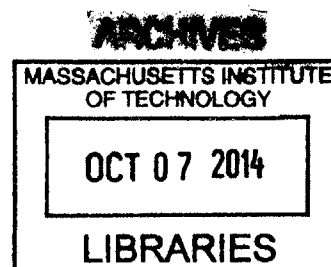Empowering Cooperation:
Dominican Hometown Associations and the Politics of Transnational Community Development

By

Deepak Lamba-Nieves

B.A. Economics
University of Puerto Rico, 1998

M.C.P. City and Regional Planning
University of California at Berkeley, 2002

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Urban and Regional Studies
at the

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
September 2014

© 2014 Deepak Lamba-Nieves. All Rights Reserved.

The author hereby grants to MIT the permission to reproduce and to distribute
publicly paper and electronic copies of the thesis document in whole or in part in
any medium now known or hereafter created.

Signature redacted

Author____
⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯
Department of Urban Studies and Planning
August 25, 2014

Signature redacted

Certified by ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯
Professor Diane E. Davis
Professor of Urbanism and Development
Dissertation Supervisor

Signature redacted

Accepted by____
⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯
Professor Lawrence J. Vale
Chair, PhD Committee
Department of Urban Studies and Planning

Empowering Cooperation:
Dominican Hometown Associations and the Politics of Transnational
Community Development

By
Deepak Lamba-Nieves

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning on August 25,
2014 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Urban and Regional Studies

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how three Dominican hometown associations
(HTAs) define, negotiate and practice transnational community development,
by carefully analyzing the processes through which state, migrants and non-
migrant actors engage in "messy" local projects.

I identify two interrelated factors that explain the differences and
commonalities in how the three organizations under study muddle through
transnational community development processes: (1) the intra organizational
dynamics that take shape as HTAs engage in cross border efforts, and (2) the
types of project-based engagements between the associations, the state and
other development actors. I also devised some stylized analytical categories
that allow for a more refined analysis of how power is negotiated and
exercised in cross-border development situations, and the ways in which the
transnational relationships between diverse development actors are shaped.

I argue that the more promising processes of transnational community
development are those characterized by the coexistence of well articulated
transnational cooperation networks that allow migrant and home country
HTA chapters to contribute effectively to a common development agenda,
together with *empowered exchanges* that enable the effective coproduction of
projects while allowing local community leaders to play a protagonist role.
More than a mechanistic cause and effect story, what the data confirms is a
co-evolving relationship between the patterns of organizational politics and
project-based engagements.

By unpacking projects and processes, I also document the routines and tactics
that HTAs employ to achieve their goals. In general, all the organizations
studied have a tendency to seek answers to complex development issues
through experimentation and problem-oriented strategies. Being able to
experiment and troubleshoot, these organizations sidestep the strictures of
policy and programmatic "monocropping", which, in turn, provides them with

2

increased opportunities to learn from practical experience. That is, in the absence of formal structures, learning becomes a continuously evolving exercise. Nevertheless, learning opportunities come in many guises, so development trials can lead to important process innovations, but also costly mistakes. In light of this, the ability to identify and make the most out of unforeseen or unintended development consequences stemming from experimental projects becomes a fundamental skill for HTAs.

Thesis Supervisor: Diane E. Davis
Title: Professor of Urbanism and Development

Table of Contents

5

Acknowledgements

—For my family, the most brave and loving group of migrants.

This transnational project took over five years to complete and relied on the generous support of many important people and institutions in numerous countries. My first words of gratitude go to the Dominican men and women who warmly invited me into their communities and homes, patiently told their histories, and kindly shared their vast knowledge with a fellow *caribeño*. I hope that the stories I have included here will do justice to their vibrant communities and to the tireless organizations that have significantly broadened my intellectual horizons. The solid friendships I have established during this time will no doubt continue to grow. To all of the big-hearted *banilejos*, and following the more old-fashioned meaning of the term, I say: ¡*Ofrézcome*!

My mentors in academia have been a constant source of inspiration and guidance. As members of my dissertation committee, Professors Diane E. Davis, Peggy Levitt and Richard Locke made abundant contributions that sharpened my research agenda and the content of this document. But most importantly, these wise teachers trained me to become a rigorous, sensible and committed academic, and looked out for my best interests. Thank you for believing in my work and preparing me for the road ahead.

Throughout my graduate studies at MIT, I benefited from the erudition and cooperation of professors, students and staff members that made the long ride a less strenuous one. In particular, I would like to thank the wonderful group of colleagues at the Community Innovators Lab (CoLab)—especially Dana Cunningham and Phil Thompson—who took me in, provided lots of intellectual and moral encouragement, and supported my research. Working alongside the CoLab bunch provided a source of fresh ideas on how to think through the big conundrums and everyday challenges of community development. Furthermore, I am extremely grateful for the grants and financial awards provided by different departments and units within MIT and beyond, especially the Department of Urban Studies and Planning and the Foundation for Puerto Rico.

Over a thousand miles away, in my native Puerto Rico, I was able to rely on the ceaseless encouragement provided by my friends at the Center for a New Economy (CNE). Although I left my island to pursue a doctoral degree, I never left the CNE. Miguel A. Soto-Class made sure I did not stray away too far, backed my academic projects, allowed me to continue earning a decent living, and continued to include me in CNE's impactful efforts to reshape Puerto Rico's socioeconomic landscape.

In every city and town I set foot to conduct research or write this dissertation, I was graced by the kindness of great friends. I thank Emil Rodríguez Garabot, Shaney Peña Gómez, Michael Jiménez, Javier Nieves, Alyssa Bryson, Graham Denyer Willis, Shomon Shamsuddin, Sheharyar Bokhari, Onésimo Flores Dewey, Jason Jackson, Harold Toro, Gustavo Bobonis, Ryan Centner, Gerardo Sandoval, and all others who lent a hand in any way. I am also grateful to María Victoria del Campo and Sergio Marxuach, who read several long chapters with caution, offered precise suggestions on early drafts, and assisted with proofing the text. Sarah Aponte, the Chief Librarian at the CUNY Dominican Studies Institute, helped me find valuable materials, and on numerous occasions offered valuable lessons on Dominican history. In addition, Manuel Clavell Carrasquillo has been a true best friend. Since our college days, he has patiently lent an attentive ear, offered great advice and constructive critiques.

My family accompanied me at every step of the way. My mother, Edda Aixa Nieves Cruz, has been a tireless cheerleader, provided endless amounts of encouragement, and come to my assistance innumerable times. My father, Ram Sarup Lamba, introduced me to the intense world of academia at a very early age, and taught me the importance of inquisitiveness and discipline. My sister, Nalini Lamba-Nieves, has always stepped up at distinct moments and in important ways. During the last stages of the writing process, when I was running on empty, she kindly revised the final text. Throughout my life I have been able to rely on them. They have always been in my corner.

I owe a great debt to my girlfriend and partner, Firuzeh Shokooh Valle, and our daughter, Marina Isabel Pineda Shokooh. They have showered me with heartfelt love through all the highs and lows, and been extremely patient and understanding. Firuzeh, your brilliance, solidarity and tenacity have been inspiring. Marina, you have filled all these days with hope and warmth. Most importantly, you have made me a better person. I would have never been able to complete this project without the two of you, and I hope to make you proud.

Preface

Experts point out that one out of every seven people in the world is a migrant. Global populations are constantly on the move, crossing between countries or within their nation's borders. One of the principal reasons why so many pack their bags and leave their homes is because of the stark disparities in incomes and opportunities between regions and countries. The poorest Americans, for example, have much higher annual incomes than 60 percent of the global population. Location and movement are important when it comes to life chances[1].

In many countries of the Global South, like the Dominican Republic, development has been a consistently unfulfilled promise made by those in power. Authoritarian legacies, fiscal insufficiencies, widespread corruption and deep partisan divisions have long been the cited causes behind the Dominican Republic's development misfortunes. Most poor communities there have suffered greatly while they wait for public agencies to honor their stated commitments. In addition, many people have opted to seek opportunities elsewhere, primarily crossing an ocean to go up north, to *los países* or *Nueba Yol*.

Interestingly, moving somewhere else has benefitted not only those who leave, but also those who stay behind. Migrants have become one of the primary development drivers of many developing countries, including the Dominican Republic. Money sent from abroad has been a vital source of foreign income for many national governments. The volumes are so vast that they are three times larger than the total amount of global development assistance. For many poor families, receiving remittances means having a shot at a better life.

---

[1] See Milanovic (2012).

However, financial transfers are only a part of the story. In several rural towns in the Dominican Republic, hometown associations (HTAs) have found innovative ways to break long-standing patterns of neglect by bootstrapping a series of transnational community development projects. In other words, development has become a cross border phenomenon that involves the bi-directional movement of people, money, resources and skills between places of origin and destination.

This dissertation analyzes how three grassroots organizations engage in community development across borders. I delve into their stories—looking at the strategies they employ to get things done, how they muddle through complex challenges, and the consequences of their hard work—to explore and rethink some of the debates on the migration-development nexus. The protagonists are committed leaders hailing from the Baní region of the Dominican Republic who labor intensely from home and migrant communities to address multiple development needs, primarily in their towns of origin. Their efforts and accomplishments are impressive and extensive. In the span of four decades, they have built and administered schools and health clinics, constructed roads, ensured the provision of potable water, established educational scholarship programs, addressed public security issues, started microenterprises and even managed a small, rural municipality. And the list goes on.

My project is based on five years of data gathering in the United States and the Dominican Republic, mostly interviewing knowledgeable individuals, attending meetings, observing the evolution of projects, poring over documents, and getting to know the communities. These interactions allowed me to gain a thorough understanding of how these HTAs operate and how they make community development happen.

What made these HTAs particularly interesting objects of study were not only the types and number of projects they took on, but also some of the larger questions that came up as the research advanced, such as: how are conventional understandings of development challenged when we take into account migration? Also, what do we learn about community development in general by looking at migrants' transnational collaborations?

First, the experiences of the Dominican HTAs examined demonstrate that development is a *process* than can spur new forms of learning and capabilities that can often be applied to other settings. Examining projects and paying attention to the process allows us to analyze how HTAs define development goals, design and implement projects, as they monitor and evaluate their efforts, and gain knowledge from their mistakes. Furthermore, analyzing the process also reveals how organizational forgetting, stemming from directorial fractures and limited transnational dialogue, can hinder the HTAs' ability to use previous learning experiences as clues to solve new development puzzles. These insights suggest that a shift in the emphasis of the academic discussions is necessary: from the conventional *how much* development occurs to a more critical examination of *what kinds* of development processes emerge when state, migrants and non-migrant actors engage in complex community projects[2].

Second, the most successful development experiences in transnational communities occur when state and non-state actors are able to come together to address community development issues. Collective migrant remittances that aim to solve community needs are sometimes considered counterproductive, because they end up substituting the state, "letting it off the hook". But I find that HTA projects can generate successful opportunities for establishing state-society synergies that can take community development

---

[2] This analytical distinction was inspired by Evan's (1995) work on the role of states in industrial transformations.

to the next level. In the town of Villa Fundación, for example, synergistic partnerships between public, private and civic actors led to new projects that allowed for more impactful efforts than the typical brick and mortar or service projects usually pursued by national governments. Led by the HTA, and in collaboration with several state agents, international development agencies and NGOs, the town was endowed with irrigation channels, a community-run fertilizer plant, and a food-processing co-op run by women. These projects have helped increase employment and economic development opportunities for the people of Villa Fundación.

Third, the field data revealed some engaging insights regarding power and the politics of development. Some of the most impactful projects and development effects came about when migrant and home country HTA chapters were able to establish transnational cooperation networks that allowed them to establish a common set of goals and set collective development agendas, and when local community leaders were empowered to play a protagonist role in the definition and execution of projects, especially those produced in collaboration with the state and other development agents. In short, I found that *how* sociopolitical relationships are developed, both within and beyond the organization's ranks, have a significant impact on their development trajectories.

Moreover, paying careful attention to the evolution of several projects also brought to light how HTA members solve complex development problems. More often than not, the organizations are unable to rely on technical assistance from development experts or the financial support of targeted programs, so they experiment and troubleshoot their way through numerous challenges. This approach frees the organizations from the limiting parameters of generic development agendas imposed from above, and allows them to engage in a constantly evolving learning practice that strengthens their execution capabilities. However, while important process innovations

arise under the "rule of non-experts", figuring things out through trial-and-error inevitably leads to some missteps. Experimental projects exhibit varying degrees of success, so HTAs must also learn to decipher creative responses to unforeseen obstacles.

In sum, how HTAs engage in complex projects across borders reveals many lessons for the study and practice of community development. In telling the story of the three study HTAs, my intention is to move past defining or promoting a model that could be replicated in communities across the globe. Many of their accomplishments are monumental, and could very well be identified as best practices for community development. But what makes them particularly useful objects of study for scholars and practitioners, and what continues to amaze me about their work is something else: it is their ability to turn the development process into a ceaseless and often fruitful search for new possibilities.

1. Introduction

It was supposed to be a tranquil gathering. The invitation announced a special community meeting to review the organization's accomplishments, its current challenges and future undertakings. However, it turned into a passionate discussion that shared little resemblance to the rest of the activities planned to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the *Sociedad Progresista de Villa Sombrero* (SOPROVIS), a renowned community development organization hailing from the southern region of the Dominican Republic, but whose reach extends transnationally. As an invited facilitator, one of my duties was to prevent the discussion from veering off track. Two hours into the gathering, I sensed they had waited too long to speak their minds without following a script, and let them have their way. The last items on the agenda were supposed to spur a collective reflection on future projects and prospects for the organization, but several leaders and chapter presidents who had travelled to Villa Sombrero from Boston, New York and Santo Domingo for the celebrations saw an opportunity to ask hard questions and get some answers.

Iván N., a long-standing director who presides the Boston chapter, stood up first. He wanted to know why progress on the sports complex, a big project spearheaded by Boston, was so slow. Then came Gabriel S., one of the original founders of the organization and a nationally known businessman residing in Santo Domingo, who inquired as to why the community wasn't pressuring the local authorities to address important needs. From then onwards, more incisive queries and several demands were made. Residents from Villa Sombrero also chimed in, asking if the organization had placed more attention on big projects and lost sight of the true social needs of the community at large. For a while, it seemed like almost everyone in the room had some grievance they wanted to air out. But for the most part, the main targets of their claims were the local authorities, mainly the town's mayor

and the province governor, whose absence was noted and criticized. When it was his turn to talk, the president of the New York chapter, Giovanni Q., provided a list of some of their recent projects, "firemen, an ambulance, a sports complex, health drives", and decried:

> Why aren't the authorities here? [...] We don't have to solve governmental and social problems, there's a mayor and a governor [for that]. We have to demand that they take care of these problems. Why does SOPROVIS have to reach into its pockets? Why don't we unite to make demands?

A veteran member from Santo Domingo echoed Giovanni's message and went further: "We don't know what they're spending the [public] funds on. The members of the municipal council have to demand that [information]." Soon thereafter, the activity began to wind down, but the atmosphere was charged. Those politically aligned with the mayor seemed upset. Some tense exchanges between leaders and representatives of diverse partisan factions ensued as the guests filed out of the small auditorium. Although the last part of the activity didn't yield a detailed assessment or a list of future project priorities, as was originally expected, I felt that the gathering provided an important opportunity to have an open debate on the respective roles, responsibilities and expectations of state entities and community organizations. It also allowed engaged community actors to express concerns regarding the future of the organization and make valid claims upon the local authorities, which would hopefully be addressed opportunely. Beyond the pomp and ceremony associated with their anniversary commemoration, I was privy to yet another series of exchanges that revealed how an enduring hometown association fostered civic engagement and cultivated organizational capacity.

A formal response from the town's mayor soon followed. In a letter directed to the president of SOPROVIS' Executive Committee, he described the critiques against his office as "inconsiderate and lacking respect". Highlighting his

positive track record and long-standing collaboration with SOPROVIS, he strongly condemned several stateside leaders who spoke their minds at the event:

> They launched [attacks] against me personally and against the institution that I lead, and I want to stress that these characters have no moral quality to rant against me nor the institution that I lead, my commitment is to my community and not with these newly minted pharaohs [...].

His pointed remarks also specified that the "imperious attitudes" of the U.S.-based leaders were to blame for any divisions that exist between the organization and the rest of the community groups in Villa Sombrero. The lopsided nature of the mayor's riposte was unexpected, given the chorus of voices that stood up to demand more attention from the authorities, and the important role that stateside leaders play in financing many of the town's major projects. Nonetheless, it can be interpreted as a calculated strategy to defend his image without ruffling any feathers within the hometown leadership or upsetting the politically connected elders from Santo Domingo. Because the U.S. leaders are a vocal bunch, but not part of his voting base, they became convenient targets. Their sustained engagement in the community, along with their relative detachment, allows them to occupy an important space in the polity where they can make critical demands, but also become political scapegoats.

Quarrels and disagreements between community leaders and the local mayor, commonplace in Villa Sombrero, can easily be reduced to small-town political theater. However, these types of episodes demonstrate some of the tensions and power struggles that lie at the core of the complex state-society relationships that emerge over time when cross-border civic actors become actively engaged in community projects. These incidents also provide a glimpse of the "messy" processes and negotiations spurred by transnational community development organizations that aim to shape their hometown's

16

development agendas. Although substantial, they are often ignored topics in the scholarly debates on the links between migration and development.

Debating the Migration-Development Nexus: What's Missing?

Before being honored with the opportunity to moderate a community assembly in Villa Sombrero, I spent many hours talking to people and attending meetings in the U.S. and the Dominican Republic, trying to figure out how Dominican migrants and their counterparts back home were able to orchestrate a series of complicated community projects that aimed to improve the quality of life in their towns of origin. This initial interest, which turned into to a five-year fieldwork commitment, began with a basic question that stands at the center of a growing literature: in what ways are migrants linked to development practices?

Exploring Links and Pendulum Swings

For many scholars and practitioners, the association between diasporas and development boils down to money, and with good reason. In 2012 alone, the funds sent by migrants to developing countries totaled $401 billion, an increase of 5.3 percentage points from the year before. Financial remittance flows towards countries in the Global South have been a major and steady source of foreign income, far outpacing official development assistance, private aid and portfolio equity investment (WB 2013). These large and growing sums have led economists and other social scientists to question the net impact and effectiveness of these financial flows: do they lead, in general terms, to improved livelihoods or generate new inequities? The search for a definitive answer has been an elusive task, given the availability of concrete evidence that points to widely different and at times even opposing conclusions (Lipton 1980; Adams and Page 2005). Despite the differences and enduring discussions, the current consensus holds that money sent home can

17

help reduce the vulnerability of poor households, but remittances alone are not sufficient to reduce structural poverty (Kapur 2004; Orozco 2004).

Researchers have also reached differing conclusions about the overall impact of migration on development. As Faist (2008), Faist, Fauser and Reisenauer (2013), and De Haas (2010; 2102) have argued, several pendulum swings have characterized the tone of the debates since mid-Twentieth Century. From positive views that saw migration as a way to spur financial remittances, address labor shortages in industrialized nations, and introduce know-how and liberal ideas in developing countries (Lewis 1954; Kindleberger 1967), to negative opinions that equated diasporas with brain drain, and remittances with conspicuous consumption instead of productive investments (Adams 1969; Entzinger 1985). These views coincided more broadly with the debates in mainstream development theory, which underwent successive shifts in focus: from embracing state-led development and a basic needs approach, to the promotion of neoliberal restructuring. At present, the pendulum has swung once more—towards the positive end of the spectrum— and there's a generalized understanding within mainstream academic and policy communities, that movement and circulation can enable positive development outcomes.

Central to this new understanding is the "celebration of circulation", the recognition that migration is not a one-way process that inevitably leads to assimilation into host societies, but that migrants become simultaneously embedded in "transnational social fields" (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004) that link multiple geographies and transcend national borders. This analytical framework, or "transnational optic" (Khagram and Levitt 2007), allows us to better understand how incorporation into destination communities and the conservation of strong ties "back at home" are not mutually exclusive phenomena, but two sides of the same coin.

Although migrant transnationalism was initially understood and theorized as a response to the oppressive racial and class inequities that immigrants faced in destination countries (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994; Portes 1996), subsequent scholarship has helped refine its definition and expand its analytical reach, in ways that have made it attractive to wider audiences[3]. Today, multilateral institutions and numerous governments worldwide have warmed up to the idea that transnational migrant practices and the circulation of labor foster sustained financial remittances flows and the creation of cross border knowledge networks, two recognized drivers of development.

A case in point is the way in which the issue of "brain drain" has been recast in the migration and development literature. The out migration of individuals who possessed a high level of human capital was long understood to be significantly detrimental to countries of origin, especially developing nations, who stood to lose more if their best and brightest were poached by developed nations searching for good talent at lower costs. But the recent literature has added a new dimension to the discussion by highlighting how transnationally connected diasporas and return migrants help establish entrepreneurial connections and contribute to a flow of ideas that oftentimes leads to the creation of new industries (Saxenian 2006), technological diffusion (Kerr 2008), and increases in human capital accumulation—when the prospect of migrating incentivizes schooling (Percot and Rajan 2007).

---

[3] Numerous scholars have also raised important critiques that have led to calls for a more precise nomenclature, and to the advent of new concepts such as "translocalism", "bi-national", and "transstate" (Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004; Barkan 2006, cited in Levitt and Jaworsky 2007). Others have disputed the seemingly ubiquitous nature of transnational practices, arguing that a rather small percentage of the migrant population engages in sustained transnational practices (Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003; Portes, Guarnizo and Haller 2002). Several scholars have also argued that cross border connections between migrants and their homelands are not a new phenomenon, but a common practice amongst earlier waves that's been dutifully documented (Foner 1997; Morawska 2004).

Central to the claims of "brain circulation" is the realization that "social remittances" are also exchanged through transnational webs. The term, coined by Levitt (2001), describes the ideas, norms, practices and identities that flow within the dense and widespread networks forged by migrants and those who stay behind. These non-monetary transfers are often exchanged through the same social fields as financial remittances, but also percolate via larger circuits of global knowledge diffusion. While migrant intellectuals, businessmen, traveling civil servants and other national elites are often thought to be the primary vectors of developmentally useful social remittances (Domínguez 1997; Kapur 2010), the evidence indicates that blue-collar workers and rural laborers, in their individual roles and through diverse organizational forms, are also purveyors, recipients and implementers of important knowledge that is exchanged transnationally (Frank 2005; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011; Iskander 2010).

The current positive outlook towards the migration-development relationship is also bolstered by a growing belief within mainstream development practitioners that communities and other civic actors can play a crucial role in overcoming underdevelopment: through empowerment, nurturing the right kinds of relationships that breed social capital, and articulating development projects "from below" (Faist 2008). This discourse aims to find some middle ground, or an intellectual comfort zone, between the top-down approaches of early developmental state programs, and the neoliberal market-driven solutions that push for individual responsibility amidst an ever-shrinking governmental apparatus. Not surprisingly, global institutions like the United Nations, the World Bank, numerous aid agencies, and international NGOs, have embraced the idea that organized communities can become important development agents, alongside migration specialists, who see an important and expanded role for migrant organizations, especially those that can build transnational bridges between developed countries and communities in the

Global South. Within this perspective, certain type of migrants and organized diasporas are seen as dynamic development facilitators that can leverage transnational ties to catalyze growth and economic opportunities in both the sending and receiving regions.

In the European context, calls for empowering migrants to take on development responsibilities in their communities of origin have been channeled through policies and programs aimed at promoting "co-development". Emerging in France during the late 1970s and early 1980s, these programs had a "double perspective" (Rey Pedreira 2006) that stressed cooperation and mutual benefit between receiving and sending countries— primarily through financial support for returnees and immigrant organizations that could embark on entrepreneurial or development ventures in their countries of origin—but were politically inspired by the desire to curb irregular or unwanted population flows from the developing world. Although years of experimentation and replication (the French experience served as a model for countries like Spain, Belgium, Holland and Germany) have provided opportunities to amend and refine co-development agendas, the development effects of these efforts have not been adequately examined or have shown mixed results (de Haas 2006; Nijenhuis and Broekhuis 2010). These limited results are primarily due to the mismatch between the official policy discourse (predicated on bilateral cooperation) and the underlying political motivations, which are geared towards immigration control and often fueled by nationalism and xenophobia.[4]

Across the Atlantic Ocean, a desire to understand the contributions of immigrant organizations to development has led to a series of studies that have provided valuable insights on their prevalence and impacts in sending

---

[4] In their assessment of co-development programs in the Netherlands, France, and Spain, Nijenhuis and Broekhuis (2010) argue that: "National interests and fear of public disagreement are what set the co-development agenda. The development of poor regions comes second" (262).

and receiving countries (Orozco 2003; Portes, Escobar and Radford 2007; Escobar 2010; Portes and Zhou 2012). The majority of these studies have been performed through the Comparative Immigrant Organization Project (CIOP), an effort that has broken new ground in examining how transnational and domestic organizations (within Mexican, Dominican, and Colombian communities in the United States) contribute to important political and socioeconomic outcomes, domestically and abroad.

Within this ambitious research agenda, scholars have also tried to develop a generalized understanding of how migrant groups influence development in home and destination contexts, and the synergies these groups generate with state actors. Their conclusions underscore earlier research findings that demonstrate the durability of transnational practices and the pervasiveness of migrant organizations, with varying roles and agendas, which can carry out successful domestic and transnational development projects. In addition, their analyses also advance new ideas regarding how contexts of exit and reception and the policies of sending country governments influence how different ethnic groups begin organizing, and the paths taken by their collectivities.

Given their desire to systematically examine migrant organizations, primarily through the use of surveys and quantitative methodologies, these studies have gained popularity and lent support to mainstream arguments regarding the central role that organized diasporas and grassroots entities can play in advancing transnational development opportunities. They're also helping fill important informational gaps regarding the transnational impacts and contributions of diaspora groups (Portes, Escobar and Arana 2008). However, the growing evidence that highlights a positive relationship between migration and development does not mean the theoretical and research debates are far from over.

Critiques: Too Much Migration, Not Enough Development

While the current positive outlook towards the migration-development nexus has gained traction and spread widely across academic and practitioner circles, a series of critical assessments have emerged in recent years. Most of the critical perspectives from scholars attuned to the complex migration experiences in sending countries, primarily in the Global South, and from experts concerned with the lack of attention devoted to the definitions of development advanced in conventional discussions.

In 2005, the authors and subscribers of the Cuernavaca Declaration[5] argued that instead of advancing prosperity and socioeconomic advancement, the development models adopted in labor exporting countries, which mostly relied on capturing the hard-earned remittances of mobile workers, were generating a number of negative externalities that contributed to a vicious cycle of underdevelopment. In their view, enthusiasts are failing to see how migration is both a cause and a consequence of underdevelopment due to growing asymmetries between North and South countries, which are deepened by expansive neoliberal policies. Development plans that rely on remittances for economic growth place an unjust pressure on the backs of migrant workers and their families back home, who are expected to make the most of these incomes by substituting regular consumption with productive or collective investments. Furthermore, when migrants are seen as the primary financiers and agents of development, both sending states and private sector actors are less pressured to assume responsibility for contributing to economic activity and solving structural problems. Aside from addressing several flaws within mainstream arguments, the Cuernavaca

---

[5] The statement emerged from a workshop titled "Problems and Challenges of Migration and Development in the Americas" which took place in Cuernavaca, Mexico on April 7-9, 2005. The discussions prompted the drafting of the declaration, which was signed by a notable group of scholars and practitioners.

statement called for an overhaul of existing policies in favor of solutions that offer realistic options for all (including the possibility of not having to migrate), address structural asymmetries, encourage greater collaboration between sending and receiving countries, and adopt a definition of development that goes beyond economic growth.

Although mostly a symbolic gesture, the statement lent major support to critical analyses and led to calls for fine-tuning claims regarding the relationships between migration and development (Portes 2006; 2009). At the center of the growing critiques is the argument that while the fascination with financial remittances flows and "brain circulation" is placing a spotlight on migration as an important topic within development circles, the debates are losing perspective, to the point that "the migration tail is beginning to wag the development dog" (Skeldon 2008, 5). Too much emphasis on the migration side of the dyad (mostly focused on who moves, what they remit, and its effects) has led to unrealistic claims regarding the potential of migrants' efforts, oversimplified the complex, two-way dynamics involved in the migration-development relationship, and eliminated discussions regarding the structural dynamics that condition development processes (Delgado Wise and Covarrubias 2009; Faist 2009). Within this limited perspective, development is what can occur when the movement of people, and the consolidation of transnational social fields, leads to the flow of money and ideas from developed to underdeveloped countries. As a result, promoting and nurturing profitable and productive migratory streams becomes a primary motivation for sending and receiving countries, at the expense of a deeper discussion of what development means in an increasingly mobile and connected world.

For many critical authors, stepping beyond the confines of the mainstream debates implies formulating a more complex understanding of development, and shying away from definitions based primarily on standardized, economic

indicators. According to Goldring (2008), this narrow characterization responds to the concerns of economists within the development industry, who are quick to evade the inherent tensions and contradictions (Skeldon 2008) that the term development arouses. Following this script, mainstream approaches have effectively "de-politicized" the concept in a manner that simplifies development issues as a series of problems that can be addressed through technical solutions (similar to what Ferguson (1994) described in his analysis of the development industry's pursuits in Lesotho). This analytical maneuver avoids a closer inspection of the social and political conflicts, and contesting visions—the "messy politics" (Li 2007)—that are at the center of development pursuits (Goldring 2008).

This is not to say that broader conceptions of development are entirely absent from conventional discussions, as Sen's (1999) and Nussbaum's (2001) capabilities approach illustrates. But even these accepted (yet seemingly heterodox) analyses have yet to find much acceptance within the migration and development literature. As Bakewell (2012) argues, this is partly due to the diversity and complexity that comes with expansive definitions of development that take into account economic, social and political change.

> The vast majority of studies that explicitly focus on migration and development spend little time defining 'development', let alone questioning its suppositions. For the most part, development is seen from a modernization perspective, concerned with progress towards universally recognised desirable goals: a common idea of the 'good'. [...] However, if we are concerned with contested notions of development whose meaning may change both with different actors' perspectives and over time, things become more challenging. (xvii)

While engaging the development debate may prove to be a daunting challenge, it is nonetheless a necessary one. Moving beyond standard metrics and simplified definitions, and paying closer attention to political, social and place-based dynamics, will help us make better sense of how development is

conceived and pursued in transnational communities like Villa Sombrero. It also allows us to elucidate the processes through which state and social actors engage in "messy" projects, where development is not a predetermined goal but a mutually constituted and contested category that is negotiated over time. In other words, it will help us open new analytical realms where the emphasis shifts from *how much* development occurs, to *what kinds* of development processes emerge in societies that are transformed by the transnational flow of people, money and ideas. This is the central theme of this dissertation.

Making Inroads in the Planning Literature

Placing attention on the inner workings of development pursuits is a task that not only helps refine the debates on the migration-development nexus, but also expands numerous conversations within the planning discipline, which has recently begun to revive its concern with migrants and their role in shaping urban environments and local development. Although the origins of American city planning can be traced back to the plight of immigrants in the expanding industrial cities of the early 20th century, their voices and interests have been mostly absent from the field's literatures today. As Vitiello (2009) explains, this is partly due to a shift in attention amongst most American planners (from people to places), to the historical changes in migration flows that made their claims blend in with those of the mainstream (as many of the early waves became incorporated into host societies), and to the discipline's interest in advancing culturally neutral processes.

Given the expanding presence of migrants in contemporary urban environments, researchers have begun to consider how newcomers are affected by the work of planners and planning decisions in key arenas like transportation (Chatman and Klein 2009; Tal and Handy 2010) and land use regimes (Logan, Zhang and Alba 2002; Harwood and Meyers 2002; Harwood

2005)[6]. Similarly, American planning scholars have also begun to follow the lead of their European and Australian (Sandercock and Lyssiotis 2003; Thompson 2003) counterparts in recognizing the changing demographics of cities, and advocating for a larger role for migrants in urban planning processes (Agyeman and Erickson 2012; Angiotti 2012; Marti et. al. 2012). While important in reviving an almost forgotten subject within the discipline, these studies have focused solely on how immigrants become active participants in their host cities' planning and decision-making processes as they struggle with the difficulties of incorporating into American society (Allen and Small 2013). As a result, many of these novel efforts often fail to take into account how migrants' transnational practices help shape home and host contexts, and thus overlook a key opportunity for expanding planning theory and practice.

A more recent strand of work has begun to fill this gap by employing and advocating for the use of a transnational perspective to make sense of the complex social dynamics that emerge in places where migration is a way of life. Some of the more eloquent projects explain how migrants and those left behind help weave complex webs of interaction that link home and destination communities. Miraftab's (2011a) global ethnography spanning the United States, Mexico and Togo explores how the revitalization of a Midwestern, meatpacking town is intimately and often adversely tied to faraway locations through transnational strategies of social reproduction and the deployment of labor. In a similar vein, Sandoval's work on "Shadow Transnationalism" (2013) examines the often-overlooked exploitative networks that exist between industrial sites in the United States and towns in Guatemala, and the roles played by diverse state, social and economic actors (or "co-conspirators") in the construction of unauthorized migrant

---

[6] For a detailed discussion on how planners have been incorporating immigrant's influence in these two key sub disciplines, see Allen and Small (2013).

communities and their connection with vulnerable home societies. Moreover, Sarmiento and Beard (2013) analyze how Mexican hometown associations in Southern California engage in civic and cultural practices that challenge traditional notions of community-based planning that rely on limited understandings of local scale and territoriality. While these studies have made inroads into heretofore-unexamined topics within the discipline, many stones remain unturned.

According to Roy (2011a) the transnational turn within the planning discipline opens new opportunities to rethink the discipline's claims of being a global enterprise, where world-spanning trends turn into fashionable models and normative templates of the trade. It allows us to move away from two key currents that relate globalization to planning: one anchored in "methodological nationalism"—that sees globalization as a process of alignment or tug-of-war between sovereign nations— and another that assumes the existence of a "postnational" world (Miraftab 2011b). In doing so, it also opens the possibility to rethink some of the conceptual categories that planners often use when designing their interventions, and to come up with novel examples of how to address challenges and opportunities brought about by increased migrant flows. If we consider planning to be both "the organization and transformation of space" (Roy 2011b, 6) and "a field through which relationships among the state, citizens, and the market are negotiated" (Miraftab 2011b, 378) then some of the lessons and reflections on the practice and processes of transnational community development that will be presented in subsequent chapters, will serve to advance new thinking of interest to both scholars and practitioners within the discipline.

Why Hometown Associations?

HTAs can be broadly defined as voluntary organizations whose members share a common place of origin and generate support—both financial and social—to carry out significant projects in host and home communities.

Although the range of HTA projects varies, in most cases they are geared toward improving economic, social, and political opportunities for community residents. These associations occupy an important place in the political and developmental networks that stem from or make up transnational migrant practices. As such, they offer useful analytical entry points for unpacking how local development is practiced in localities impacted by migration.

According to Moya's (2005) historical account of migrant associations, HTAs have a long and rich tradition that spans numerous decades, countries and localities. Much like today's groups, older associations shared a desire to maintain connections to a place of origin and lent their support for hometown projects and activities. They also created spaces for social interaction in the diaspora by publishing newspapers, celebrating dances and concerts and organizing popular gatherings. Nevertheless, present day HTAs operate in a different context where—thanks to technologies like the Internet, social media, cheap telephone calls, and less expensive and faster air travel— migrants are able to maintain repeated and frequent interactions with those they've left behind. Whereas sending a donation or getting news about the progress of a project used to take weeks or more, today's leaders can benefit from faster and more reliable communication networks to stay informed, send funds, and quickly respond to faraway needs.

Although precise figures on the number of associations in existence and the volumes of funds raised are hard to obtain, given the lack of official government registries and that many of these groups are evanescent and informal, some surveys provide a partial picture of migrant participation in HTAs. According to figures from a 2008 study (Orozco and García-Zanello 2009), amongst Latin American and Caribbean groups, 38 percent of Paraguayans, 20 percent of Dominicans and 15.5 percent of Mexicans in the United States belong to HTAs. More recent data, captured by the CIOP

(Portes, Escobar and Radford 2007) on immigrant organizations in the United States, indicate that 63.8 percent of Mexican, 3.53 percent of Dominican and 1.90 percent of Colombian organizations are HTAs. While most of the literature provides figures for the United States, there is also a strong presence of HTA branches in European Union Countries (Caglar 2006; Christiansen 2008; Mercer, Page and Evans 2009) and in countries of the Global South (Okamura 1983; Orozco and Fedewa 2005).

Despite their prevalence and popularity amongst certain ethnic groups, some academics argue that the development potential of HTAs is limited due to their relative newness, lack of expertise, and their unproven track record in generating jobs and wealth through investments (Delgado Wise and Rodríguez Ramírez 2001; Alarcón 2002; Basilia Valenzuela 2004). Others have concluded that the development impacts of HTAs are substantial, since the "collective remittances" (Goldring 2004) they send home target the most needy and aim to advance socioeconomic equity in specific localities (Orozco and Welle 2006; Orozco and García-Zanello 2009). Disagreements between some of the skeptics and supporters arise primarily from their different understandings of what it means to achieve or succeed at development, which are commonly based on standard economic appraisals, as is the case in the mainstream literature on the migration-development nexus. These narrow interpretations often lead to binary assessments and conclusions that overlook many of the political and social consequences of HTA interventions, which are not always straightforward or easily measured, but are an integral part of the broader development story.

Placing Attention on Politics and the Social: Some Lessons from Mexico

Placing closer attention on the political and social dimensions of HTAs' community interventions provides an opportunity to better understand some

30

of the critical, yet under examined manifestations of development in a transnational context. HTA projects are characterized by the sustained interaction of people, money, commodities, ideas, norms and institutional forms across borders. These are the building blocks that shape their efforts, which are coordinated through networked relationships or transnational social fields (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004) that bind people, places and institutions in home and host contexts. When these associations become active participants in local development practices, through building a school, a water well, starting a scholarship program or providing community services, for example, they engage in a series of transnational exchanges, within the organization and with other actors, that may end up redefining social and political relationships within in their ranks, with the state, and with other community actors. Beyond making monetary investments in community services and infrastructures, that may lead to increased employment, reductions in poverty and greater equity, HTAs spark a series of processes in home and host communities that can lead to new, unconventional opportunities for multidirectional learning and shifts in the ways that local development is negotiated and carried out. Although these contributions are not part of the mainstream conversations on the developmental effects of HTAs, they are by no means trivial considerations.

Scholarship on Mexico's experience with migrant clubs provides a starting point for understanding the relationship between politics, transnational migrant organizations, community development and the state. Fitzgerald's early work (2000) on the practices of "extra territorial citizenship", and later reflections on domestic and "transborder" HTAs (2008), demonstrate how the projects and investments made by migrant clubs have been part of a broader set of political manifestations whereby migrants assert their sense of belonging and claims-making within the political structures of the homeland, while building an idea of community that transcends physical confines.

31

Beyond the homeland, the civic practices of Mexican HTAs have also been linked to the establishment of a "migrant civic society" in the United States that provides opportunities for "binational" political engagement (Fox 2005b). Furthermore, Mexico's territorially-expanded idea of citizenship has also been bolstered by a "state-led transnationalism" project, which has been forged through a series of unevenly implemented programs and policies at different scales, and has focused on expanding the national state's influence and regulatory capacity over emigrants and their organizations outside the national territory (Goldring 2002).

At the center of Mexico's HTA-state relationship is the renowned 3-for-1 program. A national effort officially started in 2002, the program provides matching funds for qualifying HTAs, from local, state and federal government sources, to support community development projects. It began as a one-for-one matching program between the state of Zacatecas and a discrete set of HTAs, later evolved into a national, two-for-one federally-supported effort under Salinas de Gortari's administration, and subsequently became a three-for-one initiative under Vicente Fox's tenure[7]. The 3-for-1 has been considered a paradigmatic example of how migrants and home states can collaborate to deliver development given its notable outcomes: since 2002, it has led to led to the completion of over 19,000 projects (ranging from infrastructure to health, education, and other productive activities) and the participation (and genesis) of thousands of migrant-led associations (BID 2012; CONEVAL 2013).

Despite its reputation, a mixed picture emerges from analyses that examine the political, social and developmental outcomes of the program. On the one hand, several studies have highlighted how the interaction between HTAs and governments at different jurisdictional levels has led to positive

---

[7] A detailed account of the genesis and evolution of Mexico's 3-for-1 Program is outlined by Iskander (2010): Chapters 8-9; González Ortiz and Rivera Sánchez (2004).

governance outcomes. Some of these include, increased transparency in the handling of community projects (Burgess 2006), the emergence of "civic spillover effects" (Fox and Bada 2008) that expand accountability and voice to the demands of residents and transnational citizens (Williams 2008), and the creation of new, civic oversight structures in municipalities that benefit from the program (Fox and Bada 2008). On the socioeconomic front, the program has been shown to be effective in promoting local development[8] (Orozco and Welle 2006; Orozco and García-Zanello 2009).

But other researchers have also provided evidence of the program's limitations. Distributional concerns arise, given that Mexican states with high migrant destinations have captured most of the gains from the program, leaving other regions bereft of important funds and opportunities for needed community projects. Similar apprehensions have also been raised given the level of elite control and the disproportionate authority granted to migrants over local residents (Burgess 2006). Formal evaluations of the program (Aparicio and Meseguer 2012; Meseguer and Aparicio 2012) point to problems in the program's design that introduce bias and lead to capture by different interest groups. In some instances, overseas HTAs are founded upon the request of Mexican municipalities who also have a hand in deciding which projects are proposed and selected. This contravenes the program's primary aims of building strong, participatory partnerships between migrants, hometown residents and state authorities. In addition, political collusion often leads to the disproportionate selection of projects from municipalities that are in alignment with the national ruling party. In the state of Zacatecas, powerful HTA federations have become *de facto* gatekeepers that maintain

---

[8] These analyses of development potential have followed a systematic framework that examines: (1) the level of community control and participation; (2) whether the projects meet local priorities and (3) have a sustained life cycle; and (4) if similar resources and institutional capabilities are available in other communities (See Orozco and Welle 2006; Orozco and García-Zanello 2009).

control of migrants' interaction with the program. Given these experiences, which are primarily sociopolitical, the wider developmental effects of the program are being called into question (Aparicio and Meseguer 2012).

Differences in opinions aside, several important points emerge from Mexico's experience. First, HTAs have become important development actors in Mexico's policies focused on migration and development. Their collective monetary contributions pale in comparison to the vast flows of individual and family remittances that reach into Mexico, but their ability to effectively carry out significant community projects, often in small towns and rural outposts, has garnered the attention and support of policymakers, politicians and international development agencies. Given the large number of projects completed to date and the amount of associations involved, it should come as no surprise that the 3-for-1 Program has served as a model for El Salvador's *Unidos por la solidaridad*, and that countries like Somalia the Philippines, Peru, Colombia and Ecuador have considered establishing similar efforts (Zamora 2007).

Second, there's much more to HTAs' involvement in community development across borders than bricks, mortar and cash. When Michoacanos in Chicago organize a fundraising drive to build a community center in their hometown, they're not just playing the role of faraway funders. The association is also getting involved in the public and communal affairs of their hometown, while also building political capital in their host communities. Migrants often require that hometown residents be involved in supervising community projects (Burgess 2012; Bada 2014), they want to know who will be held accountable if something goes wrong, and as "long distance citizens" they expect to have a say in other decisions regarding the development of their hometown. When they meet in Chicago to discuss progress on a project, they're also building community ties and strengthening civic capacity that

can be employed to address political concerns in their host environment (Escala Rabadán, Bada and Rivera-Salgado 2006).

Helping build a community project with migrant donations may seem like a noble and benign undertaking, but for many local politicians in host communities it could be seen as a threat. HTAs often have to contend with and become involved in political turf battles that frequently lead to cross border tensions within their communities and beyond (Smith 2006). Partnering with state authorities is a tricky feat that can have mixed outcomes. Some engagements can lead to successful projects and policy innovations (Iskander 2010; Duquette 2011), but they can also be mired in controversy or conditioned by political capture.

Third, because politics and the social context matter, it is often difficult to make a definitive assessment of HTAs' development capacity. A transnational community development effort is often more than just the sum of its parts. Projects may reflect the desires of migrants more than the needs of the hometown communities, but they can also have far reaching benefits. Renovating a town plaza, for example, is an aesthetic undertaking that could easily be discounted as non-essential in many small towns where needs abound. But the transnational coordination issues that need to be dealt with during its completion, the political negotiations that take place, and the technical and the managerial experience attained by organization members and collaborators along the way, help build community development capacities and offer numerous learning opportunities.

Similarly, a classic development project that's supposed to provide lasting benefits for a broad majority, like the construction of a potable water delivery system, may bring about fractures in a community and lead to lasting divisions between migrants and local authorities. Such is the case of the

Ticuanense water project described by Smith (2006), where migrants contributed the lion's share of the needed funds through a quota system in New York, and thus demanded that everyone in the home community pay their fair share in order to receive the service. Hometown residents with political connections, including the powerful *cacique*, ignored their demands, which led to a protracted standoff between local political figures, migrant leaders and several residents.

These often unpredicted and messy effects resulting from HTA projects demonstrate the contentious character of transnational community development practice. Interestingly, the political and social dynamics that stem from their work are seldom seen as integral to their development potential. This lack of attention is due to the limits imposed by narrow definitions of success and failure that center on diagnosing progress or measuring outcomes at the expense of broader appraisals of *what* they are able to accomplish, and *how* they do it.

