political appropriation.

3. Qualitative analysis

For the sake of clarity, we report our findings distinguishing two different moments: first, we look into the relationship between migrants, localities, and municipalities in the municipalities that participate and in the municipalities that don't. This stage already constitutes an important filter, with municipalities exerting a strong gate keeping role on what projects make it successfully to the next stage. Then, we move up the ladder in the decision

² The list of interviewees and the questionnaires are available upon request.

making process and we study how COVAMs work, adding the state and the federation to the decision making process.

Our interviews show the centrality of municipalities in (1) promoting migrant organizations and, therefore, Program participation; (2) in picking up localities politically aligned with the municipality, both as a way to reduce transaction costs and as a deliberate political strategy and (3) the political pragmatism of migrants. The comparison of Guanajuato with Zacatecas further showed that (4) the difficulties in using the Program politically the more fragmented the decision making process and the stronger migrant organization are. Indeed, a very strong migrant organization is an important factor explaining the fragmentation of the decision making process itself.

As it will be made clear, whichever political bias we found in statistical analysis, it is more likely to be a politically motivated or top-down bias, than driven by the demands or partisan preferences from migrants.

3.1. Migrants, Localities, Municipalities

3.1.1. Non Participating Municipalities: Huanímaro and Cuerámaro

Cuerámaro (PRI) and Huanímaro (PAN) are the two non participating municipalities. They have 32 and 17 localities (also called *ranchos*) respectively. We approached these cases considering two possibilities: First, that the lack of a well organized migrant community may explain non participation - recall that having the signature of a Club registered at the corresponding Mexican Consulate is a prerequisite for participation. Secondly, that political conflicts among migrants, the municipality, and the higher ranks in the decision making process resulted in a bias against these municipalities.

The evidence shows an interesting fact: high intensity migration is not always a good predictor of a well organized diaspora. In both municipalities, the reason for not participation has to be found in a poor migrant organization, in great part due to a passive municipality.

In Cuerámaro, there is only one organized Club in the city of Hawaiian Gardens, California, but this Club has been consistently losing membership. This HTA has not participated in the Program. Instead, it has promoted the collaboration between the city and the municipality. Through this brotherhood, the municipality received an ambulance and a bus; yet all the relationship between the HTA and Cuerámaro happened outside of the 3x1 Program. Despite a bad partnership experience with a former municipal president (Carlos Ramírez, 2000-2003), the leader of this Club still shows interest in resuming collaboration as long as the municipal president "makes a

move".³ The delegate of the community of Tupátaro explained that there is no HTA in the community because migrants are not well organized. He complained that under the prior administration (PRI, 2006-2009) "nobody explained us anything about the Program."⁴ The delegate of the community of San Gregorio also stated that he did not know how the Program works. "The *cabecera* has not informed us", he added.⁵

The case of Huanímaro is slightly different: although in the years we covered in our study the municipality did not participate in the Program due to the inexistence of registered HTAs, this has been changing rapidly since 2008. Interestingly, the contrast between Cuérámaro and Huanímaro, two relatively close municipalities, reveals the centrality of municipalities and community delegates in activating their diasporas abroad. If the municipal administration does not engage in this proactive role, migrant organizations may not emerge or they may decay. As the responsible for Migratory Issues in Huanímaro told us, program participation depends on whether municipal presidents and their personnel "move or not."⁶ In the same vein, the Social Development officer stated that the municipality is crucial in helping and motivating clubs to organize and register at the consulates.⁷ The delegate of the locality Rancho de Guadalupe told us that she knew about the 3x1 Program through the municipality. In turn, she informed migrants from her community about it.⁸ And the former municipal president of the PAN (2006-2009) put it clearly: "we tell them [migrants], we start having contact with them. There is a very important thing: not all localities have a Club, but in all localities there are people in the US. Identifying who is abroad and asking for the address of migrants that just left (...), we tell them 'these are the forms' (...) that is the way we work as municipality."⁹

In sum, these two municipalities did not participate in the Program during our sample period because they did not have a very well organized migrant community.¹⁰ High migration intensity is a rough proxy for migrant

³ Phone interview, 7 October 2010. The leader of the Club recalled that they were requested to collaborate with funds to set up a shoe *maquiladora*. "The business failed and trust was lost", said the leader.

⁴ Tupátaro, Cuérámaro, 21 September 2010.

⁵ San Gregorio, Cuérámaro, 23 September 2010.

⁶ Huanímaro, 22 September 2010. One interesting thing is that the responsible for Migratory Issues in Huanímaro under the current PT administration (2009-12) was in charge of migratory issues in the municipality of Cuérámaro during the PRI administration (2006-09).