What Projects Reveal About Development Processes and Organizational Dynamics

Contemporary HTAs differ in origin, size, structure and other characteristics, but they share a common attribute: taking on projects. It is primarily through these efforts that they become intimately involved with the practice of local development. The projects pursued vary widely, but Hirschman's (1967) definition offers us a useful starting point to grasp the underlying characteristics of these pursuits:

> The development project is a special kind of investment. The term connotes purposefulness, some minimum size, a specific location, the introduction of something qualitatively new, and the expectation that a sequence of further development moves

36

will be set in motion...Development projects, then, are privileged particles of the development process... (1)

Hirschman's ideas suggest that the careful observation of projects can reveal a detailed picture of local development practice, and insights into the agency, capabilities, inventive, and transformative capacity of its executors. But beyond offering a revealing an image of what development can look like, projects also allow us to take into account some of the messiness that ensues when politics and social context are taken into account. As Hirschman's work makes clear, projects are rarely straightforward pursuits that follow clear blueprints or previously delineated "best practices". More often than not, they lead to different outcomes than those previously established in development plans. This is partly due to an underestimation of difficulties by planners and executors, and also due to the contextual complexities brought about by historical legacies and institutional frameworks that structure development work in diverse places. Thus, the non-linear paths that projects follow can reveal important insights about how organizations react to adversity, the impact and changing role of institutions, and how power is generated and reconfigured through development interventions. Specifically, a detailed examination of projects uncovers how HTAs are able to negotiate development goals across borders, how they experiment with diverse solutions and deal with uncertainty, and the diverse ways they relate to and negotiate with other powerful development executors.

Empirical Strategy

The empirical strategy of this project follows the previously outlined project-based rationale. This approach is uniquely suited to provide a deeper understanding of transnational community development and how three Dominican HTAs pursue it. Examining these issues requires placing attention on process and consequences: how projects were negotiated and carried out, and how those practices shaped their trajectory. Inserting

process into development discussions, as Mosse (1998) suggests, allows us to see projects as flexible engagements that often change as a result of learning that takes place through implementation.

Rather than viewing transformations in the original "project blueprints" as signs of planning or execution failures, attention to process reveals shifts driven by experience and new insights. Process-oriented approaches also allow us to take stock of the power and relational dynamics that are all too common in development work, but are often considered as secondary or non-essential to project advancement. In addition, by examining process we can consider how contextual idiosyncrasies affect development plans. This becomes evident when HTAs pursue similar projects, but end up with different results.

To better understand process, I employ a transnational ethnographic approach (Smith 2001; Smith and Bakker 2005) that allows me to examine the complex webs of interconnection and the simultaneous interactions between HTA members and chapters situated in multiple locales. It also provides opportunities to better understand how HTAs navigate the complex political terrain of development work, and discover some of the learning opportunities that arise along the way. More specifically, the ethnographic approach focused on identifying divergences and commonalities in: (1) how the HTAs under study define their development agendas and carry out community projects, (2) the obstacles faced and tensions that arise in these pursuits, (3) how their hometown projects open avenues for negotiating state-society relationships, and (4) how their approaches to development and change are transformed over time.

The issues outlined above stress the point that understanding transnational community development involves a careful examination of the complex

political and social ramifications of HTAs' work. In order to parse out some of the complexity, the evidence presented in the empirical case studies follows a particular identification strategy. I highlight two interrelated topics: (1) the intra-organizational dynamics and division of labors that take shape as HTAs pursue ventures across borders, and (2) the types of project-based engagements between HTAs, state and other developmentally oriented non-state actors.

By employing these two analytical strands, my work builds on examinations of the impacts of HTA interventions on the relationships between migrant and non-migrant collectives (Waldinger, Popkin and Magana 2008; Mazzucato and Kabki 2009; Duquette 2011; Bada 2014), and earlier research focused on state-HTA relationships (Smith 2006; Itzigsohn and Villacrés 2008; Fox and Bada 2008; Duquette 2011; Burgess and Tinajero 2009; Burgess 2012). Not surprisingly, most of this scholarship has focused on the Mexican and Salvadorian experience, given the existence of national policy frameworks—such as the 3-for-1 Program and *Unidos por la solidaridad*[9]— which have facilitated a series of formal engagements between migrant-led HTAs, hometown communities, diverse governmental units, and in some cases, international NGOs. In this regard, their experiences are somewhat distinctive and provide a limited basis for comparison given that the most of the countries where HTAs carry out their projects, including the Dominican Republic, lack similar institutional frameworks. Nevertheless, their experiences provide useful analytical entry points.

Patterns of Organizational Politics
As the case studies will show, the organizational dynamics that define the relationship between migrant and non-migrant HTA members matter when

---

[9] While the 3-for-1 Program has been in operation for over 25 years, *Unidos por la solidaridad* lasted from 2002 until 2005.

trying to account for their different trajectories and developmental effects—they are also closely related to the diverse project-based engagements that will be outlined below. Nevertheless, this is an issue that has received scant attention in the literature, primarily because practitioners and scholars have largely considered HTAs monolithically as collective remittance senders and community development funders. From this myopic vantage point, HTAs are charitable organizations led by overseas migrants with altruistic intentions. This perspective overlooks key aspects related to their internal politics and organizational capacity (Waldinger, Popkin and Magana 2008; Lacomba and Escala Rabadán 2013), including how different associational configurations and distinct leadership and decision-making structures affect their work. As Waldinger, Popkin and Magana (2008, 845) argue,

> Whether hometown associations can effect change in the communities from which immigrants come, and, if so, of what type, depends largely on the quality and content of the linkages connecting the migrants to one another, as well as those that tie them to the friends, families and neighbors left at home.

Studies that examine the "micro-politics of relations between migrants and their home communities" (Mazzucato and Kabki 2009: 229) usually present mixed or negative views. Focusing on the Salvadorian experience, authors like Waldinger, Popkin and Magana (2008) argue that relationships between migrant members of HTAs with those who stay behind are marred by conflict. Lack of collaborative relationships or formal partnerships with non-migrant groups, differences in project priorities and expectations, and diverse worldviews and motivations contribute to tensions that become heightened by the complications stemming from their long distance work.

Evidence from Ghanaian organizations (Mazzucato and Kabki 2009) also demonstrates that migrant-led HTA projects in large hometown communities with influential elites can spur harmful power competitions between migrant and non-migrant collectives. As a result, migrant-supported projects run the

risk of never being completed and suffering from accusations mismanagement. Nonetheless, in small towns, the existence of traditional community institutions and customs that are practiced by those who left and stayed behind, like funeral rites or communal duties, allow migrants to be perceived as actively engaged in hometown affairs, and also enable hometown elders to exert their sanctioning power and influence. Trust relationships based on kinship or communal ties, and close contact between migrant and non-migrant leaders facilitate interactions and build important cross border bridges that help smooth out conflicting dynamics.

Results from Mexico show that HTAs are not prone to establish collaboration networks and stable partnerships with hometown groups. This is partly due to legacies of state-society relationships characterized by top-down, clientelist state practices that severely limited the creation of a vibrant civic society and did not encourage independent actions by communal associations, especially in rural Mexican communities (Burgess 2012). While some migrant HTAs have created stay-at-home parallel coordinating committees that provide valuable assistance in project monitoring and implementation, they lack capacity and effectiveness due to poor training, low literacy levels, and lack of a clear division of labor (Bada 2014). Bada's research (2014) in the state of Michoacán indicates that lack of stay-at-home coordinating committee involvement in project selection or in the identification of development priorities results in poor collaboration and execution of supervisory duties. Nonetheless, the recent emergence of local Community Development Committees (CODECOs) at the sub-municipal level has opened new avenues for hometown community involvement in development decisions. In communities where there is some type of alignment between 3-for-1 projects and initiatives backed and supported by the CODECOs, there is a greater probability that "cross border cooperation and empowered participatory cogovernace spaces" (Bada 2014, 3125) will emerge.

Previous works highlight the opportunities and limitations that emerge when migrant and non-migrants try to exert influence in the politics of community development decisions. HTA projects generate opportunities for new engagements with state and private development actors, but also foment important encounters between hometown and migrant groups. Extant research has made clear that legacies of state-society relationships and institutional contexts play an important role in the kinds of opportunities for civic collaborations and trust dynamics that can enable positive returns to transnational community development efforts. But less clear is *how* community development is negotiated between those who left and those who stayed behind. Examples of tense encounters and incompatible views abound, but the ways these struggles emerge and how they are addressed—and sometimes resolved—are mostly absent.

Based on the experience of the organizations analyzed, which are characterized by a distinct organizational history and internal dynamics[10], I identify three distinct patterns of internal arrangements that define the ways in which intra-organizational politics have proceeded within the study HTAs: (1) elite command; (2) transnational realignment; and (3) transnational cooperation. Despite their strong empirical grounding, these categories are also informed by literature stemming from managerial and organizational studies, which highlight that organizational styles matter in determining performance. McGregor's classic work (2006 [1960]) emphasized how the leaders' perceptions regarding the motivations of subordinates, play an

---

[10] The collaboration networks established by the Dominican HTAs under study differ from many of the cited examples. Unlike most Mexican and Salvadorian organizations, elite hometown community members and internal migrants to the capital city founded the HTAs. In the cases where internal migrants founded the organizations, hometown chapters or coordinating committees were established to assist with project monitoring and implementation. With the expansion of international migration, new HTA chapters emerged in the United States. The growth of the network allowed bolstered the support structure and allowed a greater procurement of funds, but also brought about new procedural and coordination challenges.

important role in shaping the trajectories of organizations. His analysis put forth the idea that tight managerial controls and authoritative hierarchies, which assumed that subordinates were reluctant contributors, was not the best means of procuring collaboration from organizational members. If leaders wanted to get the most out of their subordinates, they had to realize that relationships in modern organizations are based on interdependence; that workers are intrinsically motivated to perform, and that providing the proper supports and strategic influence were the key to fruitful organizational collaborations.

More recent work has underscored the idea that different "organizational blueprints"—based on dimensions related to human capital identification, attachment and work coordination—are found even within similar industry sectors and that these models can have durable impacts that affect the evolution and subsequent managerial path of organizations (Baron, Hannan and Burton 1999). Despite their predominant focus on business firms, these literatures suggest that organizational performance and internal operational models are closely linked. Based on this notion, the types developed from the empirical evidence allow for a more clear identification of the internal "rules of the game"—how interactions, responsibilities and decisions have been dealt with and negotiated over time.

Elite command refers to a specific type of internal arrangement where prominent, respected and mostly elder members of the hometown or in-country migrant community exert control over most organizational aspects. This control includes, but is not limited to: identifying priorities (with or without broader community input) selecting projects, advocating for and representing the organization, and making financial decisions. Elite community leaders are usually successful businesspeople, agriculturalists or highly educated professionals who reside in the country of origin, demonstrate a continuing commitment to hometown community development,

have privileged access to the halls of power, and can exert influence over national and local political leaders.

Transnational realignment gradually occurs as international migrant chapters are formally embedded into the organizational structure and become the primary providers of financial resources. Initially content with supporting local needs and contributing to the development agenda set by home country chapters, over time, their increasing financial commitments lead them to demand a greater influence in organizational affairs. These requests go beyond requests for transparency and accountability regarding the use of funds, to the proposal and execution of projects that reflect their distinct vision and development desires. This role transformation can lead to tensions between migrant and home country chapters, especially in the absence of internal mechanisms that facilitate cross border deliberation and information sharing.

Transnational cooperation emerges when the organizations are able to develop a working relationship based on a well-defined, transnational division of labor, with effective communication and information sharing mechanisms, that allows each chapter to contribute effectively to a shared development agenda. Horizontal decision-making frameworks are devised to incorporate the opinions and ideas of the different chapters, and resolutions usually follow a lengthy and democratic discussion period. These collaborative arrangements are maintained though formal inclusion into the organization's bylaws or through routine practice.

Understanding how division of labors are defined and decision-making proceeds across time, provides an opportunity to gain a better idea of how HTAs navigate the messy politics and complex social dynamics of transnational community development. It also allows us to grasp how organizational actors define institutional configurations and help redefine

past legacies in ways that alter the possibilities for achieving effective developmental gains. While the categories can be understood as progressive or evolutionary stages in the life of a HTA, this is not necessarily the case nor is it a logical necessity. As the cases will show, moving across patterns takes time and involves critical shifts in the way power is shared and structured. These internal moves are not easily brokered. Furthermore, while transnational cooperation may seem like the most desirable end point, it is not a common destination. Getting to that point involves moving through a complicated social and political terrain, and it is certainly easy to get lost along the way.

A Typology of Project-Based HTA Engagements

From the data collected through the empirical cases, four types of project-based engagements emerge: (1) empowered exchanges; (2) diffuse collaborations; (3) arms-length interactions; and (4) independent ventures. These are not meant to be definitive categories, but useful analytical devices that allow me to organize the diverse and varied examples observed, and identify some of the relational aspects that shape the project trajectories and impacts. The categories developed differ along three important dimensions highlighted by previous studies: (1) the kinds of collaborations that are fostered; (2) the levels of trust between the actors; and (3) the influence exerted by local communities.

Taking a cue from Mexico's experience with the 3-for-1 Program, I argue that *how* collaborations are forged, and *what kinds* of partnerships are established leads to a better understanding of the development effects of HTAs' work, and the changing distributions of power between the state, organized communities and other development actors. These findings resonate with Iskander's (2010) study of the politics of engagement between migrants and home country governments in Mexico that led to the creation of the Program

for Migrant Communities Abroad (or PCME in Spanish) and eventual adoption of the 3-for-1 Program. Her argument stresses the idea that the way migrant-state engagements evolve over time, helps explain the emergence of dynamic and innovative practices that link migration and development. At the core of these engagements are a series of "interpretative" conversations, which are highly political, fragile and unscripted, but effective in redrawing the traditional boundaries between state and society. Also central are trust-building norms that structure the multifaceted dialogues between state and non-state actors, which can ultimately led to a series of "creative state practices".

While the distinct processes and norms that are at the heart of the engagements between migrants and state actors are important to their effectiveness, so too are the kinds of coproduction arrangements that emerge when HTAs take on community development projects. Duquette's (2011) analysis of state-HTA engagements in several Mexican towns benefitting from the 3-for-1 Program—which builds on Ostrom's (1996) ideas on coproduction[11] and Evans' (1996) arguments on complementarities, embeddedness and synergy[12]—illustrates how synergistic coproduction can be achieved if both local residents and government authorities become embedded in migrant-led efforts. By stressing the importance of hometown community involvement and the role of local government in the process of

---

[11] Coproduction refers to "a process through which inputs from individuals who are not 'in' the same organization are transformed into goods and services" (Ostrom 1996: 1073). The primary logic behind coproduction is that citizens and state actors have different but complementary ideas and know-how that can be appropriately brought together to generate improved opportunities for providing important public goods and services. In addition, by working together towards mutually beneficial goals, coproduction arrangements can also help generate social capital between citizens and with public agencies that can be drawn upon for future endeavors.

[12] According to Evans (1996) developmentally fruitful synergies between state and social actors can be achieved through complementarities—mutually supportive relationships between actors—and embeddedness—a blurring of the public private boundaries.

executing HTA projects, Duquette's analysis demonstrates how the quality of the tripartite migrant-state-hometown alignment can have a substantial impact on important local-level outcomes like democratic prospects and government responsiveness.

Despite the rather unique institutional and political context of Mexico's experience with HTAs[13], my argument builds on both Iskander's (2010) and Duquette's (2011) research. Paying attention to how engagements are forged and developed over time, I argue that collaborations that generate opportunities for building trust and where the traditional roles between actors are blurred can generate fruitful development effects. When HTAs and other development actors work hand-in-hand in projects where their knowledge, experience and resources are effectively complimented, new capabilities and learning opportunities are likely to flourish.

Furthermore, the roles played by the community leaders in the places where projects are executed are an important factor. When local leaders are able to play a protagonist role—in the negotiation, design and execution of transnational community development projects, akin to "bottom up" coproduction (Mitlin 2008; Watson 2014)—community empowerment and political capital[14] is built, and power dynamics at the center of development pursuits are transformed.

---

[13] Mexico's 3-for-1 Program has led to a fundamental change in the way home country local governments relate to their migrant populations and utilize migration for development purposes. An interesting consequence of the program's evolution is that since the 2000s, many municipal presidents eager to attract funding for infrastructure projects through the 3-for-1 Program have been encouraging the formation of migrant groups in the United States and courting their involvement in hometown development affairs (Bada 2014).

[14] See Fox (2005a) for an interesting discussion regarding empowerment and political capital in pro-poor reform initiatives.

In sum, when we draw on previous insights from the literature and the fieldwork data, we can identify four distinct types of project-based engagements.

Empowered exchanges refer to relationships that are characterized by the blurring of traditional roles—akin to state-society synergies based on complementarities and embeddedness (Evans 1996). There is a tacit understanding between HTAs and other actors that collaborating will yield to improved opportunities to build capacity and address critical development needs. In these types of exchanges, increased levels of trust are built as projects mature, and local community leaders assume a protagonist role in the negotiation, planning and execution of the projects.

Diffuse collaborations are characterized by supportive relationships between HTAs and other development actors. Synergies based on complementarities are common, but also in constant flux due to shifting power relationships within and beyond the HTAs. Partisan and community interests sometimes overlap but also may diverge, which leads to complex trust dynamics. Development decisions are not always in the hands of local community leaders, given the complex interplay of actors who are vying for influence.

Arms-length interactions occur when collaborations between HTAs and other development partners are limited and do not evolve beyond traditional political bargaining. In these types of engagements, "semiclientelistic" (Fox 1994) relationships are solidified and leveraged, and trust is difficult to sustain. Similarly, local community leaders forego control of the development agenda for instrumental gains.

Independent projects are community development interventions where substantial support of state or other development partners is lacking. While HTAs are in complete control over development decisions, the lack of engagement with important development actors can lead to situations where

HTA leaders pick up the slack left behind by the state. Independent ventures may lead to fewer opportunities for friction with entities outside the HTA structure, but they can also put tremendous strain on community actors, fuel citizen distrust of public institutions and debilitate the public's desire to hold other development actors accountable (Levitt 2001; Burgess 2012).

Different project-based engagements will likely play an important role in shaping the developmental consequences of HTA interventions. As the data will underscore, HTA projects prioritized and designed by empowered local communities, where organizational knowledge and resources are complemented by the active involvement of state or NGOs actors, lead to significantly different community development effects, when compared to those where hometown leaders take a back seat, and collaborations with state or other entities are distant or nonexistent.

Uncovering Experimentation, Problems and Learning

Dissecting projects and the particular logic of their processes reveals many novel insights on how migration and development are linked. Process allows us to look at projects and interventions as dynamic efforts that have farther-reaching impacts stretching beyond the initial intentions and plans.

Traditional assessments, on the other hand, see development mostly as a series of linear results generated by specific policies, programs and resources deployed in a given context. But this approach leaves out the interesting stories and complexities that are at the heart of its continual pursuit. It makes light of, for example, the protracted trajectories that eventually lead to the transnational coproduction of an ambulance service, the building and administration of a water well, or the establishment of a communal microenterprise under the auspices of an HTA. There is little doubt that final outcomes matter; nevertheless, so do the seemingly mundane approaches and strategies that are pursued on the path to a specific project. In many ways,

49

these are the critical building blocks on which mainstream, outcome-oriented accounts rest upon—but are seldom recognized.

Taking note of the winding paths that are traversed as projects are conceived and completed also reveals the everyday routines, tactics and practices that define how HTAs approach development endeavors. Interestingly, all the organizations examined in this dissertation demonstrate a tendency to employ experimentalist (Sabel 2004; Sabel and Zeitlin 2012) and problem-focused techniques (Andrews, Pritchett and Woolcock 2013; Andrews 2013) to address the myriad challenges they face while trying to pull off complicated projects. This is partly due to their distinct development context, which is characterized by a dearth of prefabricated scripts or formal rules, usually prescribed by development agencies or negotiated with "creative state" (Iskander 2010) bureaucracies. While the lack of formal policy frameworks that foment transnational community development, or the absence of "monocropped" development solutions could result in situations where important knowledge and financial resources are not at their disposal, it also suggests that HTAs have more freedom to figure out how to proceed in the face of significant complexity and uncertainty.

Although the experimentalist framework (Sabel 2004; Sabel and Zeitlin 2012) has been primarily employed to examine the challenges of public service provision and regulation snags in developed countries, it provides some useful insights that help us make sense of the empirical evidence. At the core of the analysis is an important conundrum that runs across most development efforts: how can we come up with plausible solutions to complex collective action problems when existing institutional arrangements are ineffective or the traditional ways of addressing them do not suffice? One of the possible answers is through an experimentalist approach, where a routine search for solutions and constant revision to existing rules or implementation procedures becomes a central component of organizational

behavior. Philosophically anchored in pragmatist ideas, experimentalist approaches embrace doubt rather than certainty when it comes to goals, decisions and procedures; they assume that all solutions are incomplete and up for review, and foment openness to learning from diverse experiences and comparison of previous efforts (Sabel and Zeitlin 2012).

In a similar vein, the authors advocating for a problem-focused approach to development embrace a similarly pragmatic approach to tough development issues. Although their reflections stem primarily from an analysis of institutional reform efforts, their approach can be easily extended to other cumbersome domains where meaningful and relevant change is sought. As the name implies, problems, not solutions, should be the guiding element in the identification of successful reform paths.

For far too long, development specialists have continually trafficked and promoted a more or less standard set of solutions (i.e. structural adjustment policies, participatory budgets programs, etc.) in different contextual settings despite the absence of unequivocal and lasting successes. As a result, "isomorphic mimicry" (Andrews, Pritchett and Woolcock 2013) became a standard practice amongst organizations seeking change; this came at the expense of more flexible and open processes where local agents are convened to deliberate on critical issues and construct a set of problems that foster learning based on contextual opportunities and constraints (Andrews 2013). Taking specific, local-level problems as a starting point allows relevant agents to confront complexity and exert their knowledge in creative ways. It also opens the door to iterative feedback and experimentation based on lessons acquired along the way to implementation.

While these complementary theories offer plausible analytical blueprints to understand and interpret the experiences of the organizations examined, I apply their lessons loosely and selectively. Most of the examples used to test

and validate these constructs involve professional bureaucrats, development experts and are rooted in governmental settings. While these sites and actors appear in the stories I present in later chapters, my cases mostly examine how grassroots, community leaders identify problems and experiment with different projects in their attempt to improve the development prospects of their towns of origin. Despite these differences, they share a similar desire to seek positive change and most importantly, utilize learning as a catalyst for development.

Exploring Typological Intersections and Previewing Findings

In order to draw out engaging insights from the study cases, I have highlighted two broad analytical strands and formulated some stylized categories that build on previous academic insights and empirical evidence. The different categories identified focus mostly on how power is exercised and negotiated, and how the symbolic blueprints that govern relationships between different sets of actors are formed. As such, they are framed by ideas associated with both political economy and institutionalist approaches (Portes 2010).

While this exercise facilitates analytic precision and highlights two particular realms of importance to this project, a further step is required. In order to better comprehend the different trajectories of the organizations and the development consequences of their pursuits, we must also attempt to understand the relationships or intersections between the patterns of organizational politics, and the project-based engagements that are forged between the HTAs, state entities, and other development actors. This task adds some complexity into the analysis but it allows us to make better sense of how transnational community development is conceived, negotiated and carried out by HTAs.

In examining the overlap between both categories, it becomes clear that despite their different defining characteristics, these typologies describe various kinds of relationships between social and political actors involved in the pursuit of development options. As such, they vary along similar elements related to power distributions and institutional arrangements that scholars have previously identified as central to more democratic and effective development pursuits, such as: the trust dynamics between actors (Locke 2001), the opportunities for establishing synergistic ties (Evans 1996), and for pursuing deliberative decision-making (Sen 1999; Fung and Wright 2003; Evans 2004).

Identifying variation along these key dimensions facilitates some ordering of the different types along a "high" and "low" continuum (See Figure 1). For example, under *elite command*, there are few opportunities for non-elite members to become thoroughly engaged in defining the development goals of the HTA. This exclusive arrangement limits opportunities to build trust between members, for different chapters to become more embedded in the organization and build on each other's capabilities, and for holding deliberative exchanges. Similar dynamics are evidenced between HTAs, and other development actors, when community development projects are pursued independently. At the other end of the spectrum, greater levels of trust and opportunities for synergy and deliberation are evidenced when organizations are able to foment internal *transnational cooperation* networks, or in collaborative projects characterized by *empowered exchanges*.

Figure 1. Typological Intersections

		Patterns of Organizational Politics	Project-based Engagements
	High	Transnational Cooperation	Empowered Exchanges
Levels of Trust, Opportunities for Synergy and Deliberation	↑ ↓	Transnational Realignment	Diffused Collaborations Arms Length Interactions
	Low	Elite Command	Independent Pursuits
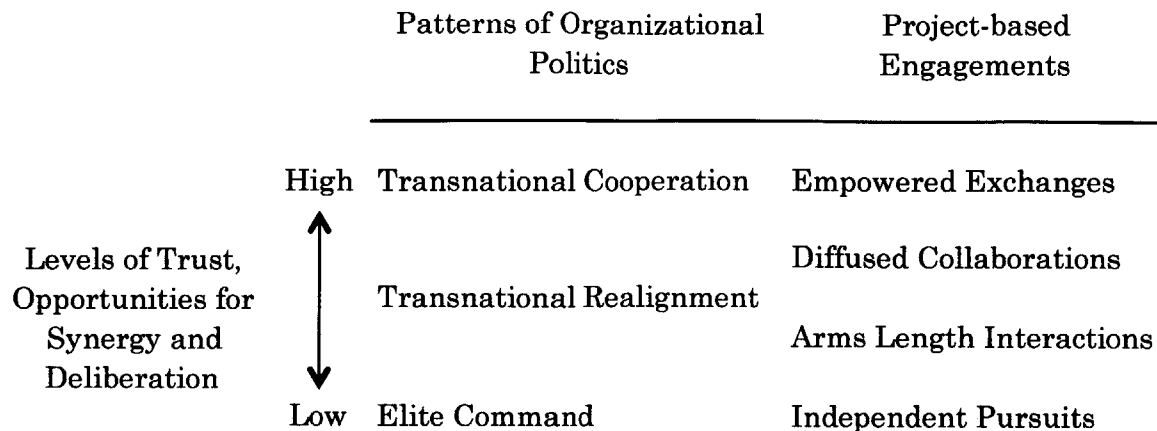
This analytical sorting reveals different combinations or intersections between patterns of organizational politics and project-based engagements, which, in turn, suggests that specific kinds of alignments may lead to distinct transnational community development experiences. It also indicates that some intersections are more likely than others—for example, it is highly unlikely that HTAs under *elite command* can help broker *empowered exchanges*, which are characterized, in part, by a more horizontal and deliberative interchange between actors. But rather than attempt to formulate an array of possible pairings and fit the empirical evidence into a neatly defined set of static options, my goal is to place closer attention on the dynamic interaction within and across these categories over time. This allows a more thorough analysis of the processes through which changes occur.

As the case study evidence will demonstrate, in the early years, HTAs were under *elite command*, and predominantly pursued independent projects. During this period, elite members took the lead in addressing long-standing community needs, like health and education, while also seeking to gain the attention of public authorities and a despotic regime, which had demonstrated a willingness to engage with certain members of the merchant and upwardly mobile classes. Independent projects provided important

opportunities for experimentation and building organizational capabilities, but also placed substantial resource and managerial strain on young associations with limited development knowledge. Thus, elite leaders employed various lobbying tactics to bring the state into their hometown communities through a series of *arms-length interactions*. These initial collaborations brought the organizations closer to state structures, which meant greater community development investments and opened new avenues for state-society dialogue. Along the way, non-elite leaders were beginning to take a more active role in organizational affairs but were mostly involved in providing logistical and implementation support.

The emergence of US-based chapters would spark a process of *transnational realignment* within the HTAs' internal structures, as stateside leaders sought to gain a more prominent role in defining hometown development goals and in the organizations' decision-making structures. This internal transformation proceeded differently within each of the study organizations. In Villa Fundación (Chapter 3), elite members ceded control of the primary administrative structures to a seasoned crop of hometown leaders around the same time that US-based HTA members began to promote their own development ideas and projects. These shifts also coincided with a unique political opportunity that allowed the hometown leadership to assume control of the recently established municipal government. Firmly "embedded" (Evans 1996; Tsai 2007b) within the organizational and political structures, hometown members were able to enter into collaborative relationships with US HTA leaders while blurring the lines that divided state and social domains at the municipal level. The strategic use of information sharing and deliberation mechanisms facilitated the formation of trusting bonds and cross border learning opportunities. Furthermore, lessons accumulated throughout the realignment period laid the groundwork for the gradual formation of a *transnational cooperation* network and allowed hometown leaders to assume

55

greater leadership roles in their community's development agenda. While changing political winds would lead to the organization's departure from the municipal structures, the hometown leaders' exemplar performance and experience accumulated during their tenure set the tone for future administrations and helped forge a series of *empowered exchanges* with international donor agencies, NGOs and myriad politicians, which have led to significant development gains.

While Villa Fundación's experience may serve to prove otherwise, *transnational cooperation* and *empowered exchanges* are difficult to establish and sustain. In Villa Sombrero (Chapter 5), the advent of migrant chapters and the establishment of a municipal government structure have been accompanied by a successful *transnational realignment* process, but the road to *transnational cooperation* has been difficult to navigate. Also, while municipal authorities have been willing to partner with the HTA, coproduction has proceeded mostly through *diffuse collaborations*.

Villa Sombrero's experience highlights the complex political and social dynamics that emerge when migrant leaders become involved in projects from afar, especially when their notions of what constitutes development and its proper execution do not coincide with that of local politicians and home country members. It also demonstrates how transnational community development projects thrusts HTAs into situations where distinguishing and at times advantageously blurring the boundaries between community and partisan politics is required. But differing views on goals and strategies, aside from leading to tense encounters, also generate opportunities for trying out "big" ideas that can have broader implications for how development is conceived and practiced.

Transnational realignment has not proceeded smoothly in Boca Canasta (Chapter 4). Differences in outlooks and what constitute development goals

have led to a series of tense disagreements over projects and priorities between migrant and non-migrant members. Migrants' "ossified" (Levitt 2007; 2009) perceptions of their hometown, limited cross border communication, and leadership turnover, have fueled distrust within the organization's ranks. Organizational fragmentation has been further complicated by persistent *arms-length interactions* with municipal authorities. While hometown leaders have been able to garner the state's attention, the relationship has seldom proceeded beyond the traditional "semiclientelistic" (Fox 1994) bargain between social and political actors. Interestingly, this complex development scenario has sparked some creative responses and learning within the organization. Faced with numerous challenges, and lacking a predefined roadmap, leaders at home and abroad have had to experiment with different tactics to arrive at plausible solutions.

Data Gathering, Cases and Methods

For several years before this project began, I was drawn to the work of practitioners and academics interested in the migration-development nexus. This was not a random inclination. I am the son of a Puerto Rican mother and an Indian father who migrated to the Caribbean looking to expand his intellectual horizons. Like many of my compatriots and kin, I have left my native Puerto Rico for the United States several times, mostly looking for educational and economic opportunities. Thus, leaving home behind to get a leg up in life is not just an interesting academic theme that I could write about to complete my doctoral studies; it is also a very important part of my personal journey.

My interest in HTAs emerged out of pure necessity. At the start of my academic program, I was asked to "operationalize" my research interests and conduct primary research. Not interested in following the footsteps of

mainstream migration and development researchers, who have been fixated on studying every possible angle related to individual and family remittances, I was drawn to works that highlighted the collective efforts of migrants interested in turning things around in their communities of origin. While the thematic specificities of my first-year project would start taking shape as I immersed myself in the academic literature, it was clear from the start that my research site would be tied to some country in the Caribbean archipelago. The region has always been a migratory crossroads. But, intriguingly, it is mostly absent from the mainstream development narratives. This combination signaled an opportunity for a student looking to make some kind of contribution to a burgeoning field. The Dominican Republic, the country next door to my island, which shared a common history related to colonial rule, United States intervention and vast, international migratory waves, seemed like the ideal choice.

Finding Dominican HTAs based in or around Boston was not hard thanks to the previous efforts of researchers involved with the CIOP, who had compiled a list of active organizations that included the names and phone numbers of key leaders. Eager to get started, I began making cold calls once I had procured the contact data. It wasn't long before I dialed Jorge S., the name associated with the *Movimiento para el Desarrollo de Boca Canasta* (MODEBO). In my Puerto Rican accent, I explained my desire to know his organization's story and how it worked. Surprisingly, he immediately agreed to meet me and share his thoughts. We met in a crowded Dominican restaurant in Jamaica Plain, on a Saturday afternoon. He talked to me at length about *el Movimiento*, recalling stories and anecdotes about projects, fundraisers and life in Boca Canasta, his hometown. He was passionate and proud of the work they had accomplished and what they had in store. I had planned to be there for an hour or so, but ended up spending most of the afternoon with him, fulfilling my appetite for Caribbean food: rice and beans,

fried meat and plantains. Before I left, Jorge let me know about the people of Villa Sombrero and El Llano, two neighboring communities in the Dominican Republic with active HTAs. I pursued those leads and met with their leaders. Fieldwork had begun.

If gaining access was relatively easy, establishing rapport was not. The initial conversations went very well since I asked them general information about their groups, and they were happy to boast about their accomplishments. At first, I took extensive notes on a small notebook. But when I asked them to introduce me to other members in Boston, began attending their fundraising parties and conducting formal interviews with a tape recorder, the conversations got stiff. It took me a while to understand that despite being a *Boricua*, interacting in a common language, partaking in their routine hangouts and drinking sessions on Saturdays in Jamaica Plain, traveling to New York City to meet other members, and attending HTA meetings, I was an outsider. Moreover, as I would later learn, some of them were wary of my persistence and curiosity. I was asking too many questions; I inquired about mundane details; I was always around. For all they knew, I could have been a detective, or worse, an immigration agent. It didn't matter that I had explained my interest and motives as a student researcher. To them, I was a guy they had just met, who wanted to know too much about the inner workings of their community organizations.

Fieldwork dynamics began to change after my first visit to the Dominican Republic during the summer of 2009. In order to understand how these HTAs worked, I needed to see the projects up close and meet the people at the other end of the transnational spectrum. After squaring it with the Boston and New York leaders, I spent almost a month between Boca Canasta and Villa Fundación—which are just a short motorbike ride away from each other. Time went by very fast, as I spent hours hanging out with their friends,

59

families, and organizational counterparts. I stayed with the parents of an HTA member from Villa Sombrero, went to many community meetings and gathered more details on the organizations through numerous interviews. Everyone I met in the Baní region[15] was forthcoming with ideas and information. They were also extremely generous and welcoming.

Upon returning to Boston, I noticed a change in attitude. Interestingly, spending time in Baní brought me closer to the stateside HTA leaders I had met before departing. Aside from helping me make better connections with my informants, it also allowed me to make better sense of how these HTAs worked. I had more than one side of the story. It was also easier to follow the conversations and debates in Boston and New York meetings, which revolved around hometown projects and other affairs, and compare the views and opinions of migrants and non-migrants. As time passed, I began to learn more about the organizations and its members. I was still an outsider, but a more informed one.

I would repeat the multi-sited research routine several times. To study how HTAs pursue transnational community development, while prioritizing process and examining the genesis and evolution of several projects up close, I spent over five years performing fieldwork, from 2008 until 2013. I relied on direct observation of meetings, fundraisers and other social activities, internal documents, journalistic and academic accounts, government reports, census figures, and in-depth interviews. In total, I had the opportunity to formally interview 85 individuals, including: HTA members, migrant and non-migrant community residents, public officials, political party and NGO

---

[15] Baní is the main municipal city of the Domnican Republic's Peravia Province, but it is also the name used when referring to the surrounding area that includes the towns studied in this project. I use the term "Baní region" to distinguish the larger area from the municipality. Residents of the towns surrounding Baní also refer to themselves as *banilejos*.

representatives, and knowledgeable academics. Several of the respondents were interviewed on numerous occasions. The topics of our conversations ranged from life and organizational histories, to operational issues, project experiences, state-HTA relationships, local impacts, community history, and development trajectories. I have also kept in constant contact with a core group of 15 informants over the years. Our continued conversations have kept me up-to-date on key organizational and community matters. Throughout the data gathering process, I have also attended and recorded detailed field notes of over 100 activities, including HTA meetings and relevant community gatherings in the study sites: New York, Boston, Santo Domingo, Boca Canasta, Villa Fundación and Villa Sombrero[16].

Eventually, courteous but distant relationships became friendships. One sign that we were growing closer came one Saturday in Jamaica Plain, when Jorge recalled the story, almost bursting into laughter, of how he told several of those sitting with us at the table that I was an FBI agent. Some of the guys laughed hard because they believed him at first, and had even worried if they were in my sights. Because most working class migrants have brushes with the informal economy, the thought of having a law enforcement officer nosing around is a cause for concern. But by then it was a joking matter because we knew each other better: I had traveled to the Dominican Republic with some of them, our families had met, we had spent time in each other's homes. They have become part of my intimate social circle. A similar connection exists with several families in the Baní region.

---

[16] In order to protect the identities of the interviewees and other study participants, I have used pseudonyms. This does not apply to individuals who held public office at the time of the interviews. Unless otherwise specified, all the interviews were conducted in Spanish. All of the translations from Spanish are mine.

Case Selection

The three organizations studied were selected due to shared characteristics and differences in key aspects of importance to this project. They are also the most active and well-known HTAs in the Baní region, which is an area known for its active organizational culture, and boasts at least 3 more such associations. The associations were founded in the Dominican Republic during the 1970s, as a response to the state's inattention towards the development needs of impoverished rural communities. As migration to the United States became more frequent, the organizations saw new chapters emerge in migrant destinations. Interestingly, their longevity and resilience are key characteristics that allow me to examine their evolution over time. With regards to their projects, all three organizations have been involved in the provision of needed community infrastructures and services. Nevertheless, there are some similarities, but also variation with regards to size, type of the ventures pursued, and relationship with national and local authorities.

Unlike many studies of development, the HTAs were not chosen because they exhibit characteristics of "successful" or "failing" organizations. To a certain extent, they should be considered intermediate cases that exhibit a mix of achievements and shortcomings. As such, I am able to avoid the practice of "selecting on the dependent variable", and am also able to take advantage of significant variation in project evolution and processes both within and across cases[17].

---

[17] Doner (2009) employs a similar methodological rationale in his study of Thailand's development experience.

Table 1. Study Organizations and Location of Chapters

Hometown Association[18]	Location of Home Country Chapters	Location of Host Country Chapters
Movimiento para el desarrollo de Boca Canasta (MODEBO)	Boca Canasta	Boston
Sociedad Progresista de Villa Sombrero (SOPROVIS)	Villa Sombrero and Santo Domingo	Boston and New York City
Asociación Pro-desarrollo de Villa Fundación (ADEFU)	Villa Fundación and Santo Domingo	New York City, Miami[19]

Initial fieldwork rounds, which began in 2008, were focused on two cases: MODEBO and SOPROVIS. In the summer of 2010, I began collecting interviews and other data for the ADEFU case, based on recommendations from study informants. I was able to compensate for the two-year time lag by examining the meeting minutes for all of ADEFU's active chapters, which are openly shared through their community's weblog page. The oldest posted minutes date from 2006.

Data Analysis

Given that the dissertation follows a multiple case study methodology, and is not concerned with quantifying the prevalence of a specific phenomenon or determining the causal factors that explain an established outcome, a traditional sampling strategy was not employed. Instead, a replication logic was pursued following the framework developed by Yin (2009). This approach

---

[18] The HTAs that will be examined show characteristics of both horizontal and hierarchical organizations. Although individual chapters operate in a quasi-autonomous manner—with separate bylaws, sources of income, and agendas—most hometown projects are coordinated, designed and executed with the help and involvement of all the active chapters. Some projects are financed almost exclusively with funds raised in the U.S. or the Dominican Republic, while others are capitalized with pooled resources. The financial structure of a project is mostly based on the type of venture and the financial stability of the chapters involved.

[19] ADEFU's Florida chapter was founded in late 2012, and is still in its initial organizing stages. Given their relative newness, no data on this chapter was collected.

required the development of a series of theoretical propositions prior to the formal data collection process. Exploratory data and information collected during early fieldwork efforts were used to craft the study's research questions, identify the interview topics, refine the case selection, and develop the initial theoretical propositions. As the project moved forward, the replication logic was performed following an iterative process where discoveries served to revise the theoretical propositions developed a priori, and led to a continual revision and refinement process that eventually resulted in a more robust set of propositions.

Fieldwork data was analyzed using a variety of methods. Detailed notes captured during interviews, meetings and activities, and digitally recorded conversations were reviewed and listened to on several occasions. Over half of the interviews, mostly those involving key informants, were completely or partially transcribed, primarily to extract precise quotes. Key themes began to emerge during the data review process, which was continuously performed throughout the fieldwork phase. These themes formed the basis for the open codes that were later refined into analytical codes. Throughout the fieldwork phase, I also produced memos and detailed analytical texts. Some of these formed the empirical basis for academic articles that were published throughout. To facilitate the organization and analysis of field data, I used the Nvivo qualitative data analysis software.

Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized into six chapters. The bulk of the empirical evidence is contained in the case studies, which are presented in chapters three (3) to five (5). The overall structure is as follows:

1- Introduction

2. Historical Context

At first, making sense of some idiomatic expressions while conducting fieldwork was complicated. Despite my Latino Caribbean roots, there were terms or phrases that I could not interpret accurately. For example, many *banilejos* I talked to during my initial research outings in Boston would say "Santo Domingo" when making an allusion to their country of origin. In my mind, that reference was reserved for the country's capital city. But more often than not, this was not the case. As time went by, and as a result of paying close attention, I learnt that the name applies, both officially and colloquially, to the first city and the whole island, also known as *La Española* or Hispañola. Interpreting how certain references with multiple meanings were used became a required skill that could only be sharpened with time and curiosity. Aside from helping me take note of certain social and political subtleties that could not be easily dismissed if one did not pay close attention, this early learning experience served to underscore the complex character of the Dominican experience and their history.

This chapter provides a historical overview of the Dominican Republic and its people. In doing so, I focus on a select set of characters and events that have shaped the country's political and socioeconomic landscapes since the Spanish colonial era. The narrative also takes stock of distinct structural and institutional factors that inspired the rise of hometown associations, define the legacies of state-society relationships, and help explain how migration became an integral part of the contemporary Dominican experience. This exercise involves retelling national-level accounts but also delving into specific events in the histories of the cities and towns where the empirical chapters are set. As such, the text moves across space and time, taking the reader, for example, to *banilejo* hometown villages during the Trujillo

dictatorship[20], and to neighborhoods in Boston and New York City during the Dominican migrant waves of the 1980s and 1990s. The overall goal is to provide a contextual backdrop and introduce some of the political economy factors that inform later chapters.

Early Colonial Rule and the Rise of the Republic

La Española or Hispañola is an island in the Caribbean region currently shared by two sovereign nations: Haiti and the Dominican Republic. With an area of close to 30,000 square miles, it is the second largest island in the Antilles archipelago, located between the Republic of Cuba and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The Dominican Republic, also referred to as *Quisqueya* or *Domincana*, occupies the largest share of territory on the eastern part of the island.

Colonized by the Spanish in 1492, the island's native settlers were forced to extract gold and other resources from the land in such a brutal fashion that most perished before the mid-1500s. The need for new laborers that could work the expansive sugar plantations led colonial landholders to import black slaves at a very rapid pace, to the point that Santo Domingo became the slave supply center for Central America and the Spanish Province of *Tierra Firme*. As African slaves outnumbered the Europeans, the Spanish lost control over the population and several rebellions ensued. By the middle of the 16th Century, Spain nominally ruled an unruly colonial outpost affected by looting corsairs, an increase in smuggled goods and runaway slaves. To deal with the crisis, the Spanish rulers forcibly removed the inhabitants of the northern and western regions, and led them into Santo Domingo. These *devastaciones*, which took place in the early 1600s, had a severely detrimental effect on the

---

[20] Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina (1891-1961) presided over the Dominican Republic for 31 years (from 1930 until his death by assassination in 1961) and imposed one of the cruelest and goriest tyrannical regimes in the modern Americas.

colonial economy and allowed the French to occupy the abandoned western parts, where they established a plantation society that relied heavily on slave labor.

European colonizers first populated the area known as the Baní Valley during the early 1500s. Like in many other settlements around the island, sugar cane cultivation became the primary economic activity; but by the turn of the Century, livestock farming had taken over given the low returns generated through sugar production. This activity led to the creation of several ranches along Baní's coastal areas and the eventual founding of villages such as Boca Canasta and Sombrero during the mid-1730s (Díaz Melo 2001, Peña Franjul 1991).

Control over Spanish Santo Domingo changed hands several times during the late 1700s and early 1800s. While the 19th century would ultimately bring independence to the Dominican people, the confrontations that ensued along the way had repercussions that last to this day. On the other side of the island, a powerful slave revolt defeated Napoleon's troops and led to the establishment of the Republic of Haiti in 1804. Fearing a French takeover through Santo Domingo, the Haitians decided to invade the eastern part of the island in 1822, which was badly managed and languishing economically. Rampant neglect and incompetence on the part of the colonial administration, earned them the colorful moniker, "*La España Boba*" [the Foolish Spain] (Ferguson 1992, 15; Moya Pons 1998).

For 22 years, Haitian rulers occupied the island of Hispañola. For many Dominicans, including several of my *banilejo* friends who did not miss an opportunity to school me on Dominican history during my visits to the island, the neighboring Haitians had established a brutal and oppressive regime that hindered their progress. Nonetheless, several historic accounts, including those of Juan Bosch (1989)—one of the country's most revered

intellectuals and a former president of the Republic—present a more nuanced picture. Haitian occupation brought forth an end to slavery and changes in the racial order established by the Spanish colonizers. Land reforms sought to break the control of large owners, including the Church and white proprietors. These changes, along with a strong military control and new rules imposed on the merchant class, led to serious discontent amongst the urban elite. Unrest and nationalist fervor led to the formation of *La Trinitaria*, a secret society organized by Juan Pablo Duarte—widely considered the father of the *patria*, or homeland—which led the movement to overthrow Haitian president Boyer. On February 27, 1844, a coup led by the *Trinitarios* led to the country's independence from Haiti.

From the outset, the Dominican national identity was partially defined by its anti-Haitian character. After a hard fought battle against the black occupiers, conservative Dominican intellectuals began to conceive their collective identity as one based on the Hispanic heritage: their customs, Catholic religion and Spanish language. It was also framed in racial terms since Dominicans were considered descendants of white Europeans; Haitians, on the other hand, descended from black Africans (González et.al. 2000).