⁷ 12 November 2010.

⁸ 12 November 2010.

⁹ Huanímaro, 11 November 2010.

¹⁰ Our interviews in Zacatecas revealed the same. According to one member from the State Secretaría de Planeación y Desarrollo (SEPLADER), the reason why municipalities do not participate is because their migrants are not organized, being the municipalities responsible for that organization (25 January 2011). Another member from SEDESOL mentioned that HTAs are clearly promoted by municipal presidents and referred to them as "Triennial Clubs" (25 January 2011). The former representative at SEPLADER mentioned that non participation is due to the fact that municipalities have not devoted themselves to promote migrant organization (26 January 2011). A similar opinion was given by another representative from SEDESOL and the former representative of SEPLADER. All interviews were held at Zacatecas in January 2011.

organization when the municipality and the localities do not make the effort to contact their members abroad, to activate clubs or to provide information about how the Program works, and to help with the *tramitología* [the bureaucratic red tape].¹¹ Therefore, in municipalities that do not participate, the organization of their diaspora will not happen spontaneously. It needs to be an explicit municipal policy. The current municipal sub-secretary in Cuerámaro puts it bluntly: the municipality has to present a budget to the delegates, explain them how the Program works, and let them organize in the community. "Here we need to start from scratch. If we start with one or two Clubs this year it would be great."¹²

3.1.2. Participating Municipalities: Tarimoro and Santiago Maravatío

There are two main findings concerning participating municipalities: first, whereas having a well organized migrant community is a *necessary* condition to participate in the program, it is *not* a *sufficient* one: municipalities handpick which HTAs to approach or whose projects to admit. Municipalities support projects and HTAs in localities that share their party label. Second, it is the municipality, not the political preferences of HTAs, the source of this bias: migrant leaders are very pragmatic. Whereas they exhibit a good knowledge of local politics, they care much more about the specific major in office than they care about his or her particular party label. Migrants may decide not to propose projects following a bad partnership experience;¹³ but we found no evidence of migrants' political preferences affecting the decision to participate in the first place.

The municipality of Tarimoro (PAN) with 14 localities has been a successful participant in the 3x1 Program. Tarimoro was under PRI rule between 2003 and 2006. In 2006, it became a PAN municipality and it will continue to be so from 2009 to 2012. On closer inspection, it turns out that most public infrastructure (road paving) recently provided under the 3x1 program has been allocated to the community of Huapango: of the 18 projects funded in Tarimoro in 2009, 10 belonged to Huapango. In some of these projects, the state government paid more than 25% of the total costs once the municipality

¹¹ Social Program Coordinator at the Municipality of Cuerámaro, Cuéramaro, 22 September 2010.

¹² Sub-secretary at the municipality of Cuéramaro, 22 September 2010.

¹³ Migrants and delegates frequently referred to a problem of cost inflation under the Program and to unmet commitments on the part of municipalities. They perceived that the costs of public works were intentionally inflated so that public work executors (who were selected by the municipality) could benefit. Many Program administrators mentioned to us that one of their first tasks with migrants had to be restoring trust after failed partnerships (Delegate of La Moncada, Tarimoro, 1 July 2010; Municipal President of Santiago Maravatío, Santiago Maravatío, 14 July 2010; Social Development Coordinator in the Municipality of Santiago Maravatío, 13 July 2010; Delegate of Ojo de Agua, Santiago Maravatío, 14 July 2010; Leader of the Club La Joyita, Santiago Maravatío, 23 November 2010; Former delegate of Panales Galera, Tarimoro, 30 June 2010; The leader of Club Huapango, phone interview, 7 October 2010; The leader of Club Hawaiian Gardens, phone interview, 7 October 2010; The co-leader of Club San Nicolás de la Condesa, Dallas, 2 November 2010).

ran out of funds. Huapango has a very well-organized HTA based in Chicago, Illinois, since 1998. The delegate of Huapango (which is a PAN stronghold) has been instrumental in securing smooth communication between the municipality and the HTA.

In an interview with Tarimoro's former municipal president in the period 2003-2006 (ruled by PRI), he stated that "the PAN plays safe", meaning that the Clubs that are actively supported are those from the localities that are PAN strongholds.¹⁴ Interestingly, Tarimoro's former municipal president (2003-2006) showed us the public projects subsidized under the 3x1 Program that were undertaken during his tenure in office. As he openly stated, the works were carried out mostly in PRI communities, whose delegates nowadays complain about being ignored by PAN municipal presidents.¹⁵ The delegate of the *priista* locality Panales Galera mentioned that the former municipal president did not even visit the locality. "We did not have any support in the *cabecera*", he added.¹⁶

Migrant leaders coming from Tarimoro PRI localities corroborated this view. The co-leader of the Club San Nicolás de la Condesa remarked that the important thing about the municipality is that they can bring benefits to the community. Yet he added: "the truth is that *panistas* have not helped us..." He explained that after the municipality turned *panista* in 2006, San Nicolás, which is "90% *priista*", has not received any public works under the 3x1 Program.¹⁷ In the same vein, the leader of the HTA El Acebuche —another *priista* locality— also complained about the municipality investing more in the localities that shared the same party label of the municipality.¹⁸

We observed the same phenomenon in Santiago Maravatío, the smallest municipality in our study, with only 13 localities. During the period 2003-06, Santiago was ruled by the PRI. The period 2006-09, Santiago was under a PRD administration. Santiago is now ruled by the PRI again (2009-12). The current municipal president told us that during his electoral campaign he called migrants abroad to urge their relatives back in Santiago to vote for him (a practice that was frequently reported to us by migrant leaders and municipal presidents).¹⁹ The localities where the PRI won are clearly being favored with investments, which in the municipality of Santiago consist mostly of recreational infrastructure (rodeo rings).²⁰ The delegate of the locality of Ojo de Agua, a small PRI community in Santiago, put it bluntly: "where the party does well, that is where the projects go."²¹

¹⁴ Tarimoro, 30 June 2010.

¹⁵ Delegate of Panales Galera, Tarimoro, 30 June 2010.

¹⁶ Panales Galera, 30 June 2010.

¹⁷ Dallas, TX, 2 November 2010. Also, interview to the co-leader of the Club San Nicolás de la Condesa, interviewed the 2 November, 2010 in Dallas, TX.

¹⁸ Telephone Interview, 1 November 2010.

¹⁹ Tarimoro, 30 June 2010.

²⁰ Santiago Maravatío, 14 July 2010.

²¹ Santiago Maravatío, 14 July 2010.

We found another example of the stronghold advantage plus the gate-keeping role of municipalities in impeding access to the Program in the locality of Santa Rita. Santa Rita is a PRD stronghold. It has an active HTA in Houston, Texas: Club Santa Rita. We visited the locality and talked to the Club leader. He told us that he was involved in the electoral campaign in support of his brother-in-law, who happened to be the PRD candidate in the 2009 election. Having lost the election, the Club representative complained that the doors of the presidential municipality have been closed to him and that Santa Rita will not be receiving investments under the 3x1 Program "because it [Santa Rita] is yellow [the PRD color]." ²²

The previous PRD administration (2006-2009) was not very different, though: according to the leader of the Club el Agila, Santa Teresa did not get 3x1 subsidies when the PRD was in power because it was a PRI locality. ²³

Thus, municipal authorities favor their localities when endorsing projects under the 3x1 Program, regardless of their party label. The abovementioned account evidences that the PAN, PRI and PRD all sought partnerships in localities politically aligned with them. Yet, the core voter or "rewarding loyalty" electoral strategy is only part of the explanation for the outcomes that we observe. After seeing in detail the workings of the program and the very contentious character of local politics, one wonders whether municipalities wanting to use these resources, but not having complete control over them, can do anything but to approach their political allies. Municipalities need HTAs to guarantee migrants' contributions, and HTAs need an anchor in their localities. Delegates and the local beneficiaries often contribute and supervise the execution of the works, exerting the role of anchors. But the relationship between delegates, beneficiaries, and the municipality is heavily politicized along partisan lines. In turn, HTAs need the endorsement of municipalities and their technical and economic support to present project applications at the COVAM. This generates a mutual need that is best satisfied when migrant HTAs belong to localities politically aligned with the municipal government.

In order to make a convincing case that biases are supply driven, we need to rule out the alternative hypothesis that migrants' political preferences are driving the outcome. For instance, we need to show that the reason why PAN municipalities have a greater probability of participating is not due to migrants' reluctance to invest in municipalities ruled by other parties. Interviews with migrant leaders helped us to adjudicate between the supply driven and the demand driven alternative explanations. As we saw above, migrant leaders openly complained about supply driven biases. Besides, the interviews portray HTA leaders as very pragmatic actors. The migration

²² Santiago Maravatio, 14 July 2010.