Blackness in the Dominican Republic is commonly associated with Haitians, and many *banilejos* consider themselves to be of a paler skin color—due to the settlement of the descendants of Spanish migrants from the Canary Islands that migrated to the region and were opposed to intermarriage with blacks (Levitt 2001). On the issue of racial attitudes in Villa Sombrero before the 1950s, Díaz Melo (2001: 36) explains,

> ...marriages were made following very rigorous criteria for selecting a spouse, where moral qualities and racial considerations prevailed. Due to those prejudices, marriages between close relatives were commonplace; it was socially accepted for first cousins to marry. Racism was so entrenched

69

that a *sombrerero* could not conceive marrying a mulatto, much less a black person.

The highly prejudiced norms described by Díaz Melo would begin to change, and intermarriage between races would increase with the arrival of mulatto and black workers to the sugar plantations established by Trujillo in the Baní region. Nonetheless, the enduring legacies of racism have made skin color a common topic of conversation. While conducting fieldwork, it was not uncommon to find Dominicans who defend their "white" heritage despite being racially mixed[21]. As I would learn, race and Haiti are difficult subjects that still inspire polarized sentiments.

Troubled Sovereignty, American Presence, and the Rise of Trujillo

The incipient nation-building process proved to be a very hard task for the young Republic. Shortly after gaining independence, Dominicans had to contend with staving off Haitian incursions and dealing with a series of leadership battles that led to Duarte's exile and the rise of *caudillos*. In addition, the country was divided between a tobacco growing economy in the northern Cibao region, and a timber-producing enclave in south. The lack of a national road system that could help integrate both areas led to a physical, political and socioeconomic disconnect that hindered the process of national state formation (Betances 1995).

Independence also generated fiscal problems for the country as violent encounters led to the frequent interruption of commercial activity, which led

---

[21] Some of these exchanges were uncomfortable and became hard to stomach, as some interviewees and friends would come up with unwarranted and seemingly unfounded explanations to position themselves as culturally and racially different from the Haitian people. Nevertheless, this was not a generalized attitude, by any means. Many individuals from diverse class and racial backgrounds who shared their ideas on Dominican-Haitian relationships also demonstrated a caring and respectful sentiment, and were quick to label anti-Haitian ideas as racist.

to insufficient public revenue streams. Needing funds to defend the territory and run the country, Pedro Santana—a wealthy cattle rancher who became the first constitutional President in 1844—printed and borrowed money without much restraint. Unversed in important public administration matters, his inadequate management of the economy led to a severe financial crisis (Moya Pons 1998). Decimated economically and seeing few options to defend the national territory, the *caudillo* sought protection through annexation. General Santana pleaded with the Spanish, who occupied the country once again in 1861. But the continuing legacy of the *España Boba* would spark another independence drive that led to the War of Restoration and "sovereign" rule in 1865.

The War of Restoration was a guerrilla conflict commanded by several dozen military leaders who fought for control over specific areas once the fighting with Spain ended. This led to an increasing fragmentation of the national territory. As Moya Pons (1998, 220) describes,

> In each of the major cities and towns, rivalries existed among the local elite for personal, family or social reasons. The internal disputes had been laid aside temporarily to fight the Spaniards...As soon as the Spaniards left, the precarious nature of this alliance became clear...Dominican politics had always been based on personalism and *caudillismo* because the population was primarily rural and illiterate, and their loyalty was only possible through a system of personal connections.

Tensions between warring *caudillos* led to a continual civil conflict that further aggravated economic conditions. After a tumultuous period that saw over 20 changes in government, Buenaventura Báez, a wealthy landowner and timber exporter, seized power at the end of the 1870s. Recognizing that his tenure would be brief if he could not secure the needed funds to stave off rebel forces, he approached the Americans with a proposition: annex the whole country for $100,000 in cash and $50,000 in arms (Moya Pons 1998, 229). Although a tentative deal was agreed upon, it failed to be ratified by the

United States Senate. The Dominican people were able to avoid American rule, but only for a brief period.

After the failed deal between Báez and the *americanos*, power struggles between the *caudillos* continued as Ulises Heureaux rose to power in 1882. Considered an able military leader and a ruthless dictator, Lilís (as he was commonly known) amassed power in a "neosultanic" fashion that foreshadowed the style of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, who would take his place decades later (Hartlyn 1998, 30). Under Lilís, the country's economic base shifted towards sugar production. State policies facilitated the incursion of foreign investors, some of which helped consolidate a planter class and a local sugar bourgeoisie in the southeast that became incorporated into the socioeconomic structures of creole society (Betances 1995). In addition, public investments brought railroads, some basic infrastructure and the professionalization of the army. But these public infrastructures were completed with borrowed foreign capital, which Lilís also used to line his pockets, and keep his supporters happy through patronage. Mounting debt allowed investment firms and other private interests from the United States to take advantage of the situation and exert greater levels of influence over the fragile Republic's political and economic spheres.

American power over Dominican affairs was initially exercised through the control over the collection of customs duties in 1904, which led to a formal receivership in 1907. The agreement led to a debt refinancing agreement that took care of European creditors and placed all of the country's financial obligations in the hands of American bankers. At the same time, United States investments in the commercial sector expanded (Hartlyn 1998). Growing American influence was not entirely welcomed by many within the country, including the Dominican Congress, which refused a full takeover of financial affairs and increased military presence. But the pushback was

answered forcefully: in 1916 US Marines landed in Santo Domingo and occupied the country.

Three distinct motives are commonly cited to explain the United States occupation of the Dominican Republic: geopolitical, economic, and ideological (Moya Pons 1998; Ferguson 1992; Hartlyn 1998). German presence in the island and their influence throughout the region was argued as a major cause for American concern as World War I was being waged in Europe. But military interests were also tied to economic concerns as the Great War led to a spike in world commodity prices that benefitted U.S. companies operating in the Dominican Republic. Furthermore, the increased armed presence ensured unfettered access to important sea lanes of communication and the Panama Canal. Finally, the occupation served to advance the "liberal interventionist zeal" of President Woodrow Wilson's administration: "a combination of self-righteousness, a sense of superiority, and a desire to bring "good government" to Latin American peoples" (Hartlyn 1998, 37).

American presence in *Quisqueya* brought about substantial structural changes in numerous domains. After taking measures to repair the financial chaos that had crippled the country for decades, and moving to disarm the civilian population, the occupiers embarked on a series of reforms and public works projects that sought to modernize infrastructural systems and state institutions. The restructuring process included an overhaul of the public administration sector, a system of internal taxation, the creation of a national guard and the expansion and eventual completion of a highway system that helped connect Santo Domingo to the country's interior (Moya Pons 1998; 2011).

American occupation also brought about the consolidation of lands into the hands of sugar companies and foreign interests. Through the 1920 Land Registration Act, communal land tenure was replaced by private ownership.

Thus, small-scale farmers and squatters were forced out of the land they had worked on for generations. At the same time, commodity shortages brought about by the War led to an increase in prices—especially sugar, tobacco cacao and coffee—that sparked a period of economic bonanza commonly referred to as "*La danza de los millones*" [dance of the millions]. In towns like San Pedro de Macorís, in the southeast, visitors could marvel at the sight of ornate concrete homes, streetcars, and other previously unseen infrastructure improvements (Kurlansky 2010). Major agricultural centers, like Santiago and La Vega in the northern part of the country, were transformed into bustling commercial centers with electric lighting, paved roads and sewage systems. Money flowing through booming towns meant greater demand for food and other manufactured imports, which producers in the United States eagerly supplied.

Thanks to the removal of protectionist measures, via the Tariff Act of 1920, duty-free American and international imports became easily accessible. The influx of foreign products greatly affected incipient Dominican exporters and producers (Ferguson 1992). According to Betances (1995, 85),

> Foods traditionally produced in the country began to be replaced
> by imports. Imported luxury articles often sold at lower prices
> than indigenous ones, and these new articles created new wants
> and consequently, new markets. As the import sector grew,
> small artisanry, unable to compete with products of U.S.
> industry, declined.

The influx of American consumer goods hindered the advancement of indigenous industrialization while facilitating the introduction of new cultural influences. As several scholars have argued (Moya Pons 1998; Tejada 2011) certain elements of the "American way of life" were introduced into Dominican society, including a familiarization with certain English words, American music, and baseball, which became the national sport. But while cultural and "neocolonial" ties (Betances 1995) to the United States would

run deep and expand after mid century, the most lasting and harsh legacy left by the Americans in their eight-year occupation would be the formation of a national security apparatus. In their desire to establish a national police that could defend the elected government left behind after U.S. withdrawal, they planted another poisonous seed that would haunt the country forever. Working as a guard outside a sugar plantation in Santo Domingo, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo was recruited and trained by the U.S. Marines, and quickly rose up the ranks of the *Guardia Nacional*. A shrewd and scheming leader, he led a military coup in 1930 that established one of the longest and most despotic regimes in Latin America (Derby 2009).

The Country's Transformation Under Trujillo

Trujillo's control over the country was initially made possible through military means, as the unarming of the population under the United States protectorate eliminated any offensive threat that other groups could mount an offensive against the professionally trained army. The United States, which had officially ended its occupation but maintained control over financial and economic interests in *Hispañola*, did not support his coup but eventually acquiesced since he was considered a guarantor of political stability. Once in power, Trujillo expanded his rule through the establishment of key political and bureaucratic institutions.

The *Partido Dominicano* became the only political party in the country and its control was completely in the hands of Trujillo. He personally selected its officers, established the programs and internal rules, and held complete discretion over their interpretation. Membership was widespread and included almost all Dominican adults. From the outset, the *Partido* was embedded within formal government structures. Its leaders held ranking public posts and in the case of civil servants, membership dues were automatically deducted by the National Treasury (Crassweller 1966). As one

of Trujillo's less coercive means of domination, the party sought the support of the public through a series of populist civic projects like building roads, feeding the poor and dispensing medicines (Betances 1995). The expansion of the military, the creation of paramilitary units and a network of informants, allowed the dictator to exert a monopoly on violence that was used to eliminate political opposition.

Formal control also came through the expansion of the bureaucratic state apparatus. Despite dismal economic growth in the 1930s, the dictator created numerous institutions, like the Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Ministry of Telecommunications, amongst others, that could provide employment and expand the number of middle-level technical workers that were absolutely loyal to his ideas, and dutifully implemented his designs. In most cases, civil servants earned high salaries but were also a very vulnerable group since their access to detailed information on the inner workings of regime made them potential conspirators. Thus, Trujillo had them sign resignation letters upon their appointment, and there was much bureaucratic turnover (Derby 2009).

The Dominican Congress under Trujillo did not uphold its obligation to counterbalance to the executive's powers. Much like the public workers, legislators also had to swear allegiance to Trujillo, subject themselves to loyalty tests and constantly notify their public and private undertakings. As a result, they drafted and passed legislation that facilitated *El Jefe's* whims and desires. This rubber stamp Congress facilitated the enactment of his economic agenda, which was focused on growing the national economy to increase his personal wealth. Laws enacted to create state monopolies on basic foodstuffs and impose regressive tariffs on small businessmen and producers allowed the government to control the productive sectors. Because the dictator "used state funds to conduct his personal business operations, and the state provided the necessary infrastructure and funds to ensure the

success of those operations" (Betances 1995, 104), there was little clarity on what belonged to the state and what was held by Trujillo.

Taking advantage of the scarcity of products entering the country due to the Great Depression, Trujillo embarked on an import substitution industrialization drive that transformed the island's economy and grew the manufacturing sector. As the local economy grew, he sought independence from American creditors and was finally able to pay them off in 1947. Regaining fiscal independence from foreign control became one of his most touted achievements. This allowed him to replace the American dollar as the national currency and gave him even more freedom to take charge of the economy. But in order to continue growing his financial position, the state needed to make important infrastructure investments. Starting around 1938, the government embarked on a massive public works effort that continued throughout his rule. This included the creation new roads and irrigation canals that could help grow large-scale agricultural production, a sector where he also had personal interests. One of his biggest industrial ventures was in sugar, which for almost a century had been controlled by private and foreign interests. Realizing that there were huge profits to be made, especially after prices increased due to World War II, he began to colonize land throughout the country, and through some suspicious and complex financial transactions, was able to eventually amass a majority stake in sugar production (Moya Pons 1998).

The tyrant's desire to expand his agricultural empire led to a series of profound changes in the economic and social spheres of numerous agricultural towns in the Republic. By 1959, the regime had completed the construction of the Marcos A. Cabral irrigation canal, which was built to serve the semi-arid lands along Baní's coastline that were forcefully taken from local farmers to plant sugarcane and corn for Trujillo's agricultural enterprises. As a result of the dispossessions, many local farmers who made a

living toiling their smallholdings or *conucos* struggled to get by. Some became foremen and worked in Trujillo's fields, while others, who could not bear the humiliations that came with the evictions, migrated to the capital in search of new opportunities in the commercial sector (Díaz Melo 2001; Báez Melo 2012).

In towns like Villa Sombrero, the establishment of a sugarcane colony led to a large influx of migrant workers from nearby towns and Haitian field hands. This demographic shift helped transform the homogenous social and cultural character of the town and its racial profile. In economic terms, the colony changed the scale of agricultural production, from a subsistence model to an industrial one. When the regime ended, former landowners were able to reclaim their plots and some were compensated for the takings. Interestingly, local producers were able to increase and diversify their agricultural output given the infrastructural improvements and land clearings performed by the regime to facilitate large-scale production (Díaz Melo 2001). But while yields increased, important rural traditions began to die out. Paid work and agricultural laborers slowly replaced the *convite*, a pre-capitalist farming practice based on collective collaboration and mutual aid.

Convites have been important community institutions in many agricultural regions of the Dominican Republic. According to Fidel Santana (2011),

> The peasant *convite* is a mutual aid community institution
> through which rural groups combine forces and efforts in the
> development of some tasks that exceed the capabilities of each
> individual. That is to say, it is a group of farmers who meets
> occasionally or periodically to collaborate on various agricultural
> tasks such as planting, harvesting, logging, etc.

Practiced in *Hispañola* for over three centuries, the *convite* became an important practice for *conuco* farmers who needed to rely on the community's collective efforts to eke out a living. Marcial C., a former president of

SOPROVIS and an occasional *conuco* farmer, described how this collective farming practice was carried out,

> *Convites*...are a part of our culture. For example, [let's say that] there was a hill that had to be cleared, and I wanted to put it to work, put it into production; and I did not have the resources, the resources to put people to work, to clear down that mountain, to put that land into productive conditions. So then we gathered all the men [from the community] and said: "Well, we're going to go work to this guy's grounds" and all the work was done. The owner of the property contributed the food for all the workers. So once that land was ready to be worked on, to be planted and everything, then went moved on to another person's plot. That was the way we practiced agriculture at a time where there was no money. During a period when the peasantry had no resources.

Santana (2011) argues that *convites* are one of several collective customs that emerged as a result of social and cultural syncretism. The melding of European, African and Amerindian influences also led to the establishment of burial societies, rotating credit associations and other solidary civic practices that are still evidenced in Dominican social life. Because these communal practices are an integral part of a well-established cultural repertoire, they laid a strong foundation for other civic traditions that flourished after Trujillo's regime, including HTAs. These collective practices were also manifestations of a "disciplinary ethos" (Davis 2004) exhibited by small-scale farming societies in Baní, a trait that shaped their attitudes towards local development and their engagements with state actors[22].

During the dictatorship, social and civic life were also were tightly controlled and monitored. Trujillo's stronghold extended far beyond the economic and political realms, and encompassed family life, education, religion, and

---

[22] Davis' analysis underscores how certain values like self-discipline, thriftiness, and industriousness are part of the social backbone of small-scale farming societies. This is due, in great part, to the unpredictability of agricultural production, and the fact that economic survival depends on the hard work and effort of local producers. As Davis argues: "when this type of disciplinary ethos infuses both society and the state, and vice versa, the developmental gains are enormous" (2004, 11).

virtually every form of social organization (Lora H. 2010). A large military and police apparatus, control of the press and media outlets, indoctrination through the school system, and a nefarious partnership with the Catholic church allowed the regime to impose a series of ideological campaigns centered around national unity, work, peace and order and progress (Espinal 1994). Control over important social institutions meant that all organizations had to follow Trujillo's line or risk being persecuted and eventually eradicated. Labor unions, feminist groups and intellectuals were made to fall in line or coopted. Opposition groups were effectively driven from the country and exiled to different cities like New York, Havana and Port au Prince. A "culture of terror" (Derby 2009) and repression was skillfully used to advance the regime's project and quell any attempt to overthrow or challenge *El Jefe*.

A chilling example of how violence was used for political and ideological purposes is the Haitian massacre of 1937. Claiming that a group of peasants near the border were stealing cattle from the regime, Trujillo executed his own brand of justice. In a matter months, over twenty thousand Haitian peasants were killed with machetes by government troops in one of the most deadly and atrocious episodes of his rule. This catastrophic massacre sent a clear message to nationals and foreigners alike: Trujillo was not above employing brutal means to eradicate any kind of threat to his absolutist rule.

The regime's repressive apparatus pervaded everyday life and was felt everywhere, even in remote rural towns. Bernardo D., a longtime community leader from Villa Fundación and director in ADEFU's hometown chapter, recalled how regular folks had to follow a strict set of rules designed to instill fear and control over all aspects.

> When they mention it, I get goose bumps...Back then you had to
> have *los tres golpes* [the three blows]: carnet [official ID], voter
> registration card and the *palmita* [the *Partido Dominicano* card].
> [...] If the police caught you and you did not have one of those

things they would take you to Baní and give you twenty-five days [in jail].

On Sundays when you went to the *conucos,* you couldn't have your machete hanging from your waist; you had to store it in the saddlebag... One Sunday we were headed for the *conuco,* and when a friend and I were arriving at the gate to enter the *conuco,* the guards from Cruce de Ocoa [a nearby town] were also coming by, and almost entering into the *conuco* we were stopped. I had my machete in the saddle but my mate had it at his waist. So they took him and gave him twenty-five days in jail.

Trujillo's relentless pursuit of control was exercised beyond the country's borders. On several occasions, the dictator hatched and executed plans to assassinate dissidents residing in the United States and elsewhere. In 1960, his intelligence service went as far as carrying out an attempt on Venezuelan President, Rómulo Betancourt, who had allowed Dominican dissidents to carry out a political campaign against the regime. By then, the economic situation in the Dominican Republic had deteriorated considerably and opposition to the savagery and terror of the regime—as political prisoners were killed and tortured on a daily basis—was mounting within and outside the Republic. Fearing a Cuban-inspired takeover, the United States turned its back on Trujillo and conspired with members of his inner circle to end his rule. On May 30, 1961, Trujillo was killed in an ambush assault. The plan, developed by the CIA and regime insiders, and supported by a number of Dominican elites, was to do away with the *Trujillato* and install a new government. Only the first part of the plot would be completed; the dictator was gone, but a new political crisis emerged.

The Tortuous Path to *"Neo Trujilloism"*

Shortly after the dictator's death, numerous groups with diverse class profiles burst into the scene demanding the end to the regime and a real transformation of the country's political and social structures. Leftist

revolutionaries and established businessmen wanted to overthrow Joaquín Balaguer, Trujillo's right hand man and acting president, who along with several of the dictator's family members had managed to stay in power. Demonstrations against the regime, which were unheard of previously, were occurring on a daily basis. But as Betances (1995) argues, because the traditional bourgeoisie and the subordinate classes had been barred from engaging in national politics, they lacked the needed experience to quickly assume the power of the state.

Despite aligning himself with a faction of the regime's opponents, dissolving the *Partido Dominicano* and lowering food prices to curry favor with the masses, Balaguer was unable to stay in control. A transitional government was established and free elections were organized in 1962. Juan Bosch, a tireless politician and intellectual who had been exiled during most of his adult life for opposing the regime, came back to his country and won a landslide victory as the presidential candidate for the *Partido Revolucionario Dominicano* (PRD), a political organization founded in Cuba in 1939.

Bosch's plans for the country's transformation rested on populist and reformist principles. The new constitution included many forward thinking ideas such as, worker participation in the management of corporations, the right to strike, controls over foreign ownership and the prohibition of private monopolies. Despite his nationalist and progressive leanings, Bosch understood the need to proceed tactfully when dealing with foreign and national elites. Yet he was unable to gain their confidence, and soon these influential business interests and the Catholic church embarked on a campaign to label him as a communist and repudiate his tolerance of leftist groups and organizations operating in the country (Moya Pons 1998; Ferguson 1992). Opposition to Bosch's government grew rapidly, while American officers stationed in Santo Domingo expressed concern given the

physical proximity of Cuba's revolutionary government and Castro's public embrace of communism.

Bosch's days in power came to an end just seven months after being sworn in. A coup was orchestrated on September 25, 1963, and a triumvirate government beholden to business and foreign interests was established. Shortly thereafter, violence ensued as a guerrilla force, made up of leftist organizations and military men who wanted Bosch's return, confronted the Dominican army in the streets of Santo Domingo. A civil war erupted on April 25, 1965, but just days after, President Lyndon B. Johnson gave the order to deploy 42,000 U.S. Marines to the Dominican Republic in order to "save lives" and protect American interests (Moya Pons 1998). For the second time in less than a century, American military forces had occupied the country.

The American takeover was accompanied by a series of institutional changes at the heart of the Dominican state. Still resembling the structure laid by Trujillo's dictatorship, the governmental apparatus was swiftly revamped through the strategic insertion of U.S. agents in important technical posts within key ministries and development institutions (Betances 1995). As part of that effort, the Americans also restructured the Dominican military and provided the needed funding to maintain government units in operation during the occupation[23]. Four months of intensive negotiations led to an end of the civil conflict, but U.S. and foreign military presence—conveniently rebranded as the Inter-American Peace Force—stayed in place until another provisional government organized new elections in 1966.

---

[23] As Moya Pons (1998) explains, over 400 U.S. functionaries and advisors controlled the Dominican government before Balaguer regained power in 1966. The military, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Education, the Office of Community Development or (ODC), and the National Police, which included CIA operatives in its ranks, were formally advised or unofficially controlled by American experts.

The prospects of a new electoral contest brought Bosch and Balaguer back from exile in Puerto Rico and New York, respectively. With the support of the Trujilloist military, Balaguer was able to neutralize Bosch and his PRD followers. In the run up to the election, over 350 of the PRD's political operatives were killed and Bosch was forced to stay under house arrest. On June 1, 1966, "Neo Trujilloism" (Moya Pons 1998) was established as Balaguer took his oath of office and returned to power.

Balaguer's rule, commonly referred to as his "twelve years", signaled a return to some of the brutal and despotic practices of the Trujillo years but also opened spaces for some novel political and socioeconomic ideas (Espinal 1994). A new constitution was drafted; one that gave broad powers to the president, allowed consecutive reelection, and dissolved many of the progressive rights previously afforded to the working classes. But while working to consolidate personal power, he reached an accommodation with the local bourgeoisie and foreign capitalist interests for the sake of economic growth. Trujillo's fall created opportunities for the consolidation of political and economic interest groups, which led to the configuration of a national entrepreneurial class, initially composed of artisans and small business owners, which later became important industrialists and held sway over national economic matters (Moya Pons 2011). Through new institutional forms, like the National Development Council, which served as a consultative body, Balaguer was able to incorporate members of the growing economic elite into the decision-making structures of the Dominican state. This was one of the many ways *El Doctor*—as he was commonly referred to—was able to garner political support while establishing a clientelistic project that expanded considerably throughout his "twelve years", and served as a model for later administrations and politicians (Lora H. 2010).

Economically, Balaguer also pursued import substitution in order to foment industrialization. With the help of guarantees and business insurance

schemes provided by the U.S. government, he was able to attract foreign investment, take advantage of increasing prices in main commodities, and thus register impressive growth figures, especially from 1970 to 1974. But as Grassmuck and Pessar (1991) argue, many of the policies he adopted favored urban sectors and hurt rural producers. Small agricultural producers were particularly affected by artificial controls over food prices, which forced many to leave the land and head to the cities in search of more profitable economic opportunities.

Given the urban bias in his economic program, Balaguer's patronage network had to grow beyond entrepreneurial circles to include the rural common folks, who represented a very large percentage of the voting public. Through a series of public works and development programs that brought roads, schools, churches and irrigation projects to rural areas, he was able to appease some of the discontent and gain political support within the peasant population in the countryside. Because he wanted to be regarded as a capable provider to the masses, the president often made personal visits to inaugurate projects and interact with the *campesinos* in remote areas. Many of these public works were developed with U.S. foreign aid, which became the government's financial lifeblood in the immediate years after his rise to power. Although Balaguer drove out many of the U.S. advisors and technical experts from the government's ranks upon his ascent—in order to have complete control over the bureaucratic structures—institutions like the Agency for International Development (AID), the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank continued to play a critical role in the expansion of agricultural projects and the establishment or rural development schemes.

An important component of the rural development schemes included community development efforts sponsored by AID through the state's Office of Community Development—known commonly in the country as the ODC, but officially known as the General Directorate of Community Development

(AID 1968). Created through a formal collaboration between AID and the Dominican government, the ODC was originally tasked with providing support to peasant communities and teaching them agricultural improvement techniques based on "self-help" and "mutual aid". Nonetheless, while an important public mission of the ODC was geared towards advancing project-based community development efforts, they also pursued important, yet veiled ideological tasks. As Maríñez (1984) explains, these included the demobilization and indoctrination of rural workers including the ability to identify "communist techniques". Technical workers and ODC staff were deployed throughout the country, and their efforts were felt in the rural communities surrounding Baní. ODC's interventions led to key projects like the construction of Boca Canasta's first cemetery, Villa Sombrero's community center, a woman's group in Villa Fundación, and the creation of the 5-D youth clubs, which were modeled after the American 4-H experience.

Although initially created during the mid-1960s to foment conservative cultural values and keep the rural youth organized and occupied in non-political matters, the club experience served as an initial laboratory for leadership development and helped spark the eventual creation of more radical and politically engaged community groups. Intertwined with Catholic parochial efforts, many 5-D clubs, like the one established in Villa Sombrero, were initially all female and their activities focused mostly on training young women how to take care of home care duties. Eventually, males would be incorporated but their activities were still geared towards entertainment and the promotion of reactionary ideals. As Joel T. explained,

> The work they were doing with the [5-D] clubs was to keep them [the youth] in a vicious circle, spinning, filling their heads with historical phrases...With a philosophy that would keep them meek, quiet, disinterested in the exigencies of the people. [They taught them] to not stand out, not to uncover their true verve that the youth always has. [...] They maintained them entertained, as if they were dancing in circles. [...]

But along the way, the youth say: "the poetry recitals and
theater plays that we do here for laughs...we need to take it
seriously. We need to appeal for liberty, the true expression and
diffusion of thought, and democracy. We need to advocate for
what the people need; that they be told the truth, and that they
open their eyes. Let's give them information". And that's when
the 5-D transform themselves into cultural and sporting clubs.

As Pérez and Artiles (1992, 32) argue, the basic characteristic of these early

club experiences was a type of "primitive communitarianism" oriented

towards individual advancement and the uncritical reproduction of

universally accepted values that were sanctioned by the regime in power. But

with time, those early organizational experiences sparked within the youth a

desire to become more civically engaged, and to speak out against the abuses

of Balaguer's rule and North American influence in their country. In the

name of keeping the peace, Balaguer's police and goon squads—known as la

Banda Colorá—harassed, jailed, tortured and killed opponents or dissenters

of the regime, most of them activist youths who were inspired by leftist

organizations that advocated for increased social freedoms and progressive

ideals. According to numerous community leaders from the Baní region that

lived through the "twelve years", the regime created an environment where

"being young was a crime". In order to avoid persecution, "cultural activism

became the primary outlet" (Hoffnung-Garskoff 2008). The cultural and

sporting clubs, which became popular during the 1970s, organized poetry

readings and staged plays that allowed them to express political messages

against the regime through artistic manifestations. They also took on small

community projects and moralistic campaigns against prostitution and other

vices within their communities. Ultimately, the cultural and sporting clubs

became key breeding grounds for enthusiastic leaders who were beginning to

align themselves politically in a repressive country that had previously

allowed few associative liberties.

In Boca Canasta, leaders like Fabio B. helped organize the *Club Deportivo y Cultural Mauricio Báez*, which was named after a legendary union organizer who fought for the rights of sugarcane workers. Similarly, in Villa Sombrero and Villa Fundación, energized youths who eventually became HTA directors, helped found the *Club Deportivo y Cultural Gregorio Luperón* and the *Club Villa Fundación* in their respective hometowns. According to Francisco T., the club experience awakened social justice yearnings in many young leaders within the Baní region, and planted important seeds that are being harvested to this day:

> Many young club members lost their lives, and I was also persecuted, I was beaten. When there was any organization that protested against any sort of measure, they were immediately labeled as communist. And, of course, the majority of the young leaders of those clubs had leftist tendencies. That was normal in those times since our idols were the Che Guevara and those were the times of the Cuban Revolution...but it was just a youthful aspiration, although some of us also had political commitments with leftist parties...We aspired to a different society. In Baní, it was a very beautiful period. And today, all those young people who belonged to the cultural clubs are well established and respected professionals. And they are the ones who lead many of the community organizations. For example, the youngsters that led the Villa Fundación club from 1974 to 1979, they are the men who lead ADEFU here [in the hometown], in Santo Domingo and in New York.

While the clubs harbored idealistic and committed youngsters with leftist leanings, other young community members who had left their villages for Santo Domingo and were involved in commercial ventures, decided to establish and join voluntary organizations that sought to generate development opportunities in their home communities. Taking advantage of their more favorable economic position, and in close coordination with hometown leaders, they lobbied the government and pursued electrification, educational and health related projects. Although Balaguer's regime was suspicious of civic organizations that operated outside its sphere of influence,

these early HTAs were not considered a threat since they did not openly criticize the regime, and provided an alternative way to address some of the claims being made by many of the club leaders.

Because many of the HTA founders were small business owners or rural merchants, they could take advantage of Balaguer's affinity towards the commercial elite to benefit their hometowns. Thus, their class profile offered political cover and made them strategic brokers between the government and the some of the more vocal groups in the community. With regards to Villa Sombrero's initial experience with the HTAs, Joel T. commented:

> The interest of governments and their biggest fear was to maintain control of the youth at all times, because their power was always undermined by the youth, [by] the frenzy of the student groups, and the community groups. Wherever the youth was present, they were pressuring to break the pattern of the government. [...]
>
> The community [HTA] directors at the level of the city and in Sombrero, the heads, the presidents, treasurers, vice presidents, were persons involved in productive commercial activities in the capital and in Villa Sombrero. It was an important sector for the government. They had to interface with the small and middling bourgeoisie, because who do the governments want to be in harmony with? And where are their complications? And where do the protests come from with greater force? [They come] from business and the youth. And the youth, above all is the dynamo...The ideas for change, transformation and liberty are in the youth. [But] the youth was always seen as carrying a book or with a machine gun in their mouths, to talk. And every time the youth spoke it was [considered] venom. But then these young people, [the HTA leaders] come along, that were from the commercial sector, levelheaded, from respected families... They had a different standing. It was a more peaceful youth.

Several HTAs emerged during the early to mid-1970s in numerous villages within the Baní region. Although the first one was linked to Matanzas, within a couple of years there would be similar associations in Boca Canasta, El Llano, Villa Sombrero and Villa Fundación. Moreover, as the Dominican

89

economy began a severe slowdown and labor opportunities in rural and urban sectors decreased from mid-1970s onwards, movement from the countryside to Santo Domingo turned into migration to the United States. These migratory flows had a substantial impact on all aspects of Dominican life, and also facilitated the emergence of HTA chapters in popular destinations such as New York City and Boston.

Exodus to *Nueba Yol*

Nueba Yol is another term that has an elastic definition and is often used in different and ambiguous ways by many Dominicans. While it serves as shorthand for the state of New York, the primary destination for international Dominican migration, *Nueba Yol* can also refer to any place outside *Quisqueya* that has become a migrant destination. As Duany (2011, 174) explains: "for many Dominicans, moving abroad (to *los países*) is practically synonymous with relocating to New York". The reason for this association becomes clear when we consider that in 2012, close to half (764,454) of all Dominicans and their descendants in the United States lived in the state of New York. But in many cases, *Nueba Yol* means New York City, one of the largest Dominican enclaves in the world, second only to Santo Domingo (Hoffnung-Garskoff 2008).

Dominican migration, to New York, but also in general terms, can be divided in two historical periods: before Trujillo rose to power, and after his rule. Although small communities were established in Manhattan during the early 20th Century, in Queens during the 1950s and in Brooklyn by the early 1960s (Hendricks 1974; Ricourt 2002; Duany 2011) the "great exodus" began after 1961 (Hernández 2002). Trujillo's desire to grow the country's population, limit information flows, and curb any criticism of his regime are the most oft cited reasons for his restrictive migration policy, which was operationalized through a generalized refusal to issue passports. But shortly after the dictator's death, migration swelled considerably. The first batch of migrants

would be regime bureaucrats and well to do families who had the means and sought stability amidst a highly volatile and uncertain post-regime environment. Given the historical relationship between the United States and the Dominican Republic, and the fact that there were already a number of exiles in New York City, many of those early leavers ended up in the Empire State.

Political turbulence in the immediate post-Trujillo years sped up migration flows. Worried about the possibility of evidencing another Cuban style revolution, the American government gave hundreds of immigrant visas to alleged subversives, and conspired with the Dominican government to deport leftist leaders (Hernández 2002). As passports and visas to the United States became more accessible, thousands began to line up in the American embassy looking for an opportunity to leave the country. Many petitioners included members of the urban upper and middle classes, but a growing number of rural workers who were affected by a languishing agricultural sector—due, in part, to Balaguer's industrial expansion policies—began a rural to urban exodus that would eventually turn into migration to Puerto Rico and New York (Duany 2011).

Many Dominicans who migrated in those early waves sought stability and opportunity in New York City but quickly confronted the hardships associated with the migratory process. Nancy H., a first-generation migrant and community activist in New York City, recalled the family pains endured when her mother migrated by herself in 1962.

> My mom told me that at first she struggled a lot in her relatives'
> home [where she was staying]. After you stay for a while, then
> the problems begin. Many times she slept on the floor, got lost in
> the [subway] stations. She did not know very many people, and
> at that time there were not many people who spoke Spanish.
> She struggled a lot, a lot. She cried a lot. We also struggled a lot
> in the Dominican Republic during her absence because we were
> a family that lived closed together. When my mom left, we were

91

scattered, [sent off] to different relatives. That is why the
migration experience impacts me so much. Because I know how
migration breaks everything related to the process of family
unity, and that has always affected me.

Dominicans arrived to a city in flux. The New York that once had allowed
migrants to become working class laborers was deindustrializing, and well-
paid factory jobs were quickly disappearing. Although numerous early
migrants recall arriving to a city where employment was easily procured
(González 1970, Hendricks 1974), social mobility became increasingly
difficult for the new arrivals, especially during the 1970s, as the city went
through a profound economic restructuring process and endured a severe
fiscal crisis[24].

The economic downturn that rocked the Dominican Republic by the late
1970s, the strengthening of the main opposition party, and popular
repudiation of Balaguer's repressive tactics generated an opportunity for the
PRD's social democrats to take power in 1978. While President Antonio
Guzmán tried to make important political changes and dismantle the
repressive military apparatus, his corrupt practices and substantial
expansion of the public sector led to an even direr economic situation. Amidst
high unemployment and underemployment, many more decided to leave the
country. By then, Dominicans had established more of a presence in the city
and those desiring to emigrate could take advantage of the *cadena* [chain]
migration process, whereby friends and kin provided an important support
network for new arrivals that facilitated and fomented making the journey
up north (Portes and Guarnizo 1991; Hernández 2002). Family unification
stipulations under the U.S. federal code, allowed some to enter with
immigrant visas, but others had to take considerable risks to establish
themselves by overextending their travel permits.

---

[24] Estimates indicate that around 465,000 manufacturing jobs were lost in New York City
from 1969 to 1985 (Drennan 1991, quoted in Hernández 2002).

The 1980s marked a watershed moment in Dominican international migration, as the economic debacle of Latin America's "lost decade" served as a powerful "push factor". By 1981, the Dominican government was essentially bankrupt and many important public services like housing, electricity, health care and education were in short supply. Agriculturalists were hard hit as subsidized food imports and price controls lowered the demand for their products. Moreover, the Dominican peso was losing its established parity with the U.S. dollar. A high cost of living and currency devaluation sent many Dominicans packing. The situation would get worse, as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) imposed structural adjustments and an austerity plan to combat the country's economic crisis.

By this time, a new president from the PRD's ranks was in power. Under Jorge Blanco, unemployment increased and flawed economic planning led to a decline in real wages that contrasted significantly with the basic earnings in the United States. As a result, the Dominican Republic became the second largest source of foreign-born to New York City during the 1980s, with 120,600 residents—an increase of close to 70,000 persons from the previous decade (NYC 2013). This large migratory flow would include Dominicans from all walks of life, as rural peasants, blacks, and mulattos joined the middle class and upper class individuals who were searching for a better life.

Growing Dominican presence in the city also spurred the creation and growth of numerous ethnic voluntary associations that laid the groundwork for their political incorporation into the host environment. In her study of Dominican associational life in New York City, Georges (1984) provides a detailed account of how the political profile of the diverse migrant streams shaped the organizational character and overall mission of the groups that emerged since the 1960s. Because many of the earliest newcomers had an upper class profile and ties with Trujillo's regime, some the first associations were small

groupings of conservative elites who were mostly interested in exclusive, cultural and folkloric activities.

Later on, political turmoil brought about by the April Revolution and Balaguer's rule saw the arrival of members of the radical left, the PRD, and university leaders who brought with them a rich organizational experience rooted in the student movement and the cultural and sporting clubs. As a result, the organizational profile of Dominican groups changed dramatically throughout the 1970s and 1980s and included activist organizations (including self-help organizations, student groups and political parties), occupational associations, performing cultural groups, and recreational clubs (Georges 1984, 22-23). Amongst the latter group, Georges highlights the existence of several hometown associations that surfaced during the late 1970s, thanks to the increase and concentration of arrivals from similar provinces, towns and villages. Organizational growth and density, especially in Upper Manhattan, generated new opportunities for seasoned activists who began to shift their energies towards making critical demands to city officials, especially with regards to schooling and social services.

The New York City of the 1980s offered few economic opportunities for many of the new arrivals seeking to move up socioeconomically. The growing Dominican enclaves, in places like Washington Heights and the Bronx, were suffering from the impacts of white flight, the demise of manufacturing, governmental underinvestment, racism, and malicious slumlord tactics (Hernández 2002; González 2004; Contreras 2013). Furthermore, the general attitude from natives and even politicians was that these communities were dangerous and hopeless, which further complicated access to public services and needed investments. Nonetheless, the tenacity and resilience of the new arrivals propelled them to make inroads into neighborhood politics while getting by through whatever opportunities they could find, mostly in the

94

lower rungs of the service sector and in entrepreneurial activities (Portes and Guarnizo 1991).

From Colmados in Quisqueya to Bodegas in New York City

Many of the *banilejos* from Villa Sombrero and Villa Fundación who arrived to New York during the 1980s, ended up working in *bodegas* or corner stores, which were ubiquitous in the city's boroughs. Previously owned by European migrants, these small commercial establishments were later associated with the Puerto Rican diaspora, and eventually ended up in Dominican hands. Their occupational choice was not unusual or serendipitous since many of those who journeyed up north had already amassed commercial skills and experience as attendants or owners of *colmados* in their home villages and Santo Domingo.

As youngsters of limited means who grew up in an agricultural region of the Dominican Republic, the search for ways of making an honest living—besides working the land—usually took them to the capital city, where they would be trained to work in small grocery stores owned or operated by hometown natives. Those who began their careers in *colmados* would usually start at the bottom, working long hours behind a counter, learning the exact prices of all that was sold and dispatching goods to the customers. If the store was far away from their hometown, they spent nights in the store to save money and secure the premises.

Depending on the rules established by the owner, they would enjoy a day off once a week or every other week. Much like an apprenticeship, they didn't receive much pay in the early stages, but their salaries increased as managerial skills improved and they took on more responsibilities. Individuals who showed the most promise were provided an opportunity, usually by a relative or a known acquaintance, to rent or own a *colmado*. Once in charge, they would send for trusted family members or friends to

learn the trade and work alongside them. Many *banilejos* refer to this system as a *cadena*, which refers both to the idea of an assembly line and a securing chain composed of several strong links—and is also an important link of the migratory *cadena* system described above.

In his family's memoirs (2012), Juan Emilio Báez Melo, a Dominican educator and writer from the town of Matanzas, narrates his uncle's experience as a *colmado* worker during the Trujillo era (103):

> The bodegas of Matanzas were a type of laboratory for
> adolescents; there we learnt the rudiments of work in *colmados*.
> We would start selling kerosene gas for lamps, then we learnt
> how to weigh, and what was hardest, to wrap. When someone
> was sufficiently skilled in wrapping they were supposedly ready
> to emigrate. They could be recommended to go to the [main]
> town or the capital, to work in *colmados*, or more properly said,
> to continue training.

Having amassed sufficient experience and knowledge about managing *colmados* in the Dominican Republic, many of Villa Fundación's[25] emigrants to the U.S. were able to find work in city bodegas or invest in related businesses. But before doing so, they had to become better acquainted with the American legal system, local customs and the specific needs of local patrons in order to effectively translate their knowledge to their new setting.

Manuel José P., who owned four *colmados* in Santo Domingo but migrated to New York in the mid-1980s fleeing the economic downturn, spent some time learning how the bodega system worked and found his first commercial venture as a distributor, or *rutero*.

> I started walking, to see the businesses. I went to the bodegas,
> to see how they worked…and I started to see what they sold. So
> after seeing bodegas and bodegas, I saw that they sold many

---

[25] While many of the *banilejos* who migrated to New York City have found work or own bodegas, migrant males from Villa Fundación are particularly known for their incursion into this specific commercial sector.

> batteries, the Duracell kind...so I called one of my brothers in
> law that was here, [and asked:] "where do they sell those
> batteries that sell well in the bodegas? [...] Let's sell them in
> your truck. I buy them, you help me sell and I pay you weekly. "
> So we did it...then we started adding toilet paper, then Good
> News [razors]...we would ask [what they needed] in bodegas.

Taking advantage of the expanding network of *bodegueros* from Villa Fundación, who would always try to support his distribution route, Manuel José was able to successfully grow his business. He would eventually own several bodegas and other businesses in the South Bronx, like many of his *banilejo* colleagues.

While some arrived with money to invest in the U.S., there were others who had to start from scratch, working their way up the *cadena* system. Ignacio V., a native son of Villa Fundación, had to work two 8-hour shifts daily upon arriving. After saving enough funds with his wife, and with the help of an uncle, he was able to secure loans and become part owner of a *bodega*, the first of several. Víctor B. had to endure a similar work schedule before becoming a successful business owner:

> When I arrived here [in 1989], I went to a cousin's house, and I
> worked with him for over a year. I worked 16 hours a day,
> [daily] for a $250 weekly salary. And I wouldn't get paid because
> I lived with him. I had my salary but didn't collect it...if my
> children needed something [in Villa Fundación] I would ask him
> for it because I didn't have the money.

Despite not having the start-up capital to jump-start a business in New York, Víctor's brief ownership of a *colmado* in Santo Domingo, and successful payment of his loans, made him eligible for credit with Don Isaac D., a hometown patriarch and former *colmadero. Don Isaac* and his family were owners of a savings and loan bank in Santo Domingo, and were willing to help finance ventures headed by trustworthy *fundacioneros* who didn't have access to lending agencies in the U.S.—due to their migration status or lack

of credit history. In 1991, Víctor took out a loan and opened his first *bodega* in the United States.

Access to credit from Santo Domingo helped many *fundacioneros* become business owners in New York City, but so did their mental and physical toughness. The South Bronx of the 1980s and early 1990s was considered a risky environment, with few signs of revitalization after the wave of fires and decay of the 1970s. But these conditions didn't derail their desires, and most were able to adapt to the blight and crime while taking advantage of low rents and a large minority and low-income customer base. Resilient entrepreneurs like Manuel José experienced holdups at gunpoint and many scares throughout, but they learnt to manage the tough street dynamics:

> Around me, near my [first] bodega, I had 20-something drug dealers out front. [...]
>
> *And they never messed with you?*
>
> No, no, no, thank god, never...Now, I wouldn't let them do anything. I would tell them: "I don't care that you're out there [dealing], but you have to respect my business". I would talk to them, because if you're not at odds with them, you have no problems. Later on, I would even say hi to them. What's more, some of them would even help me put the milk and sodas into the refrigerators. So inside [my business] they weren't allowed to do anything [regarding drugs].

Learning the code of the street, working hard, and taking risks became necessary strategies for many *banilejos* who sought economic opportunities in a new environment. For some of the most enterprising migrants, self-employment and commercial enterprises gave them a chance to escape the dead-end jobs that were available to most immigrants. But these entrepreneurial chances in the formal sector were not easy to come by. In the tough Dominican enclaves, many had to settle for hard jobs in the service economy, while some chose to work the street corners (Contreras 2013). Others moved further north or skipped Gotham altogether.

Movement to the Bay State

Although New York City was (and still remains) the primary destination for most Dominican migrants, several northern cities, like Boston and Providence, and down south, like Miami, have also received *quisqueyanos* looking for economic opportunities. As Levitt (2001) underscores, Boston has been an important immigrant gateway since the Civil War period, as waves of Italians, Irish, Canadians and Puerto Rican migrants have flocked to the city and surrounding areas looking for opportunities in manufacturing, commerce and agriculture. These prospects were not lost upon the people from Boca Canasta, who established a presence in the city since the early 1970s and made it their principal destination.

Most *boca canasteros* who arrived to Boston made their home in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood, which had previously been home to Irish, Cuban and Puerto Rican communities. Kin and friendship networks facilitated access to work opportunities and housing, and many of the new arrivals from Boca Canasta recall having a job waiting for them before they set foot in the United States. Thanks to the efforts of an early migrant who held a managerial post in a manufacturing plant, numerous *boca canasteros* initially became industrial workers in a shoulder pad and hanger factory in East Boston.