²³ Dallas, TX, 1 November 2010.

scholar Rodolfo García Zamora attributed this pragmatism to a learning process on the part of migrants. Being aware of the volatility of local politics and the short tenures of municipal administrations, the best thing migrants can do is to avoid taking clear partisan stances. García Zamora describes HTAs as highly mobilized, but not according to traditional party lines.²⁴

The Club Huapango (Tarimoro) has a long history of participation in the 3x1 Program under administrations led by different parties. Club Huapango's leader told us "we do not care about the party; we care about the person [of the municipal president]."²⁵ The leader of the San Juan Bautista HTA, also based in Chicago and a locality from Tarimoro too, made clear that the constitutive acts of Clubs explicitly state that they do not belong to or support any political party. "I would present this project even if this municipality were not *panista*."²⁶ And according to the former PRI municipal president in the 2003-2006 administration "migrants want public works and they do not care who provides them."²⁷

Similarly, the leader of the Club Ojos de Agua/Novillero, located in Anaheim, California, forcefully stated "we want to work with everybody, regardless of their party." This newly created HTA from the municipality of Huanímoro has already worked with two municipal governments from different parties (PAN and PT, *Partido del Trabajo*) "and found no differences". The Club refused the invitation to participate in the campaign of the PAN candidate in the last municipal election (2009-2012). "Our policy is to work with whoever is in power..." he insisted.²⁸ "Migrants do not care about the party that is in power. They want to work with whoever is there" stated the leader of the mirror HTA at Ojos the Agua locality.²⁹

In the same vein, the leader of the Club Hawaiian Gardens from the municipality of Cuerámoro made it clear that her father was a former PRI municipal president but that she does not mind working with the current PAN (2009-2012) municipal president "as long as he works well."³⁰ The leader of the Club El Ágila from the community of Santa Teresa (Santiago Maravatío) was the only migrant leader we interviewed who voted in the 2006 presidential elections. He voted for the PAN presidential candidate, Felipe Calderón. Interestingly, his Club presented a project in the municipality, which is currently ruled by the PRI (2009-2012). "I am not interested in the

²⁴ Zacatecas, 25 January 2011.

²⁵ Phone interview, Mexico City, 7 October, 2010.

²⁶ Tarimoro, July 1, 2010.

²⁷ Tarimoro, June 30, 2010

²⁸ Phone interview, Mexico City, October 7, 2010.

²⁹ Leader of the Mirror HTA at Ojos de Agua (22 September 2010). Although Huanímoro qualified as a non participating municipality, migrants have started to get organized from 2008 on. The responsible for Migratory Issues at the municipality also stated that migrants do not make participation contingent on party labels (Huanímoro, 22 September 2010). The former delegate of the locality of Otates held that migrants talk about what can be done and how they can help; but they do not care about politics (11 November 2010).

³⁰ Phone interview, Mexico City, October 7, 2010.

party that is in the municipality. I just want them to work for us”, he stated.³¹ Finally, the president of the Club Hermosillo (Santiago Maravatío) explained that they want the best for their community. Yet, “we do not take official positions.”³²

The two main findings coming out from our fieldwork in participating municipalities –political bias in favor of local strongholds and migrants’ pragmatism– can be best summarized in the words of the leader of the HTA La Condesa. This Club based in Dallas belongs to the locality of San Nicolás de la Condesa, a PRI locality in Tarimoro (PAN). This HTA is currently in the process of submitting several applications under the 3x1 Program; but the leader complains about the difficulties in reaching the municipality: “We can work with whoever is there, but the municipality does not treat the *ranchos* equally [*parejo*]...”³³

To sum up, close inspection of the relationship among migrants, their localities, and their municipalities turned out to be very illuminating in understanding several sources of political bias in the actual implementation of the 3x1 Program. In our view, the most important evidence is the central role of municipalities, which casts doubt on the characterization of this particular program as driven by the demands of migrant clubs. As the non participating municipalities revealed, high migration intensity is a rough proxy of a good migrant organization. When this organization does not exist, the role of municipalities is central in spreading information and helping migrants to organize and activate HTAs. Lacking this proactive role, participation in the Program may not materialize, even in municipalities with a long tradition of out-migration.

In turn, the study of participating municipalities revealed that not all existing HTAs that are potentially interested in the Program receive support from municipal or state officials. Migrants are aware of local politics, but for the most part their approach to it is very pragmatic and non partisan. After fieldwork, it was evident that migrants’ political preferences are *not* the source of any observed partisan bias. HTAs need the municipality commitment of resources and their technical help to put together the application files. This gives municipalities a strong gate keeping role. In choosing which HTAs and projects to support, municipalities of all party labels favored their political strongholds. Moreover, fieldwork made clear that this type of local investments under the 3x1 Program can hardly be qualified as investments in pure public goods (non excludable). Rather, they fall under the category of club goods (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2006: 11), which provide benefits for subsets of citizens who have already delivered their electoral support (loyal localities). But it is also important to take into account that given the mutual

³¹ Dallas, TX, 1 November 2010.

³² Dallas, TX, 1 November 2010.

³³ Dallas, TX, 2 November 2010.

need that exists between HTAs and municipalities, we learned that favoring strongholds is a clientelistic strategy in as much as it also is the side effect of a policy design in which municipalities do not have full control of the program resources, and face high coordination demands.

3.2. Committees of Validation and Attention to Migrants (COVAMs): Municipalities, States and SEDESOL

We started out our fieldwork with two statistical findings in mind: the allocation of resources under the program benefits political strongholds regardless of party. As we saw in the previous section, PAN, PRD, and PRI municipalities all supported HTAs that proposed projects in localities sharing their party labels. Recall that we found this bias after controlling for the selection process, which favoured strongholds of the ruling PAN in the first place. In short, at the national level, there are more cases like *Tarimoro* than cases like *Santiago Maravatío* participating in the Program. Non PAN municipalities successfully receiving 3x1 subsidies are atypical. The next issue we explore is how the selection process that takes place at state COVAMs may easily result in a bias in favor of projects presented by PAN municipalities in PAN states.

After the municipal filter, proposals reach SEDESOL and the state offices. Before being discussed and voted at COVAMs, SEDESOL and the state inspects the technical files and whether proposals meet the rules of the Program. Figure 1 showed COVAMs composition. According to the rules of operation, COVAMs consist of three representatives of the four actors involved. There has to be at least one COVAM meeting per year. In Guanajuato, COVAMs are held every month until the budget is over. More importantly, projects approval occurs on a first come-first served basis. This obviously implies that municipalities with a well organized diaspora and expertise in putting together applications have a clear advantage when it comes to secure successful participation. Decisions about which projects to fund are taken by majority rule. In the case of Guanajuato, SEDESOL and the State share party label (PAN). Every year, the SEDESOL state delegation decides which municipalities participate in COVAMs on the basis of somewhat arbitrary criteria, such as migration intensity and previous participation in the Program.³⁴ Thus, it is obvious that COVAMs' composition can be easily aligned with the preferences of SEDESOL and/or the state of Guanajuato. We attended a COVAM meeting in which all three municipal representatives came from PAN municipalities: Cortázar, Jaral del Progreso, and Manuel Doblado. In other words, 9 of the 12 votes in that COVAM were politically aligned, and they were PAN votes.

³⁴ Sub-delegate from SEDESOL Guanajuato, Mexico City, 3 March 2011.

In this COVAM, decisions were made concerning the approval of several public infrastructure and productive projects. The validation and approval of productive projects is left to three experts (Reglas de Operación del Programa 3x1 para Migrantes 2010). Migrant representatives do not have a say in this decision. Seventeen productive projects were evaluated. Ten of them were precisely proposed by the municipality of Santiago Maravatío (PRI), a previously participating municipality. The expert committee considered all of them as *non viable*. Interestingly, all viable projects were located at PAN municipalities.³⁵ A representative of the state of Guanajuato who asked to remain anonymous openly acknowledged that this type of partisan biases in project allocation is not at all infrequent.

Making a convincing case that the bias in favor of PAN municipalities in PAN states has to do with political collusion during the decision making process implies showing that this sort of political manipulation does not occur in states ruled by a different political party. In other words, the political fragmentation of the decision making process in a non-PAN state should complicate the political manipulation of the Program.

Table 4 below shows the correlation between municipal participation and partisanship in the four high migration states that concentrate most of the participation and the resources of the 3x1 Program: Jalisco (PAN), Guanajuato (PAN), Zacatecas (PRD), and Michoacán (PRD, under the PRI since 2010). As it is possible to see, during the period 2002-2007, only in Jalisco and Guanajuato is the share of participating PAN municipalities significantly overrepresented relative to the proportion of total PAN jurisdictions. On the other hand, program participation of PRD municipalities in Zacatecas is strikingly proportional to the fraction of PRD municipalities in the state.

³⁵ Guanajuato, 16 July 2010.