By 1974, a Dominican presence was already being felt in places like Boston, Lynn and Lawrence, as highlighted by a Boston Globe article published that year. According to the press reports, their growing presence in parts of Boston required that bilingual teachers be trained on the cultural and social dynamics of the Dominican Republic (Kirchheimer 1974). By the 1980s, *sombrereros* and other *banilejos* who were looking to escape the hustle and bustle of New York City, and were searching for a more tranquil environment to raise a family, also ended up in the Boston metropolitan area. While some of the Villa Sombrero newcomers also found work in a decaying industrial

99

sector, by the 1990s most of the old factories had shut down as the region's economy had shifted towards high-tech activities. Many Dominicans who lacked the skills to take advantage of the "new economy" had to take up jobs in the lower-end of the service sector, mostly in building maintenance—a common occupation for many of Boston's *banilejos*. For many young migrants who wanted a shot at a better life and had to support family members back home—especially those with irregular status—the earnings from regular jobs would have to be complimented through other informal business ventures. Gilberto P., who arrived in 1985, explained:

> I bought a stove and used to cook lunch [in the factory] for twelve men. I recruited others and had them peel plantains and do other tasks, and gave them $25 every Friday. I used to make $400 asides from my salary. I also used to bring *pastelitos* and *arepas*, and on Saturdays I used to sell beers at two for $5.

While some found options to generate supplementary incomes in the underground economy, those who could take advantage of immigrant visas or had become U.S. citizens started formal businesses in Boston's growing Dominican enclaves. Julio E., who had lived in New York City for years before moving to Boston in 1978, worked long hours as a maintenance worker and saved enough to become a part owner of a supermarket during the 1990s. His entrepreneurial drive led him to open up several successful storefronts on Centre Street, Jamaica Plain's main road. The same was true for Iván N., a *sombrerero* who saved enough money while cleaning offices to start a dollar store and a restaurant in Dudley Street, and Facundo C., a successful businessman who eventually became the primary liaison between the Dominican community and the mayor's office. According to Facundo, many migrant *banilejos* brought with them a penchant for finding new business opportunities,

> The *banilejos* are no strangers to microenterprise development. In the Dominican Republic, successful businessmen are

associated with the people of Baní. They are extremely enterprising and knowledgeable about how to grow a business.

Asides from a disposition to pursue entrepreneurial prospects, Dominicans also brought their civic and organizational skills and passion for politics to Massachusetts. In cities like Lawrence and Boston, cultural and sporting clubs, and voluntary associations were started as a way to gain visibility, lay down roots, and begin making specific claims within the mainstream political community (Barber 2010).

In 1983, and taking the experience from Lawrence as an example, migrant leaders in Boston organized the *Club Deportivo y Cultural Dominicano*, which took the lead in organizing the first Dominican festival in the city. But unlike Lawrence and Providence, where a crop of leaders were able to use civic entities to slowly make their way up the political ranks and even occupy the mayoral seat, or New York City, where Dominicans boast several prominent political leaders at all levels of government, Boston's Dominican population has struggled to gain effective political representation. This is due to a series of structural and contextual factors that include the lack of organizational contact points, low numbers of naturalized citizens, and language barriers (Levitt 2001)[26].

Throughout the 1990s Dominican migrants continued making their way up to New York City and Boston due to a continued decline in living conditions brought about by irresponsible policymaking and further structural adjustments. Balaguer rose to power again in 1986, promising positive changes based on a free market regime, but ended up imposing new state controls on the economy and misguided monetary policies (Tejada 2011). Having taken measures to weaken the opposition party, he would also win the 1990 elections. At the start of the decade, the country would continue

---

[26] For a detailed discussion on the complex political panorama faced by Dominicans in Boston, see Levitt (2001, 143-158).

shifting its economic focus from traditional exports towards tourism and free-trade zones. According to Betances (1995), the adoption of these strategies, which were prescribed by international lending and development agencies, diminished the state's control over the economy and also its capacity to generate sufficient public revenues to meet the needs of the population. Macroeconomic stability was ensured, which benefitted foreign investors, but the shift towards export industrialization and tourism did not create the needed jobs to replace those lost in agriculture and other traditional sectors (Torres Saillant and Hernández 1998; Duany 2011). Thus, the exodus of the 1990s was massive. Over 360,000 Dominicans were formally admitted to the U.S. and many others entered the country without documentation.

While several migrant entrepreneurs were able to gain a foothold in Boston's growing immigrant economy, this was not an option for many of the new arrivals. The "Massachusetts Miracle" of the 1980s based on the expansion of high-tech industries bypassed many Latinos in the state, including Dominicans who lacked the required education and skills (Levitt 2001). As a result, many *banilejos* struggled to make ends meet and had to hold down multiple jobs that offered very few chances for economic advancement. Some took to the streets, where there seemed to be opportunities to make "easy" money. Gilberto P. recalled how, upon arrival, a group of men approached him with a proposition: he could earn $800 a month to sit by a bedroom window and act as police lookout. Although highly lucrative, especially for a recent migrant, he declined the offer and went to work at the factory instead. Back then, according to Gilberto, there was a lot of drug activity in Jamaica Plain and many migrants with few economic prospects were drawn to the trade. News reports from the 1980s and 1990s and resident accounts provide a troubling picture of life in Jamaica Plain and other minority neighborhoods like Dorchester, where drug arrests, murders, gang violence and criminal activities involving Latinos were hard to escape.

A commonly held belief amongst those who left their rural villages for Boston was that an easier life awaited them in the United States. On several occasions, seasoned migrants who arrived during the big waves of the 1980s and 1990s commented on their naïve beliefs before making the journey: "we thought that you could pick up dollar bills in the streets". But the economic reality was much different. Dominicans in the U.S., much like other Latino migrants, faced considerable economic challenges. According to U.S. Census figures, at the turn of the century, close to 30% of migrant Dominicans and their kin lived in poverty, and registered the lowest levels of median household incomes ($37,192) amongst the major Latino groups in the United States. For irregular migrants like Josué, pre-migration poverty conditions, low-paying jobs in the host environment and high levels of debts incurred to make the voyage to the United States led to a series of complicated life choices.

Struggling to Get By in Boston

After crossing the treacherous border between Mexico and the United States with the help of a coyote, Josué arrived in Boston during the mid-1990s. Migrating to the United States seemed like the only way to help his family and leave behind hard experiences like hunger, child labor and little formal education. Upon arriving in Jamaica Plain, he quickly procured a false identity, and found part time employment in a cleaning company through members of his family who also offered him free room and board while he paid the loans he took to pay for his crossing. His weekly paycheck only gave him enough to start paying down his debt, send $50 dollars to his family back in the Dominican Republic, and sometimes have enough in his pocket to purchase necessary items. Lack of proper documentation limited his chances of securing better paying jobs or accessing the public welfare system. After some time, his precarious economic situation drew him to sell cocaine with some cousins who offered to pay down the loan, live rent-free and boost his

earnings. With his extra income, Josué was able to send more remittances and rebuild his family home in the Dominican Republic. He also came up with the money to pay a coyote that brought his wife and baby daughter to the United States. Scorned by some of his family members in Boston and coming dangerously close to being arrested a couple of times, Josué considered quitting.

The end of his hustling days would come abruptly, when one of his clients ratted him out. After spending over $10,000 in legal fees and some days in jail, his case was dismissed. Josué knows he was lucky since a conviction could have led to considerable jail time and deportation. He gave up the drug business and went back to holding two part time jobs cleaning offices. Despite facing a grueling daily schedule, and not being able to accumulate any vacation days or retirement benefits, he has made peace with the fact that upward mobility will not be a reality for him, but it might be for his children, who have grown up in Boston. While his offspring and family in the Dominican Republic are enjoying the fruits of his labors, "life is not easy". In his household, every dollar is accounted for: "We don't have the money to go shopping whenever we want. For us to go shopping we have to plan because we cannot spend $100 or $200 at once... " Josué has not been able to see his mother or visit his hometown since he left in the 1990s. But his wife and children have secured proper migrant documentation, which means they have a shot at a better future. Their advancement is how he measures his own success. Looking back, the migrant experience seems bittersweet,

> *How would you characterize your experience in the United States?*
>
> Like a *novela,* with highs and lows: sadness, tears, and nostalgia...
>
> *Do you regret coming here?*

> No. I regret selling drugs... [but] I have set my children on a
> good path. They know two languages. My eldest daughter is in
> college; she's going to choose a good major. She's also working.
> She's a good daughter.

Josué's experiences are not representative of the struggles faced by most Dominican immigrants in the United States—who predominantly steer away from criminal activities. But his story is not entirely unfamiliar to several working class *banilejos* in Boston who are constantly faced with difficult choices and increasingly less options to make an honest living. Recalling his vicissitudes allows us to take stock of the challenges encountered by brave migrants who risk their lives so that their loved ones can have a shot at a better one.

The Contemporary Period: Making the "Transnational Nation"?

The economic shifts in the Dominican economy that spurred the large migrant wave of the 1990s were accompanied by significant changes in the country's political landscape. After two consecutive terms, the people had had enough of Balaguer and his economic program, which established deep reforms that mostly addressed the worries and interests of the IMF and other international lending agencies. In another effort to extend his rule, Balaguer would employ questionable tactics to win the 1994 elections. Nonetheless, opposition parties had amassed sufficient experience and evidence to reveal and denounce the massive electoral fraud. Amidst national and international pressure, Balaguer was forced to accept drastic political reforms and amendments to the Constitution that would allow a new presidential election in 1996, the end to consecutive re-election, and a two-round voting system (Espinal 1998).

With the *caudillo* out of the electoral contest in 1996, Leonel Férnandez Reyna, a lawyer who had grown up in New York City and held a U.S. green

card, became the first president of the Republic from the *Partido de la Liberación Dominicana* (PLD)—founded in 1973 by Juan Bosch after he broke ties with the PRD. Having received Balaguer's backing, the new administration would deepen the neoliberal reforms begun by his predecessor through policies that favored trade liberalization, fiscal and monetary controls, and privatizations. For example, managerial control and partial ownership of publicly owned assets, including several sugar mills and the state's power company, were extended to private investors. Cost-cutting measures taken by the new corporate partners in the sugar industry led to a further weakening of agricultural labor markets, while the privatization of electricity provision led to rate increases that affected the most vulnerable populations (Gregory 2007). While these policies were credited with increases in national growth figures, they did very little for average citizens, as poverty and unemployment remained high (EIU 1999).

With regards to the political process, a desire to "rescale" state functions (Brenner 2004) led the Fernández administration to promote measures that shifted centralized capacities to other government units. Decentralization became a national priority that sought an institutional reordering of the state apparatus, the professionalization and upgrading of managerial competencies at lower levels of government, and the creation of new spaces for civic participation (Figueroa 2012). Starting in 1996, new legal and regulatory frameworks were introduced to reshape how municipal units operate and engage with social actors. Interestingly, these proposals found support amongst a wide array of groups, including opposition parties and a growing civic sector. Thus, key measures, like participatory budgeting, increases to budgetary allocations and stricter municipal monitoring mechanisms, have gradually become part of the existing legal framework. Nevertheless, formal adoption of decentralization measures has been slow and haphazard, which has led to limited impacts.

While decentralization may lead to both positive and negative outcomes (Bardhan 2002; Treisman 2006) it is generally understood that when citizens are able to become more involved in local decision-making processes and have a favorable view of local governments, they have a higher disposition towards embracing democratic systems and generalized levels of trust towards national institutions (Booth and Seligson 2009; Morgan and Espinal 2010). Evidence from public opinion surveys in the Dominican Republic demonstrates a mixed picture with regards to the fruits of the decentralization and other political reforms. On the one hand, Dominicans demonstrate a high degree of participation in local government processes and civic organizations when compared to other countries in the Latin American region. Nonetheless, local government responsiveness is limited, the public's level of satisfaction with regards to government services is low, and trust in both national and municipal government has been declining in recent years (Morgan and Espinal 2010). Moreover, decentralization has to contend with a long tradition of clientelism and corruption. As Morgan and Espinal (2010) argue, historically speaking, clientelism has been a defining characteristic of the state-society accord in the Dominican Republic. In comparison to other Latin American countries, Dominicans report the highest prevalence of clientelist offers made during election years[27]. Moreover, the public perceives that graft is highly prevalent, which coincides with the low scores registered on metrics related to the country's corruption controls (WB 2012).

Fernández' plans to modernize the Dominican economy would also include efforts to upgrade the physical infrastructure of major cities and an international dimension that led to an increased participation in CARICOM and the signing of free trade agreements with Central American nations. His disposition to make connections outside the country's borders also led to a

---

[27] Twenty two percent of adults surveyed in 2010 had received some form of clientelist offer during the electoral cycle (Morgan and Espinal 2010).

significant change in policy towards Dominican migrants. One year after taking office, the Dominican Congress granted Dominicans abroad the right to vote, which complimented earlier efforts that allowed dual citizenship. As Itzigsohn (2012) argues, these policies were central to the Dominican Republic's new economic model, one based on a neoliberal script that considers the exportation of "people" as a highly lucrative strategy, given the vast amounts of financial remittances sent from abroad.

Official figures reveal the significance of Dominican migrant contributions to the country's economy. In 2011 alone, remittances sent by international migrants amounted to $3.2 billion, and reached 18.9 and 12.4 percent of urban and rural households, respectively (ONE 2013). Mostly flowing from the United States, these funds are primarily used by recipient households for general consumption but also to cover education and health expenses. Because migrant remittances have become the country's second largest source of foreign income, significantly dwarfing foreign direct investment and international aid, the Dominican state has consistently enacted measures to court *"dominicanos ausentes"* [absentee Dominicans].

The PLD would lose the 2000 elections, but upon Fernández' comeback in 2004, following the country's worse banking crisis, his government would embark on a "transnational nation" project that saw the creation of presidential consultative councils in the diaspora as a way to "integrate migrants into national development policies" (Itzigsohn 2012, 188). Through a series of meetings with council members who represented diverse Dominican communities abroad, the Fernández administration sought feedback on two issues which were later included in the country's 2010 constitution: (1) the extension of citizenship to the children of migrants and (2) parliamentary representation for members of the diaspora. This last provision generated much debate from migrant community leaders, who worried that the all-too-common partisan battles of the Dominican electoral

process would generate harmful schisms and limit their efforts to exert more political representation in the host community. Nonetheless, the measure was approved and the *dominicanos ausentes* elected seven representatives to the Dominican Congress on May of 2012. The effectiveness and impacts of their legislative tenure remain to be seen.

For the most part, the efforts of the Dominican state to construct a "transnational nation" project are incomplete, at best. Creating consultative councils and fomenting migrants' formal engagement in the political sphere does very little to address the harsh conditions that many migrants face once they set foot outside their homeland. Today, Dominicans in the United States are considered one of the most underprivileged groups (Duany 2011). U.S. Census data from 2011 (López, González-Barrera and Cuddington 2013) reveal that they had one of the lowest levels of household median income ($32,300) and one of the highest poverty rates (28%) amongst major Latino groups. Limited English proficiency, low educational levels, racial discrimination and industrial restructuring have all contributed to their socioeconomic difficulties (Hernández 2002). Studies focused on the Dominican second generation in New York City also demonstrate how the disadvantages of the first generation are affecting the prospects of their offspring (Kasinitz et. al 2008). In Boston, fewer than 10 percent of Dominicans had achieved a middle class standard of living in 2009, compared to 25 percent of all foreign born and 38 percent of the native-born (BRA 2009). Nevertheless, a considerable number of Dominican migrants continue making the necessary economic sacrifices to send family remittances and assist their communities of origin. While their contributions to the homeland are substantial, their plight is scantily addressed by the Dominican state.

Moreover, the policies that link migration and development in the Dominican Republic are ambiguous and lopsided, especially when considering the growing numbers of Haitians that have arrived in the country searching for

economic opportunities. Estimates indicate that in 2010, there were over one million Haitians residing and working in the Dominican Republic (Moya Pons 2011), many of them with an irregular migration status. Furthermore, racist policies based on the troubled history between Haiti and the Dominican Republic have prevented the extension of citizenship and ensuing rights to the Dominican-born children of Haitian immigrants. These abuses have been widely documented and condemned by local NGOs and international human rights organizations, and contributed to the state's inability to articulate a coherent migratory policy framework that takes into account the country's dual status as producer and receiver of migrant labor. Haitian migrants to the Dominican Republic have become crucial laborers in the agricultural, construction and tourism industries. Nevertheless, many of them live in segregated areas and are often denied access to basic services, like health and education (Amnesty International 2007). Maite B., a Dominican government consultant on migration policy, highlighted the limits of the country's bifurcated migration agenda,

> In terms of policies related to migration and development, we are highly ambiguous, because we are exporters of migrants but also receivers of migrants, receivers of an important volume of migrants. And we have completely different policies for one and the other. I say differently but what I mean is contradictory. In order to develop a true migration and development policy, we have to come to grips with that, as a country. [...]
>
> The policy is restrictive with relation to the volume of migrants we receive and for whom we do not have a developed policy framework. That is, they [the Haitians] are here, they work here, but we have not been able to organize them, or we have not cared to organize them as a community. At times we deny them [resident or citizen] papers. The country denies them their papers. And we cannot demand that other countries provide some [fair] treatment to our nationals if we do not know how to do the same with foreign nationals.

As events during the contemporary period demonstrate, recent efforts to move past a deeply entrenched authoritarian system of government have

110

paved the way for a different kind of relationship between the Dominican state and its growing transnational society. But while democratization has fomented the emergence of new connections that transcend national borders, it has also revealed numerous inconsistencies and historical injustices related to rights, belonging and territory.

3. "An Insatiable Pursuit for Development": The Experience of the Asociación Pro-Desarrollo de Villa Fundación (ADEFU)

It didn't take long before I began hearing about Villa Fundación's accomplishments from community leaders in the nearby towns of Boca Canasta and Villa Sombrero. Although competitive pride usually leads them to highlight their own town's efforts as pioneering or outstanding, what the neighboring district had achieved was something altogether different and worthy of acknowledgement. The repeated mention of a surprising fact revealed the origins of their appreciation: *ellos hicieron las calles de su campo* [they built their town's streets].

Before heading to Villa Fundación to learn more about their known and notable track record, I dug into some *banilejo* archives. The search yielded an old news article that corroborated and enlarged the town's reputation[28].

During the early 1990s, a group of foreign journalists visited Villa Fundación to report on an on-going project, and an organization that was involved in an uncommon but exemplary venture. The lengthy piece begins with some mouth-filling words to describe a peaceful and bucolic landscape that seemed to be far removed from the urban bustle and texture of Dominican cities. Several paragraphs offer details of the town's center and some local residents. The narration then shifts to ADEFU, the *Asociación para el Desarrollo de Villa Fundación*, and how this grassroots organization, which has relied on the support of locals and migrants from Santo Domingo and New York City, has been central to the town's progress. There is a picture of Pedro R., a slender, brown skinned man with abundant black hair and matching

---

[28] I have modified this particular introductory account to protect the identity of the informants. Nevertheless, direct quotes are entirely accurate.

mustache, whose caption reads: *Encargado Municipal* [Municipal Administrator]. In a sidebar, Pedro R. explains,

> ...we are a community that's known for requiring organizing to do things. We are a community that's not waiting for the government to plan in order to do [something] for us. We plan, begin to undertake, and if the government is interested, they finish [the projects] on our behalf.
>
> Journalist: What sort of things are you currently doing?
>
> Pedro R.: We are currently involved in the Association for Development's largest project, which is the construction of the sidewalks, gutters and a new aqueduct system for the community.

In his careful choice of words, Pedro R. makes a clear distinction between the government's and the community's role in Villa Sombrero, and which camp he sides with. The community takes the lead, plans and executes. Once projects have taken flight, the government steps in, if at all. In the rest of the interview, his tone is serene, not denunciatory. It is as if he is stating a fact, or explaining a common modus operandi. Less clear is his role in this community-government development scheme. Pedro R. is the primary municipal authority, the *encargado*, but his statements suggest that he works on behalf of the community through the Association. As I would later learn, this was part of a unique, "bottom up" coproduction (Mitlin 2008; Watson 2014) arrangement that helped advance a different kind of development process in Villa Fundación.

Images of trucks hauling dirt, and people working on the ground with pickaxes appear between short interview paragraphs with other municipal and community leaders, who list some of the different projects the organization had already completed—the town's plaza, the rural clinic, both the primary and secondary schools, and the cemetery—and describe how they have been eschewing partisan differences and working collectively for the benefit of all the townspeople since the 1960s.

Although there are no pictures of him, Don Isaac D., "a distinguished native son" who resides in Santo Domingo, is credited with providing many of the heavy machinery for the roads project. Although briefly mentioned in the story, his role in the town's progress is substantial. As many leaders in the *fundacionero* community explained in posterior conversations, *Don Isaac* is a wealthy and well-known businessman in the Dominican Republic that has made big monetary contributions to hometown projects and served as a critical broker in numerous negotiations with national and local politicians. Always concerned with hometown affairs, he is considered a *patriarca* that dutifully looks after his community.

The journalists also point out the financial contributions raised by *fundacioneros* residing in New York City. Frank L.'s young face appears on a grainy picture. As the then President of ADEFU's chapter in New York, he is quoted:

> We are blessed, I would say, by God, because we have the chance to give something, a little bit, perhaps, of what we have to spare, to do something for those that came before us and the people who stayed in *el campo* who really need the support of all of those who've had the chance to leave. It's not something commonplace. What's more common is that people leave and forget about their hometown, their *patria chica*.

The article ends with a brief mention of other community groups that enhance Villa Fundación's civic infrastructure like the *Centro de madres*— a long-standing women's collective—and a small producers group. In the parting words, the authors state: "With the tenacity that characterizes them and determined to maintain their faith above all common despair, while spreading the hopes placed in them and in their neighbors, the people of Villa Fundación have reasons to be proud of themselves".

Asides from providing important details about their renowned project, the news article offered some insights on how local development is carried out in

Villa Fundación by drawing attention to the commitment and contributions of those involved. At the center of the story is the work of ADEFU, a 41-year-old HTA that has zealously labored to bring social, political and economic opportunities to the residents of a southern, agricultural town. But also key to the narrative is their complex, community development model that relies on a series of engagements between state institutions, national leaders, hometown groups and transnational actors.

Months after learning of Villa Fundación, I visited for the first time. Almost twenty years had passed since the big ditches, pipes and heavy equipment were part of the landscape. What first caught my attention was the thick layer of smooth asphalt covering all the major paths: their claim to fame. Not surprisingly, the town seemed much bigger and densely inhabited than in the photographs. Twenty years had passed since they'd started working on their "largest project" and it felt like other big ventures had also been taken care of.

This case sheds light on how ADEFU has been able to establish a fruitful community development process that has been assembled through sustained negotiations with national and regional state entities, novel coproduction arrangements at the local level, and a careful assignment of roles and responsibilities within the organization, that strengthens transnational ties and allows their chapters to partake in *transnational cooperation* efforts that yield meaningful contributions at home and abroad. Through a careful examination of some of their most notable projects, this chapter examines the politically contentious and collaborative strategies they've employed to make effective claims towards state authorities and political leaders, and their tactical involvement in formal political structures that have allowed *empowered exchanges* for transnational community development and "bottom up" coproduction to emerge in Villa Fundación. It also sheds light on the how their approaches to community development have been characterized by a disposition to experiment (Sabel 2004; Sabel and Zeitlin 2012) and

strategically combine proven lessons accumulated from years of troubleshooting tough problems (Andrews 2013), with new ideas from professional development practitioners.

Defiance and Collaboration: The Origins and Evolution of ADEFU

ADEFU's legacy of delivering important community projects was established over almost two decades before they began building roads and expanding aqueducts. In 1973, a group of committed leaders who had migrated to Santo Domingo in search of economic opportunities, and had achieved some success in mostly commercial enterprises, decided to organize an association devoted to collecting funds for the betterment of their hometown. Motivated by a desire to address numerous deficiencies in the provision of public services and the lack of opportunities for educational and socioeconomic advancement—while not wanting to stay far behind their counterparts from the neighboring town of Matanzas, who had founded one of the first such associations in Santo Domingo—a group of 15 to 20 migrant *fundacioneros* organized a formal chapter in the capital city and set up a supporting committee in Villa Fundación. Their identification with the small business sector helped them avoid persecution at a time when Balaguer's government clamped down on civic associations that could mount any sort of opposition or voice displeasure with his policies. Despite their interest in mobilizing resources and people to address the state's negligence, the regime's close relationship with several national business groups and favorable view towards *empresarios* (Moya Pons 1998; Despradel 2005) offered valuable political cover to the civic-minded entrepreneurs from Villa Fundación. From the outset, navigating through rough political waters became an indispensable skill for ADEFU's leadership.

During those days, Villa Fundación resembled many of the agricultural villages in the Baní region: most houses were made out of wood and had thatched roofs, while dirt pathways served to connect the different *barrios*.

Life was hard since many families relied on the meager production of their smallholdings or *conucos* to get by. According to Francisco T., electrical service was lacking, and ADEFU organized committees that tactfully lobbied state authorities and approached the press to raise the profile of their demands. Their early claims-making efforts proved successful, and in 1973 the Dominican Electric Corporation began to erect electric poles and wiring in Villa Fundación.

That same year, they began building the town's main plaza in a plot previously designated by the town's forbearers for that use. Executed without government support, the sizeable public space is a highly visible example of their capacity and relative autonomy. Establishing a division of labor and informal norms that would characterize future ADEFU projects, they gathered funds and materials from the Santo Domingo chapter and relied on hometown volunteers to carry out the manual work. All of the resident families were expected to collaborate in the project. This arrangement was not wholly unfamiliar given the long-standing tradition of *convites*, or mutual aid farm work that was common in the Dominican countryside[29]. As argued in Chapter 2, *convites* were an important communal institution that laid the groundwork for subsequent civic and community development practices in Baní and other regions of the Dominican Republic.

But asides from serving as an important test of their ability to organize, raise funds and carry out a highly visible infrastructure project on their own, the completion of the plaza provided an opportunity for the town's youth leaders to voice their displeasure towards the political leadership. In a demonstration of civil disobedience, the leadership invited the province governor to attend the inauguration. As part of the activity, the local youth poetry club recited denunciatory and politically charged verses that were not well received by

---

[29] For a detailed description of *convites* and their role in Dominican agrarian societies, see Santana (2011).

the authorities in attendance. Minutes after the activity ended, several of those involved were detained and beaten by the police. As Pedro R. commented:

> The community gained a lot of political prestige because of our rebelliousness. Because we were the most rebellious community in Baní [and were] against the abuse of authority of the government in power...Fundación was known for its rebelliousness and verticality...we invited them [to the inauguration] to reproach the government's bad deeds.

Their daring attitude would become a community trademark, and help define the political stance of the organization: ADEFU would not wait for inattentive authorities to respond to their claims; they would proceed on their own. Not wanting to let the state off the hook, they would also voice their incomformity publicly. Furthermore, because the provision of adequate public goods and services is thought to be an important way for states to acquire legitimacy (Tilly 1975; Tsai 2007a), ADEFU's autonomous completion of a communal space in the town's center also challenged the regime's control over development decisions in Villa Fundación.

Confident that they were capable of completing large projects without the government's blessing or support, ADEFU's leaders raised the stakes by taking on the meager educational opportunities available in their hometown. Leaders in Santo Domingo who were forced to migrate at a young age and had to forgo additional years of schooling, had made this their primary concern from the outset. Most of the town's students could not afford to traverse to and from Baní (a 24-kilometer trek) to advance beyond the sixth grade, so in 1974, the organization hired private instructors that were sponsored by individual donations. For youngsters like Francisco T., the opportunity to attend middle school offered a chance at a different life:

> I am a product of that [school] effort. When the school was started, I was already in Santo Domingo because I was sent to

work in a *colmado* owned by my family. I finished the sixth
grade, and as was customary, I was ready to work and was sent
there. When the middle school started here, I came back from
Santo Domingo to study.

At first, pupils from the *Liceo Juan Pablo Duarte* would meet in makeshift classrooms inside the community center. To ensure that the national educational standards were being met, professors from the public secondary school in Baní would administer tests and evaluations at the end of each term. As demand from nearby towns grew, they soon ran out of space in what had fast become an unofficial regional educational center. This endeavor was a truly experimental feat, pursued without the benefits of expert technical assistance and lacking an existing blueprint or "best practice" examples that could be followed to ensure success. ADEFU's leaders had identified a key development constraint and decided to seek a solution through the creative use of the limited funds, political resources and technical skills at their disposal. But the organization's leaders were also cognizant of their limitations. Given their inexperience, running a growing school was a challenging task for the organization. Having already laid a solid foundation for the project, their next move was to lobby and pressure the national government to take over and build a proper facility in Villa Fundación that would meet the growing educational demands of the area. Using their political contacts in Santo Domingo, and taking advantage of shifting political winds that would see the end of Balaguer's repressive 12-year reign, ADEFU succeeded. In 1978, shortly after accepting electoral defeat, but while still in power, Balaguer signed orders to establish a public high school—later renamed *Liceo Ernestina Tejeda*—and a hospital in Villa Fundación. It would be up to the new government to provide for and deal with the "rebellious" community. Building an educational center that addressed a fundamental community need was an important achievement, but so was negotiating with

the state and persuading them to assume a more active role in the town's development, even if at arm's length.

The 1980s was a period of less activity for ADEFU given the paltry performance of the Dominican economy and the fiscal and monetary crises faced by the national government (Despradel 2005). As argued in Chapter 2, populist policies aimed at curbing the rising cost of living, including price controls and increased food imports, greatly affected farming production. Fearing the worse, many Dominicans (and *fundacioneros*) migrated to the United States and Puerto Rico, unlocking a migratory cycle that lasted well into the 1990s. Big infrastructure projects were not on ADEFU's agenda, but the organization continued working on behalf of the community, requesting public services from the national authorities and supporting existing projects. The relative calm of the 1980s would not seep over to the next decade, as ADEFU embarked again on a series of complex projects and expanded its organizational reach.

Expansion Towards New York City

During the 1990s, ADEFU would embark on three major endeavors: converting the town into a municipal district, constructing asphalted roads and a new aqueduct, and founding its first stateside chapter. Taking into account the challenges that lay ahead of this highly ambitious agenda, Don Isaac D., already known to many in the Dominican Republic as a prominent businessman and the organization's primary leader, made a trip to New York City to spur the creation of ADEFU's first stateside chapter. Understanding that building major infrastructure projects would require substantial financial investments, he brought together a group of over 50 *fundacioneros* in an *alto* Manhattan restaurant. Many of those invited had already established successful businesses in the city, primarily *bodegas*—some of which were initially financed by *Don Isaac*, who had established a small

120

lending operation to help out budding and trustworthy entrepreneurs from Villa Fundación. According to those present, *Don Isaac* appealed to their sense of hometown pride by explaining what was at stake with becoming a District and the major construction projects underway. What ensued was an outpouring of solidarity and cash. That night alone, those in attendance pledged thousands of dollars and ADEFU-New York was born.

With the help of New York's *bodegueros* and *ruteros*[30], the organization could rely on an even larger funding stream to carry out their projects. But a steady flow of support could not be ensured unless supporters in New York became organized, established a viable administrative framework, and developed strong working ties with the Santo Domingo chapter and the hometown committee. Operating across borders required the creation of a viable organizational infrastructure for them to do so. Migrant life in New York was markedly different from their experiences in the Dominican Republic, but transnational ties ran deep. Developing a stateside chapter involved translating social remittances from the home country and crafting new organizational strategies (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011).

Before *Don Isaac* visited the City to spur the creation of ADEFU-New York, several attempts had been made to organize community groups centered on hometown affiliations. Fernando H., a former journalist, youth club participant, and founding member of ADEFU-New York, recalls how in 1985, a year after arriving in New York City, he became involved in helping organize a committee of non-partisan associations from the Baní region, that included migrants from Villa Sombrero, Matanzas and Villa Fundación.

> It didn't prosper. We met on Sundays. I would say it didn't prosper because of the same reason that things don't prosper in this country: everyone has their job...and you need lots of

---

[30] A more detailed account of the *fundacionero's* involvement in bodegas and distribution routes, or *rutas*, is provided in Chapter 2.

willpower to dedicate time to these social activities, leaving your
family aside on a Sunday, which was one of the few days you
were off [from work].

While work responsibilities made it hard for many *fundacioneros* in New
York to become involved in community organizations, they did not inhibit
them from helping out financially when a collection was made to upgrade the
hometown cemetery or make improvements to the local schools. Nonetheless,
migration to the City from Villa Fundación had swelled by the early 1990s,
and many who had moved in the previous decade had a firmer footing in their
commercial operations. Understanding that timing was key, *Don Isaac* made
a plea to start a chapter in New York to a group of established and reliable
leaders, at a moment when the town they had left behind was in the midst of
several transformations. The business experience that many of the migrant
leaders had amassed in a tough and challenging environment like New York
City, proved to be a determinant factor in their eventual successes. Their
entrepreneurial mindset, connections to the formal economy, and ability to
navigate the city's complex legal frameworks were important skills that they
would employ to build a strong and reliable migrant chapter.

Shortly after the first fundraising meeting, ADEFU-New York constituted a
board and began meeting as a formal chapter. The gatherings, held on a
weekly basis, usually on Thursday nights, provided opportunities to discuss
organizational matters, socialize with friends and stay up-to-date on
hometown and local affairs. As Fernando H. explained:

> The community was very excited. The Thursday meetings
> offered a place for reuniting. We've always met in restaurants,
> and people would take advantage of the opportunity to *botar el
> golpe* [relieve stress], to meet other people...and to fight for the
> community.

During the early days, the meetings drew numerous *fundacioneros* who were
energized about the big projects that were planned for Villa Fundación.

Because several of the founding board members had belonged to community organizations and clubs in the Dominican Republic, they possessed the skills to conduct meetings, coordinate organizational matters and organize fundraising activities. Nevertheless, they relaxed existing bylaws and protocols, especially during the meetings, and adjusted the administrative processes to ensure a more relaxed environment. Fernando H. added:

> We are a flexible association, so flexible that we don't use the term meetings, but *tertulias* [social gatherings]. This is a *tertulia* where there are [people having] drinks. You won't see people drinking beers in an association meeting in Santo Domingo...If we are not having a drink, we're not in *la chercha* [animated chattering]. So we *botamos el golpe* of our workday and are able to fight more earnestly for our community...also it doesn't matter if someone cannot come to one, two or three meetings, and there aren't formal membership requirements. Anyone who is a native of the community, or a friend of the community who's willing to fight alongside us for the benefit of that community over there [in the Dominican Republic], can be a member of ADEFU-New York.

Flexibility is an important quality that has allowed ADEFU to effectively carry out its developmental goals while incorporating transnational migrants in its ranks. It is also a trait that allows the organization to stomach experimentation and avoid the drawbacks of "institutional monocropping" (Evans 2004; Portes 2010) in a grassroots, transnational context. New York's *tertulias* are part social gathering, part organizational meeting. The nightly gatherings I visited were held in a private room inside a South Bronx pool hall where the attendees—mostly males—were engaged in casual, yet ordered discussions. Attendance varied greatly, and discussions did not drag on for too long—always starting around nine or ten in the evening and ending before midnight. Whenever meetings are disrupted by too many side conversations or talking out of turn the president rings a reception bell, which serves as a call to order. Despite the relaxed environment, organizational matters are dealt with effectively when in session. In contrast,

meetings in Villa Fundación take place on Wednesday evenings in the town's community center, are attended by male and female residents, both young and old, and are run using rules of order and following a detailed agenda. Similarities between chapters abound, but so do differences. They share the same commitment to their community, and tend to agree on projects and priorities, but because each chapter operates in a different place and context, they differ in membership profiles, and other aspects related to their roles, rules and responsibilities.

As ADEFU's history shows, their ability to employ varying tactics to address project implementation issues and engage in political negotiations has been an important part of how they approach the community development process. Beyond being able to translate their home country model to life in New York, their early successes were made possible through experimentation and flexibility—evidenced in their ability to build on existing capabilities through adjustments in their organizational structure, internal rules and interactions with state actors. Creative protests, high-level lobbying, reliance on self-help traditions, cross border financing and a daring approach to identify and address complex problems, were some of their most common and effective strategies.

Orchestrating a Transnational Division of Labor

While flexibility and experimentation have allowed ADEFU to develop new capabilities and pathways for transnational community development, their successes are also associated to a set of intra organizational arrangements that have facilitated work across borders and deliberative exchanges that enrich the range of options and strategies for community development (Evans 2004; Baiocchi 2003; Fung and Wright 2003). Nevertheless, these tacit agreements are not set in stone. They have shifted purposefully at distinct

124

moments, and allowed the organization to make specific realignments that have led to new development opportunities.

Defining clear and adaptable roles for each chapter has been crucial in their ability to pursue and coordinate projects across borders. Since its founding in 1973, the leaders in Santo Domingo had assumed the reins of the organization and relied on the support of community groups and a coordinating committee in Villa Fundación to execute plans and projects. The leaders from the capital city were the founders and primary financiers; many belonged to the merchant class, and had access to important national bureaucrats and political figures. Thus, under *elite command*, the leaders from the capital city exerted most of the influence regarding project selection and implementation. Hometown residents would voice their concerns, mostly through the local civic organizations, which worked hand-in-hand with the ADEFU leadership in the capital city. The Santo Domingo leaders had demonstrated a willingness to invest substantial amounts of financial and political capital in the community they had left behind. As a result, the hometown community held them in high esteem, especially *Don Isaac*, who had championed many of the marquee projects. Interestingly, the cultural youth club served as the organization's primary community partner. They had a dynamic leadership that was politically active against Balaguer and his cronies, had the capacity to mobilize residents and organize community activities, and enthusiastically advocated for the provision of public services. Despite their rebellious nature, youth leaders respected and admired the committed members from Santo Domingo. They considered them skilled mentors with similar goals, who employed different tactical approaches.

This arrangement began to shift during the 1990s, as ADEFU embarked on large-scale projects and sought New York's support. Stateside *fundacioneros* were primarily recruited to assist with fundraising, which they quickly became good at. Taking advantage of their expansive social and business

125

networks, they were able to raise large sums and relieve the Santo Domingo leadership of the primary fundraising duties. But as the organization became more reliant on New York's support, it had to accommodate to their proposals and different understandings of community development.

Funds and "Modern" Project Ideas from New York: Transnational Realignment in ADEFU

Although they raised a sizeable amount of cash from individual donations pledged by those who attended their inaugural meeting, the roads and aqueduct projects were costly endeavors that could not be financed by just a select few. Soon after they began meeting as a formal branch of ADEFU, they began to organize *comisiones* [commissions] that would visit bodegas owned or operated by *fundacioneros* to collect donations. Because the establishments employed the *cadena*[31] system, it was common to find employees from their hometown who were also willing to contribute.

But visiting bodegas and organizing fundraising drives were time consuming efforts that could not be performed recurrently, as they could lead to overtaxing and possible attrition of their donor base. Understanding these limitations, Manuel José P., a founding member of ADEFU-New York and current president, proposed that they organize a big party, with live music, in a New York City dance hall. This first gathering yielded a good amount of charitable donations, and soon thereafter, they began hosting similar events in Upper Manhattan and South Bronx nightclubs. As they became more adept at organizing the events, the proceeds began swelling. Their success was appealing to club owners since the organization would reap donations

---

[31] Please see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion on the *cadena* system.

from the sale of tickets while the establishment sold thousands of dollars' worth of drinks.

In the early days, fundraising proceeds were almost exclusively earmarked to pay down loans and other costs associated with the roads and aqueduct project. But as the project winded down, they began identifying opportunities to expand their role and influence in the organization. The *bodegueros* and *ruteros* of New York had proved their worth and commitment, and sought to be more than just ADEFU's fundraising arm, bankrolling projects conceived in Santo Domingo and Villa Fundación. *Transnational realignment* seemed inevitable as the New York chapter set roots within the organization.

Much like their counterparts in Santo Domingo, they would use their influence as a recognized group of businessmen and community leaders to make requests for their hometown. Ernesto T., founding member and past president, recalled how leaders from New York took advantage of a campaigning trip to the City made by the then candidate for Vice President of the Dominican Republic under the PLD, Jaime David Fernández Mirabal, to lobby for the construction of a new health center in Villa Fundación, which was eventually built. They also began to propose and support projects that reflected their particular development values and goals, which were shaped by their experiences with "modern" installations and services in New York. According to Ignacio V.:

> Modern things, like computers that we didn't have when we were studying. And we want the children there, not that they be equally educated as in the United States, but that they are somewhat similarly prepared...We also proposed a project to build a children's playground...we had seen similar playgrounds here [in New York].

Their commitment to modernizing hometown facilities also led them to support the construction of a cafeteria in the high school building, refurbish the local cemetery, the provision of school supplies for local students, and

sustained financial backing for the community's technology center—which was built by the National Telecommunications Institute (INDOTEL in Spanish) but relies exclusively on community donations for its operating budget. For the most part, projects proposed in New York addressed important needs in Villa Fundación, and were thus welcomed by the other chapters. In many instances, their initial ideas matured through discussions with hometown leaders, who offered advice and suggestions on how best to operationalize projects and follow through. Nonetheless, it was clear that they sought to realign their benefactor profile by becoming project proponents and executors.

In this vein, their wishes also included the construction of installations that primarily served their interests and desires. Because several of the ADEFU-New York members participate in a summer softball tournament organized by the *La Curvita* Softball League in the Bronx, and travel to Villa Fundación to take part in matches with local teams, they decided to build a new and well equipped playing field in their hometown. As Víctor recalled:

> We used to go there and played during the day, with the sun
> [over us], at one or two in the afternoon. That sun...it punishes
> you, so one of the fellows [from New York] had an idea: "why
> don't we build a softball field?" And we built it so that we can
> play at night, with lights and all.

The new field would become New York's second largest project, and one that they financed and planned in its entirety. Leaders in Villa Fundación didn't consider it a priority, but supported them in its construction—with volunteer labor and project supervision—given the generous support they'd received from them in years past. Ignacio V. explained how the seemingly simple idea became a complex undertaking:

> We thought it would be a small project, but as we got started, we
> realized that we were getting into a very big enterprise. But
> thank God, our community is what it is because we support our

projects. After we finished the field, we were able to ensure that
the government electrified it.

Seeking to exert further influence in the organization's development agenda, New York's members would cut their teeth building the softball field. The venture proved to be a challenging enterprise as project costs shot up and several logistical issues ensued. Taking a page from the traditional ADEFU playbook, they were able to secure government support to play nightly games. More than just a luxury facility for sporadic use by migrant *fundacioneros,* it has been enjoyed by several hometown leagues, and adequately maintained by the stateside members. For the New York leaders, the project is a notable achievement that reflects their transnational prowess and commitment to modernizing Villa Fundación. It is also provided a valuable lesson for the migrant leadership: *transnational realignment* can lead to favorable results if the pursuit of "modern" ideas is complimented by local capabilities. The complexities of executing grand ventures, conceived and well financed in New York City, but executed in a difficult development environment like Villa Fundación, can be effectively addressed through constant interaction, deliberation and seeking guidance from home country leaders who have the necessary knowledge and experience to translate migrant desires into transnational projects. Hometown residents were instrumental in providing technical and logistical solutions, while Santo Domingo's leaders aided in bringing in the necessary state support to complete the installations.

Shifting Dynamics: Hometown Empowerment and a New Framework

By the early 1990s, many of the young leaders who were actively involved in Villa Fundación's cultural clubs and other progressive political organizations had already become seasoned organizers who were dedicated to their hometown's progress. Several had migrated to New York and belonged to the stateside chapter while many others stayed behind and continued laboring

through the farmer's collectives and other civic groups. Non-migrant leaders led the roads and aqueduct projects, and also occupied government posts when Villa Fundación became a municipal district and ADEFU took control of the local bureaucracy. Taking advantage of their deep involvement, during the mid-1990s the veterans from Santo Domingo turned the original hometown coordinating committee into a formal chapter, which gradually gained influence in the organization, working alongside the recently minted New York branch. Attrition stemming from the complex roads project led Santo Domingo to cede control to a crop of trusted leaders that had been active in the rebellious clubs and were also beneficiaries of the early ADEFU interventions.

A greater level of hometown influence transformed the organization and its development agenda. As will be described in later sections, completing the roads project and becoming involved in running municipal affairs provided them further technical and political capabilities to carry out and negotiate development projects. These skills allowed them to become more savvy interlocutors and advocates. It also gave them a different perspective regarding the true development needs of their community and empowered the hometown leadership within the organization. Once the streets were built, the hometown leaders proposed to refocus the organization's energies and resources. They were ready to embark on different kinds of projects that went beyond bricks and mortar. Given that agricultural production was their primary economic activity, and as a result of their growing power within ADEFU, they would make it the organization's top development priority.

Since the late 1970s, Villa Fundación's farmers had been searching for ways to stave off the dry spells that limited their agricultural output. Geographical conditions and extensive deforestation had taken its toll on crop yields, and while several efforts had been made to introduce different types of trees that could withstand the local conditions, most didn't survive. Taking advantage

of a pilot initiative developed by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) in the early 1990s, several leaders of ADEFU and the farmer's organizations were trained by the German aid organization to remedy the situation with the neem tree. Given that the plant can survive in arid conditions, it was a great match for Villa Fundación. These days, it's hard to miss the lush tree cover along the *Calle Central* and most of the streets that crisscross the densely populated areas of Villa Fundación. The green landscape provides a cool cover from the harsh sun that beats on the southern region of the Dominican Republic, and brings color to an otherwise dry terrain.

Among the technical experts that worked with the community leaders, was a female scientist interested in sustainable agricultural production and organic pesticides. A dedicated and entrepreneurial development worker, Karen M. identified several opportunities in Villa Fundación: they had a proven cluster of community organizations, had successfully carried out the neem tree project in conjunction with international aid entities, and were also struggling with the monoculture of onions, abuse of chemical pesticides, and few work opportunities for women outside the home. When the GTZ project ended in 1995, Karen M. decided to stay in the Dominican Republic and develop projects focused on organic agricultural practices that limited health risks for consumers and producers. Confident that Villa Fundación was one of many communities she could assist, she founded a development NGO, *Fundación Agricultura y Medio Ambiente* (FAMA), in Santo Domingo alongside other Dominican technicians that had worked with her in her previous assignments.

Although her primary interests were focused on using the neem tree to produce botanical insecticides, FAMAs first big project in Villa Fundación was the construction of 26 kilometers of irrigation channels and the perforation of wells. Up until that point, the scant flows of water for

131

agricultural uses were transported from the Ocoa River through a rustic system of dirt canals that would generate tremendous losses of water along the way. Seeing how little could be done to promote safe agricultural practices without improving the farmer's water supply, FAMA and ADEFU drafted a successful proposal to German Agro Action—a private development cooperation entity—to expand the agricultural water supply in Villa Fundación. The successful project, which relied on a synergistic collaboration between the HTA and the NGO, signaled a shift towards economic development within ADEFU, and established an important precedent for community control over project decisions that would transform the power dynamics between ADEFU and external development promoters. Karen M.'s ideas and skills would be employed to complement a development priority dictated by the local community, not the other way around. As Francisco T. explains,

> That project [—the irrigation channels and wells—] culminated a phase of [projects focused on] perforating wells for agriculture that ADEFU had initiated. With funds from ADEFU, we started that. Because we noticed that we had advanced urban growth rather than agriculture, which is our primary output...we were projecting a development that we really didn't have...to continue developing the town, we had to develop the people, the production. So all the efforts were focused towards the sector that provides people's livelihoods, and that's agriculture...our idea was: if there was no economic development, we could not sustain what we had done before.

As agricultural output increased in Villa Fundación, Karen M. was able to suggest new ideas that addressed the socioeconomic needs of the town's residents and were aligned with FAMA's inclination towards sustainable development projects. Furthermore, ADEFU was able to expand their reach into new areas that directly affected the livelihoods of the town's residents.

While the hometown chapter has primarily executed most of all the recent economic development projects, these initiatives have been discussed, vetted and validated by members in the United States and in Santo Domingo. Organizational realignments have strengthened the decision-making powers of hometown leaders, but the remaining chapters continue to contribute money and ideas to address community needs. Interestingly, these shifts, which have been implemented gradually and relied on robust communication channels and transnational deliberations, have vitalized the collaborative spirit that lies at the center of the organization's success.

Establishing a cooperative dialogue across borders has been helpful in the execution of projects and building bonds of solidarity. In order to maintain a constant communication flow that ensures their active participation in community affairs, board secretaries circulate meeting minutes via email (and previously via fax machines) to specific leaders, and post them in villafundacion.com, a community blog that's viewable by the general public. These summaries are read out loud at the start of weekly meetings (or monthly in the case of Santo Domingo) and commented by those in attendance. Relevant responses are recorded and shared through the same weekly cycle. This epistolary exchange also allows ADEFU to maintain a detailed and public record of proposals and decisions that keeps chapter leaders and the general public abreast of the organization's business.

While common business items are dealt through the circulation of minutes and other documents, major decisions are discussed in the yearly *convivencia*[32], a gathering of all chapters usually celebrated in Villa

---

[32] Interestingly, the term *convivencia* roughly translates into conviviality, which relates to friendliness and sociability.

Fundación during the celebration of the patron saint festivities—to take advantage of programmed visits from stateside members who enjoy the revelries. The yearly meeting offers an opportunity to discuss the progress of projects underway and define the organization's agenda for the coming year. Leaders from neighborhood boards, youth organizations, church groups and the town's mayor are also invited. According to Francisco T., the *convivencia* and the exchange of minutes provide opportunities to reach consensus decisions, openly discuss differences and share ideas. Because political authorities and key community groups take part in the conversation, the adopted measures are usually pursued further without major opposition. As Francisco T. remarked,

> Here every project is decided by consensus between all the chapters. The meeting minutes [system] enables that. One proposes an idea, and it's as if I proposed it in their meeting [in New York or Santo Domingo]...They give their opinion on what happens here, because they're kept informed. We read two minutes, first, our own and then the New York minutes. When Santo Domingo meets, and sends their minutes, we read New York's and then Santo then Domingo's minutes, which include their commentaries of the previous meetings of the other chapters. That's how we've built consensus. Also in the *convivencias* we organize with the leaders...we meet over here with the principal leaders, we propose projects and ideas, and we discuss them. That's then taken to the different chapters, they're discussed and if there aren't objections that may change the course of action, then we execute.

The consensus-based approach developed by ADEFU for their internal decision-making processes allows them to establish the basis for *transnational cooperation* within their ranks and beyond. It also provides opportunities for raising and vetting ideas conceived by the different chapters in an open and horizontal forum. Nevertheless, the overall process is not devoid of tensions. Migrants and non-migrants often disagree on important matters given their different views regarding community needs. Non-migrant leaders argue that the New York leadership is less attentive to economic

development ventures and more drawn to brick and mortar projects they can easily fund and point to as achievements. Likewise, they are prone to support the celebration of festivities and social activities that they can enjoy during their hometown visits. Nevertheless, the organization's leaders have learnt that engaging in constant dialogue and lively debate can help remove obstacles to cooperation.

Information flow is key in ADEFU's line of work. Contributors to the organization's coffers, from New York and elsewhere, want to know how money is being managed and put to use. Sustained debates and dialogues on what projects to pursue and how to do so help avoid discord and attrition, both within chapters and across the organization. These exchanges also lead to improved development ideas. Furthermore, communicating openly with local authorities and other civic organizations helps build pathways for collaboration, while avoiding political turf wars and the duplication of efforts.

Over time, ADEFU has evolved from an organization under *elite command* into a *transnational cooperation* network. Responsibilities and roles have shifted gradually, in a way that has allowed each chapter to make significant contributions to the development of Villa Fundación. The founding of a chapter in New York initially relieved Santo Domingo from its financing duties, and eventually shifted the power balance regarding project selection and priorities. Migrant *fundacioneros* to the United States began to have a say in what constituted development and strived to make their town more modern. At the same time, former youth leaders in Villa Fundación carved out new management roles in the organization, and within the town's political structures, that allowed them to refocus development priorities. Their interest in creating jobs and improving agricultural production opened the doors to new partnerships with international aid agencies and professional development practitioners who have helped transform the town's economic base. Through a series of realignments and informal routines that

135

rely on a sustained dialogue across borders, cooperative transnational development has been made possible in Villa Fundación.

Engaging With the State and Communal Governing in Villa Fundación

From the outset, ADEFU's leaders understood that advancing development required resources, knowledge and political savvy. Behind every project built or supported by the organization, there is a story that includes tussles and negotiations with politicians, bureaucrats and government technicians. Taking on education, water provision, transportation and basic infrastructure needs are complex endeavors that challenge the organization's financial and implementation capacities. In countries that aim to uphold democratic values and establish bureaucratic institutions, like the Dominican Republic, the responsibility of providing many of these public goods is expected to fall upon the state. But in Villa Fundación, as in many other parts of the country, public services are seldom provided unless there is some prodding. Knowing who to tap, when, and how to do so are important skills that ADEFU's leaders have honed over time by taking on a range of projects and experimenting with different coproduction schemes.

In the early days of the organization, the support of the Santo Domingo chapter was crucial: influential leaders like *Don Isaac* had access to national politicians and central government officers, and could convince them to do right by his community. This strategy usually worked when the community began a major project and requested that the state take over its completion. Despite its relative effectiveness, these *arms-length interactions* required much back room lobbying that was hard to sustain in the long term. Agencies sometimes made promises they couldn't keep, like when the national water company (INAPA in Spanish) reneged on its promise to reimburse the community for the investments made in the expansion of the aqueduct.

136

Trusting relationships between state and social actors were hard to produce through these unenforceable deals. There were also numerous risks involved in relying on semi clientelistic deals based on personal connections. In the roads project, for example, the community had invested several hundred thousand dollars with no end in sight. Once the major stages were finished—cement sidewalks and gutters were built, ground was flattened, and the aqueduct pipes were below the earth—ADEFU approached the Secretary of Public Works and asked them to take care of laying the asphalt. Not wanting to be completely bested by a community that had almost completely taken care of what are usually considered state projects, and understanding that there was a political cost to ignoring a well-known effort, their petition was approved. Despite the government's intervention, it took them years and plenty of effort to repay the loans they took out to complete their part.

Shaming or challenging the government to do its part sometimes led to desired outcomes, but better accountability mechanisms and improved development governance was needed. For this to happen, more direct engagement with governmental institutions was required. Once Balaguer's bloody and repressive 12-year reign ended, and as the country made slow transitions towards developing democratic institutions, it was possible to develop different relationships with state entities. For the people of Villa Fundación, an important step towards garnering the government's attention and developing a formal relationship with local authorities would be to convert the town into a municipal district. Interestingly, ADEFU succeeded and went several steps further. Instead of starting out by building ties with an appointed municipal administrator, the organization took over the politico-administrative structure. This allowed them to accelerate their development agenda and establish a different governance and administrative framework that would serve as an example for future incumbents. A series of *empowered exchanges* would emerge from their fruitful experiment with

communal governing. The New York chapter also established lines of communication with politicians from home and from the city, but their involvement would be much more timid and limited.

Seeking Municipal District Status

As the 1980s drew to a close, an opportunity arose for Villa Fundación to *elevarse de categoría* [elevate its stature] by becoming a municipal district. According to Dominican law, municipal districts are political units of a lesser category than municipalities, governed by a municipal board composed of a director and several aldermen, and receive direct funding from central government sources based on their population size. Petitioning jurisdictions have to meet specific requirements, submit a series of reports and lobby extensively in the national legislature. Asides from receiving a monthly subsidy, a municipal district is governed by a formal, bureaucratic body that is responsible for providing certain public services, helps orchestrate development opportunities and advocates for its residents within higher order institutions. Since a great number of municipal districts have been designated based on political interests and cronyism, their development capacities and performance vary widely across the Dominican Republic.

A senator who was sympathetic to the town's notable progress approached community leaders to begin coordinating the process that would lead to the promotion process. The opportunity energized local residents and *fundacioneros* in the capital city, but political momentum was lost due to shifts stemming from the 1990 congressional elections. With a new Congress sworn in, their petition was resubmitted but now competed with those of the nearby towns of Matanzas and Sabana Buey. Although they considered themselves superior in terms of advancement and developmental capacity, having accomplished numerous visible community projects since the 1970s, they were now in a race where political contacts also determined who reached

the finish line first. Competition and mimicry between *campos* has been a common social trend in the Baní region. But with so much on the line, the rivalry intensified.

In addition to hosting congressional delegations and participating in debates where they had to make their case, local leaders had to lobby Congress since Sabana Buey and Matanzas had already obtained support from influential politicians. Although they could count on the faithful support of prominent heads in Santo Domingo, they lacked a *padrino político* [political godfather]. As Francisco T. explained,

> Unfortunately, Fundación hasn't had an important political
> representation...rather than political leaders we have developed
> community leaders. We community leaders have always said,
> due to the discredit of political parties, that our political party,
> or the means to develop our [community] work has been and is
> ADEFU.

According to Pedro R., throughout the process the town suffered several "humiliations" like being included in a preliminary bill that designated them as a "sector" of the Municipal District of Sabana Buey[33]. Because it came down to which town had the votes and influence to see their petition through the legislature, Villa Fundación had to pull all the stops. *Don Isaac* stepped in and leveraged his political connections in favor of his hometown. They also seized the moment to begin the roads and water project, an effort that proved their community development abilities. In 1991, after a long year of trials and negotiations, an agreement was reached and the three petitioning towns were converted into municipal districts. Law 91-24, signed by President Balaguer, made it official.

---

[33] The adjacent and rival town was considered to be years behind them in terms of its development and was only being considered thanks to the help of Abigail Soto, a congressman from Sabana Buey. At the time, Villa Fundación was officially named Villa Fundación *de* [of] Sabana Buey, a title that did little to soften their competitive spirit.

ADEFU Manages the District

The lessons gathered by hometown leaders while carrying out major projects, providing primary services, and negotiating with state authorities, would eventually prove very useful down the line, but especially when Villa Fundación became a municipal district in the early 1990s. The prevailing political rules dictated that the mayor of Baní would select the town's municipal manager: a partisan administrator that could be trusted to follow orders and report dutifully to superiors[34]. But this would not be the case in Villa Fundación. The mayor of Baní, who had broken ties with his party, chose an ADEFU leader as its *encargado municipal*. Pedro R. was tapped for the position:

> At that moment, I put forward that I didn't have a problem being the *síndico*, but with two conditions: that I didn't have to stop working my plot of land, stop cultivating, and that they let me to choose the people that would work with me in the *ayuntamiento*.
>
> *Do you think he, [the mayor of Baní], chose you because he was governing as an independent?*
>
> Well, not just because of that, but because the strength of the community was superior to the political leadership of Baní... he had to present the nomination to the board of regents [for their approval]. And the PRD [Revolutionary Dominican Party] and the *Reformista* Party [PRSC] predominantly governed the board of regents. But the three parties that were in charge of the board of regents [PRD, PRSC and PLD] gave their approval.

True to his role as a committed community leader, Pedro R. surrounded himself with others like him, mostly hometown leaders, who had Villa Fundación's interest at heart. From the outset, they assumed a different

---

[34] This political arrangement prevailed until 2010 when municipal district managers were elected by popular vote for the first time.

governance approach. Their first uncustomary decision was to forgo their January salaries and assign these funds to the town's general budget. To ensure transparency in the administration of public funds, monthly budget reports were provided to all the townspeople, including information on the salaries of municipal workers. Furthermore, and in keeping with the ADEFU model, major decisions were discussed in open forums and popular approval was sought. At the time, the monthly municipal subvention provided by the central government fluctuated between 7,000 and 8,000 Pesos—which translated into roughly $560 to $640—a small sum, but enough to get some things done by following proven tactics: employing voluntary labor and involving the community, including the "*muchachos* from *Nueva York*". Although Pedro R. had not amassed many years of schooling or received formal training in public administration, he was able to successfully meet the demands of the job, as he said, by "following the principles of social organizations" and following the requisite laws and regulations. Communal governing in Villa Fundación would blur some of the dividing lines between state and social domains, and would proceed through a combination of problem-solving and experimental approaches.

But in 1997, the municipal law was amended and the amount of funds allocated to the town increased substantially, to 45,000 Pesos. With the increase, more funds could be invested in local needs, but it also attracted the attention of local politicians. As Pedro R. recalled:

> Then the politicians became interested. They began to say that the community couldn't run it, and that the *ayuntamiento* needed to be administered by a politician...when there were few resources there wasn't enough for wheeling and dealing, but when we got a lot of funds, then they could do so.

Mounting pressures from political operatives led to several conflicts between ADEFU and the board of regents in Baní. At one point, when the political leadership in Baní changed, Pedro R. was asked to manage the district

alongside political appointees, but he would not accept this arrangement. Because of the moral standing of the organization and the community's reputation, the politicians eventually budged and agreed to the previous arrangement. But his administration would be under constant scrutiny and even falsely accused of mismanagement of public funds, given their refusal to play the usual political game. Pedro R. provided several examples:

> I was building a basketball court in Las Carreras [a sector under the purview of the municipal district of Villa Fundación] and the *ayuntamiento* in Baní was building another one that cost them 250,000 Pesos...The one in Las Carreras cost me 98,000 and it was bigger than the one they were building. So the townspeople questioned them over there [in Baní]. [...]

> Our budgets were supposed to be prepared by one of the inspectors that provided his services in Baní, but we had to pay that inspector 3,000 Pesos, which was a lot of money. So we prepared our own budgets, we didn't request his services. Also, we didn't give people money for their medical prescriptions, we didn't give them rum, we didn't give perks to anybody. What we did was provide medicines to the hospital. Instead of giving money for individual prescriptions, we gave medicines to the hospital. So that bothered them [in Baní] because one of the ways of politicking in the country is that in the *ayuntamientos*, the regents, the *síndico*, and everyone else give money for prescriptions.

> In the towns up north [that were now under the purview of the Villa Fundación Municipal District] on Fridays people would go to the pharmacy and a bring prescription for 300 Pesos and trade it for 150 in cash to buy rum. Then, the owner of the pharmacy would go to the *ayuntamiento* and charge 300 Pesos for a prescription that wasn't filled...so because we knew this scheme existed since forever, we eliminated it. And to the people of Las Carreras, El Cruce, Las Mayitas y Los Ranchitos [the towns up north] we told them "no, we don't give out prescriptions, go to Baní". So I sent them to Baní...so they [the Baní politicians] were screwed, and came here to organize a session to question me where I spent the *ayuntamiento's* money.

Upset that ADEFU's transparent and austere administration was clouding their reputation, and eroding some of their political capital, Baní's board of

regents openly questioned their administrative practices but failed to find fault. While ADEFU ran the town, they dutifully served the better interests of the residents by employing sound administrative practices based on prior community development lessons, and experimenting with creative ways to effectively deal with problems encountered along the way. Among the measures taken were: doubling salaries earned by some municipal workers, taking measures to cover three payroll cycles in case the subvention didn't arrive on time, beginning infrastructure projects only when they were fully funded, and saving 250,000 pesos in five years to build a slaughterhouse for Villa Fundación. In addition, instead of providing assistance to individuals, they supported recognized community groups like the agriculturalists association, the youth clubs and the *Centro de madres*. But political pressures did not subside, and ADEFU ceded control to the politicians, who named Pedro's successor and took over the municipal district in 1998.

Shortly thereafter, "everything changed", according to Pedro R. The *ayuntamiento* was administered with partisan interests, employees were not receiving their periodic raises, and the funds saved for the slaughterhouse disappeared in a year's time. ADEFU has maintained close ties with the four *síndicos* that have been named since, but according to former municipal managers, including Pedro R. and Francisco T., instead of taking into account the interests of the community, the political appointees have responded to the whims of Baní's mayor. Nevertheless, ADEFU's experience running the district has served as an example for future *encargados*, and created an important precedent that career politicians can ignore, but certainly not erase. The administrative norms they established still serve as the yardstick used to judge public management in Villa Fundación. In short, by blurring the state-society boundary, and through thoughtful experimentation, they were able to turn the communal governing exercise into a learning and capacity building process that would improve ADEFU's community

development practice, lay the groundwork for "bottom up" coproduction, and foment a series of *empowered exchanges* that further transformed participatory governance in Villa Fundación.

Brushes with New York City Politics

While the Thursday night *tertulias* serve as an informal forum to discuss a several matters pertaining to life in New York City, most of what is discussed and planned in the stateside meetings focuses on providing support to development activities in Villa Fundación. But given their stellar reputation in New York as community development financiers and honest businessmen, politicians from the City and the Dominican Republic have made numerous visits to their meetings, mostly looking for endorsement and financial support. According to Fernando H.:

> [Guillermo] Linares[35] has been here [in the meetings]. He came when Bloomberg, the mayor, was up for reelection. He came with two or three of our members, but his ultimate goal was to ask for our individual or group support for Bloomberg; but we didn't agree with that as an organization. They didn't ask for this directly, but in the end, we could insinuate that this was their intention.
>
> *And they came to you because you are "una fuerza" [hold power] in the City?*
>
> I wouldn't characterize the organization as a *fuerza*. The thing is that we are an honest group made up of very hardworking people. They see that we're not a group that's working for personal gain, and that we've been here, working uninterruptedly since 1991; and if you look sideways and backwards, there's hardly an organization that has lasted so long without internal conflicts, without different kinds of problems, principally financial ones.

---

[35] Guillermo Linares is the first Dominican elected to public office in New York City. He's served in the New York City Council, as New York City's Commissioner of Immigrant Affairs and as State Assemblyman.

Not wanting to mix politics with the organization's business, ADEFU-New York has never backed a candidate or donated to a campaign—individual members, on the other hand, have done so. But because they understand that politicians can offer support for some of their projects or pull strings, they have tried to reach out to important political leaders. Members like Manuel José P. understand that establishing a closer relationship with local politicians means gaining access to certain opportunities. He's invited Linares to the *tertulias* several times, and asked him to swear in the board of directors. As he explained,

> We didn't want to get the organization involved in politics, but wanted to have *roces* [brushes] with politicians, because you know that everything is accessed through politics. So we had *roces* with the politicians without getting politicized.

The distinction made by Manuel José is an important one: becoming politicized means choosing sides and polarizing the members, while having brushes with politicians provides access to opportunities and benefits. Being able to play the political game without associating the organization with a political clan is a complex endeavor. Nevertheless, it is a skill that most of ADEFU's leaders in the Dominican Republic and the United States have developed over time through a gradual learning process. Because Dominican politics are also transnational, several New York members maintain an active membership in home country political affairs while also becoming involved in the City's partisan circles. These politically inclined leaders are the ones who play an intermediary role between politicians and the organization—much like *Don Isaac* in Santo Domingo— and have the ability to make petitions without undermining the organization's harmony.

In addition to from Guillermo Linares, the *tertulias* have hosted several known figures in homeland and New York City politics, including Jacobo Majluta, who served as Vice President of the Dominican Republic, and Adriano Espalliat, a New York State Senator who also served on the State

Assembly. Beyond just proffering stump speeches, visiting politicians have also come to gather opinions and discuss specific proposals of interest to the *bodegueros* and *ruteros* of ADEFU-New York.

Despite having brushes with political leaders, the New York chapter has not made attempts to get involved in local advocacy efforts, or partner with city organizations that address the needs of New York Dominicans. As several members claim, given their time and resource constraints, most of their energies are exclusively focused on hometown needs. Furthermore, they lack the traction that comes with increased levels of political incorporation into the City's political structures. While brushes with politicians from host and home contexts in New York serve as a reminder that Dominican political life is transnational (Itzigsohn 2012; Levitt 2001), how politics is used for community development purposes varies significantly from one context to the other. Despite the different outcomes, the experiences accumulated in migrant and home destinations have brought about significant learning and skill building opportunities that are also part of ADEFU's contributions to community development.

Learning Within and Beyond ADEFU

As the aforementioned examples illustrate, ADEFU has amassed numerous lessons on how to spur transnational community development in their 40-year history. Some have arisen from their problem-focused approach and disposition to experiment in the pursuit of complex projects, like starting a school, building a softball field from afar, or running the municipal district. Other lessons become evident over time, like the importance of maintaining open, cross-border communication channels, or the positive consequences of making the state more accountable. In most instances, these experiences help increase organizational capacity, which leads to improvements in how ADEFU addresses the community development needs of *fundacioneros* at home and abroad. In other cases, their practices have impacts that spill over

146

to other domains and lead to broader learning experiences and development effects.

Building Capacity and Community Through Trial and Errors in New York

For instance, creating and maintaining a stable chapter in New York City has been extremely beneficial to the organization's coffers, but it has also contributed to migrant life more broadly. While the parties have netted thousands in donations for ADEFU, they have also helped build a strong and committed community of *fundacioneros* in the United States. Over 1,000 persons come to these events, and many who hail from Villa Fundación and work long hours across the City use these opportunities to catch up with friends and family, enjoy live shows by known Dominican performers, and contribute to a worthy cause. Several long-time members of the New York City chapter argued that the parties were much-awaited events within the larger *banilejo* and Latino community. As Víctor B. commented, over time, their chapter has developed a sound reputation as hosts and community fundraisers, and amassed the necessary experience and skills to address the challenges that surface:

> We've been organizing the parties for over 20 years, and
> everybody knows how our parties are, there are no issues. You
> can go with your family to relax and there will be no *revolú*
> [mess or quarrels] of any kind, or any kind of problem.

Given that New York City is a Latino hub, and is considered the second largest Dominican enclave in the world, the organization has had a very large client base for their events. Attracting people means more money to cover project expenses, but it also helps foster a sense of moral obligation and hometown pride.

Their community's strength is skillfully used when the time comes to sell tickets or collect donations. Through the *fundacionero* network of bodegas

and *rutas* they've been able to publicize and garner support for their activities. As Norberto B. explained:

> There are many of us here [in New York City]. So, what happened? We invented a system...we used to go to the bodegas and leave them 5 to 10 tickets. And the people in the bodegas would sell them to the vendors that visited them. In a systematic way, they would say: "you have to buy so many tickets..." and they would also purchase tickets for themselves, and so the vendors would go [to the parties]...and also some of their clients who they could approach.

Fundraising has also been coupled with more traditional family outings and sporting activities. They've organized picnics in city parks, excursions to nearby sights and trips abroad that bring together whole families of migrant *fundacioneros*. ADEFU-New York has also worked hand-in-hand with *La Curvita*, a community softball league that organizes a summer tournament and numerous traveling games across the East Coast and in the Dominican Republic. Many community members frequent the playing field to hang out, enjoy the company of other *fundacioneros*, and comment on the games. This is a common practice in Villa Fundación, where community members come to watch their hometown team compete against those from neighboring towns. A visit to the *Curvita* tournament reminded me of similar outings in the Dominican Republic: while the games transpired, fans were listening to music, enjoying cold beers and some purchased food from roving vendors. It was also interesting to see many of ADEFU's directors taking the field in their team's uniforms.

In a similar fashion, their weekly *tertulias* allow New York City members to keep abreast of what is transpiring in Villa Fundación and address internal matters pertaining to their responsibilities within the organization. In their meetings, strategies are discussed, critiques regarding community issues are aired and solutions are devised. But the meetings also provide a space to raise other topics of importance to the members. Issues related to *bodegueros*,

ruteros or small business owners in New York City are often brought up, usually close to the end when formal organization matters have been dealt with.

Such was the case during a meeting on March of 2011, where several members discussed undercover police busts and fines being levied upon *bodegueros* for selling unbeknownst counterfeit or prohibited items.[36] The crux of the discussion centered on the importance of becoming involved in the trade associations. As one member stated: "we don't attend any [*bodeguero* association] meetings, but when we get a fine we get moving." The issue of Dominican establishments being threatened by growing competition from Arab and Indian merchants was raised in a subsequent meeting, where the discussion turned to a proposal made by the 7-Eleven convenience store chain to convert City bodegas into franchise operations. Manuel José, who belongs to the Bodeguero Association of the United States—a group that endorses the idea—argued that taking up the proposal early on could stave off their competitors and other threats of displacement:

> They're slowly displacing us. We, the *bodegueros*, are the greatest power, and the biggest crap [in the city]. If we don't unite, they're going to completely displace the Dominicans...*los blancos* [the white people] are removing the poor people already.

The idea was debated but ultimately drowned out by its critics, who argued that the freedom to run their business independently outweighed all the benefits the retail chain could offer. The meeting ended shortly thereafter, but the debate continued for a while longer amongst those who hung around. Although none of the bodega or business issues raised are voted on or fully resolved, the meetings provide an important space for debating topics related to their business interests in New York City. Given that the commercial

---

[36] Numerous interviewees in Boston and New York commented that some bodegas sell home remedies, prescription drugs and other medications commonly used in the Dominican Republic without the needed permits.

success of the members is tied to the chapter's achievements, and few of them are active in trade associations, these sporadic discussions have become an important part of deliberation routines that foster valuable information exchanges, the search for good ideas, and a sense of community through the Thursday night *tertulias*.

While some learning within New York's ranks has occurred through positive experiences completing successful ventures, many others have come about amidst experimentation and the search for problem-driven solutions (Andrews 2013). After years of supporting community development efforts in their hometown, the migrant chapter decided to apply their skills on their first project outside of Villa Fundación: *Casa Club ADEFU*. Since their founding, ADEFU-New York has organized its *tertulias* in restaurants and clubs in Upper Manhattan and the Bronx, close to the businesses and homes of the members. Although they had spent years talking about the desire to rent a formal space that could serve as their clubhouse, in 2005, under the leadership of Víctor B., they took concrete steps and rented 5,000 square feet in the Bronx. Their plans for the space were ambitious: beyond their weekly meetings and some weekend community gatherings, they wanted to host their parties and rent the venue to other communities who solicited the space, to cover costs and accrue donations. Finding affordable venues where they could host fundraising parties had become increasingly difficult in Manhattan's ever-competitive nightclub circuit, so the effort was also addressed a core organizational need.

With the membership in agreement, they invested some of the chapter's funds to refurbish the space. From the outset, they were not able to rely on the consistent support from *fundacioneros* in New York, and the operating responsibilities fell on the shoulders of a few members. Moreover, they didn't possess all the formal permits, but were able to stay afloat by renting the place for private parties. During one of these events, an unfortunate incident

occurred outside the club and a man was slain. Shortly thereafter, the clubhouse closed, as local authorities demanded that they procure permits and neighbors protested their presence. Two years after opening its doors, the club was closed. The money invested was never recuperated. Unrealistic expectations, rash decisions, and bad luck got the best of them. This experience has led them to rethink their stateside pursuits and their capacity to execute certain projects independently, without relying on the support structure and experience of ADEFU's *transnational cooperation* network.

Over time, New York's members have understood that there are only so many responsibilities they can assume as a stateside chapter. Their experiences building the softball field and running the unsuccessful clubhouse have helped them adjust their expectations of how to best contribute to their community and become better managers. This has allowed them to take pause and consider the implications of taking on more obligations.

Operating in New York City for over two decades, the stateside chapter is a non-profit entity. In the early 1990s, an effort was made to register the organization but little else was done to take advantage of the classification. Ernesto T. explains:

> We were on that pathway, but the government requires a lot to
> be an organization of that type. Once you are a tax exempt
> organization you can receive help from different organizations,
> but you have to prove where all the money is spent and that
> implies having employees within the association, a board of
> directors that has to get paid because it's doing a job and is
> dedicated to doing that...We have never been divided because no
> one receives a salary for the work that we do.

Afraid that establishing a formal administrative structure will disrupt the voluntary work dynamic of the chapter, and cognizant of the administrative duties involved, the directors of ADEFU-New York have paid little attention to the non-profit designation. Fernando H. argued the point further, adding

151

that the reporting requirements are too onerous and that the costs exceed any possible benefits.

> People see incorporation as a way of procuring resources, and that the state will provide benefits. But at the end there are many hurdles...the state likes to peer into the personal lives of all involved. And although we're not delinquents, no one likes to be investigated so much. Anything that happens in the association is tied to you, personally, so no one is willing to deal with that. We make sacrifices without receiving anything in return, and while giving everything, so we don't want that...

Given the large amounts of charitable donations raised over the years that have found their way to Villa Fundación, many of the members, especially the small business owners, fear that government oversight of their charitable activities will lead to unwarranted personal inquiries and audits—which several have endured. Thus, the complications associated with all the administrative requirements involve considerable social and monetary risks, perhaps too big for them to stomach.

Embarking on Economic Development at Home

While the roads and aqueduct project has been ADEFU's flagship undertaking, several of their most recent ventures seem equally impressive and promising. Primarily focused on the creation of jobs and the expansion of the agricultural sector, these projects are the product of experimental and problem-focused approaches that foment continuous community learning processes and the evolution of organizational capabilities: from the expansion of basic infrastructure, civic advocacy and public administration to community economic development.

The largest and most visible venture in this vein is their mango production project, which involves the cultivation of almost 800 acres by 149 farmers organized in two cooperatives. Although this is not an effort designed or executed by ADEFU, they have advocated for its progress, and many of the

participating farmers are active members and directors of the organization. In many ways, it can be considered a spinoff of earlier efforts to enhance agricultural production in Villa Fundación that were spearheaded by the organization and relied on the support of international donors.

Officially begun in 2002, as part of a government initiative to promote fruit exports, the project is located on community land reserved for collective farming since the late 1960s. Despite proving to be a profitable undertaking—the first harvest, in 2008, yielded 10 million pesos and double that amount the year after—clashes with government administrators, lending agencies and periods of droughts hobbled the cooperatives, and led to an indefinite production halt after 2009. During this period of inactivity, ADEFU and the cooperative members sought ways to jumpstart the effort, lobbying the government and applying pressure through major media outlets. Although these measures had limited success, in January of 2013, during a surprise visit to Villa Fundación, the newly-elected President of the Dominican Republic announced that his administration would restructure past debts and make substantial investments to get one of the country's largest mango plantations up and running. Initial investments have been made, and ADEFU is keeping a close watch on the new plans, which they hope will restore employment growth.

Press reports from the President's unannounced visit highlight that Danilo Medina also vowed to provide financial assistance to "a group of women from the project who possess a dehydration plant" so they can process the mangos that are unfit for exporting. The cited women are the core members of *Fruticoop*, a cooperative enterprise that produces dehydrated fruits for sale in retail establishments. Launched in 2003, the project was conceptualized by Karen M. and ADEFU's hometown chapter as a way to provide employment opportunities for local women and take advantage of excess agricultural crops produced in Villa Fundación. During her time in the field, she noticed that

153

there were few opportunities for women to work outside the home and untapped skills potential that could be leveraged for their benefit. As Karen M.[37] explained,

> In the poor regions of the Dominican Republic, normally the women have no choice to earn money. They are working in their houses with their children, cooking, they help their husbands in the fields...and this type of work [carried out in the dehydration plant] is very near to the work they normally do in their houses, because preparing the fruits and drying the fruits, it's not something that they need too much teaching, because they know it already. And before the project started, they already had a women's group, it was this *Centro de madres*, and we started with them...from the beginning the idea was to work with the women to give them some additional income.

A key starting point, the *Centro de madres Nuestra Señora de Regla* was founded in 1978 with the assistance of the national government's *Oficina para el Desarrollo Comunitario* (ODC). The *Centro de madres* has provided opportunities for women to work collectively, to develop a network of solidarity and generate supplemental incomes. Originally conceived as a mutual aid association, it has evolved into a successful microenterprise that produces and sells artisanal ragdolls sold in tourist stores. Both Natalia D., a member of the *Centro* and head of *Fruticoop*, and her mother recalled how becoming associated was a transformational experience for the women involved:

> *Natalia*: There's a lot of machismo in the Dominican Republic. There were problems with many women who wanted to associate, and their husbands didn't want to come back from their *parcelas*, or from wherever and not find their wives at home. That's been changing a lot these days. [...]
>
> *Natalia's mother*: When my husband arrived and wouldn't find me in the house he would tell me: "you're wasting your time around there, I don't know what for." But when I saw and

---

[37] This interview was conducted in English.

understood that there were profits, I told him: "You do what you want, but I'm over there [to the *Centro*]. When you get back from the *conuco* [smallholding], you wait for me here, and when I'm finished I'll come here [to the house]." Because we realized that we could gain independence from the home, we didn't mind that they argued, we were involved in something else, we were working.

Of course, and the opportunity to become associated gave you the strength to fend off the machismo?

Natalia's mother: Of course it did! It gave us courage and it gave us strength to realize that it was not just men who had rights, women did too.

Following the model set forth by the *Centro de madres*, Karen M. engaged in a long deliberation process with the women that led to the founding of *Fruticoop*. Cognizant of the challenges that a dehydration plant could face in a region that suffers from lack of continuous power provision, the cooperative members agreed that solar energy was the only viable source. With grants procured by ADEFU and FAMA from several national and international development agencies, and after several rounds of training by expert technicians, the women-led enterprise was up and running by 2005. Since it began operating, the cooperative has been experimenting with different production processes and uses of technology to develop a quality product that can compete in local markets. Although the plant is not solar powered anymore and still struggles to make a profit, the cooperative has recently begun filling orders for a local supermarket chain and with the help of several Peace Corps volunteers, has been developing elaborate marketing and distribution plans. Asides from dehydrated mango and papaya, they're also producing jams to take advantage of excess harvests and over ripened fruits. Despite all of the ups and downs, Natalia and the members have not given up.

The trusting bonds that emerged between Karen M. and ADEFU paved the way for opportunities to coproduce projects based on *empowered exchanges* where the economic development plans of hometown leaders were executed

while the environmental and sustainable agriculture goals of FAMA and numerous international donors were also advanced. Alongside ADEFU, the foundation began a demonstration project focused on organic agriculture with the assistance of several local farmers. Tomás N., an ADEFU leader and grower who worked alongside Karen M., recalls that many of the parcels in Villa Fundación, including his own, had been badly affected by the constant use of chemical pesticides. With the help of an international grant, they prepared three plots to grow fully organic crops with drip irrigation. The goal was to experiment with and educate local farmers on the benefits of growing fully organic crops. After several tries, they were able to successfully grow organic plantains. As Tomás recalled,

> My *parcela* would not produce plantains...I saved the soil that was destroyed with chemical use; *we* saved it. I thank her for her great interest in helping us with that. But there are lands here where the plantain barely grows...because the soil is saturated with chemicals. [...] I don't use any chemicals, not herbicides or any other product. All I use is organic.

These successes strengthened ADEFU and FAMA's resolve to start a community-owned and operated organic fertilizer plant, with the assistance of several donor agencies, including USAID and the UNDP. Inaugurated in 2008, the plant employs five persons and sells two different kinds of fertilizers produced primarily with organic waste material sourced from the residents of Villa Fundación. In close coordination with the *ayuntamiento*, ADEFU developed a system whereby municipal waste workers deliver compostable waste to the plant previously sorted by cooperating residents. But even with the support of local *fundacioneros*, the plant cannot meet the growing demand from farmers within and beyond Villa Fundación. According to Tomás, who manages the plant's production, many local farmers are utilizing their product but still employ chemicals since having a completely organic plot is costlier and the lack of a differentiated organic market makes it hard to compete with traditional harvests.

156

For Francisco T., the economic development impacts of the varied agricultural projects they have embarked upon have been substantial, as he states:

> In the agricultural sector, more labor is being used. There is a more continuous production, and this generates more labor opportunities. There is much more production. In the case of the fertilizers, the effect on the production of those employing it, plus the labor we use for the production is generating jobs. But the most important is the multiplier effect. When you sow a farm, and you're successful, you plant again. That's a double harvest. If in one harvest you employ 100-200 workers, those are jobs right there. If there's no production, there are no jobs.

The fertilizer plant project, which is based on tripartite—public-private-HTA—coproduction arrangement, is a clear example of how ADEFU has spurred an innovative and inclusive transnational community development agenda. The plant has helped create jobs, introduced sustainable farming practices, and involved citizens and public sector actors in the pursuit of important community goals. Beyond the job growth that has helped advance economic prospects in Villa Fundación, the work carried out between FAMA and ADEFU produced new skill building and learning opportunities for both organizations. The chance to develop successful partnerships while crafting competitive projects that received funding from international and local donor agencies are important accomplishments that have further amplified their ability to conduct successful coproduction efforts. In most of the joint efforts, FAMA took care of administering grants and the drafting of reports and evaluations, while ADEFU managed the field operations. Within these *empowered exchanges*, ADEFU employed a proven strategy of collective work that stresses the involvement and buy-in of local residents in community development projects. This allowed the FAMA staff to focus on other technical, but critical aspects of project management.

157

Transforming Development, Governance, and Building the Future

There are few corners of Villa Fundación where ADEFU's presence and impact is not evidenced. Since the early 1970s, the organization has taken charge of the town's major development efforts, and helped improve basic infrastructures, enhanced educational and health opportunities, helped improve local governance of public resources, improved state accountability, created jobs and built organizational capabilities. Their notable track record has been reviewed by numerous press outlets and earned them numerous commendations in the Dominican Republic and the United States. But the impact and consequences of ADEFU's accomplishments can be evidenced well beyond the physical limits of Villa Fundación and the transnational social fields that link the town with its migrant communities. Their process of carrying out transnational community development has impacted broader development arenas in ways that help us better understand how HTAs contribute to development prospects.

How ADEFU has been able to establish working partnerships with international development agencies is a case in point. Their collaborations with GTZ, FAO, USAID and FAMA share little resemblance to the planning and power dynamics of traditional donor interventions, where beneficiaries cede control over important aspects to funders, like program priorities and timing. In Villa Fundación, hometown leaders felt empowered to set the pace of collaboration, which allowed them to establish a different relationship with international agencies and its representatives. It took Karen M. years to establish trusting bonds that could yield productive collaborations. As she explains:

> Gaining trust means that you have to work with the community
> and the associations for quite a long time, so that they can see
> that you are really interested in the development of the town
> and you are not coming [just] for some weeks or some
> months...it took me like eight years to show them that I really

wanted to help them out of their structural problems, the problems they had in agriculture. And sometimes you need that, because they are very accustomed to the government development experts coming to the field sometimes, and they go back to the city and never come back because they're not interested in the worksites. So it is a long-term process [...]

[Government workers] are not interested in the outcomes of the projects. They're doing a job and leaving, and if it's working or not, they're not interested in that because they are getting their salaries anyways.

But the distinct power dynamics and coproduction arrangements that ADEFU developed with FAMA were not easily assimilated by international donor agencies, despite their recognition that both organizations were successfully carrying out their projects. Building trust between the organizations and the donor community was necessary. As Karen M. recalled,

The FAO [Food and Agriculture Association] and USAID were very impressed with how this was working and they mentioned this several times. After finishing the projects, in some meetings, they said to ADEFU that they had never seen an organization with such good efficacy in the field and in the organization of these kinds of activities. [...]

Of course that, for USAID to accept this kind of work [model] was a long process as well. We had several projects with them and I knew very well the woman coordinating these projects, so the same trust we had with the people in Villa Fundación, we needed to create with these cooperations [international agencies] as well.

Concerned that the funding would not have lasting impacts, and would go primarily towards paying salaries—as was usual in development project partnerships with the Dominican state—international donor agencies were initially skeptical of the model employed in Villa Fundación. But as Karen M. recalled, with time and after seeing lasting results, they became convinced:

If the communities are not identified with these projects and haven't participated in the planning, and the whole process of [carrying out] these projects, after the international cooperation

159

is gone, many times the projects vanished. And this does not
create a good reputation for the international cooperation
agencies…[but] if they [the international donors]…trust that
you will create something with a long-term effect, they are
willing to give you the project and trust that you will do it in
your own way.

Beyond generating new economic development opportunities in Villa
Fundación and contributing to an upgrading of organizational capacities,
these experiences have opened up opportunities to rethink and transform
how powerful development agencies intervene in local communities. They
also demonstrate how the scales can be tipped towards hometown control
within international development interventions. In addition, the knowledge
stemming from ADEFU's engagement process helps broaden the discussions
on how HTAs can formulate and manage development opportunities with
transnational actors of a different sort.

ADEFU's influence has also spread to the realms of governance and public
administration. Their experience running the district, maintaining a cross
border dialogue and working collaboratively with state and community
institutions, has served as an example for important public figures. Katerine
Pimentel, a native of Villa Fundación and the current mayor, or *Directora
Municipal*, argues that her approach to the town's development follows a
similar method. As she argued,

> I am a member of ADEFU. […] When talking about development
> in Villa Fundación, you're obligated to mention ADEFU. When
> ADEFU was born, the development of Villa Fundación was born
> as well. ADEFU has to do with the entire infrastructure that our
> community has…it is the parent organization. […] Let me tell
> you that one of the principal accomplishments in my
> administration, as the director of the municipal board, is that
> our obligations, our decisions always go hand in hand with the
> local organizations. We have never started initiatives without
> taking them to a plenum where the local organizations know
> what we're going to do, where [we ask] what they need, and if
> they are in agreement.

160

Guided by ADEFU's example running the district, and embedded (Tsai 2007b) within the organization, Katerine has sought to emulate a governance model where decisions are consulted with constituents and public funds are administered with the community in mind. Although municipal laws only require that 50 percent of the public works funds be invested in projects selected by the communities through the participatory budget process, Katerine has been experimenting with allocating more than double the stipulated amount. These populist decisions follow a proven transnational coproduction model between state and society actors. According to Katerine,

> ADEFU was exemplar here. Because in the time they administered the *ayuntamiento*, not even 100,000 Pesos would be assigned [from the government subvention]. And those people gave *cátedras* [lectures] in good administration. [They showed] that with little resources you can do great things, if you know how to administer it. I have learned a lot from them, a lot.

> *Tell me about those lessons, what have you learnt from them?*

> I saw that during ADEFU's administration in the municipal board, the community got involved...the vast majority of the sidewalks and gutters, many infrastructure projects that we have here, that were built through ADEFU's administration, were done like that, through the *ayuntamiento*-comunidad [partnership]. With little funds, but with good administration you can do many things, many things. I learned from that. I saw that they would control excessive expenses. As director of this *Junta Municipal*, the law allows me to claim an incentive for each trip that I make. I have never claimed that per diem. Because I saw that if I'm going to charge 10,000 [Pesos] in per diems, to give you an example, it could be more or less, I'm taking away from the community in case of an emergency. [...] My projects, all of them, have the support and endorsement of ADEFU. I don't do anything without consulting the Association for the Development of Villa Fundación.

The *síndica's* desire to maintain a close relationship with ADEFU has led to a series of fruitful, "bottom up" coproduction efforts and learning opportunities. Beyond providing an institutional blueprint for the town's political leaders,

161

ADEFU's pursuits have also inspired novel ideas for future government projects and helped build development capabilities in the public sector. Katerine's interactions with FAMA and Karen M.'s sustainable agriculture projects in Villa Fundación have inspired her to search for environmentally conscious solutions to pressing problems, like waste management. Lacking a viable dump yard to dispose of the town's waste, the *ayuntamiento* plans to develop a model facility and a waste management operation in Villa Fundación, where trash is sorted, sent for recycling and where biodegradable waste is converted into fertilizer. As the *síndica* remarked,

> The ideas that *Doña Karen* brought here have been put to good use. [...] For example, she was the ideologue behind the organic plant, but we also did other pilot initiatives with organic agriculture in some *conucos* [smallholdings]. [...] There were farmers that volunteered to help carry out organic agriculture, which had never been done before here. [...] We want to do a model dumpsite based on that experience, thinking about the ideas that *Doña Karen* brought here.

During the 18 years she spent in the Dominican Republic, Karen M. was able to plant many seeds of knowledge that have borne fruit in Villa Fundación and in other parts of the Dominican Republic. But within the community's empowered model, knowledge didn't flow in one direction—from the professional, rich country development worker towards the underdeveloped community, as common aid narratives argue. Villa Fundación's experience with international aid projects also provided important lessons for Karen M., who took these with her to Germany, where she works for a company that supplies organic inputs for agriculture. Her time in the field transformed her worldview, and has propitiated a different kind of transnational idea flow; as she stated:

> I've learnt to see the world with another perspective. I see this in Germany now. In Germany, they have a very good level of living. They have food, houses, cars; they have not nothing to worry about, but little to worry about, comparing it with the

families and people in the Dominican Republic or specifically in Villa Fundación. But they always want more; they do not have fun in their life. They are always worrying about what will happen in five or six or seven years. And what I learned from the Dominicans and my friends in Villa Fundación is that in spite of all the crises and all the emergencies...to enjoy the moment, to enjoy the meeting of the people, to enjoy the parties, the *fiestas*, to enjoy and not suffer because of anything that will happen in the future. So now I'm a combination. I still have a German mind, I'm a very curt, organized and planned person but with a Dominican style of living. And sometimes, here in Germany, I have problems: the people cannot understand how I am working. [Laughs] Because now I am a new species, it seems.