**TABLE 4. Municipal Participation in the 3x1 Program vs. Ruling Party
All municipalities and selected states, 2002-2007**

Full sample (all states)	PAN	PRD	PRI	Other	Total
Non participating	2,258 22.77%	1,875 18.91%	5,433 54.78%	351 3.54%	9,917 100%
Participating	683 32.28%	456 21.55%	907 42.86%	70 3.31%	2,116 100%
Total	2,941 24.44%	2,331 19.37%	6,340 52.96%	421 3.50%	12,033 100%
Chi2 p-value =0.000					
Guanajuato (PAN state)	PAN	PRD	PRI	Other	Total
Non participating	75 53.57%	13 9.29%	45 32.14%	7 5.00%	140 100%
Participating	96 70.59%	2 1.47%	29 21.32%	9 6.62%	136 100%
Total	171 61.96%	15 5.43%	74 26.81%	16 5.80%	276 100%
Chi2 p-value=0.003					
Jalisco (PAN state)	PAN	PRD	PRI	Other	Total
Non participating	110 38.87%	15 5.30%	142 50.18%	16 5.65%	283 100%
Participating	221 47.73%	28 6.05%	200 43.20%	14 3.02%	463 100%
Total	331 44.37%	43 5.76%	342 45.84%	30 4.02%	746 100%
Chi2 p-value=0.043					
Michoacan (PRD state)	PAN	PRD	PRI	Other	Total
Non participating	21 6.56%	166 51.88%	131 40.94%	2 0.63%	320 100%
Participating	49 13.69%	171 47.77%	133 37.15%	5 1.40%	358 100%
Total	70 10.32%	337 49.71%	264 38.94%	7 1.03%	678 100%
Chi2 p-value=0.015					
Zacatecas (PRD state)	PAN	PRD	PRI	Other	Total
Non participating	11 11.34%	45 46.39%	36 37.11%	5 5.15%	97 100%
Participating	37 15.04%	113 45.93%	90 36.59%	6 2.44%	246 100%
Total	48 13.99%	158 46.06%	126 36.73%	11 3.21%	343 100%
Chi2 p-value=0.515					

Another set of interviews in the state of Zacatecas made clear that the strength of migrant organizations in this state actually made very complicated for PRD or PAN politicians to systematically favor their own municipalities. As in the case of Guanajuato, all interviewees portrayed migrant federations as

very pragmatic and only “conveniently” partisan.³⁶ Thanks to their strength, migrants have secured a decision making process that is fragmented enough to impede an easy political manipulation of resources by governmental actors.³⁷

To begin with, COVAMs at Zacatecas are composed of four representatives for each of the actors involved (migrants, municipalities, the state, and SEDESOL Zacatecas) making a total of 16 members. Thanks to rules specifically adopted in Zacatecas, each political party has a municipal representative in the COVAM: PAN, PRD, PRI, and more recently the PT (Partido del Trabajo). Their participation in COVAMs is decided by municipalities in the meetings of COPLADEs (Comités de Planeación y Desarrollo).³⁸ Thus, a situation like the one we witnessed in Guanajuato, where all three representatives of municipalities were appointed by SEDESOL and belonged to the same party, is impossible in Zacatecas.

Also, migrant organization is the strongest and has the longest tradition in Zacatecas. Migrants have secured increasing levels of political autonomy over time (Goldring, 2002). There are 14 active federations which control Program participation: HTAs can only submit projects through migrant federations.³⁹ According to one representative from (SEDESOL), there is also an ever increasing competition among federations to attract HTAs and to occupy the position of migrant deputy in the state legislature –another peculiarity of this state that indicates the political strength of migrants in policymaking.⁴⁰ The power of these organizations is such that migrants have secured veto power at COVAMs: it is necessary the positive vote of at least one of the four migrant representatives for decisions to be taken.⁴¹ During our interviews, SEDESOL representatives openly mentioned to us their weak position vis-à-vis the state and migrants. And both the state and SEDESOL agreed in that their relationships being good and “very institutional.”⁴²

Therefore, the strength of Zacatecan migrant federations, and the juxtaposition of federal and state governments, resulted in an increased

³⁶ Former representative at SEPLADER. Former representative at SEDESOL. Rodolfo García Zamora, University of Zacatecas. All interviews held in Zacatecas, 25 January 2011. One representative of SEDESOL, 26 January 2011. Project Director at the Zacatecan Federation of Southern California, 26 January 2011. The Zacatecan Federation of Southern California has traditionally been identified with the PRI. Yet, a faction of it supported Ricardo Monreal (PRD) during his campaign in 1998 (Goldring, 2002).

³⁷ Goldring’s (2002: 83) study of the relevance of Zacatecas under PRI rule follows a similar argument of partisan alignment to explain migrants’ organization ascendance. As Goldring explains, the alignment of the powerful Zacatecan federation of Southern California with the PRI, a PRI governor (Arturo Romo), and PRI rule at the federal level empowered migrants as strategic transnational actors in Zacatecas as opposed to other states where those political alignments did not take place.

³⁸ Former representative at SEPLADER, 25 January 2011. Former representative at SEDESOL, 25 January 2011. Former representative at SEPLADER, 26 January 2011.