Also transformed were her views on how development work is conceptualized and carried out. They have also led to new ways of engaging in the field:

You are going to this country with a lot of theories and ideas about how things should be, and the work with the people of Villa Fundación brought me to the ground in a realistic way: to see what is possible, and what you can do, and how can you do it so it can remain there and be successful. So I learnt much more from them, than what the people in Villa Fundación learnt from me.

Are you applying any of those lessons in your current work?

Of course!

Can you give me some examples?

Yes. I always try to work in teams, to get the people motivated with what we do. I never tell them what to do directly, but I try to come to decisions, and they support them because they participated in them. I am working in a Church Council...and it's the same: we try to work in teams and create new activities and projects, but looking at what is needed, and what the people in the community want from us. So for them sometimes it's a little bit new, my way of seeing things. But normally the people like it. They're not used to it, but they like it.

For some young leaders from Villa Fundación, it's easy to see how ADEFU's accomplishments have contributed to development, but also shaped civic and social life of *fundacioneros* at home and abroad. Amongst their numerous

163

contributions is also the creation of new leaders that can translate and transmit ADEFU's lessons into different contexts. This has facilitated the reproduction of their values and ideas into broader civic institutions. Benjamín Q., a young community leader who belongs to the Santo Domingo chapter and has grown up collaborating and learning from ADEFU, argues that the key to understanding the organization's longevity and impact lies in the history of the groups that it has spurred and supported.

> The historical context and the formation of the leaders from the different organizations that have emanated from ADEFU are important determinants. Why? Because the different leaders of those organizations have been members of ADEFU and they have developed their leadership capacities within the organization. The organizations that were just starting out in the 1980s and 1990s owed respect and authority to an organization that established a framework to follow, that has impregnated itself like a culture that future generations will follow. [...]

> *Would you say that a culture of ADEFU exists in Villa Fundación and gets transplanted to Santo Domingo and New York?*

> Yes, it's something that characterizes us. [...]

> *If you had to describe that culture, how would you do so?*

> I would summarize it as a culture of responsibility, of self-sacrifice, a culture of work, a culture of an insatiable pursuit for development, of searching for alternatives, also leadership, as well. As an institution you have to have sufficient leadership to situate yourself for 40 years as a community leader. [...] Villa Fundación is a community of self-development and action.

In the span of four decades, ADEFU has positioned itself as the primary development vehicle for Villa Fundación through the implementation of a varied series of projects that have offered the chance to build productive coproduction partnerships, establish critical learning processes, and expand their reach and capabilities. Some of their successes are rooted in their ability to establish *transnational cooperation* networks that bring together

164

and work jointly with diverse institutions and actors at the international, national and grassroots levels. They are also evidenced in the ways projects move forward through *empowered exchanges* in which community, government and NGO actors build trusting relationships that end up empowering the people at the receiving end of local development projects. Throughout their evolution as a transnational community development organization, they've been able to act as executors, ideologues and leaders in a town that hosts a fair share of formal organizations and community groups.

4. "Nobody is Above *El Campo*": MODEBO's Endeavors to Transform Boca Canasta.

Just a few miles away from Villa Fundación, the town of Boca Canasta is also home to several community development projects that have been made possible through grassroots mobilization and transnational collaborations orchestrated by a long-standing HTA. Some parts of their development histories overlap: the rich tradition of collective work stemming from their agrarian heritage, the complex negotiations with state actors in the pursuit of public services, and the continuing support from stateside migrants that goes a long way towards addressing basic needs. But their results and trajectories vary significantly. While ADEFU's story highlights their ability to promote and sustain *transnational cooperation* networks that link migrant and non-migrant HTA chapters, and take on projects characterized by *empowered exchanges,* where hometown actors assume a protagonist role in the design and execution of the local development agenda, Boca Canasta's experience underscores some of the limitations and difficulties that HTAs face when embarking on transnational community development projects. Notwithstanding the deep transnational links that have been forged over the years, cross-border partnerships between stateside and hometown *boca canasteros* have been less continuous, at times filled with tension, and stifled by lack of coordination. *Transnational realignment* within the *Movimiento para el Desarrollo de Boca Canasta* (MODEBO) has been an uneasy process. Differences between migrants and non-migrants, over what projects should be pursued and how their implementation should proceed, have led to long impasses and been difficult to overcome. In a similar vein, MODEBO's members have developed an arms-length relationship with key public institutions, and engaged in a series of "semi clientelistic" bargains that have limited their ability to transform the HTA-state divide. Thus, the absence of consistent state support and limited opportunities for coproduction have

166

placed a heavy burden on organizations like MODEBO, which have tried to move forward as best they can.

This chapter sheds light on MODEBO's experience with transnational community development. While part of the narrative plays close attention to cross-border conflicts and *arms-length interactions* with public authorities in order to draw out some important lessons, Boca Canasta's story is not one about failures or missed development opportunities. As will be highlighted in the concluding sections, the people of Boca Canasta have accumulated numerous development lessons along the way, given their disposition to experiment and engage in the search for smart solutions to complex, community development problems. Consequently, *boca canasteros* have much to be proud about. More than just a story of struggles, this case also highlights the resiliency and grit of a determined HTA.

Establishing Priorities: Choosing Between the Living and the Dead

In Boca Canasta, the dead have played an important role in the town's transformation. Concerns about their final place of rest, how to transport them there, or give them a proper goodbye, have sparked different collective efforts and community projects that have made hard burdens easier to bear. Ironically, for the residents of Boca Canasta, taking care of the departed has benefitted the living. Nonetheless, death is certain and also unpredictable, so dealing with it is often a messy and complicated affair.

In 1967, amidst a highly repressive and socially turbulent environment, following Joaquín Balaguer's first rise to power in the post-Trujillo era, the leaders of Boca Canasta and El Llano, a neighboring town, joined forces to address an urgent matter: the need to secure a formal burial site close to their communities. For the majority of residents, who were poor agricultural workers, having access to a local cemetery helped lessen the financial burden

167

of procuring suitable and accessible tombs for the remains of their dearly departed.

Knowing well that this was an ambitious project, and that it was improbable that local or regional government actors would take the first steps or react swiftly to their valid claims, the leaders of El Llano and Boca Canasta took a different approach to develop an important community facility. They organized a committee made up of people from both towns, sought donations from wealthier residents, and purchased an accessible tract of land that sits between both villages. Back then, when urbanization pressures were not a major threat, finding a viable piece of land was a relatively easy undertaking.

Once the parcel was secured, they looked to the state for additional help. The organized residents approached the ODC or *Oficina de Desarrollo de la Comunidad.* Following the coproduction model demanded by the ODC, the organized residents of El Llano and Boca Canasta received assistance to prime the land and build the enclosing concrete walls. The state agency provided technical experts, carpenters, and masons, while the community supplied the land, materials and non-skilled laborers. Shortly thereafter, both towns shared a cemetery that remains in operation.

Forty-five years later, the cemetery again became a popular concern in Boca Canasta. Families from both towns have laid many of their loved ones to rest there, and there's not much room for new tenants.

During my first visit to the Dominican Republic, in the summer of 2009, Joaquín V., a long-standing leader and then president of MODEBO, took me on a tour of the town. When we arrived at the cemetery, I wasn't expecting to see much more than an enclosed field full of graves, but this place was something different. Alongside the usual, austere collection of tombs, there were numerous big cement mausoleums that resembled small houses with different facades and creative designs painted in an array of colors. Some of

168

these structures were secured with wrought iron gates and had benches installed inside small vestibules, amenities that were not present in some of town's the more humble homes. My initial impression was that the community's gravesite resembled a downscaled, dense, and irregular gated community.

Because they had prior experience addressing the same problem, identifying a solution was not the most critical issue. MODEBO can follow a proven, problem-driven formula: get organized, fundraise, buy some land, ask the state for help and start building. But this time, there are other factors to consider. An accessible piece of land is harder to come by. Plots close to the original cemetery are substantially more costly due to urbanization pressures and the continuous growth of the community. Because Boca Canasta is right next to the coast, some lands have high commercial value and development potential. Also, real estate investments made by migrants for over 20 years have driven property values up.

To purchase land, MODEBO had to rely on their sister chapter in the United States, which skillfully organizes successful fundraising activities in Boston and sends dollars back to Boca Canasta. But some of the most vocal leaders in Boston were initially hesitant to follow the previous strategy and had other project ideas in mind, which were based on their distinct view of how community development should proceed.

Having lived in the United States for many years, they have developed a different set of expectations of what the state should provide and how it should do so. Their experiences with a free health care system, housing and nutritional assistance, amongst other manifestations of state support in Massachusetts, have transformed their ideas regarding state capacity and what residents should be entitled to—notwithstanding their unequal footing in the socioeconomic hierarchy, given their working class migrant status.

169

Jorge S., the longtime treasurer and de facto leader of the Boston chapter, claimed that a community cemetery is a public good, and as has been the case in some neighboring communities, the state should be the one responsible for building it. He also raised questions regarding the kind of partnership agreement that they would have to establish with the local authorities: why should the community invest in a plot that the state will want to administer and use to generate revenue. Back in 1967, the municipality took over the administration of the cemetery, even though the community contributed the land and manual labor. Those who wished to bury their loved ones had to pay the municipality for the crypt and other costs. In addition, the municipality plans to charge a tax on the graves. In the minds of leaders like Jorge, that mistake should not be repeated. While he is fully aware that a new cemetery will not be built unless the community comes up with a viable piece of land, and that some level of state control is inevitable (as has been the case in the past), his misgivings towards the authorities partially emanates from a deep and growing distrust towards national and local representatives of the Dominican government, and a desire to make them more accountable to the town's needs. From their vantage point, public services and corrupt politics are intertwined. Politicians peer their head and offer assistance to their home community only when electoral gains are to be made.

Boston's reticence towards the new cemetery proposal was also influenced by recent investments they made to build a sports complex in another part of town. An ambitious and costly project that they chose to pursue independently, without securing the support of the hometown directors, the complex will include a softball field, a clubhouse, a basketball court and other amenities. Directors of the Boston chapter argue that these are important public spaces that everyone in the community will be able to enjoy. Having places for the youth to concentrate on sports will keep them off the streets

and contribute to a decline in delinquency and drug use, which is a growing concern in Boca Canasta.

But several leaders of the Boca Canasta chapter and some Boston residents claimed that this is a capricious project that will only please those migrants who like to play softball during their visits to Boca Canasta. The venture reflects an "ossified" perspective (Levitt 2007; 2009) where the hometown becomes a vacation destination, a place where they can escape the incessant hustle and bustle of Boston. It harkens to a quasi-mythical idea of a simpler life in the *campo* of their youth. But several migrant and non-migrant residents claim that the community already has a baseball field that was built over several years with the contributions of Boston residents, so why is another similar structure needed? Most of the detractors consider it an attempt to keep up with the neighboring community of Villa Sombrero, whose migrants in Boston have been working on a similar project throughout the past years.

These differences illustrate some of the complications that arise in the *transnational realignment* process. While MODEBO's president in Boca Canasta and several other directors were not in favor of building a costly sport venue, and favored the idea of expanding the cemetery, they did not want to openly oppose the Boston leadership. For decades, the organization's primary donor base has come from the United States. Avoiding a confrontation ensured that much-needed funds for other programs and initiatives continued to flow into the community. Furthermore, evading friction avoids internal divisions within the organization and the community, and limits the possibility that members become discouraged and stop collaborating. Since the organization has only two chapters that rely on small boards composed of committed volunteers, lack of stateside cooperation can stall on-going projects, like the services provided in Boca Canasta's computer center, which require constant streams of financial support. It can also fuel

divisions that take years to mend. Having dealt with similar situations before, they understand the delicate nature of their predicament.

The impasse over what constitutes a community priority and how the state should respond to an important public need remained unresolved for several months. A series of tense exchanges between migrant and non-migrant chapters ensued. A comment made by Santiago M. during a meeting of the Boston chapter, captured the strain between both camps and hints at the stateside chapter's sense of ownership and control over projects funded with migrant donations:

> If they need the money from the participatory budget to build the cemetery, they should take it. But they can't mess with our plans for the softball field...that's our thing.

Santiago's comment reveals a misalignment in development priorities produced by different perspectives of what the community is and who gets to define it. Competing notions of who holds the power and moral authority to call the shots lie at the core of the disjuncture. As will be shown in later sections, strained communication channels and limited opportunities for deliberation have restricted the chapters' ability to develop more trusting and horizontal relationships that result in *transnational cooperation*.

A solution was identified after numerous cross-border trips and meetings in Boston and Boca Canasta between hometown and migrant directors. In the end, both projects would be pursued. The Boston directors agreed to locate the new cemetery in a far corner of the lot purchased to build the sports complex. Furthermore, leaders from Boca Canasta consented to lending a hand in the long-term completion of the stateside proposal. But state support would be meager, and would only come through the yearly participatory budget program allocation controlled by the municipality of Baní. This type of *arms-length interaction* with the state further limited the possibility of establishing coproduction efforts that could lead to community empowerment.

The road to arrive at a transnational consensus was both bumpy and circuitous as both sides stood their ground while they battled over development priorities. As committed members of a transnational community, and as MODEBO's primary financiers, the Boston directors felt entitled to propose and pursue projects that migrants could enjoy during their visits. On the other hand, non-migrant leaders sought to uphold MODEBO's original mission of prioritizing hometown needs. This type of impasse is not new, and has always proven to be difficult to address and resolve[38]. MODEBO has continuously struggled with finding a plausible division of labor that addresses changing power dynamics amidst a complex *transnational realignment* process—evidenced, for example, in the Boston chapter's current profile as exigent donor and occasional beneficiary. As a result, development projects have been pursued in fits and starts and the organization has seen repeated periods of inactivity. Dormant spells and internal clashes have spurred discussions within the organization on how to improve transnational dialogues, but old patterns are hard to transcend. Periods of latency have led to "organizational forgetting" (de Holan, Phillips and Lawrence 2004; Argote 2013), which hinders the buildup and strategic use of learning experiences. Furthermore, internal disputes and lack of coordination have also influenced how MODEBO interacts with a sluggish and distant public sector, primarily because organizational fractures make it hard to develop a unified and strong voice that can make demands and enhance civic capacity. Because Boca Canasta is not a municipal district, they have to compete with many other towns for the attention of regional politicians, who constantly claim that their budgets are spread too thin, and leverage *arms-length interactions* to their advantage. These experiences highlight what most HTA directors in Boca Canasta and Boston have learned over the years: transnational community development is easier said than done.

---

[38] Similar examples are provided in Levitt's (2001) analysis of the Miraflores Development Corporation.

MODEBO's Origins: Applying Pressure and Building Partnerships to Get Things Done

In 1975, the need to endow the agrarian town with its own health clinic motivated several elite, male leaders in Boca Canasta with prior experience in community development to start MODEBO. This new organization would emerge within an already groomed civic sector that had been built through community institutions like the *convites*, the town's burial society, youth clubs, and a savings and loan co-op, which served as important training grounds for political mobilization and collective agency. It would also work alongside a farmer's association that emerged after the co-op was disbanded.

Although politically engaged, most of MODEBO's founders were considered more conservative than the leaders of previous groups, who were more vocal against repressive practices and also more progressively inclined. Their main strategy was to subtly pressure government actors, when necessary, and mobilize the community as a means to their primary goal: carrying out public service projects that the state had failed to provide. In starting this type of organization, they were following the examples of neighboring towns like Matanzas, Villa Fundación and Villa Sombrero who had founded similar groups just a couple of years before. Nevertheless, while successful migrants residing in Santo Domingo were behind the genesis of these exemplary groups and served as their principal leaders, MODEBO's founding directors and principal managers were mostly respected farmers who resided in Boca Canasta. Nonetheless, a connection with Santo Domingo migrants would be quickly established, but would prove hard to maintain in the long run.

During the period of *elite command*, the organization was focused on addressing three primary areas not being adequately served by the local and national authorities: health, education and public space. These were

174

priorities set by hometown residents, who bore the brunt of inadequate basic services, and had seen how neighboring towns worked collectively to address similar concerns. Lack of basic necessities, decades of government neglect and a competitive spirit served as the important catalysts of a community development approach that relied on identifying workable problems and experimenting with novel solutions. Migrant support was enlisted early on by calling on the extended community network of small businessmen from Boca Canasta, mostly *colmado* owners and employees who had migrated to Santo Domingo in search of better economic opportunities. A formal chapter in Santo Domingo was established, but control remained in Boca Canasta. From the outset, the well-off Santo Domingo members would be mostly confined to helping provide financial assistance.

Their first project, a health clinic, was pursued independently and financed with donations made in a community festival, known as a *kermesse*, which brought together leaders from Boca Canasta and Santo Domingo to celebrate the founding of the organization. They were able to raise enough money to purchase several plots of land, build a clinic and help cover some of the costs of running it (including supplies and medicines), with the assistance of doctors-in-training sent from the public university's medical school. Although elite leaders lacked the technical expertise to set up and run a clinic, taking on this important public service allowed them to accrue important skills, provided much-needed credibility and helped them establish a positive reputation in the eyes of the community and local authorities. Nonetheless, pursuing a project independently involved considerable costs. Maintaining a public facility was a big responsibility for a budding, grassroots organization. In 1978, after managing it for almost 4 years, they handed it over to the national health authorities who have been in charge of running public health services in Boca Canasta ever since. Ceding control of management was part of their original strategy, but it did not mean that the organization would

turn their backs on this important service. Knowing well that a government takeover provided no assurance of adequate services, a health committee was established to keep an eye on public performance and ensure that the important needs were being met. Maintaining state accountability through an oversight group also assured beneficiaries and donors that prior community investments would not be pilfered or become eroded due to the government's neglect.

Two years after completing the clinic, and after having amassed some project execution capabilities, in 1977, they raised the stakes and focused on rebuilding the town's primary school. This was an even bigger project, which initially required the government's intervention. Given the highly centralized (or personalized) control over development decisions within the Dominican government, they had to petition President Balaguer directly and receive his blessing. To effectively lobby the government, they brought high-caliber *Partido Reformista* leaders from Boca Canasta with them whenever they met with the authorities. They also persuaded the province governor to speak on their behalf. It took several meetings, but during a presidential visit to Baní, and after confirming that the community had secured a suitable piece of land, Balaguer gave the final order. The President's authoritarian consent made all the difference. The following day, there was a government engineer surveying the site. Several months later, Boca Canasta had a new school.

These two projects demonstrate how *boca canasteros* were able to spur a new phase of community development that improved on a long-standing tradition of civic engagement. As they moved forward, their efforts were more tactical, and characterized by three important elements: the formation of a community-led, non-partisan organization composed of elite leaders with moderate political views, the financial backing and support of migrant businessmen from Santo Domingo, and the strategic use of political mediators who could shepherd their claims directly to the central authorities.

Effective leadership, popular legitimacy, financial autonomy, and political savvy were MODEBO's primary building blocks.

In a country where repressive regimes had squashed dissent and offered few opportunities for communities to make claims or raise their voices against government neglect, *boca canasteros* found a way to make their needs heard, and endow their community with priority services. Under the cover of community associations, they could organize and leverage the political dynamism of those opposed to decades of government neglect and authoritarian rule. Instead of mounting a dangerous offensive against the government, they used organizations like MODEBO to become engaged in developmental projects that were previously controlled and badly provisioned by the authoritarian state. Knowing well that these were complex efforts that they couldn't develop or sustain by themselves, MODEBO developed an experimental coproduction model whereby the community identified a collective priority, worked on it as far as they could—which in most cases meant purchasing land or building structures—and then lobbied the state for further support. This approach allowed them to address and resolve critical needs while also building important capabilities for community development that could serve them well in later pursuits.

Taking MODEBO to Boston

Shortly after Trujillo was killed, the flow of Dominicans to the United States began growing at a very rapid pace. Manhattan island, or *Nueba Yol*, was the primary Dominican enclave in the United States, but most of those from Boca Canasta who traveled to the United States ended up in Boston, following the lead of those who had traveled before and taken advantage of a budding social network. Many of the elder migrants I've met, who left the Dominican Republic in the 1970s and 1980s, talk about working in a shoulder pad factory, "*La fábrica de los Martínez*". Others would secure employment in the

177

service sector, mostly amongst office cleaning crews. As they recall, it was easy to get a job in those days, even if you didn't have your papers in order. Sometimes a gig was already waiting for them when they arrived, and taking advantage of extended kinship ties and small town customs, a friend or a family member would put them up until they were able to secure their own place.

As described in greater detail in Chapter 2, many *boca canasteros* settled in Jamaica Plain, an immigrant neighborhood that had evidenced decades of tough times due to disinvestment, white-flight, and misguided city planning. Cheap rents made it easy for the newcomers to find affordable dwellings, and many found a home in *La Mozart*, or Mozart Street, an area where one of the first residential clusters of *boca canasteros* sprang up. Because most Dominicans did not possess the skills to thrive in the "new economy", they were thrust into the strenuous and low-paying service sector. Although they didn't import the needed expertise to bask in the "Massachusetts miracle", *boca canasteros* brought with them a rich associational experience that helped them come together in Boston as they adjusted to the difficult realities of living in the United States.

Boston migrants had been remitting funds to their friends and relatives since their arrival, and some had supported collective efforts from afar. In 1979, they took more concrete steps to organize collective support for Boca Canasta and charted a way for the creation of MODEBO's first stateside chapter. That year, hurricane David, a category 5 storm, tore through the Dominican Republic from south to north, leaving a devastating path of destruction. Hundreds of thousands lost their homes and the losses in the agricultural sector reached US$1 billion (Pérez 2009). Like many other southern towns, Boca Canasta was badly hit. MODEBO took the lead in organizing emergency and relief services, and ensured that no lives were lost in the aftermath of the storm. Along with the other community organizations, they

helped organize a civil defense unit and coordinated with local farmers to use a local well as a source of water for Boca Canasta and nearby towns. Their control of the town after the storm further legitimized the capacity of the organization in Boca Canasta and in Boston. It also gave them more confidence in their pursuits, and standing outside the community since they were able to assume an important emergency management role ideally carried out by the state. As Edison M., an elder leader and former member of MODEBO remarked: "[During the relief efforts] we were the Dominican state."

The havoc wreaked by the storm created a sense of urgency in Boston that helped them become better organized to rally behind MODEBO's hometown efforts. They raised over $5,000 and collected clothes, medicines and other basic items that were personally delivered to their hometown. To this day, leaders in Boca Canasta remember this act of solidarity that helped cement a long relationship between committed leaders in both countries.

Nevertheless, in the years that followed the storm, MODEBO in Boca Canasta went through a prolonged dormant period. They organized important community activities like sporting leagues, and were able to secure some land to build a baseball field in 1985, but they did not have the same drive as in years past. Migration to Boston contributed to MODEBO's slump. Already scarred by hurricane David, many *boca canasteros* moved to the United States fleeing a depressed economy and an agricultural sector ravaged by misguided national policies. The exodus included many community leaders and supporters in Santo Domingo and Boca Canasta who had been central to the successes of the organization. In those days, Boston's primary role was to provide financial support to the projects orchestrated by the hometown chapter, so the lull in Boca Canasta also ameliorated stateside engagement. Some people remained engaged, as was the case with an ad-hoc committee that fundraised in Boston for the construction of the town's plaza.

But overall, the eighties brought many changes that led to a reshuffling of roles and responsibilities within the organization: the Santo Domingo chapter stopped operating, and the Boston community kept growing, so did MODEBO in the United States.

In the early nineties, MODEBO-Boston demonstrated their growing strength in the United States and their disposition to lend a hand. In Boca Canasta, MODEBO reorganized their board and began a community-wide effort to expand the town's water supply. In many of the southern towns around Baní, potable water is supplied through a system of wells, small reservoirs and water towers. As the towns grow in size and population, the systems need to be upgraded and expanded. These are complex and costly projects that are usually performed by INAPA, the national water company. MODEBO began to take steps to remedy the situation, knowing well that waiting for the state to react would only worsen the situation. The hometown devised an experimental solution: build a new underground well in one of the fields they had purchased. The organization's leadership understood that this remedy would only serve as a partial solution to the problem, but it was better than the alternative. A costly project, it would require many rounds of fundraising, but they knew that with the help of the Boston chapter it would take less time and effort.

As Dominican migration to the United States swelled in the 1990s, there were more *boca canasteros* arriving in Jamaica Plain. That growth meant that MODEBO-Boston could rely on the financial support of a larger number of people, at a time when the exchange rate stood at an average of 12 pesos per dollar. A big, all-day festival was organized in Boston during the summer months of 1991. The Boston chapter sold homemade food prepared by volunteers, beers, and collected donations for a whole day. Hundreds went to Bromley Hall in Jamaica Plain to share with their family and friends and pledge their support. The videos recorded that day show cars arriving in

caravans, live music shows, celebratory speeches and people coming together to have fun. Those who were there speak of that day as a momentous occasion, since it signaled the strength and commitment of a growing community in Boston that cared deeply about the needs of their hometown. Even though they struggled in the United States and didn't have much of a say in how their lives were unfolding in a tough new environment, being able to contribute to the betterment of their hometown offered an opportunity to exercise some level of influence in their community's development and elevate their profiles, from working class laborers, to major financiers and benefactors. By the end of the festivities they had raised a record figure that has never been surpassed.

Attempting to Work Collectively Between Boston and Boca Canasta

Several *boca canasteros* in Boston recall how the organization gathered strength in the aftermath of the 1991 fundraiser. Luis T., who migrated to the US in 1988, and whose father was an early member of the Boston chapter, remembered MODEBO meetings in the 1990s that were well attended by persons seriously committed to the group.

During those meetings, leaders in Boston would phone their counterparts in Boca Canasta to receive updates on projects and hear the latest news and gossip related to the organization. Those calls helped bridge the physical distance between the two chapters and offered a chance to gather information about what the community needed and why. The conversations also kept the Boston membership motivated, since it offered an opportunity to voice their opinions in hometown affairs. Constant communication between chapters was fundamental for establishing collaborations at a distance. For many of the migrant collaborators, who were slowly deciphering the politics of *transnational realignment*, two internal management issues were of importance. First, being kept informed as to how their financial contributions

181

were being used. This information helped build trust in their cross-border partnership and in the community at large. Knowing where the money was being spent helped dismiss common gossip regarding the ill use of collective remittances, and offered a sense of security that their hard earned cash was not lining the pockets of a director in need. Some elders recalled how the mismanagement of funds led to the dismantling of the town's savings and loan co-op. In order to grapple with this negative reputation, put those fears to rest and gain legitimacy[39] within the organization and in the larger community, MODEBO leaders also published detailed reports on hometown finances that were sent over to Boston and discussed during their regular calls.

Another important management issue was tied to decision-making and goal setting. From the start, the hometown leadership made most decisions regarding project selection, since they were thought to be the ones more attuned to local needs. But Boston leaders were not just following along silently. Being able to voice their opinions on procedural or decisive actions was an important part of their involvement and duties. Although they were thousands of miles apart, many kept abreast of what was transpiring in their hometown through regular phone calls with friends and relatives. They felt sufficiently informed and up-to-date to raise questions and get answers. Keeping open communication channels with their counterparts in Boca Canasta, and holding regular meetings where matters related to the community could be debated allowed them to feel engaged, and solidified their commitment. In short, realignment for cross border collaboration required the adoption of several self-governing mechanisms (Ostrom 1990; Locke 2001) that could ensure the stability and sustainability of their cross border collaborations.

---

[39] As Santana (2012) has argued, leader and organizational legitimacy has an important effect on the performance and stability of HTAs.

During the 1990s, MODEBO built a modern funeral home, which was endowed with a funeral car sent from Boston, made important investments to upgrade the school, while other donations from the United States helped maintain or improve existing facilities. But organizational leadership waxed and waned throughout the decade. If there were important projects to support, they would come alive and lend a hand. When asked about why the Santo Domingo chapter dissolved and some leaders in Boca Canasta have abandoned the organization, Joaquín V. explained:

> Some people passed away, others just get tired. Many from Boca Canasta and Santo Domingo migrated to the United States. Some had a special inclination towards a specific project, like the school or the clinic, and once they had seen they had reached the objective, they felt they had satisfied their needs.

Conversely, Roberto T., a former director of the Boston chapter, explained why a voluntary group like MODEBO has had a difficult time maintaining a steady leadership structure in the United States.

> [Only] a small group is worried about working for the community. Because here, in this country, sometimes it's difficult to do many things, because of work, the hours... So people get a bit lazy (*haragán*) and don't want to work for the community...Many people work two jobs, and then in the weekend they have other activities, things to do with the family, so it's hard to tell them 'you have to come to this meeting', or 'you have to get out and sell tickets'. So that's why many people are not inclined to work. But the majority is willing to cooperate.

> If someone comes to their home and says: 'we're from the committee [MODEBO] and we're selling these tickets', almost everyone will say yes [to their request] and cooperate with any activity that's organized by the community.

Roberto's comments, which are also shared by other interviewees, point to complicated work schedules and time as the main limiting factors. For Roberto, these are not constraints shared by his counterparts in Boca

Canasta, whose labor experiences are shaped by a very different socioeconomic context.

> In Boca Canasta things are different because people have more time...they work less and the jobs are very different. I would say that all of the jobs there are until 5 in the afternoon, and you're free the rest of the day. Saturday and Sunday are free. Only those that work in *colmados* or run a business work at nights or weekends.

While Joaquín and Roberto point to individual-level factors to explain member attrition and waning commitment, their comments suggest that key structural factors, like the types of economic opportunities available in each place and migration pressures, also play a role. These are important elements that previous scholarship on HTAs has underscored (Portes and Landolt 2000, 545):

> In immigrant communities, there is a constant erosion of membership. Impoverished transnational *paisanos*, burdened with competing sets of relations and obligations and experiencing shifting loyalties that are typical of the migrant experience, drift away from the association.

Roberto's comments also highlight an important distinction between working and cooperating. Most *boca canasteros* in the United States are willing to cooperate and do their part to carry on the solidary tradition of helping out their *campo*, but few are in a favorable position or inclined to donate some of the little free time they have to attend a meeting or plan fundraising activities. This makes it hard to maintain an active core of HTA leaders in the United States. As research on Salvadorian HTAs demonstrates, maintaining a balance between core and periphery members is difficult and risky with regards to the continuity of these primarily voluntary groups. Free riding is likely to occur and further contribute to HTA attrition, as a small group of active members are left shouldering the brunt of what should be a communal effort (Waldinger, Popkin and Magana 2008).

But in Roberto's view, migrants should not be held to the same standard of community service as their counterparts back home who have less demanding work schedules. His perspective is another manifestation of what Levitt described as the "ossification effect" (Levitt 2007; 2009). Having made numerous sacrifices in their migrant journey, those who leave tend to "ossify" their home community and perceive it as a simpler, bucolic landscape where those they left behind are still stuck in the labor and sociocultural regimes of a quasi-mythical past. However, many of their counterparts back home have inevitably moved on and lead similarly complex lives, in part due to the changes brought by transnational migration. This disjuncture between migrant's perceptions and non-migrant reality, as will be argued further, tends to generate difficult negotiations regarding what each group wants for their home community (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2013). Roberto's opinions are shared by many of his migrant peers, who express that most of those who stay behind now lead an easier life due to the individual and collective remittances sent from Boston. These ideas have also given way to new hierarchies that shape transnational social relationships and the definition of roles within organizations like MODEBO[40].

The structural and social dimensions that help shape expectations regarding roles and duties amongst migrant and non-migrant chapters give rise to differences in priorities and management styles. Years of living in the United States have influenced migrants' expectations and desires regarding community amenities and public infrastructures. Their interest in sport facilities is a case in point. Because several of MODEBO's migrant members used to play or attended baseball and softball league games in Boca Canasta, and now enjoy doing the same throughout Boston's public parks—which have

---

[40] Some of the most insightful work on changing social dynamics within transnational societies has come from scholars examining transformations in gender roles and household relationships (Georges 1992; Pessar and Mahler 2003).

better furnishings, including facilities where their children can play while they spend the afternoon amongst friends, and are relatively well maintained—they are convinced that these are the kinds of community projects that they should aspire for their native community. Although they recognize that their towns face very different fiscal and economic conditions than cities like Boston, these constraints are not seen as major impediments to pursue facilities that provide similar comforts as the ones they have come to enjoy in the United States.

At times, these aspirations are not met with enthusiasm by hometown leaders who understand that there are more pressing priorities in Boca Canasta, and want to exert their traditional influence over project selection. Reticence has also stemmed from concerns that acquiescence to non-essential desires, especially those coming from younger migrant members, will undermine the leadership of founding elders who have customarily been at the helm of the organization. In communities like Boca Canasta, where the flows of social remittances between migrant and non-migrant enclaves often leads to renegotiations of traditional roles, these types of power plays are not uncommon. Despite the big shifts in social structures and values that have emerged as a result of sustained migration and transnational ties, a certain amount of deference is afforded to seniors who are considered to be the *viejos robles* (elder statesmen) of these HTAs. Interestingly, the elders' influence within the organization comes from their use of experience and standing to address complex situations within the organization and gain access to state actors and institutions, not from imposing their views or using status to sway decision making within the organization. As such, authoritative styles and capricious decisions can be met with resistance or lead to the erosion of valuable members who feel shunned from making meaningful contributions to their community.

In the late 1990s, after the funeral home was completed, Luis T. and other younger members of MODEBO in Boston were interested in making improvements to the town's baseball field. Before migrating, Luis played for Boca Canasta in the *Liga Campesina,* a semiprofessional league that included teams from nearby towns. In Boston, he also coached little league teams, which he described as well organized and endowed with the proper equipment and facilities to play. Inspired by his coaching experience, he fundraised, purchased equipment, and sent it to his hometown so that the youth baseball coach in Boca Canasta had the resources to offer a similar experience. As a former player and coach who had seen the contrast between how things were done in Boston and Boca Canasta, he understood that upgrading the baseball facilities would offer better opportunities for young people to develop their skills, socialize in a safe and constructive manner, and maybe play professionally—something he always dreamed about as a youngster.

When Luis and his friends approached MODEBO's leadership in Boca Canasta, they were told that it wasn't a priority project, and the organization would be focusing on other efforts, like upgrading the community center and fixing the local Catholic church. Not interested in delaying their desires, and feeling that their ideas had been precipitously vetoed by Joaquín V. then president of the hometown chapter and a ranking senior within MODEBO—they organized a separate group (with representatives in Boston and Boca Canasta) and moved ahead with their project. Secession from an established organization would make it difficult for the new group to take advantage of the organizational capabilities and skills that had been developed over the years. This would ultimately hamper their ability to address project implementation issues, and deprive them of the necessary opportunities for reflection and consultation that are essential for building transnational collaborations and trust. MODEBO's leaders gave them their blessing, but

only because they forecasted failure. In the years that followed, the group raised money in both places and made slow but steady progress.

Before the project was completed, tensions between both groups increased as Joaquín V. asked to see the project's expense reports, and alluded that funds were being misused. Although the accusations were never confirmed, they drove a deep wedge between those who had worked in the project and MODEBO's leadership in Boca Canasta. Luis, who led the project in Boston, explains that the group did not produce detailed financial reports because they were focused on getting things done, and had the semi completed project as proof. But an accounting of funds was standard practice in MODEBO. Whenever money was sent from the US, leaders in Boca Canasta produced reports that detailed their uses. This was a trademark practice that curbed accusations of corruption and helped build legitimacy and trust between members in the organization and the larger community. It also set them apart from the standard practices of the Dominican state, where money for projects is seldom accounted for and detailed documentation of uses is almost nonexistent. Lacking the technical expertise that MODEBO's seasoned members could provide, the splinter group's efforts drew considerable critique. Although they were following a similar approach to community development, they lacked the reputational backing and know-how that can turn experimental efforts into legitimated and successfully completed projects.

In Luis' view, the accusations succeeded in generating divisions that led to MODEBO's takeover of the almost-completed project. Afraid that they would be labeled as crooks, and disheartened by the growing tensions, many of those who volunteered in the original group bowed out. After putting the finishing touches, MODEBO led the inauguration of the baseball field, which now had roofed cement stands and other amenities. But the differences over what project to take on and how to do it left some deep divisions between some migrants and hometown leaders that last to this day. Leaders in Boston

like Luis, who felt wronged and pushed aside, have never returned to the organization.

The Complexities of Working a Transnational Project: MODEBO's Ambulance Service

Over time, and ironically, pulling off transnational projects has become an increasingly complicated task for MODEBO's members. Years of experience should have made them reflect on past mistakes and make the necessary corrections, but unfortunately, this has not been the case. Prolonged and repeated periods of dormancy, mostly brought about by tensions between migrant and non-migrant members in recent years, have limited the organization's ability to develop an institutional memory, or routinize and deeply embed knowledge and skills that can help them avoid past mistakes and identify the most appropriate problem-solving strategies—more so in Boston than in Boca Canasta. What ensues is "organizational forgetting" (de Holan, Phillips and Lawrence 2004; Argote 2013), which leads to situations where groups are unable to perform certain tasks that they were previously able to do, and productivity wanes considerably. With each chapter revival, new members are recruited, as many veterans have grown tired or become discouraged. New recruits often bring novel ideas, which are always in high demand within organizations that seek to provide solutions for development. Although highly eager and committed, many of the newcomers lack the experience and technical insights that are necessary to ensure improvement and evade the implementation pitfalls that accompany many of the trial and error approaches that organizations like MODEBO employ. Lack of continuity results in situations where some new members are given important roles within the organization, and they feel compelled to push their ideas, but lack the requisite experience that comes with prior peer mentoring or learning by example.

189

"Organizational forgetting" also implies rebuilding roles and protocols within a chapter and between chapters— for example, deciding when to meet, how to share information, and assigning responsibilities, amongst others. Moreover, it requires redeveloping communication channels between migrant and non-migrant boards. Finding the most appropriate ways of sharing information and making joint decisions is of utmost importance to a multi chapter organization that operates across borders. Because minutes and important documents are not regularly stored or shared across chapters, MODEBO lacks a stable repository of prior organizational decision-making. Furthermore, because most of the experiential information is held by individual members—mostly by elders who have amassed "folk knowledge"— or is embedded in organizational routines, attrition and periods of dormancy inevitably hamper future endeavors. Lacking experience, and without the proper organizational frameworks in place, makes it hard to build working relationships based on collective trust both within the organization and with state actors. It also hinders organizational performance, which in the case of MODEBO means that projects take longer and do not lead to the desired outcomes.

In the fall months of 2008, when I began my fieldwork, MODEBO-Boston was going through another prolonged dormant phase. Jorge S., the longtime treasurer, was keeping the group afloat, organizing activities, making small donations on behalf of the group, and staying in touch with the hometown chapter. All of the work fell on his shoulders and he talked about being very saddened by the absence of commitment from the people of his *campo*. Lack of appeal from the second generation, previous differences regarding what should constitute timely community priorities—or "out-of-sync future visions" (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2013)—and the temporal constraints faced by most *boca canasteros* in Boston were limiting factors. Several months after, in the

summertime, he began to recruit new members, convened a meeting, and a new board of directors was established.

The new board included a few veterans and several newcomers to the organization. To get them motivated, Jorge proposed that the new board rally behind the donation of an ambulance for Boca Canasta. The idea had been in the Boston's project pipeline for some time, but now that the group had come together once again, it seemed achievable. Like the baseball park effort, this was a venture conceived and proposed by leaders in Boston.

In small towns like Boca Canasta, where local health services are provided in community clinics, there are usually no ambulances available and if a patient needs to be carted to a hospital in an emergency, they are often laid in the back of cars or pickup trucks. Stories abound of persons who passed away because they didn't reach the hospital on time or were given proper medical attention at the scene of an accident.

In Boston, migrants are used to dialing 9-1-1 in case of an emergency, and having an ambulance appear. Their lived experiences inspired a very specific notion of development that would be translated into the implementation of a specialized public service. Knowing that an ambulance made a difference in a life and death situation, it became a highly necessary, priority project. In their minds, being able to rely on a similar local service in Boca Canasta is a sign of progress and a step forward. Also, the nearby town of Villa Sombrero had just received a donated ambulance from their HTA chapter in New York City. The *boca canasteros* from Boston couldn't stay behind the curve. These were strong enough arguments to pursue the effort, even if was not consulted with their counterparts in Boca Canasta. Stateside *boca canasteros* hoped that a quick win would send a clear message to their counterparts back home and to migrant peers from nearby towns that MODEBO-Boston was back in full force.

Although the Boca Canasta chapter did not come up with the ambulance project, they weren't opposed to the idea. When I first spoke to Joaquín V., then president of the Boca Canasta chapter, about the ambulance service, he commented:

> Traditionally, we decide what we have built here, and they support us...We didn't tell them that we wanted that [an ambulance]. But they have their ideas and they ask us...but we can't be against them, they're the ones who have *los cualtos* (the money). We are not opposed to that [the ambulance].

His comments demonstrate the shifts in power dynamics that had been developing, and how the customary way of operating was changing as MODEBO faced another round of *transnational realignment*. Having been through a divisive experience over the baseball field, Joaquín V. seemed to be choosing his words carefully. Opposing the recently reconfigured Boston chapter could compromise access to their major source of financial support, and further complicate relationships between migrants and non-migrants.

With the money raised in a big party that featured a live Dominican band, the Boston chapter purchased a used ambulance. They had it painted and affixed MODEBO's logo—a handshake—in the vehicle's doors. Although they had not worked together before and the novices were learning on the go, the process seemed to flow smoothly, as some of the stateside veterans had experience hosting fundraising parties, and several newcomers knew about commercial vehicles, getting them fixed and other related issues. But things got complicated fast, since some important knowledge and strategies had been forgotten and had to be relearned along the way.

Transporting the ambulance to Boca Canasta proved to be a tortuous process. Because MODEBO is not registered as a non-governmental entity in the Dominican Republic, they had to cut through several strands of red tape and pay a substantial amount of fees and taxes, on top of the shipping costs. This

did not occur when they sent the funeral car, because back then the Boca Canasta chapter enlisted the help of the province governor and the vehicle was sent in his name. But the funeral car had been sent many years ago, and none of the current members in Boston knew enough about this experience to attempt to do something similar. Afraid they would fall prey to a corrupt ploy if they entered into a similar agreement with a local politician, and lose momentum in their new project due to rampant delays associated with government intervention, the Boston leadership decided to forego that possibility. Furthermore, they did so without much consultation with their counterparts in the Boca Canasta, who later asserted their disposition to come up with other feasible alternatives. Nonetheless, their hurried attempt to save time and bypass the complications of dealing with the government did not yield the desired outcome, since it took them several months and numerous intricate transactions to retrieve the ambulance from the customs dock.

Once the vehicle arrived in Boca Canasta, they faced even more hurdles related to project implementation. Both chapters raised important questions: who would be in charge of operating the vehicle, or of maintaining it and making sure it is being put to good use? Who would pay for the maintenance and insurance? Where would it be stationed? These are important queries that should have been addressed by both chapters before the vehicle was purchased, and needed answers. While the ambulance gathered dust in Boca Canasta, they tried to figure out how to get the project off the ground.

Understanding that they had already done their part, the Boston leaders shifted most of the administrative and implementation responsibilities to the Boca Canasta chapter. Given all the money and energy spent in purchasing and transporting the vehicle, they wanted to have some form of control over its use, so they asked Boca Canasta to draft a set of bylaws to be approved by MODEBO-Boston. During these conversations, they debated their role and

standing within the *Movimiento,* since it had just come to their attention that the previous board of directors in Boca Canasta—under Joaquín V., who had recently stepped down—had entered into an agreement regarding the maintenance and management of a state-built computer center, that would require a steady stream of financial support from Boston. When the contract was signed, the Boston chapter was in a dormant state, so the hometown leaders unilaterally made a decision. An exchange between members during a meeting in Boston reveals some of the tensions that emerged as a result of the disconnection between home and host country chapters:

> *Martín* [new member]: We should approve what they write [for the ambulance] so that we're not taken by surprise...those issues that we don't agree on, we should modify jointly.
>
> *Javier* [Vice President, new member]: Nobody is above anyone here. We're all equal.
>
> *Jorge* [Treasurer, veteran member]: Nobody is above *el campo* (the community).
>
> *Javier:* Working with people is hard. Working in groups is hard. In here, what the *Movimiento* says has to be respected.

Although the responsibility for managing the ambulance would rest on the hometown chapter, many within the Boston leadership wanted to assert their equal standing in the *Movimiento's* decision-making process. They purchased the ambulance without cross-border consultation or detailed discussions about execution, but they wanted full cooperation from their counterparts in the Dominican Republic regarding project implementation and management decisions. Although this attitude can be attributed to organizational forgetting, and the newcomers' lack of experience with undertaking community projects and working in transnational organizations—as the differences between Jorge's and Javier's views shows—there was an evident lack of coordination and deliberation between both groups. As a result, when

the ambulance was stuck in customs, and information on the reasons for the delay was scarce, the blame was cast on the hometown chapter.

> *Martín*: The ambulance investment is in danger. Who's going to take care of the ambulance? We have to think about the projects that we're going to undertake. We are not going to take on projects to place them in the hands of people who won't support them.

> *Javier*: We want order [in the hometown committee]...I am convinced that there is no [functioning] committee over there.

The agitation that was brewing in Boston started to subside once Jorge came back from a Christmas visit to Boca Canasta. Having had ample time to meet with the hometown leadership and observe how projects were unfolding, he brought back some important information to a meeting:

> *Jorge*: I talked to Eugenio [the president of the Boca Canasta chapter] and he told me: "they [the ones who question what we're doing] have not talked to me". So they don't talk to Eugenio but come quickly to us with complaints [about what's going on in Boca Canasta]. [...]

> The committee over there is well organized [shows their audited financial statements to those present]. They have accumulated benefits totaling 100,000 Pesos in just five months...they're going to incorporate MODEBO in Boca Canasta. Here it's more problematic [to undertake incorporation], but it's important that they incorporate over there because it will be easier to *hacer gestiones* (make arrangements).

Jorge's comments reveal how lack of communication between the leadership had led to quick judgments and unnecessary tensions within the organization. As it turned out, the hometown committee, which was presided by a successful farmer and businessman, was well organized and taking important measures to make sure that all of the group's dealings were done by the book. Regarding the ambulance, an interesting debate ensued:

> *Jorge*: The thing about the ambulance is very complicated. I went to see how the one in Cañafístol [a neighboring town]

works. A couple manages it. They get called and she takes the passengers. Eugenio looked for an expert, someone from the Red Cross. [According to the expert], the ambulance needs two paramedics and one driver, one radio for each one and a mobile phone. I think the solution is to sell it, or privatize it.

Javier: They're not in the United States. We bought the ambulance for Boca Canasta...over there it doesn't work like here. He should lay off the Red Cross thing...they have to find the best way of administering it. The ambulance is not a business; it's for helping people out.

Jesús [veteran member]: If you involve the Red Cross, it becomes a business, because you have to hire a paramedic.

Jorge: But we're not going to accept that.

As Jorge remarked, running an ambulance service is a complicated affair. In their haste to embark on a project after a prolonged period of inactivity, MODEBO in Boston did not consider all the important implications. They also didn't consider that, when charged with the responsibility of administering the service, the hometown chapter would consider employing the standards used by the Red Cross, which are similar to the ones they've experienced in the United States. Employing these standards involves some considerable costs—like salaries, equipment, and training—which, in their view, cannot be easily subsidized by the organization or the government and would make the ambulance project more like a business, where the expenses are covered by a fare. Their reflections reveal how stateside members held "ossified" views on how public services worked and how they should be managed in Boca Canasta. A skillful manager, Eugenio wanted to abide by the existing legal framework, which had slowly changed and now resembles the standards used in the United States. It's important to note that these conversations began to emerge when Jorge brought firsthand information on the hometown chapter and how discussions over the ambulance were unfolding in Boca Canasta.

An agreement over how to proceed with the project was worked out weeks after, when Eugenio S. traveled to Boston and attended a meeting of the Boston chapter. It was an important gathering that helped bridge information gaps between both groups and reach agreements. Eugenio was given the opportunity to speak at length about ongoing and future projects and propose ideas for improving working relationships. For the first time since the Boston chapter was restarted, I felt that the organization was deliberating over priorities, process and goals. "Organizational forgetting" had taken its toll and the organization was slowly beginning to engage in a much needed, recursive process of reflection and revision (Sabel 2004; Sabel and Zeitlin 2012) or "iterative feedback" (Andrews, Pritchett and Woolcock 2013) that could allow them to rebuild important capabilities and ensure a less turbulent *transnational realignment* process within MODEBO.

The first theme Eugenio raised was related to transparency and trust. He gave his counterparts a dossier filled with receipts, financial reports and other documents related to the management of the hometown chapter. His predecessor, Joaquín V., kept a private archive of the organization in his home, but Eugenio suggested a different approach: a physical community archive that provides detailed information on all financial matters of the organization and is accessible to people in both places. He explained the main motivation for the archive:

> *Eugenio*: We come from a culture where people raise many questions, many doubts. We have to be prepared...have proof...there are people who can cause harm.

When Eugenio received the reins of the organization, accusations of mismanagement were made in Boston and Boca Canasta regarding Joaquín V.'s tenure. His proposal aimed to avoid these divisive and harmful comments, increase trust in the organization, and dispel any possible rumors against his administration—even within the organization. He was also

encouraging the Boston chapter to follow an "open books" policy. This suggestion was well received amongst the stateside members, but could not be implemented. Unlike the dealings within the hometown board, meetings in Boston are very informal and somewhat disorganized. Detailed minutes are rarely recorded, and the same goes for financial reports. Many meetings are only attended by a handful of members, and repeated attempts to hold new elections or draft a set of bylaws have been unsuccessful. Because many of its members can only invest a few hours a month to the organization and still lack the technical expertise associated with running effective meetings, the stateside chapter is unable to engage in a simple documents exchange that could go a long way to build trust and curb coordination failures.

With regards to the ambulance, Eugenio's initial comments were very precise:

> The ambulance is ready [to be used]. But you thought that
> having the ambulance was everything [that was needed].

He listed all the important steps involved in getting the ambulance service started, such as: equipping, registering and insuring the vehicle, finding experienced drivers, paramedics, and an accessible and safe garage. The costs associated with providing the service were also discussed. The Boston leaders listened intently while coming to terms with the fact that they had acted prematurely and unknowingly. The Boca Canasta chapter would eventually launch the service, but it did not last long. Several months after it began, it became clear that the service would be difficult to maintain due to cost and coordination issues. The vehicle was ultimately sold.

Knowing that they could muster the economic resources to carry out projects in their hometown, Boston migrants wanted to have a say in the decisions over projects and priorities. Wanting to make their presence and prowess felt after a prolonged dormant period, they felt determined to become active

developers and practitioners, not just financiers from afar. Living in the United States had separated them from their hometown and the needs of its residents, but it provided opportunities to come up with new projects based on lived experiences in a developed country. Thus, their definition of development shifted, and so did their project proposals for Boca Canasta. But these ideas needed to be rendered through a process that involved cross border dialogue and negotiation. Lacking the time and expertise within its ranks, MODEBO-Boston needed to rely on the knowledge and support of their counterpart organization in the Dominican Republic. Experimenting with complicated transnational projects independently proved to be a risky and costly move that did not yield the desired results. Nevertheless, it served as a trial by fire for a stateside group that sought to rebuild their transnational community development capabilities.

Dis/Connections with the Political Process and the State

Boca canasteros in the Dominican Republic have employed diverse tactics to make claims and access state resources for development. Through defiance, negotiation and collaboration, they've been able to nab the attention of diverse governmental actors and undertake a series of essential community projects. With each success, MODEBO has been able to upgrade its reputation and standing within the community and in the eyes of local authorities. But their predominantly civic-driven approach to problem solving and community development, while sometimes effective, has also been limiting. Their inability to establish more permanent or stronger partnerships with state actors and government authorities in the Dominican Republic, has led to an *arms-length* relationship characterized by timid or sporadic interventions from the authorities. This particular state-society relationship has stymied effective coproduction and synergies between state and non-state actors that could lead to more favorable opportunities for

199

hometown community development. In this section, I explain how *boca canasteros* have worked through a series of complicated engagements with national and local authorities.

Initial attempts to engage in development projects were pursued through acts of calculated defiance. In 1955, while Trujillo was still in power, the community replaced the worn out grade school with a new, one-classroom structure. During the dictatorship, Trujillo was the only one who could take care of these matters, so the community's actions were interpreted as a challenge towards the regime. It wasn't long before government officers showed up in Boca Canasta, demanding an explanation to the perceived affront. But there weren't any major repercussions, thanks to the involvement of government officers from Baní who interceded and made sure the incident was forgotten.

For seasoned leaders in Boca Canasta, this story underscores the community's tenacity and commitment. They have been executing community-led public projects for many decades, and even under one of the most repressive regimes in the Americas. But more than being brave or resourceful, *boca canasteros* were also being strategic. Building a school was a way of drawing attention to their needs in a non-confrontational manner. When the repressive state responded, they leveraged their government contacts to resolve the matter. Interestingly, a similar approach based on strategic but indirect claims making is still being employed, albeit under a very different system of government.

During Balaguer's first government, residents of Boca Canasta took advantage of the state's interest in promoting community organizations, and were able to organize youth clubs, farmers associations and even a savings and loan co-op. Community leaders with progressive principles spearheaded these groups, which also harbored young people with revolutionary

inclinations who sought political cover from a different authoritarian regime. Revolutionary politics and associational life were conjoined during that period. Working within these supposed non-political organizations was the safest way of avoiding persecution, and claiming public goods and services from the state. Joaquín V. recalls how the farmer's association, for example, pressured INESPRE, the National Institute for Price Stabilization, to take swift action when good harvests, or an overabundance of staples drove prices down and threatened the earning power of local farmers.

These associational experiences served as important learning opportunities for political mobilization and collective agency. Nevertheless, while many of their efforts led to tangible results, they were focused on garnering particular benefits and making piecemeal demands to national agencies and central government bureaucrats who would easily forget about Boca Canasta once they attended to specific requests. Such was the case of the town's aqueduct, which was built during Balaguer's second term.

With the money from Boston's big fundraiser of the early 1990s, the Boca Canasta chapter pressed ahead with their plans to build the well to make a much-needed expansion of the town's water services. But in order to do so, they needed to secure government permits to start the project. They visited state offices, the National Palace, and enlisted the help of local politicians, to no avail. Knowing that Balaguer was fond of exercising his presidential authority for paternalistic and populist displays of benevolence, they decided to approach him during a ribbon cutting activity in Baní. Using the *Reformista* governor as an interlocutor, they explained how much money they had, how they raised it, and what their plans were. Joaquín V., who was part of the group that met with the President, recalled:

> Balaguer was laughing [and said] 'Don't talk to me about those *chelitos* [pennies], keep those *chelitos* and build something else because I'm going to build your aqueduct, we'll start next week'.

201

A shrewd politician, Balaguer didn't want to lose the opportunity to concede a favor or become upstaged by a community that was capable of identifying solutions on their own. For numerous leaders in MODEBO, attaining the aqueduct showed that with Boston's moral support and financial backing, they would be able to take on larger projects, and thus nab the attention of high-level politicians. Their success in pressuring Balaguer to deliver a needed infrastructure project meant that they had the ability to convince and converse with powerful state actors in order to do right by their community. But these were singular gains that, while helping them deliver important services to the community at large, did little to produce significant gains in their relationship with state actors—such as, altering patron-client relationships, introducing significant changes in democratic accountability, or having a larger say in the development agenda. MODEBO's tactics have led to successful projects, but have not led to many improvements in institutional capabilities that can lead to better alternatives for transnational community development.

Bargaining for Local Development at Arms-Length

For the most part, MODEBO's approach to the politics of development has been to leverage collective remittances and hometown partisan connections while maintaining an official non-partisan stance. The organization has welcomed members from all political persuasions and never taken sides in the highly divisive partisan arena. Their political strength comes from their ability to rely on local gatekeepers from all the major parties, while speaking on behalf of the community. This strategy has afforded them an important level of credibility and gravitas in the eyes of important political actors in the Baní region, and earned them recognition as project brokers and development troubleshooters for their *campo*.

In a period spanning almost four decades, MODEBO's leaders in Boca Canasta have worked with different types of national and local governments, from repressive regimes to neoliberal administrations. Along the way, they've learnt how to converse with those in power and sometimes persuade them. They exert positive pressure to get the politician's attention. But this type of engagement, while creating openings for effective claims making, is based on a strategy of political bargaining that fosters a "semiclientelistic" (Fox 1994; Goldring 2002) relationship between more powerful national or regional state actors and an influential but significantly weaker transnational civic association. When I asked Joaquín V. how they got their message across to the local politicians, he explained:

> We don't mistreat them too much; we make our claims in a democratic way, in a civilized manner.
>
> *How do you communicate with them?*
>
> We visit them and invite them here, and they come...in this country, office holders don't have the intention of ever leaving their posts; they want to continue, so they fear that certain communities will become their enemies.

Because Boca Canasta is not a municipal district, it is under the purview of the province capital, Baní, and it's mayor, who's currently Nelson Camilo Landestoy—known by everyone as *Chacho*. This politico-administrative arrangement is a key structural impediment that has limited MODEBO's ability to engage in a more direct relationship with key state actors. For development purposes, lacking a local *síndico* means that Boca Canasta is unable to rely on a monthly budget allocation that is dedicated exclusively to the needs of the local community. Furthermore, it means that MODEBO's claims have to be taken to *Chacho*, a shrewd politician[41] who enjoys broad

---

[41] Landestoy is a strong leader within the *Partido Revolucionario Dominicano* (PRD), which is the main rival party to the *Partido de la Liberación Dominicana* (PLD). The PLD has held the country's presidency for 14 (non-consecutive) years since 1996, and throughout

electoral support, and oversees the needs of over 90,000 residents and numerous barrios in his administrative jurisdiction. Astute in his dealings, *Chacho's* political relationship with local communities follows a utilitarian electoral calculus. When asked how he manages the clash of interests that can ensue between respected and capable community organizations and political leaders, he responded:

> Look, one has to take that into account, and become their ally. Because there are organizations like SOPROVIS, like MODEBO and ADEFU that are strong, and have an influence when voting time comes, primarily over local candidates. ...But they should be your allies; you have to work in harmony and with transparency so that even if they don't give you [votes], they don't take away [votes]. [...] They can even be of a rival party, and if they are, you minimize [their effect] so that they don't go against you.

Developing a harmonious relationship with groups like MODEBO is central to the electoral mathematics that has allowed *Chacho* to win three consecutive elections, and consistently grow his margins of victory. Nevertheless, the mayor acknowledges how men in his position still hold the upper hand in the relationship between the state and society.

> You can't be completely against the people in power. If you want to achieve something, you have to do it in an amicable way. In this country, they sometimes take away your rights if you're from another political party. So politically speaking, they [community leaders] know how to handle themselves.

When Landestoy was the province governor[42], from 2000-2002, he was instrumental in getting Boca Canasta's streets paved for the first time. This

---

Landestoy's tenure as mayor. Landestoy has held the mayoral seat since 2002, and claims to be a social democrat much in the vein of legacy figures from his party like Francisco Peña Gómez.

[42] According to the Dominican Constitution, the President of the Republic designates province governors for unspecified terms. They are not elected by popular vote.

was a big government project that transformed the community's physical landscape and livability. According to Joaquín V., the community rewarded his efforts when he ran for mayor of Baní in 2002.

> Landestoy was the governor of the province during that time [when the streets were paved], but he had political aspirations. When he launched his candidacy for mayor, he had a lot of support from this community. Why? Because of all the public works that he was able to accomplish when he was governor.
>
> *So you use the political process in your favor...*
>
> In an affectionate manner, in a pleasant way, we let them know the truth...during the last congressional and municipal election cycle, we had a meeting in the community center, and they came. First came the candidates for mayor, and we pressured them. And that's why Nelson Camilo Landestoy, who was the incumbent, started to make big contributions to the churches and MODEBO. We would tell him, behind the scenes, in a hushed way: 'if you want to win, you have to make a big contribution to the churches and MODEBO. Now, if you want to lose in Boca Canasta, if you don't give us anything, we'll pay you back the same way'. We didn't do this publicly, but when we were in closed quarters.
>
> We did the same to Wilton Guerrero.[43] [He] came to a meeting, and we gave him the same message. Wilton Guerrero and *Chacho* Landestoy enjoyed a landslide here because the people saw that they contributed to our town.

Although Joaquín V. and *Chacho* Landestoy didn't belong to the same political party, they established a very good working relationship and held each other in high esteem. Landestoy knew that Joaquín V. represented an important community group whose aim was the town's improvement, and could "take away" needed votes if some of their collective demands were not met. They both understood that working together would be beneficial for their own agendas. But this type of bargain, while helping MODEBO

---

[43] Wilton Guerrero is the current Senator of the Peravia Province and a member of the *Partido de la Liberación Dominicana* (PLD), the main opposing party to Landestoy's *Partido Revolucionario Dominicano* (PRD).

complete some important projects, has done very little to change the unequal, vertical relationship between the town and its mayor—particularly with regards to community development—or promote opportunities for effective coproduction that foment state-society synergy.

Given the transnational nature of Dominican electoral politics, MODEBO's bargaining approach is also bolstered by stateside leaders. In 2010, Landestoy was up for reelection. Like many other Dominican politicians, he travelled to the United States to gather donations and support. I had the chance of watching him speak to a crowd of supporters in Jamaica Plain. Jorge S., from MODEBO-Boston committee accompanied me. He wanted to make a personal financial donation that he strategically stuffed into an envelope with MODEBO-Boston's logo. When Landestoy went around shaking people's hands, Jorge was introduced as a *boca canastero* and a leader from MODEBO. Landestoy replied: "I have been good to Boca Canasta". Jorge knew this to be true, but Landestoy wanted to make sure that the message got across: he wanted *boca canasteros* in Boston to be good to him.

During that campaign visit, Landestoy touted "his most significant achievement": the ability to include residents in local development decisions through the participatory budget program (PB). As part of this effort, which Baní adopted before it was included in the national municipal law[44], *Chacho* has been able to build a substantial number of public works projects, which are selected and supervised by local residents. Since it was formally established in 2007, the number of barrios proposing projects has grown significantly. In 2013 alone, the municipality had approved over 60 projects,

---

[44] The first-ever participatory budget effort in the Dominican Republic was conducted in the town of Villa González, Santiago Province, in 1999. Before 2007, when it became a legal requisite, as part of the national municipal law, it was gradually and informally implemented in select municipalities.

organized 86 community assemblies to select them, and engaged with 350 community delegates.

Communities like Boca Canasta, which have strong civic organizations, have been able to benefit from the program since its inception given their ability to get organized to make specific development demands. But the program's popularity has diminished the town's yearly allocation, as the amount of the municipal budget devoted to the effort has not kept pace with the increasing number of *barrios* that have signed up. Thus, Boca Canasta's share of the PB pie has shrunk due to an increasing number of groups that want to claim a piece of their own. As *Chacho* admits, most of the projects built are relatively small or "trivial, in the eyes of the government" but "for a sector, a *barrio*, or a community, the projects are of utmost importance, because they are their priorities". The small projects that local communities are able to build with their yearly apportionment include amenities like streetlights, sidewalks and housing upgrades. While inciting community engagement in public decision-making, the program has also offered politicians like *Chacho* an opportunity to extend his populist reach in a politically favorable manner. Democratizing the use of municipal funds allows him to become a champion of transparency and empowerment, through small, physical interventions that are easy to provide and claim credit for. But by placing limits on the amount provided to each *barrio* or sector and the types of projects that can be selected, his administration can effectively manage expectations, maintain a tight control of the process—and what communities choose as development priorities— while accruing significant political wins.

For *barrios* or sectors in Baní that had been traditionally excluded from discussions and claims making efforts regarding public investment decisions, the PB is a step in the right direction as it allows them to become organized, and somewhat empowered and engaged with the local bureaucracy and with the politics of development (Baiocchi, Heller and Silva 2011). Nevertheless,

207

for towns like Boca Canasta, which have a rich tradition of organizing for development; of making big demands based on the aspirations of migrants and non-migrants alike; have developed the capacity to erect and implement some public works projects independently and; have built significant political capital throughout their decades-long history, filtering their demands through Baní's participatory budget process hinders their ability to move beyond the existing semiclientelistic state-society accord. *Chacho's* politically clever management of the program's structure and design allows him to establish clear limits regarding his administration's involvement in Boca Canasta's community development needs, thus bounding MODEBO's bargaining position while offering a semblance of greater devolution and accountability. Claiming that he has to contend with limited budgets, but while operating within a framework of greater participation and resident choice, the mayor can also sidestep deeper discussions and questions regarding the types of public goods needed and the aims of socioeconomic policy.

While key structural dynamics have limited MODEBO's ability to craft synergistic development ties to the mayor's office, their lack of elite interlocutors at the national level has also contributed to their overall *arms-length interactions* with the Dominican state. MODEBO has few direct contacts at the national level, where many important decisions regarding development projects are made. Although decades have passed since the dictatorial presidencies of Trujillo and Balaguer, political and development decision making in the Dominican Republic is still concentrated in Santo Domingo's presidential palace. Because most of the commercially successful *boca canasteros* left Santo Domingo for Boston, MODEBO hasn't been able to rely on a chapter in the capital city that has firsthand access to national legislators and other prominent political figures. This political disconnection has limited their ability to make important claims and negotiate projects at

the highest stage, an opportunity that is not lost for some of the neighboring organizations from Baní who have influential leaders and chapters in the capital. In the case of ADEFU and SOPROVIS, the *viejos robles* from Santo Domingo play a pivotal role in gaining access to important government dependencies and politicians that can provide monetary support for their organization's projects, cut through unnecessary red tape, or override political gridlock at the local level.

If MODEBO's political connections in Santo Domingo are few and far between, they are even scarcer in the United States. Few *boca canasteros* are engaged in Boston politics, and for those who are citizens, the extent of their engagement is almost completely confined to the ballot box. The reasons behind this trend are varied. Jorge S., who's been in the United States since 1985, claims that engaging in local politics is a waste of time because local politicians don't really care about the fate of Dominicans. He likes to point out that the long-time Boston mayor, Thomas Menino, and some of the other local representatives, used to make visits to the Latino part of Jamaica Plain only once a year: to light up the Christmas tree on the Centre Street rotunda and hand out gifts. Fabio B., a veteran member of MODEBO in Boston and Boca Canasta, elaborated on this issue:

> I would say there are numerous reasons. One of them is the language issue. Many of us don't speak English. There are those who speak it but don't master it enough to feel confident speaking it. Another is that Dominicans have to move away from the idea that politics is a dirty business. [...] Many times we associate politicians here [in Boston] with the politicians from our own country. It's common to hear people say: 'politicians are all crooks', because we bring that from there [the Dominican Republic]. [...] Another thing is also the need that people have to apply the politics of 'every man for himself'. There are people who wholeheartedly think, fight and try to do something that helps others. But the majority focuses on 'I'm going to work, and struggle so that I can live well'.

> *And citizenship status plays a role as well?*

209

That's another point. People think 'I'm not going to get into politics because I can't aspire to any post'

The individual-level factors that limit migrant's political incorporation have been examined and discussed by numerous scholars (DeSipio 2004; de la Garza 2004; Pantoja 2005). But organizations like MODEBO, which have ample experience in the political arena, should be primed to undertake political action and make claims on behalf of the residents of Boca Canasta. Unfortunately, this has not occurred in Boston. As Fabio explains:

> The importance given by directors of organizations in Boston is for things that occur over there [the Dominican Republic], not what occurs here [in Boston]. The umbilical cord is still attached to over there [the Dominican Republic]. And that is really counterproductive, because we have to fix problems over there, but we also have problems over here.

> *What type of problems?*

> ...Drugs, gangs... young men who are even related but kill each other over nonsense. Counseling experts can be sought, even MODEBO can make contacts with experts so they can provide guidance. And every now and then— there are several halls here for rent—they can hire specialists on different themes and organize a seminar...organize cultural activities.

As Fabio explains, most of the energies in MODEBO-Boston are spent fundraising to solve problems in Boca Canasta. Nevertheless, the organization is not oblivious to some of the pressing issues that affect their way of life in the United States, many of which are similar to their hometown concerns. Given how hard it has been for many of the Boston members to devote further energies to the organization due to time constraints, expanding the organization's political profile to address host country issues is an uphill battle. Furthermore, despite the establishment of city-wide efforts to assist migrants in their incorporation to the political and social structures of the host society, and the emergence of some Dominican-led NGOs that are also dedicated to these efforts, many of MODEBO's members feel

inadequately represented in city politics and lacking organizational role models that they could partner with to address common challenges. For now, MODEBO's Boston chapter is busy attending to what they know best: fundraising to help improve Boca Canasta.

Learning from Complicated Experiences

Despite many of the structural and contextual hurdles that *boca canasteros* have faced in their plight to improve development prospects for their hometown, they have amassed important lessons that serve as building blocks for continued growth and improvement. Some of the learning opportunities have come from dealing with (internal) organizational politics, "forgetting" and coordination issues. Others have emerged from trying to engage the state and make inroads into the politics of development in Boca Canasta, and from attempting to continually address critical, yet unmet public needs.

Chapter dormancy has been a particularly difficult obstacle that MODEBO has grappled with since its early days. Operating in fits and starts has led to unproductive fragmentation and member attrition which, as described previously, has led to organizational forgetting and the progressive buildup of internal capacity, mostly within the stateside chapter. Interestingly, these critical junctures have led to transformative responses based on experiential learning (Andrews, Pritchett and Woolcock 2013) on the hometown front. In 2001, shortly after the dispute between hometown and migrant leaders over the baseball facility, the Boca Canasta chapter decided to reorganize its board of directors, to include representatives from all of the organized community groups and the different church congregations. This internal shift was a calculated response that aimed to strengthen the organization's standing as the primary community group and also ensured that most of the projects and activities carried out in Boca Canasta would be channeled and

managed through MODEBO. Fearing that other migrant and non-migrant groups would also attempt to break ranks and cause further fragmentation amongst *boca canasteros* at home and abroad, hometown leaders sought to centralize development decisions and make claims in a unified manner. This response to a transnational rift has proven beneficial, especially when dealing with politicians and state authorities that are prone to employ "divide and rule" maneuvers when faced with development demands. In addition, the reorganization has allowed MODEBO's Boca Canasta chapter to gradually move past *elite command* and towards a more inclusive and deliberative working model that allows the community to effectively coordinate the disbursement and use of the town's yearly allocation from the PB.

Fluctuations in Boston's leadership, brought about by soured working relationships and member departure, also led hometown leaders to establish a fee system for the funeral home, the baseball field, and the community center, which was remodeled and run by MODEBO. The fees collected, which are only charged to non-community entities, help cover maintenance and other costs. These funds have become a vital source of income for the sustainability of community projects, especially when the Boston chapter is inactive and substantial cash amounts are not flowing from the United States. They have also allowed hometown leaders to achieve some financial independence and dismiss the notion that they are completely dependent on the fruits of migrant's labors.

Problems arising from the difficulties of experimenting with transnational projects have also led to important learning experiences. Upon learning about the complexities involved in running an ambulance service, Martín and other Boston directors began to understand the need for internal feedback mechanisms that allow the group to better establish project priorities and proper implementation procedures, thus turning lessons into plausible solutions.

> *Martín*: We bought it without knowing. We thought that *el campo* would be fixed in one day...we bought it without knowing how things operate over there. It's not as easy as we thought.

Eugenio's visit, and the ensuing conversation during that meeting, led to several important lessons: MODEBO needed to establish better deliberation and coordination mechanisms amongst its chapters since improvisation can undermine organizational unity and leads to costly mistakes. Also, when experimental ideas about projects inspired by the US experience are transported to the Dominican Republic, they need to be recast and translated for a different developmental context. As Martín's remarks suggest, becoming familiarized and taking into account the development realities of Boca Canasta is an important prerequisite to undertaking projects across borders. Interestingly, the decision to sell the ambulance was not seen by Martín as a complete failure on Boston's part, but rather as a risky venture that led to an important outcome, since having a project to rally behind was a critical motivating factor for many new members who helped restart the dormant chapter:

> *Martín*: We worked [on the project] without thinking about the consequences. But thanks to that ambulance MODEBO-Boston is operating. It was our first main cause.

Despite the ambulance experience, developing a feasible communication strategy between chapters, and learning to deliberate on the selection of projects is still a work in progress. During another visit to Boston, when the cemetery and sports complex dispute was being worked out, Eugenio explained:

> The needs of Boca Canasta are not the needs of Jamaica Plain. ...Those who go [to Boca Canasta] to vacation see things with a different point of view. You cannot compare the culture over there [in Boca Canasta] with how things are here [in Boston]. Let's work together on a schedule of priority projects. And let's

213

seek consensus. [...] From today onwards, we should be in more harmony.

The differences between Boston and Boca Canasta are not completely lost on migrant directors who continually travel and maintain close contact with non-migrant friends and family. They are not naïve neophytes with completely "ossified" perspectives, but committed communitarians who aim for big transformations and inevitably run up against structural hurdles that are not easy to surpass. As he tried to convince the Boston members to forego the construction of a new softball field (as part of the sports complex) while underscoring the material differences between Boston and the hometown, he reminded them that it's unimaginable that Boston's leagues couldn't play because they lack playing balls or umpires, but that is the unfortunate and common reality in Boca Canasta. While a sports complex could go a long way towards improving public space needs and create new recreational opportunities for the local youth, it could also turn into an unsuccessful venture given the lack of certain basic resources that non-migrants sometimes take for granted.

Eugenio's idea to set up a projects schedule went to the heart of a major organizational problem: communication and coordination failures between Boston and Boca Canasta that have set hurdles in the *transnational realignment* process. The issue was made clear to everyone in attendance when Eugenio declared that he learnt about the Boston chapter's purchase of a plot of land in Boca Canasta for the sports complex after the deal was already made and money had exchanged hands. In their haste to move forward on the project, they invested hundreds of dollars without running it by their sister chapter in Boca Canasta. For some younger, female members of Boston's chapter like Luisa O. and Yolanda C., the idea of establishing an improved communication and deliberation mechanisms seemed necessary since they felt that only a few of the older, male migrant directors were privy

to information that was not being shared and debated in their meetings. They were also convinced that being informed could lead to a better choice of projects and more trusting relationships.

> *Yolanda*: We've made one or two mistakes as a *comité*. The mistake is that we made that decision [to purchase the land] thinking about our own preferences. Maybe if we called the Boca Canasta committee and asked them what they needed, we would have thought things out better.

While Eugenio's visit and the open exchange of ideas went a long way towards smoothing the tensions that had been brewing in the organization, the chapters still have a ways to go before they are able to fully incorporate many of the lessons amassed. While a resolution was achieved with regards to the cemetery project, haphazard information exchanges are still the norm and differences over project selection still exist.

MODEBO's efforts to establish a more direct engagement with state authorities and exact more accountability have also led to some important lessons and favorable results. When Eugenio S. took over the Boca Canasta chapter, he continued nurturing the organization's relationship with local politicians and power brokers. Because Eugenio is a known businessman, a personal friend of Landestoy, and is affiliated with the *Partido Revolucionario Dominicano* (PRD), MODEBO now enjoys a closer relationship with the mayor. But because *Chacho* claims that he cannot meet all their demands, Eugenio has also reached out and established links with the current province governor, Nelly Melo, who's affiliated with the ruling national party, the *Partido de la Liberación Dominicana* (PLD). Although partisan politics are highly divisive in the Dominican Republic, maintaining ties with two key political leaders from rival parties has not affected MODEBO's standing with either one. Félix C., a director of the Boca Canasta chapter, explained how cross party collaborations have occurred. He recalled a recent request made by MODEBO for lighting posts in a local street:

We visited both the governor and *Chacho* to make the request. And the last time we met with *Chacho*, who's a personal friend, he told me: 'hey, don't ask me for both things. If I'm going to give you the posts, go and ask the governor for the lighting fixtures.'

Something takes place in Baní that doesn't happen much in the country; and that's that when there are common objectives, you see the senator, the mayor and the governor sitting at the same table. That doesn't happen much in other places, because people in Baní think a lot about the common objectives, and they're not going to be meddling too much in petty partisanship.

Do you think that the organizations [like MODEBO] have helped create that political environment through their non-partisan approach?

Yes, I would say that's been important. Another thing is that the groups, like MODEBO and the neighborhood boards have a lot of credibility because they never bring up a topic that doesn't concern the whole community. They don't discuss politics in the groups. So that gives them certain validity, in this case, [validity] to negotiate. They pay much attention to us, and they know that what we claim can be corroborated.

Lacking the necessary funding and attention from the local mayor to address important public needs has, in turn, led Boca Canasta's leaders to reach up to regional authorities and across party lines. Along the way, they have honed their capacity to navigate through complicated political waters, bargain with local and regional politicians, and accrue credibility. As the streetlight example indicates, Landestoy's clever attempt to relieve himself from having to fully address MODEBO's requests, or pass the buck, was seized by the organization as a chance to build bridges to the province governor and has helped foster a different collaborative political environment where non-partisan demands are addressed and *diffuse collaborations* can be attempted.

Despite their disengagement from local politics, MODEBO-Boston's leaders have been thrust into situations that have shifted their focus on hometown issues and led to opportunities for mobilization around migrant concerns. A shooting incident in a Jamaica Plain pizzeria, in November of 2010, where

three young gang members with family ties to Boca Canasta died, brought about an important discussion regarding their role and responsibilities in the stateside community. The incident, which shook the entire neighborhood, was discussed at a MODEBO meeting that Fabio presided. An important concern for Martín, who was partly raised in the United States, was the organization's lack of involvement in problems that concerned their host community. He worried that their fundraising parties and undivided commitment to improve *el campo* would end up alienating Boston *boca canasteros* who longed for attention to their needs. As a way to begin addressing the growing gang violence, he proposed that they organize a community gathering with all the *boca canasteros* in Boston to discuss possible solutions. The idea was well received by the other directors, but Fabio explained that his brother in-law, who's Dominican and works for the mayor, was already organizing private meetings with the parents of gang members and a group of concerned citizens. The mayor's aide wanted to proceed stealthily to prevent exposure and avoid the threat of gang retaliation. He urged Jorge and other members to attend these gatherings, and asked for patience. But this approach yielded few immediate results. MODEBO did not become formally involved, the group addressing the issue stopped meeting after several weeks, and the gang issue was never brought up in the Boston chapter.

Notwithstanding the discouraging outcome, the debate regarding their involvement in local affairs has created an important opening for bringing migrant concerns into the chapter's agenda. Boston members have also discussed the possibility of becoming formally incorporated as a non-profit organization in Massachusetts and made efforts to connect with other collectives that aim to organize cultural and social activities that celebrate Dominican heritage in the city. Many of Boston's younger directors have

realized that their ability to foment new development opportunities need not be confined to their hometown.

5. Building a Transnational Federation: The Experience of SOPROVIS Inc.

There is little doubt that in the past four decades, ADEFU and MODEBO have been able to deliver a series of important community development projects for Villa Fundación and Boca Canasta, respectively. Along the way, both HTAs have accumulated important lessons that improved their ability to collaborate across borders, and honed their capacity to engage with state actors and institutions. Nonetheless, it is also true that there are significant variations in their trajectories and results. The differences become more discernible when taking into account the patterns of organizational politics, and the types of engagements established with public sector actors and politicians. This analytical approach reveals key factors and underlying processes that explain the different paths taken and ensuing consequences. But casting these examples as "successful" or "failed" experiences with transnational community development, as is often the way these efforts are evaluated by analysts and practitioners, would inevitably leads us to a limited understanding that places more attention on tallying outcomes rather than comprehending the actions and events behind their interventions and pinpointing learning opportunities. This chapter, which focuses on the experience of the *Sociedad Progresista de Villa Sombrero* (SOPROVIS), dispels a success versus failure reading of the study cases and reveals how transnational community development is mostly a messy and complex undertaking where projects often lead to mixed results and instructive experiences.

Like their neighboring counterparts, *sombrereros* have grappled with the complexities of doing community development with the help of committed sons and daughters that are both near and afar. Their decades-long efforts are similarly substantial, and share many elements in common with both ADEFU and MODEBO. State-society relations at the national and municipal

levels have been characterized by periods of tension and distance, but the organization has also been involved in *diffuse collaborations* with limited synergistic experiences. Likewise, the organization has dealt with a prolonged period of dormancy, and the four chapters that make up the transnational HTA have grappled with intricate, internal negotiations regarding projects and priorities. Decision making within the organization has also gone through distinct phases. While elite businessmen from the capital city held sway for decades, the introduction of two migrant chapters opened the doors to a *transnational realignment* of roles and duties. In recent years, the difficulties of operating and brokering projects transnationally have led to a more formalized, yet still untested structure for *transnational cooperation* where all of the organization's chapters should have equal standing.

SOPROVIS' story serves to highlight how HTAs often grapple with finding a balance between partisan and community politics. Making clear distinctions between partisan and community interests has allowed the organization to avoid capture and remain inclusive, but blurring the lines has also provided opportunities for embedded partisans to help advance important community goals (Tsai 2007a; 2007b). Furthermore, this chapter calls attention to how the transnational flow of funds and project ideas, through two influential and active stateside chapters, has influenced members' notion of development and their community's aspirations. Although not all of the projects have panned out or been successfully sustained over time, they have ushered in important learning opportunities that have important implications for organizational management but also capacity-building in the public sector.

Ultimately, SOPROVIS' story underscores the idea that there is not one pathway or an ideal model to carry out transnational community development. The processes that lead to their ongoing and evolving community projects help us understand how triumphs and disappointments

are different yet intimately related aspects of transnational community development.

Crafting a Transnational Federation

Most of their chapter meetings are small gatherings hosted by a board member, and usually take place on weekends during the late afternoon or at night in living rooms or in the small basement of a commercial establishment. Occasionally, they start on time and usually go on for several hours while the conversations alternate continuously from organizational issues to social commentary. Heaping plates of food are expected, but usually after the meeting has concluded or is close to ending. When the dialogue drags on for too long, the stimulating smell of Dominican *sazón* becomes too distracting and helps bring the formal meeting to a close.

In April of 2012, the SOPROVIS Boston chapter decided to host a different gathering. They invited their counterparts from the New York City chapter to meet with them in Massachusetts. Although they're not too far apart, they seldom come together to talk about community issues due to busy working schedules, family commitments and other complications. But since the president of their other sister chapter in Villa Sombrero was in the United States for the first time, visiting family members in Boston, they decided to convert the meeting and social gathering of the stateside chapters into a formal board meeting of SOPROVIS Inc., the *de jure* parent organization that brings together the organization's four chapters. Pulling this off was not easy since SOPROVIS Inc. has official delegates equally divided between the United States and the Dominican Republic. To link up with the rest of the leaders who were outside the United States, they improvised a videoconference system using laptop computers, television screens, high-speed Internet connections and Skype.

On the Boston side of the video call, there was a group of over 25 people gathered in a rented basement, including family and friends of the directors in attendance, who were eager to begin the social gathering that would follow the official meeting. At the other end were delegates from the other two SOPROVIS chapters—Santo Domingo and Villa Sombrero—and other invitees, seated in a spacious meeting room inside the hometown's recently inaugurated community technology center. It was an important moment for the organization, since it was the first time they held this type of meeting via video and doing so opened new opportunities for communicating and conducting community work across broad distances. But novelties aside, they came together to discuss important matters. The primary issues in the agenda were related to the management of four on-going projects that all the chapters had agreed to work on jointly: a college scholarship program for Villa Sombrero's students, the construction of the town's sport complex, the administration of the community technology center, and SOPROVIS' ambulance service.

While these enlarged and inclusive meetings had not been a common occurrence, a similar one was held just two months before in Villa Sombrero to officially establish SOPROVIS Inc. For the first time in 39 years, the organization's leaders were taking the necessary steps to bring all chapters under a parent organization formally recognized as a non-profit corporation in the Dominican Republic. With a crowd of residents and many representatives from the different chapters on hand at the hometown's community center, they approved a set of by-laws and established a transnational governing board that brought together leaders residing in Boston, New York City, Santo Domingo and Villa Sombrero.

Although this new organizational arrangement is in its early stages and many operational matters are being worked out, incorporation was sought, in part, as a means to formally establish a *transnational cooperation* network

and transform the organization's standing in the eyes of public and private sector actors. For years, they had worked under an informal division of labor where most of the money for projects and initiatives flowed from the United States, the political muscle and general coordinating duties were handled in Santo Domingo, and the implementation and management of projects were left to the hometown chapter. Now that a representative governing board is in charge of making major decisions, working dynamics are being reshuffled. Becoming a corporate entity also allows the organization to formalize ownership and control of the properties where some of their projects are located, and hopefully gain access to more donations from private and state actors.

But the road to incorporation was bumpy and reflected the organization's complicated power dynamics. Prior to SOPROVIS Inc., the Villa Sombrero chapter explored the possibility of becoming a non-profit entity that would deal with the legal and administrative demands that were being placed on the organization. The leaders from Santo Domingo objected, and suggested that the hometown chapter was not capable of dealing with such a big responsibility. They feared that rent-seeking individuals or partisan operatives could take over and place the organization's stability and assets at risk. Their apprehension was interpreted by some of the hometown leaders as an insulting and paternalistic response from a group of powerful businessmen who wanted to maintain some level of control over the organization. Until just a few years back, the men from Santo Domingo, who were also the original founders of SOPROVIS, had called the shots. But the power dynamics began to shift as the chapters in the United States, who raised the lion's share of the organization's funds, insisted on having a say in how decisions were made. In a scenario where each unit wanted to exert their influence, a new coordinating mechanism was needed to ensure that each chapter had a voice while maintaining some level of harmony. A plausible

solution was reached when all the chapters agreed on a new arrangement, akin to a federation, where each subsidiary retains some level of independence but a governing body provides some oversight and is entrusted with all the legal responsibilities. Almost four decades after its foundation, SOPROVIS was entering a new phase that demonstrated its evolution from *elite command* to a grassroots federation that facilitates *transnational cooperation*.

Bringing Advancement and Progress: The Origins of SOPROVIS

If you traverse along Máximo Gómez road, the primary thoroughfare that passes through Villa Sombrero's center, you will inevitably see some of the fruits of SOPROVIS' labors. As you make your way from Baní, the province capital, a large cement structure welcomes you to the town. Several hundred meters down, on the left hand side, is the primary school that was built by the government on land donated by SOPROVIS. Closer to the center is the town's main plaza and the funeral home; and further along, due west, is the baseball field, all of which were financed and built by SOPROVIS at different moments in their four-decades long history. There are many more examples dispersed throughout the town, and there aren't any signboards that explain their provenance since almost everyone in Villa Sombrero, and many beyond, know who's behind these developments.

While the town of Villa Sombrero is where all of the major projects and its beneficiaries are situated, the organization's roots stretch out to Santo Domingo, the country's capital. In the years following Trujillo's death, many young *sombrereros* who could not afford to continue their studies or find jobs in a dwindling agricultural sector sought opportunities in the capital city's commercial sector, mostly working as attendants in small grocery stores known as *colmados*. Hired by relatives or family friends who needed a trusted aide, they worked long hours, were offered room and board in the store and

had a few days off every two weeks. Although they weren't paid large sums, they were able to help their families in Villa Sombrero, save a bit and learn the trade. After a few years, some were able to purchase their own *colmados* and expand the *cadena* system described in Chapter 2. Circulating between Santo Domingo and Villa Sombrero, many of the *colmaderos* took note of the stark contrasts between city and village life. Antonio C., a longtime leader in Villa Sombrero and New York City, recalled the story of Bernabé B., one of the founding members of SOPROVIS:

> Bernabé had the initial idea. My *compadre* reached out to Eduardo E. [another founding member] and explained his interest in getting organized, because he always went to the community and saw the same situation. Already living in the capital, when he arrived there [to Villa Sombrero]—it was his village, but wow—there was an abysmal distance because those who came from there [the capital] arrived in their vehicles and those they left behind travelled in donkeys, horses and bicycles. He said 'let's bring, in some way, our advancement and progress [to Villa Sombrero]'.

Inspired by the efforts of nearby towns, whose leaders in Santo Domingo had founded hometown societies, Bernabé B. and Eduardo E. brought together a group of *sombrereros* in 1972 to sketch out an organizing strategy and lay the groundwork for the budding organization. They established a dialogue with hometown leaders, and decided to organize two boards, one in Santo Domingo and another one in Villa Sombrero. In August of 1973, a big caravan of cars from Santo Domingo arrived to a lively celebration in Villa Sombrero that marked the official founding of SOPROVIS.

The first major project focused on the provision of important social services like health and education. They rented a big, wooden house in the middle of the town where they set up a health clinic and classrooms for vocational training. Because the town's primary public school was in disrepair and oversubscribed, they also hired teachers to offer officially sanctioned courses.

To finance this venture, funds were raised in Santo Domingo, primarily through a quota system supported by the organization's membership.

Although they had prior experiences with civic engagement in the youth clubs, farmers' associations and community groups that had sprung in Villa Sombrero after Trujillo's death, SOPROVIS' members were experimenting with the pursuit of new community development opportunities. Health and education were basic needs in short supply, so they took on the challenge independently and as best they could. Knowing well that the national or regional government could not be relied upon to serve their town's needs, the Santo Domingo leaders self-financed some modest solutions while the hometown chapter provided on-the-ground support. Their independent approach was predicated on the idea that important changes would only come about if they took direct action to solve long-standing problems.

As time passed, SOPROVIS became more experienced at carrying out projects. They worked on several upgrading efforts on their own, but also realized that the government needed to step in, both financially and administratively, in order to attain lasting solutions. As community leaders became more adept, they realized that their independent and philanthropic approach had considerable limits, given the financial and logistic demands associated with the provision of major public service projects. More than a pragmatic consideration, it was also an important ideological shift: attaining significant development gains meant making strategic claims and becoming involved in the coproduction of community projects. This meant reaching out to national government dignitaries, including Balaguer himself. Relying on private sector contacts in Santo Domingo and their growing political relationships, SOPROVIS met repeatedly with government officers and convinced them to invest in their communities. Their first major petition was a new primary school, which Balaguer built after requesting that the community purchase the plot of land where it would stand. This type of *arms-*

length interaction was not ideal, since it allowed the state to skirt some of their public duties and favored those communities that could rely on elite brokers and their donations, but it opened new possibilities for SOPROVIS and the people of Villa Fundación. It also signaled that the organization's leaders were honing important political skills that would prove useful down the line. A similar strategy was used several years later, to build a more modern health clinic.

As the 1970s drew to a close, the Dominican Republic registered impressive economic growth figures. But the impacts were mostly felt in the capital and less so in rural towns like Villa Sombrero, thanks to a series of policies that favored urban expansion. Santo Domingo was the place to be, and many young *sombrereros* had already sought new opportunities in the growing city. Nonetheless, those who left sought to generate opportunities for the ones they left behind. Leveraging their growing political and commercial networks, they planted the seeds of a new civic organization that was transforming how community development was articulated and carried out.

In the early years, the SOPROVIS leadership began to try out different ways of identifying solutions that could meet the growing needs of their hometowns. Like their peer organizations from neighboring towns, they were moving through unknown terrain, experimenting with different problem-driven strategies and learning as they went along. Although rooted in the rural *convites* and the collective work traditions of the Dominican countryside, and inspired by the youth club experience, the SOPROVIS leadership was taking on new responsibilities and defining a development agenda that was previously determined and executed, albeit incompetently, by different manifestations of an authoritarian state. In doing so, they were slowly carving a new space for themselves in the civic sphere and within the polity. Proceeding cautiously, in order to avoid political pitfalls, they initially relied on an independent philanthropic approach that allowed them to gain

experience and exposure, while also building a base of supporters amongst a growing group of small businessmen in the capital city. Having demonstrated their ability to pursue small projects and mobilize support within a budding capitalist class, they called on the state to do its part. Along the way, they were developing organizational capacity and deciphering a way to address complex problems. These were the building blocks of a new and promising community development approach that could bring "advancement and progress" to Villa Sombrero.