³⁹ Project Director at the Zacatecan Federation of Southern California, 27 January 2011.

⁴⁰ Former representative of SEPLADER, shared this same opinion, 26 January 2011.

⁴¹ Project Director at the Zacatecan Federation of Southern California, 27 January 2011.

⁴² The former representative at (SEPLADER), 25 January 2011.

political fragmentation of the decision making process to allocate funds under the Program. In contrast, shared PAN control of this process in Guanajuato and Jalisco has guaranteed a steady increase in the participation of these states in the 3x1 Program total outlays —a growth rate that cannot be simply justified on the basis of “the strength of its migrant organizations.”⁴³

⁴³ 27 January 2011. Regarding Jalisco, Rodolfo García Zamora shared the same opinion.

Conclusions

The Mexican 3x1 Program for Migrants is usually regarded as international reference in the cooperation between diasporas abroad and their communities of origin (World Bank, 2006; Fernández, García and Vila, 2006). The 3x1 Program matches each dollar sent by hometown associations (HTAs) to finance local projects with one extra dollar from municipal, state and federal governments, respectively. In previous statistical research, we found evidence of two sorts of political biases in the incidence of the 3x1 Program, controlling for migration, poverty and other covariates: First, a bias in favor of PAN municipalities or PAN strongholds in *program participation*. Second, once selected into the program, there is a bias in favor of political strongholds across political parties in the *amounts* per capita devoted to public projects. Our statistical regression analysis provides evidence of significant association between political variables, participation, and fund allocation by the program. However, to precisely understand the mechanisms underlying these correlations, a more qualitative approach is essential.

We posit that the political bias in participation and fund allocation may be due to two possible mechanisms: on the one hand, HTAs decisions to invest in some municipalities but not others may reflect migrants' preferences (a demand driven bias). On the other hand, it may be the case that government officials use the Program to direct funds according to their own political objectives (a supply-driven bias). To disentangle which of these two mechanisms is at work, we studied a 2x2 matrix of statistically selected cases of high migration municipalities in the state of Guanajuato.

We chose the state of Guanajuato to hold constant the party label of the state and the federal governments (both panistas). We then allowed for variation at the municipal level along two dimensions of interest: program participation and municipal partisanship. In order to identify four municipalities that were relatively comparable, we used propensity score matching. We carried out over 60 semi-structured interviews to state and municipal Program administrators, local politicians, and migrant leaders from these four municipalities as well as in Dallas, Texas.

A closer look at the relationship among migrants, their localities, and their municipalities illuminates several sources of political bias in the actual implementation of the 3x1 Program. In our view, the most important piece of evidence to adjudicate between a demand- or supply-driven bias is the central role of municipalities in promoting the program and in facilitating a successful participation. Clearly, this finding casts doubts on the characterization of this program as driven by the demands of migrant clubs. The experience of non-participating municipalities also revealed that high migration intensity is not always a very good predictor of migrants'

organization. When this organization does not exist, the role of municipalities is central in spreading information, helping migrants to organize, and to activate HTAs. Lacking this proactive role, participation in the Program may not materialize, even in municipalities with a long tradition of out-migration. To further demonstrate that the bias in favor of PAN municipalities in PAN states has to do with political collusion during the decision making process, we also find evidence that this sort of political manipulation does not occur in states ruled by a different political party.

All in all, the statistical and qualitative evidence suggests that the 3x1 Program is being used as a political instrument to reward high-migration strongholds of the ruling party. This result shows that this policy is ill designed to devote public resources where they are most needed. Our research also points to the emergence of an important political “partnership” between hometown associations in political strongholds and local politicians. Without disregarding the economic benefits that the projects may bring to the communities that actually receive them, we contend that the 3x1 Program for Migrants is used in part as an instrument for exchanging public infrastructure for political support. This raises fundamental questions about the social impact and incidence of this sort of policy intervention, as well as on the limits of collective remittances as poverty reduction tools.

Appendix

A1. DETERMINANTS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE 3X1 PROGRAM IN MEXICAN MUNICIPALITIES, 2002-2007

Heckman selection models						
	Program Participation	log(Amount)	Program Participation	log(Amount)	Program Participation	Log(Amount)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Migration Index	0.261	0.093	0.278	0.093	0.278	0.091
	[0.018]***	[0.023]***	[0.022]***	[0.024]***	[0.022]***	[0.024]***
Poverty	0.833	-0.102	0.864	-0.058	0.864	-0.078
	[0.096]***	[0.131]	[0.106]***	[0.139]	[0.106]***	[0.140]
Squared Poverty	-0.133	0.016	-0.148	0.014	-0.149	0.016
	[0.018]***	[0.025]	[0.020]***	[0.027]	[0.020]***	[0.027]
Politics						
PAN State	0.214	0.006	0.167	0.071	0.16	0.074
	[0.100]**	[0.128]	[0.111]	[0.131]	[0.110]	[0.130]
PRI State	0.161	0.067	0.114	0.134	0.138	0.135
	[0.107]	[0.145]	[0.110]	[0.145]	[0.112]	[0.146]
PAN Municipality	0.112	-0.013			0.024	0.084
	[0.049]**	[0.057]			[0.076]	[0.083]
PRI Municipality	-0.066	0.011			0.007	0.108
	[0.043]	[0.049]			[0.066]	[0.078]
PAN Municipal Vote Share			0.338	0.185		
			[0.126]***	[0.142]		
PRI Municipal Vote Share			-0.295	-0.24		
			[0.170]*	[0.191]		
PAN-PRI Municipal Vote Share						
Municipal Competitiveness					0.018	0.756
					[0.407]	[0.468]
Shared Partisanship					0.025	-0.001
					[0.036]	[0.043]
Local Election					-0.159	-0.039
					[0.040]***	[0.046]
Effective number of parties						
Competitiveness*PAN Municipality					1.272	-0.717
					[0.528]**	[0.589]
Competitiveness*PRI Municipality					-0.198	-0.863
					[0.456]	[0.547]
Log (Population)	0.15	0.171	0.143	0.17	0.14	0.173
	[0.017]***	[0.025]***	[0.020]***	[0.026]***	[0.020]***	[0.026]***
Water	0.249		0.192		0.193	
	[0.086]***		[0.095]**		[0.095]**	
Sewage	0.211		0.168		0.165	
	[0.085]**		[0.097]*		[0.097]*	
Electricity	0.006		0.022		0.008	
	[0.087]		[0.094]		[0.094]	
Constant	-0.846	0.303	-0.784	0.183	-0.863	0.071
	[0.259]***	[0.204]	[0.287]***	[0.215]	[0.282]***	[0.210]
Observations	14,519	14,519	10,897	10,897	10,897	10,897

Units are municipality/year observations. Program participation is a binary outcome

Robust Standard errors in brackets. * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%.

All models include state and year effects.

A2. LIST OF LOCALITIES

HUANÍMARO	SANTIAGO MARAVATÍO	TARIMORO	CUERÁMARO
CERRITO ALTO NUEVO	COLONIA MORELOS	SAN NICOLÁS	TUPÁTARO
CERRITO ALTO VIEJO	OJO DE AGUA DE LA	LA MONCADA	SAN GREGORIO
CERRITO DE AGUIRRE	YERBABUENA	PANALES GALERA	OJO DE AGUA
COPALES	LA MAJADA	PANALES JAMAICA	EL SAUCILLO
GRANJA BEATRIZ	LA LEONA	HUAPANGO	LA BATALLA
GRANJA LA JOYA	EL DORMIDO	LA NOPALERA	PUERTA DE LA RESERVA
LA TINAJA	HERMOSILLO	SAN JUAN	PRESITA DEL SAUZ
LOS OTATES	JOYITA DE PASTORES	BAUTISTA	NUEVA ESPERANZA
MONTE BLANCO	LA JARA	OJO DE AGUA DE	PUERTA DE LA CAÑA
OJOS DE AGUA	LA JOYA GRANDE	NIETO	NUEVO EDÉN
RAMÓN GARCÍA	SANTA RITA	LA NORIA	LA SABINA
SAN ANTONIO	SANTA TERESA	EL TERRERO	PLATANAR
BUENAVISTA	LA PILA	EL ACEBUCHE	LA LLAVE
SAN ISIDRO DE AYALA		LOS FIERROS	SANTA RITA
SAN JOSÉ DE AYALA		CHARCO LARGO	18 DE MARZO
SAN RAMÓN		RANCHO DE	LOS HORNOS
ZAPOTE DE AGUIRRE		GUADALUPE	LA SARTENEJA
ZAPOTITO DE MANCILLA			LA SOLEDAD
			GALERA DE LA GRULLA
			LA PALMA
			PLAN SEXENAL
			SAN JOSÉ DE OJO DE AGUA
			BARRANCA DE LA HUERTA
			EL NOVILLERO
			LA REGALADA
			BUENA VISTA
			LINDA VISTA
			CERRITO DE AGUA CALIENTE
			PRESA DE URIBE
			SAN JOSÉ DE RAMALES
			LUZ MAZAS
			TRES VILLAS

Visited localities as well as those from which we interviewed migrant leaders appear in boldface.

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