Expanding Overseas: SOPROVIS in New York and Boston

As explained in Chapter 2, the migratory waves that first landed in Santo Domingo spread beyond the national confines and towards Manhattan, that other Dominican island. Néstor F. was part of that extended current; he moved from Santo Domingo to New York City in 1979. It was his second try at living in the United States in a year or so. The first time, he settled in New Jersey with his wife, but things didn't work out. Although he still owned a couple of *colmados* in Santo Domingo, he had secured a visa to visit the United States and wanted to try life up north. The wintertime was harsh on him and getting used to a very different city was a struggle. He recalled a cold day when he purchased a bottle of whiskey and was not permitted to take a drink right outside the store because it was against the law. Those details reminded him of how far he was from Santo Domingo and Villa Sombrero, his hometown, where a thirsty man was not denied a sip. It didn't take long before they packed their bags and headed home.

After hurricane David tore through the Dominican Republic and the bustling economy began to slow down, Néstor and his wife packed their bags again and headed up north. Their plan was to stay for a brief period, to weather the economic storm while Néstor's brothers took care of his two *colmados*. In New York City, they settled in Washington Heights. Néstor worked in the Bronx,

tending a bodega, and his wife had two jobs. This time around he was able to rely on the support of a growing network of *sombrereros* who had recently arrived in the city and were also learning the ropes.

Néstor F.'s story was not entirely uncommon. He was one of those who were able to become small business owners in the United States after a few years of hard work as an employee and by making an earnest effort to learn how to navigate and adapt to a new system (Krohn-Hansen 2013). During his first visit back to his hometown, in 1982, he was struck by how much needed to be done:

> I found my community, Villa Sombrero, very sad, asleep. There was a lot of dust, dirt, and a drought. Something was missing. I got in touch with a friend of mine, Quino S. and told him: 'what can we do for our Villa?'...he answered: 'go to the US, form a group and start saving, let's build a plaza for this community so the youth has a place to entertain themselves, to push them away from vices'. I came here [to New York City] and quickly got in contact with my friends, people from over there. We started a movement to fundraise. Later on, I realized that the best thing was to organize a chapter, SOPROVIS New York.

Néstor was one of the leading figures who started the first stateside chapter in 1984, but the group also relied on the knowledge and experience of several *sombrereros* who had been members of youth clubs and other civic groups in the Dominican Republic. Antonio C. and Bernabé B., who had been involved in SOPROVIS since its beginnings in 1973, were amongst the founding members of the new chapter along with women like Patricia R. and Diana I. While Néstor was working on starting an official stateside chapter, these two female pioneers were mobilizing the growing community of *sombrereros* in New York City to gather support for their hometown's needs.

Amongst the first to be recruited were family members and close acquaintances, and the meetings provided opportunities to discuss official matters, share hometown news and socialize. To help build a large

constituency, Néstor and other *bodegueros* closed their stores early on nights that meetings were held and encouraged employees to attend and contribute to the organization.

Their first project SOPROVIS-New York supported was the construction of Villa Sombrero's central plaza, or *parque*, an effort spearheaded by their counterparts in the Dominican Republic. An important public space and a distinguishing landmark found in reputable towns, building the *parque* was a project that also aimed to help *sombrereros* catch up with neighboring towns like Villa Fundación, who had completed theirs years before. Because the new chapter could access contributions in dollars, and take advantage of a favorable exchange rate, they became the primary financier of the project. New York's support would spur a series of important transformations for SOPROVIS, the first and most notable one being an increase in the amount of funding available to carry out community projects.

To raise funds, the stateside members relied on individual donations but also organized parties and other events that grew the membership and raised their profile in New York City's growing Dominican community. Many members had prior experience with volunteer organizations and fundraising efforts in the Dominican Republic, and they were able to transfer this knowledge to a new context. But despite the benefits of these collective social remittances flows (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011) from the Dominican Republic, starting a new chapter and working across borders also brought new challenges. The town plaza project proved to be a costly and difficult undertaking that took several years to complete and relied heavily on funds raised by SOPROVIS. Lack of funding from the government placed all the financial pressure on a young organization that was only beginning to develop the trust and logistics frameworks to work across borders. Misunderstandings regarding how funds were being spent and errors committed in the construction led to tensions within the New York leadership

and between migrant and non-migrant members. A dormant spell ensued, and internal differences over management styles also led to a division that prompted the creation of a new, but short-lived splinter organization known as *La Unión de Hijos y Amigos de Villa Sombrero*. Many *sombrereros* were starting anew in New York City's tough and markedly different social environment, and so was SOPROVIS. The organization's expansion proved to be an exacting feat, but also one they would eventually learn from.

Growing the Franchise in Boston

Although New York was the primary destination for most *sombrereros* looking for economic opportunities outside their home country, some migrated farther north, to Boston and Lawrence, Massachusetts where there was a growing community of Dominicans from the Baní region. Given the elaborate kinship networks and social ties that exist within the migrant community, encounters between New Yorkers and Bay Staters were not uncommon, and the members of SOPROVIS New York made several trips up north to rally support for the creation of a second stateside chapter.

That chance came several years later, when the opportunity arose to remodel Villa Sombrero's old funeral home. Old and new leaders like Diana I., who played an important role in the founding of SOPROVIS New York and had moved to Lawrence, and Iván N., who had helped start the Dominican Softball League in Boston, were active in lighting a spark that reignited SOPROVIS, energized the New York chapter and spurred the creation of SOPROVIS Boston. After a long hiatus, the organization reawakened and expanded. As Iván N. explained, the idea behind starting a Boston chapter was to unite and formalize an existing network of individual supporters.

> We had been helping for many years and sometimes only the
> names of individuals would be known...we wanted a name that
> would let it be known that it was the people of Boston...for
> example, SOPROVIS, something that gave us credibility...

Formalizing a new chapter was also sought as a way to keep up with HTAs from nearby towns that had organized Boston chapters in years past and were recognized in the migrant community. Solidary ties forged through long-standing friendships, intermarriage and regional pride have helped weave dense, transnational social webs amongst *banilejos* in Boston. These tight-knight bonds have served as an important source of "bounded solidarity" (Portes and Landolt 2000), but have also fueled a highly competitive spirit that is sometimes expressed through the pursuits of their HTAs. This ambitious attitude is also expressed within the organizations, as chapters vie for recognition and aim to be known as the most influential or cooperative— which is usually measured through political gravitas and financial capabilities.

In order to become an officially sanctioned as a chapter, the Dominican Republic leaders needed to validate the request from the Boston group, which was approved without reservations given the highly regarded character of the petitioners. Because SOPROVIS had an established reputation and track record in the Dominican Republic it was important to scrutinize the standing of their representatives both in the home and host communities. Given their engagements with national politicians and high-level bureaucrats, Santo Domingo leaders employed an informal vetting process that aimed to weed out individuals who could compromise their standing. Those who were suspected of being associated with unlawful enterprises posed a particular threat. Stateside *sombreros* who hustled for a living or were involved in shady dealings were not welcome by the SOPROVIS leadership.

During the first years, the members from Lawrence also came together under the banner of SOPROVIS Boston, but disagreements between leaders led to a schism that signaled their departure from the organization. As several *sombrereros* explained, reputational issues and arguments over who held the

reins of the Massachusetts chapter contributed to the breakup. Nevertheless, the excitement of new projects in Villa Sombrero helped the stateside chapters carry on despite some of the internal quarrels within the groups.

As Iván N. recalled, there was much energy and impulse amongst the Boston group in the beginning, but little experience with organizational affairs amongst many of the first board members. They tried to transplant the structure adopted by SOPROVIS in the Dominican Republic, but it took some time before they adapted it to their context and matured into an organized group. As Iván recalled,

> [The structure] was similar but we had a lot of deficiencies. For us, from a distance, what we had was a lot of sentiment. When we started, many of the guys just wanted to cooperate, but we didn't know what being organized was. We worked in a disorganized manner for several years. [...]
>
> I acquired experience because Héctor O. and Saúl E. were directors of the [youth] clubs in Villa Sombrero and they would teach us...we didn't adopt all of that they said because definitively the system here, sometimes we organized a meeting...after returning from work. If you're returning from a [tiring] job and you're told 'hey, wait your turn [to speak]' or 'you're out of order' then the people just start regretting [coming to the meetings]. The system is very different because over there [in the Dominican Republic], in the organizations you have to raise your hand. Now, over here, we're trying to do that, but we don't accept being told to shut up because we know this is voluntary work...sometimes we come from finishing two jobs and we don't accept those restrictions.

Similar to ADEFU's experience in New York City, flexibility in rule enforcement and a willingness to experiment with new ways of dealing with organizational matters became essential strategies for host country chapters. In the early stages, SOPROVIS Boston underwent a process of adaptation and member training that was crucial to its evolution and survival. Although most of their meetings today are markedly different than those held in Villa

233

Sombrero and seem more like social gatherings, a level of order is maintained so that work can proceed somewhat efficiently.

With the establishment of a second stateside chapter, more voices would be added to the chorus of community creators who wanted to advance a distinct vision of development within the organization. Villa Sombrero could also count on an increased flow of dollars for community projects, which were initially chosen and managed by the Dominican branches. The funeral home renovation that helped reignite the organization was successfully completed (as I will discuss in a later section) thanks to the dollars sent from abroad, but also due to a change in the management and structure of the project, that included the incorporation of skilled technicians, and a novel coproduction agreement with a national government agency. Coproducing the project with expert assistance, and through a closer relationship with a state agency, proved to be an important step forward that strengthened the organization's technical and political capabilities as they awoke from a deep sleep. From then on, SOPROVIS would continue growing their list of accomplished projects, and accumulating important development lessons. Along the way, they would also learn to experiment and adapt their organizational practices in order to address the tensions arising from *transnational realignment*, grapple with a collaborative but at times resisting *síndico*, and work through the challenges of a heated partisan environment.

Coordinating Work Within SOPROVIS

Being able to coordinate the roles and responsibilities of four chapters is central to SOPROVIS' transnational development strategy. Their ability to stay united and leverage each chapter's strengths is what enables the organization to undertake complicated projects—like the building of a church, a sports complex or running a college scholarship program—and to maintain the volunteer-run group from falling into periods of inactivity. But internal

collaboration within SOPROVIS doesn't occur automatically. It is forged by a series of formal and informal mechanisms that are constantly revised and reworked internally. Over the years, they have evolved from an *elite commanded* organization spearheaded by well-off businessmen from Santo Domingo with ties to national power brokers, into a quasi-federation that is trying to construct a *transnational cooperation* network with a more balanced deliberation and decision-making structure.

During the early days of the organization, the Santo Domingo leaders took the lead in selecting and operationalizing projects, based on the needs communicated by the hometown chapter. Eduardo E., a founding member from Santo Domingo, explained how ideas were communicated and transacted:

> Over there [in Villa Sombrero] they asked for certain things, for example: 'a school is needed'. So [we said] let's work for a school. But where did the needs come from? They're identified there [in Villa Sombrero]. The SOPROVIS members relayed those concerns and we [the Santo Domingo board] channeled them, gave them shape.

Even after the organization added new stateside branches, which contributed substantial sums for hometown needs, there was a tacit agreement that the elite leaders from Santo Domingo held the upper hand in making important decisions regarding the organization's dealings. Their seniority came from being the organization's founding members, but also because most are successful merchants with deep pockets, who have ready access to important political and commercial contacts, and can travel frequently to meet with hometown residents and monitor the projects, or visit the stateside chapters and discuss pressing concerns. Their entrepreneurial mindset and experience in the commercial sector has sharpened their ability to navigate and effectively deal with a complex and opaque state bureaucracy. On the matter

of traditional roles and power dynamics, Giovanni Q., then president of SOPROVIS-NYC, explained: [45]

> There are certain differences. The majority of people with economic power are the ones who moved to the capital. And their power comes from having money. They regulate what things should be done and how they will be done, because, over there, in the capital, they have more power. The ones that remain in Villa Sombrero are people with much knowledge of the community. Normally, they inform us what is happening, and we find a way to solve things between the capital, them and us. We do it together but a great part of those decisions are made in Villa Sombrero and the capital.

Elite command of the organization helped maintain some degree of stability as new chapters emerged and SOPROVIS learned how to conceive and complete complex community projects. But this framework was far from ideal as tensions over decision-making power and management styles emerged frequently, much like the ones that brought the organization to a halt in the late 1980s. To address these serious concerns and the continual push of the stateside chapters, who sought equal standing within the organization, they experimented with a novel arrangement that facilitated *transnational realignment* within SOPROVIS. As Giovanni noted,

> ...now, because the help and representation of New York and Boston has grown...in New York we are the greatest contributors in all respects...now we demand a little more. If there are decisions to make and we're not there, we have a representative there that will formulate an opinion based on what we want. Before it wasn't like that, we just helped. But it has changed because Boston has a representative there, in [Villa] Sombrero...and we have one as well. So anything that is happening in terms of the community and the government we have a person there to give an opinion and vote.

---

[45] The interview was conducted in 2009, three years before the organization was restructured as SOPROVIS Inc.

The growing involvement and financial support of the stateside chapters led to an important realignment that sought to revise the working dynamics and decision-making processes within the organization. Since 2006, New York and Boston have had formal representation through two representatives that can vote and voice their opinions in hometown meetings. The stateside chapters rely on their representatives to advance their ideas and concerns, and to effectively gather information regarding the organization. Stateside leaders maintain a constant dialogue with their representatives, who also provide advice and valuable background information that allows those living abroad to become more integrated and exert more influence in the organization. Those chosen are usually established hometown members with a good reputation in the community and a high moral standing.

The stateside chapters also pushed for increased representation because they wanted to improve their ability to monitor donations, oversee and advocate for on-going projects that they had proposed for their community. As they honed their fundraising capabilities in the United States, sent larger sums to Villa Sombrero, and figured out how to collaborate transnationally, they felt empowered to pursue different projects that reflected their own development goals. These projects were inspired by their lived experiences in the United States and the socioeconomic and institutional undercurrents of the cities where they resided. Effective representatives in hometown forums allowed migrant leaders to articulate and translate these development ideas, packaged as collective social remittances (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011), into new projects and strategies. This experimental shift helped usher in new development possibilities, but also posed several challenges.

Grappling with Transnational Realignment

Because stateside chapters operated with their own rules and by-laws, they sometimes drew up their own plans and pursued some projects and donations

independently (like donations to the local school and the health clinic, or organizing a health drive) but in coordination with the hometown chapter, who had to ensure their proper implementation. Bigger projects that required larger amounts of funding, and more coordination, were worked jointly. For Iván N., a founder of the Boston chapter, this division of labor allowed the organization to incorporate migrants' vision of a developed hometown community:

> We made an agreement to unite when taking on big projects.
> But each chapter can take on the projects they want even when
> the others don't…The pact was made for the big projects,
> because united, the four SOPROVIS can turn our community
> into what we want, like a small *Nueva York* that has everything.

One of the first joint projects proposed by the stateside chapters was the creation of a scholarship program, in 2004, to cover the costs of training Villa Sombrero's youth in computer and English literacy. The program, which lasted four years and served over 60 students per semester, was inspired by a definite problem faced by many migrating *sombrereros*: as low-skilled migrants in the United States they make ends meet in tough service jobs with few opportunities for promotions due, in part, to their lack of technical knowledge or grasp of English.

The training program lasted only four years due to quality and coordination problems with the course providers, but it demonstrated that the stateside chapters could come together to experiment with new project ideas and advance a shared vision of how to pursue community development. Two years later, Giovanni Q.—then President of SOPROVIS-NYC and also a college graduate—proposed that they take the original idea a step further and launch a university scholarship program. Taking advantage of their prior experience, and after maturing the idea within the organization, a more ambitious effort seemed within reach. The new awards have been granted to

over 30 hometown residents enrolled in Baní's recently established campus of the *Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo.*

The stateside chapters have also pursued complicated projects individually that reflect the boldness and experimental desires of their members and leaders. Just a year before the job training scholarship program was started, Boston had purchased a used fire truck in Connecticut and sent it Villa Sombrero. After learning of the damage left by a fire in Villa Sombrero, Saúl E., who then presided over the Boston chapter, wanted to endow his hometown with the same public safety services that he enjoyed in the United States. The goal was not just the creation of a fire station, but to have a squad with similar standards and as the ones in Boston.

> I would like to have a fire company in [Villa] Sombrero similar to the ones here [in Boston]…with well-prepared trucks; that has well prepared personnel ready for any emergency at any hour, and that enjoys the support of the community and the government…something similar, not the same as what we have here.
>
> *Why can't you have the same kind of service?*
>
> Because of the financial support. In our countries, the government completes a project and then abandons it. And then, the community also abandons the project made by the government; we leave it up to the government, we don't follow up. I would like something like here [Boston], but something within our reach…something similar but it won't be the same, but it should better than what we have in our country.

Saúl's responses demonstrate how his years in Boston have influenced his vision and how development goals need to be calibrated to make them possible. He wanted Villa Sombrero's firehouse to resemble the ones in Boston. But existing constraints needed to be considered, so the aim was to establish a good fire service that's manageable and within financial reach. Meeting the goals set out by migrant members was not easy, but along the way both SOPROVIS and the local authorities deciphered how to work

through some of the problems. After numerous ups and downs and many lessons accumulated along the way, the fire service was suspended. Funding and managing the service proved to be too burdensome, but Boston's leaders have vowed to rethink the project and jumpstart Villa Sombrero's firehouse in the near future.

Boston's lead was followed some years after by New York's desire to support the creation of an ambulance service. Giovanni Q., then member of the New York chapter, explained how the passing of his grandmother, while being transported to the local hospital in a taxi, inspired them to take action. The service, which added to the town's existing public safety infrastructure, was monitored by SOPROVIS, managed by the civil defense and financed primarily by the fees charged to patients. Wanting to consolidate the emergency response services, New York members also helped set up an emergency hotline, "that works like the 9-1-1 service here, in the United States" and collaborated with the other chapters to house all the public security services in the town's community center. But much like the fire truck experience, after years of providing an important public service the organization recently decided to suspend the service. Frequent mechanical problems and coordination issues have forced them to come up with a new strategy for the effort.

New projects from the stateside chapters have led to important learning opportunities and the upgrading or temporary establishment of key services, but sometimes they don't coincide with the desires and priorities of non-migrants and local authorities. Antonio C., a founding member of the New York chapter, has suggested that SOPROVIS could help the local authorities finance the creation of a municipal police force to curb growing criminal activity, but the local mayor, or *síndico* is not on-board. He argues that the public costs are too high and that there are numerous legal constraints that complicate the establishment of what could become a semi private force.

Similarly, SOPROVIS' *transnational realignment* process has led to tensions and disagreements. Leaders from Villa Sombrero and New York have questioned Boston's insistence on building a large sports complex when locals want to prioritize the upgrading the town's community center and improving educational services. Their experiences in the United States, where they are able to enjoy the use of public spaces with their families, and where organized sports leagues keep communities together and kids off the streets, fuel Boston's desires. According to David L.:

> We saw that we had not done much to promote sports activities, and that there weren't places in the community where we could spend leisure time with our families...when we travelled there (back to Villa Sombrero), we had to go to other communities [to enjoy family-oriented places]...we had to do something related to sports because they say that sports can discourage the youth from vices...there's going to be a youth baseball field to teach the children [how to play]. Big league players can come out of there.

The sports complex project reflects Boston's changing notions of what development means and what their community should aspire to, much like what occurred within MODEBO. It's also the biggest and one of the costliest projects SOPROVIS has undertaken. After many debates over the amenities that would be included and how the project would be completed, the organization agreed to proceed in phases. This has bought Boston some time to rally behind the project, fundraise at a manageable pace, and lend a hand in other efforts that comply with the locals' wishes. Over six years in, they still have a ways to go. Interestingly, some of the technical problems confronted during the project's implementation and the tense debates that have ensued, have helped spark innovative solutions and critical conversations on the need to develop a more structured and formal decision-making process within SOPROVIS.

Transnational realignment led to increased flows of collective remittances (both social and financial) that began to challenge the tacit control of the

organization held by the Santo Domingo elite. No longer willing to be passive collaborators, migrant chapters sought to complete bigger and more complex projects that reflected their personal and collective notions of development. The funding and managerial challenges generated by their new project ideas required yet another revision to their roles and division of labors that could allow the organization to continue collaborating transnationally while avoiding fiscal difficulties and divisive conflicts. These growing concerns eventually led to a substantive overhaul that prompted the creation of SOPROVIS Inc. and the formalization of the federative structure described earlier in the chapter.

But migrants' influence over the organization's development agenda and the pursuit of complex projects, like the fire station and the ambulance service, also led to a series of important debates regarding the state's role in helping advance a transnational community development agenda. Migrant-led projects allowed the organization to exert more pressure and further involve national and local state actors in the provision of needed services and infrastructures, because that is what those who left had observed and come to expect in the United States. Making the state more accountable to the demands of the townspeople, both near and afar, and devising new ways to coproduce important infrastructures and services with governmental authorities have been key elements in the development strategies of the HTAs hailing from Baní. Once SOPROVIS awoke from their long hiatus, they hit the ground running and embarked on a series of ventures that offered new possibilities to transform their relationship with the public sector.

Building New State-Community Partnerships

Villa Sombrero's old funeral home was a modest structure built out of wood and cement. It had been remodeled a number of times since the structure was transformed from the town's primary school into its mortuary. In 1999, an

engineer from *Procomunidad,* a national government fund for community initiatives, approached SOPROVIS with a proposal to remodel the decaying structure. Although the organization was awaking from a long sleep, the leaders in the Dominican Republic agreed, but some leaders in the United States and Santo Domingo wondered whether it made more sense to build a new, more modern structure similar to the ones that had been erected recently in nearby towns. They took the proposal to *Procomunidad* and were offered interesting coproduction deal: if the town could come up with 25% of the funds (around 800,000 Dominican pesos), the government would finance the rest.

Sergio R., a successful *colmado* owner who presided over the Santo Domingo chapter and was considered the principal leader of the organization, accepted the challenge and rallied the chapters—especially those in the United States—to come up with the community's share. To ensure that the funds raised and deposited in a government account did not disappear in the usual palm greasing that characterized government projects, they requested that Adrián N., a native son of the community and a well-known architect, become embedded in the effort as project director. They also created a *comisión* (an ad-hoc committee) composed of community members who had prior experience with construction projects and political contacts, to lend a hand to the project director. At times when the project was stalled because the funds were held up in *Procomunidad,* Adrián and the *comisión* would call *Don Sergio,* who would *mover unas teclas,* or push the needed buttons through his government contacts to get the project back on track. According to those involved, the funeral home was built in record time, compared to the schedule of regular government projects.

The funeral home experience brought about an important change in the relationship between SOPROVIS and national state actors. Whereas previous projects had been pursued independently or through an *arms-length*

interaction—like the school and health clinic under Balaguer's regime—the deal with *Procomunidad* generated the conditions for a new kind of coproduction effort. The agreement allowed public investment to compliment community resources, and enabled SOPROVIS to exert control over key areas of the project. This adaptation of what could have been a traditional venture executed and run by the government, allowed the organization to develop project management and execution capacities, and helped establish a different kind of synergistic relationship between community and state agents based on increased levels of trust: SOPROVIS proved to be a capable and effective executor, and national bureaucrats could be relied upon to deliver community development projects.

The success of the funeral home project ran parallel to the efforts spearheaded by *Don Sergio* and other prominent leaders from Villa Sombrero and Santo Domingo, to elevate the politico-administrative status of the town into a municipal district, much like ADEFU had done so a decade before. According to Dominican law, municipal districts are political units of a lesser category than municipalities, governed by a municipal board composed of a director and several aldermen, and receive direct funding from central government sources, based on their population size. Petitioning jurisdictions have to meet specific requirements, submit a series of reports and lobby extensively in the national legislature. In the case of Villa Sombrero, SOPROVIS called on several professionals who could provide technical assistance and relied on some of their Santo Domingo leaders, like Gabriel S. and Sergio R., who were associated with the main political parties, had good relationships with high profile politicians and were recognized members of the merchant class. A legislative act approved their petition in 2001, and the SOPROVIS leadership was asked to weigh in on the naming of a municipal board director, which they hoped would be someone with an affinity to the

organization and the community's needs. But after a complicated negotiation process a political figure close to the Mayor of Baní was chosen for the job.

For Sergio R., attaining municipal district status meant that new development opportunities would materialize for the residents of Villa Sombrero:

> A municipal district is a town council that receives a monthly resource allocation and generates employment for many people in the community...also commerce and the development of public works, because within that [district] budget there is a percentage for public works. So that has propelled—along with the efforts of the current director of the council, Juan Peña, who has been very consistent with SOPROVIS and has partnered with SOPROVIS, working jointly—the development of our community...

Direct access to public funds and the opportunity to coproduce projects with a local mayor were seen as key development drivers for the SOPROVIS leadership. Previous efforts had demonstrated that they were capable of fundraising to provide community services and build infrastructure projects, but much more could be attained if "state-society synergy" (Evans 1996) could be struck at the municipal level. Despite not being able to choose their mayor through direct elections, their hope was that the existence of a local state agent with some fiscal and legislative powers would bring them closer to a formal governmental structure that they could make specific claims to and actively collaborate with.

Given the decades-long history of oppressive regimes, opaque public management and patronage systems, these state-society arrangements involving organized community groups and government actors were not customary in the Dominican Republic. But these trends would begin to change during Leonel Fernandez' rise to power, as explained in Chapter 2. Thanks, in part, to the influence of international development and lending agencies interested in fomenting decentralization strategies across the

245

developing world, the Dominican national government demonstrated a disposition to try out a series of *diffuse collaborations*, albeit in a very limited fashion. In Villa Sombrero, a synergistic coproduction effort between the home community and the national water company served as a guiding precedent.

In 1997, during Fernandez' first presidential cycle, the national water company known commonly as INAPA, was undergoing a regionalization process and engaging in pilot initiatives that sought to decentralize the management of water and sewer services in the Dominican Republic. In rural areas, and with technical assistance from USAID, the plans called for the expansion of water services and the handoff of administrative responsibilities to community-based groups. Given their positive reputation with community-run projects, Villa Sombrero benefitted from the construction of a new system that also served the neighboring town of El Llano. Once the system was up and running, the community came together to organize CADARVIS (the Administrative Council of the Villa Sombrero Rural Aqueduct), an elected board composed entirely of residents from the local community. With assistance and oversight from INAPA, the community board developed the expertise and management systems to run the service. During the initial stages, several challenges emerged due to habitual power outages and the difficulties of sharing a limited water supply with an adjacent community. Despite these initial hurdles, the effort evolved into a fruitful, "bottom-up coproduction" (Mitlin 2008; Watson 2014) effort characterized by a synergistic relationship between local residents and the national water company, but where the power over an important state resource was effectively shifted towards hometown residents.

Interested in having control over their system, and being able to rely on learning accumulated through previous rounds of experimental approaches to

246

address community development needs, *sombrereros* adopted the total community participation administration model (TCP) promoted by USAID. Under this framework, CADARVIS took charge of the billing, maintenance and other important administrative duties, while INAPA maintained an oversight role. With the residents in charge, water provision has improved substantially and payment delinquencies have been significantly reduced.

Once SOPROVIS awoke, they rallied behind CADARVIS to address some of the initial challenges and worked with them to expand the town's water supply. While lobbying to attain municipal district status, SOPROVIS petitioned for an independent aqueduct for Villa Sombrero that could provide enough potable water for its residents. This entailed some careful advocacy efforts amidst a highly polarized political environment largely controlled by two rival parties—the *Partido de la Liberación Dominicana* (PLD) and the *Partido Revolucionario Dominicano* (PRD). In Villa Sombrero, as in most other parts of the Dominican Republic, townspeople are divided along political lines, and strong allegiances built on deep patronage networks have been known to easily create divisive fissures within civic and social structures. Despite SOPROVIS' apolitical charter, all of its members, including most leaders in the United States, have partisan leanings. Partisan contacts can help bring about results, but sides have to be chosen carefully, as political winds tend to change, and any shift in administration inevitably leads to the undoing of prior agreements. In order to get what the community needed, the organization's leaders would have to rely on their political savvy once more.

When Hipólito Mejía became President of the Dominican Republic under the PRD, Sergio R. began to knock on the doors of friends and political contacts in the national government. He went armed with blueprints and a budget for a new system, prepared by a professional engineer, another friend of *Don*

247

Sergio. His efforts got him several meetings with the President, who gave the order to move forward in 2002. But the project was shelved for five years due to the economic crisis of 2003 that brought the Dominican economy to a halt, cost Hipólito Mejía his reelection and brought a rival party to power. Not wanting to give up after getting close to their goal, *Don Sergio* leveraged his personal contacts in the PLD and his status as a known community leader and merchant to petition the new administration. Although negotiating at arms-length and with an opposing party, his sophisticated political tactics paid off, and Villa Sombrero's new aqueduct was completed in 2007.

SOPROVIS' successful comeback from a long recess demonstrated that the organization had strong roots that only grew deeper with time. When the opportunity arose to engage in new projects, they took advantage of some unusual chances to redefine their relationship with the Dominican state in ways that allowed them to coproduce important services through complementary and synergistic ties. This approach differed significantly from previous efforts, which were defined primarily by a "semiclientelistic" (Fox 1994) relationship to governmental entities. But these opportunities to change the relationship between the state and society did not replace the old ways of achieving community gains. Arms-length bargaining with the state was still practiced, but the range of possible interactions with the state had expanded and signaled a different way forward. Taking these lessons into account, and over time, they would also aim to establish a close working relationship with their newly appointed *síndico*. Their efforts yielded mixed results.

Negotiating Local Development and Governance with "El Síndico"

Juan Peña is a soft-spoken man who carries a big responsibility on his shoulders. As the town's mayor or *síndico*, he is entrusted with a series of

responsibilities that range from garbage pickup and disposal, to the construction of necessary community infrastructures. He is also one of the principal heads of his political party—the *Partido Revolucionario Dominicano* (PRD)—in Villa Sombrero, and has been in power since 2002, when Nelson Camilo Landestoy, the popular mayor of Baní, appointed him to the position. In that time, he has survived changes in the national government, a transformation of the municipal law, harsh criticisms from citizens and the political opposition, and the first-ever election for *síndico* in Villa Sombrero[46]. An astute politician, Juan Peña has also had to address many of the claims made by over 20 organized groups in Villa Sombrero, including church congregations, neighborhood boards and SOPROVIS, mostly through a series of *diffuse collaborations* at the municipal level.

Given SOPROVIS' standing as the principal community organization in Villa Sombrero, Juan Peña has tried to maintain a close working relationship with its leadership and often collaborates with the organization's projects. But the *diffuse collaborations* between SOPROVIS and *El Síndico* differ greatly from the common clientelistic relationships between politicians and subjects in the Dominican Republic. While the exchange of public resources for political loyalty is a distinctive feature of the "neopatrimonial" (Hartlyn 1998) political environment in the Dominican Republic, SOPROVIS has effectively evaded partisan capture due to its resource capacity and its membership profile. Peña's modest public purse and limited policy influence are insufficient to establish strong patronage links with an institution that commands a strong funding base and relies on a respected and politically connected elite. Nonetheless, he is able to provide public employment to a few hometown

---

[46] In 2007 a new municipal law (Law 176-07) was passed that allowed local citizens to exercise the right to vote for municipal district mayors. Before this change was introduced, these *síndicos* were political appointees selected by the mayor of the province's principal municipality, who also determined the duration of their appointment (usually in consultation with prominent leaders of the towns). The first direct election for municipal district mayors in the Dominican Republic was held in 2010.

leaders, including members of SOPROVIS, who are partial to his administration. As will be explained later, because they are seasoned political actors, hometown leaders often use their partisan links and their embedded position within the organization to achieve important gains for the community. Stateside leaders who espouse different political values and are somewhat distanced from the tense partisan environment have been vocal in constantly denouncing these practices. Thus, the leaders from Boston and New York often play an important claims-making role and attempt to hold *El Síndico* accountable to SOPROVIS' demands. In some instances, agreements are worked out through a series of transnational deliberations where development goals and priorities, and local governance are intensely debated and negotiated.

During the first days of 2011, while visiting his family in Villa Sombrero for the holidays, David L., then president of the Boston chapter, attended a meeting with Juan Peña and a lawyer from his office, and several SOPROVIS leaders. The gathering took place in a comfortable restaurant known as *El Chapuzón*, steps away from the town hall. To stave off the afternoon heat, they drank cold beers and positioned their chairs close to the entrance, where they could enjoy some fresh air. As an invited observer, I sat in the circle of chairs that had been organized by those present.

The first issue discussed was the inoperativeness of Villa Sombrero's fire squad and *El Síndico's* insufficient support. During the first years, the experimental and volunteer-run station was supported with donations from Boston, some local businesses and a meager stipend from *El Síndico*. To aid with fundraising and management duties, a *patronato*, or community board was set-up. Although they lacked the financial support and sometimes the proper equipment, in 2005 alone they attended to 360 emergencies. But coproducing and maintaining the service running soon became a real challenge. Whenever the truck broke down or when the rent was past due on

the house that served as the station, the fire chief made pleas to the mayor, but had to rely on SOPROVIS' stateside chapters to address their difficulties. The Boston leaders knew that their support would always be needed, but hoped that the mayor would play a larger role. During a meeting in Boston where the issue was discussed, David commented: "I have been reading that in all places [in the United States] the firemen are supported by the authorities".

Juan Peña's responses to the claims made by David and the fire chief in *El Chapuzón* were disappointing. He urged the *patronato* to rely on support from local merchants who benefit from the squad's services while the lawyer explained the numerous budgetary constraints they face. Peña even raised the issue that he goes above and beyond his call of duty by paying for services, like a bus route, from his own pocket: "I'm such a *pendejo (idiot)*...if I don't pay [the bus from my pocket], it becomes a social problem and they'll come to me [for help]". But David L. and Antonio C., who represented the stateside chapters, were not impressed by his statement and pressured Peña to increase his contribution and make a formal pledge to the fire station. As the conversation progressed, *El Síndico* talked about paying for the gasoline and slightly increasing his monthly allocation. Realizing that the negotiation was yielding results, the leaders pressed ahead and asked Peña for additional support. It became apparent that despite all the budgetary constraints, there were ways of making *El Síndico* more accountable.

The exchange between migrant leaders and Peña demonstrates the continuous friction and power maneuvers that are at the heart of the *diffuse collaborations* between local government and community leaders in Villa Sombrero. While discussing the cost of fixing the fire truck, David L. declared: "The cost is 43,000 [Dominican] Pesos. Boston is willing to give 30,000; you [the *síndico*] can put the rest". Peña replied that he couldn't make that commitment. David responded:

251

SOPROVIS has done a lot of work, and has the desire of
continuing...we want to commit to helping each other. Where
does your budget go, [just] to pick up garbage and pay salaries?
[...] Just this year alone, SOPROVIS Boston donated thousands
[of Pesos]. We're doing our best. [...] Imagine if SOPROVIS
didn't exist!

The exchange was respectful but tense. The lawyer and Peña agreed that
SOPROVIS' support was substantial, and recognized the power they wielded
by describing the organization as a "small city hall". But their suggestions
focused on shifting responsibilities to the *patronato*, making them responsible
for levying an informal tax to the local merchants. Peña even raised the issue
of asking for support from the province governor, who's from a rival party,
given that the truck and squad have been deployed to nearby and faraway
towns throughout the region. But it also seemed like the mayor was willing to
cede some ground during the negotiation given the favorable financial terms
being posed by the organization and out of fear that a stalemate could have
harmful political repercussions. As David highlighted, SOPROVIS invests
considerable amounts towards needed community goods and services. Many
of those investments help relieve the mayor's budgetary pressures. Thus,
Peña's reluctance could place that continued support in jeopardy and further
complicate his mayoral duties. Not wanting to cede their ground, the
SOPROVIS leadership continued making their case. In the end, Peña budged
and agreed to cover the difference for the truck repairs.

The next issue discussed at the meeting was related to SOPROVIS' sports
complex project. An effort led by the Boston group, the project aims to endow
Villa Sombrero with sporting grounds and public spaces similar to those they
enjoy in Massachusetts. Although several leaders question its need, given the
existence of other priorities and the costs, all the chapters and *El Síndico*,
who donated the land, are coproducing the project. The primary concern
raised at the meeting was making the land endowment official, which was
stalled due to the organization's lack of certification as a non-profit entity.

252

The lawyer took the lead in the conversation. He offered clear explanations on how the legal process worked, answered questions and proffered sound advice on the benefits and challenges of incorporation. In an interesting twist, the bureaucrat switched from being *El Síndico*'s defender, to pro-bono consultant and ally. Although they raised several questions and concerns, the leaders agreed to move forward with the incorporation and even considered retaining the lawyer's services for future dealings.

Before adjourning, David raised one last point regarding the organization's desire to use the funds from the town's participatory budget (PB) process to build a structure where the fire truck and the town's ambulance—which was purchased and sent to Villa Sombrero by the New York chapter—could be housed. The lawyer, which was now being referred to as *"doctor"* (a sign of respect), explained that the burden lay on SOPROVIS to convince all the organizations participating in the process, since the law explicitly indicated that the local authorities could not decide what to do with those funds. Although the community leaders knew the rules of the PB process—since several of them had partaken in previous rounds— they wanted to gauge *El Síndico's* reaction to the proposal. The lawyer's response, which sounded more like a challenge, confirmed that SOPROVIS did not have the mayor's blessing. The Villa Sombrero chapter took the lead in lobbying the other community groups. Months later, a substantial sum from the PB was allocated for the fire and ambulance station.

These encounters demonstrate some of the ways in which organizations like SOPROVIS broker *diffuse collaborations* with state actors, and exert influence over local development decisions. For the most part, deliberations between stateside leaders and *El Síndico* proceed in an adversarial fashion, which denotes a lack of initial disposition to find common ground amidst a complex power framework. Although collaborations are ultimately brokered, lack of trust makes it hard for the parties to develop other forms of dialogue

and engagement. For Peña, the projects proposed and the claims made by stateside leaders end up generating fiscal and managerial burdens that challenge his discretionary powers and authority to assign public funds. Moreover, given the stateside leader's unique political position, where they feel entitled to make claims and are not persuaded by traditional patronage relationships, there is little room for the common political bartering that takes place in the Dominican Republic. Although experimental and somewhat uncertain, the pursuit and financing of complex projects allows leaders from Boston and New York to exert an important leadership role and pressure local authorities to enter into agreements that ultimately lead to larger investments towards public services.

Although Juan Peña doesn't budge easily, he understands the importance of establishing collaborating with Villa Sombrero's community groups, many of which were founded before he became *síndico*. As he describes it, collaborating with the groups allows him to better interact with the community's residents, or *"llevar las informaciones"* (carry his message) about what his administration is able to accomplish with the available resources.

> A *barrio's* nonconformities can be expressed in different ways,
> through different means, they can burn tires [in the streets],
> they can make other types of demonstrations...I feel good about
> how I've been able to manage with their help. For example, in
> the trash pickup they have established some routes, a specific
> day [for pickup]. They [also] know the issues, the economic
> deficiencies we [at the municipal district] face. On that front,
> any demands are transmitted in subtle manner, in a
> communicative form, and that is of great benefit to us because
> we can conduct a harmonious management...and we can do it in
> a tranquil manner.

Although the cordial state-society negotiations in Villa Sombrero that *El Síndico* describes may be a positive outcome of high associationalism and a well-mannered citizenry, it may also be a sign that local organizations have

been coopted by local politicians through a web of clientelistic arrangements. But while there is evidence of groups whose leaders are loyal to *El Síndico* and his party, SOPROVIS included, negotiations like the one in *El Chapuzón* demonstrate how the organization is able to rise above partisan considerations and make forceful claims that can unsettle the mayor's plans, effectively adapting his partisan agenda. The leaders from Boston and New York play an important role in these exchanges because of their unique relationship to the polity: they are legitimate community representatives with financial resources at their disposal, who can intervene in dialogues with local authorities and use their migrant condition to separate themselves selectively from partisan dynamics.

Beyond successfully advocating for increased public investments in specific community projects, SOPROVIS has sought to establish a different model of local governance and resident engagement. Because the organization predates his political leadership and was instrumental in creating the position he occupies; is supported by Villa Sombrero's migrant and local elites, and has a proven track record delivering independent community projects, Juan Peña has much to gain by working with SOPROVIS.

When I asked Peña to describe his relationship with SOPROVIS and the other community organizations, during my first visit to Villa Sombrero, in 2009, he underscored the importance of building synergies and offered examples of productive collaborations between his administration and the local groups—like coordinating cultural activities and certain public services. But he also recognized that these coproduction efforts make his job easier (especially given his limited financial resources), provide learning opportunities, and political cover from possible accusations of misuse of funds:

255

We could not take care of what the community needed without the participation from the neighborhood boards and other organizations, principally SOPROVIS. [...]

[The organizations are like] a rainbow, there are people there from different political parties, and I think that if they have a very ample vision, at least one gets nurtured, at times one learns [from them]. *And the way the resources are used is more credible and more transparent.*

To prove how deep his ties are to these groups, and highlight his commitment to the community, Peña commented:

I didn't come unilaterally from [the sphere of] politics; I came from the organizations. In my adolescence I belonged to the *Club Inmaculada Concepción*. I belonged to the agriculturalists *Sombrero en Marcha* in the nineties [...] and I am member 107 of SOPROVIS...

Despite his stated allegiances, and claims of being "embedded" (Evans 1996, Tsai 2007b) within the principal community organizations, several SOPROVIS members in the Dominican Republic and the United States— including sympathizers of his political party—have expressed discontent with his performance and his commitment to the community. Iván N., a founding member of Boston's chapter, offered his view:

On the surface he looks friendly, but he disappointed us because he likes to do his projects alone. All the thousands that enter, he prefers to work it with his political group...he works as a politician not as a communitarian.

Iván's comments point to something more than the usual critiques levied on Dominican politicians. They reveal an underlying tension that exists between migrant leaders and Peña's administration. Many stateside members who have spent years living in Boston and New York have developed different expectations of what the local authorities should provide and how they should do so. Although cognizant of the significant differences between how public services are provided, and how political matters are dealt with and

structured in host and home communities, they nonetheless aspire to have a more accountable, transparent and responsive hometown mayor. In their somewhat idealistic view, a "communitarian" mayor would do more to work hand-in-hand with SOPROVIS. While mutual apprehension can sometimes lead to tough negotiations where state and social actors work matters out by ceding ground or adapting to specific demands—as the meeting in *El Chapuzón* demonstrates— it can also result in divisive and harmful arguments and drive deep wedges—much like the acerbic exchange described in the dissertation's introduction, where the mayor engaged in a personal attack against several stateside leaders. Although state and social actors agree that working together can yield significant gains for all parties, the complex interaction of development-oriented actors, and deficit of more trusting relationships makes *diffuse collaborations* possible, but also limits the possibilities of constructing *empowered exchanges*.

In 2009, as the first-ever elections for Villa Sombrero's *síndico* drew near, several members commented that the ideal ballot would include two committed leaders from SOPROVIS in Villa Sombrero that belonged to the PLD and the PRD, the main rival parties. Their hope was to elect a "proven communitarian" they could rely on, a "*síndico* that works with us". But this proposal did not gain much traction since some of the elder leaders, primarily *Don Sergio*, considered that getting formally involved in partisan politics would create serious divisions within the organization. In his view, SOPROVIS is a non-partisan, organization that engages strategically with politicians.

> The politicians sometimes use you to get votes, so I say that SOPROVIS should use the politicians to get assistance through them; but not so that they can use us. Because we invite politicians to our activities, we invite them but with the intention that they help us. But if we get involved in [partisan] politics…the political parties will want to impose their people on us.

257

Don Sergio's cautionary remarks stemmed from his profound experience with a wide array of politicians and previous dealings with political parties. David L., a Boston leader, explained that when Villa Sombrero was named a municipal district, SOPROVIS had identified and suggested candidates with a positive track record working for the community to occupy the position of *síndico*. But shifting political winds and partisan interests brought Juan Peña to the seat instead. For leaders like *Don Sergio* the message seemed clear: SOPROVIS' strength lay in mobilizing, negotiating and sometimes partnering with different politicians, not in creating them.

Gathering Development Lessons at Home and Abroad

SOPROVIS' experiences carrying out transnational community development for several decades demonstrate how they have learnt to navigate the "messy politics" of development (Goldring 2009) to carry out their work. Achieving promising changes in Villa Sombrero has been accompanied by a series of important political and institutional changes, including the emergence of migrant chapters in New York and Boston and the advent of novel political relationships with a town mayor. These important shifts have driven key adaptations within the patterns of organizational politics and with regards to the types of project-based engagements brokered with state actors. Along the way, they have also allowed the organization to hone their strategic use of political power in the interest of their community.

One of the principal lessons that many of SOPROVIS' leaders have acquired is the ability to make a distinction between partisan and community politics in order to engage the state on behalf of the community, or practice politics, while avoiding partisan backlashes or the cooptation of the organization. Although most *sombrereros* in the United States and the Dominican Republic have strong—usually critical—views about politicians and partisan politics,

they nonetheless obliquely or openly identify with a political party from the island. Because partisan opinions often lead to friction between opposing camps, proselytizing is prohibited in SOPROVIS meetings. But the organization is constantly discussing community affairs that are affected by the actions of elected or appointed government officers, so there are times when a critique can turn into a tense conversation about political beliefs, primarily in hometown meetings. Despite their best efforts to rise above discord, a fine line divides community and partisan politics.

Engaging in community politics has always been a delicate endeavor, but one that many within SOPROVIS have learned to master over time. For those in the organization who lived under the regimes of Trujillo and Balaguer, becoming involved in youth clubs, during their early days (mid-1960s and 1970s) was a way of becoming politically engaged while avoiding the radical label. Taking a stand against corrupt practices, like prostitution rackets in local bars, which were considered illegal but weakly monitored by local authorities, allowed community minded youngsters, and future SOPROVIS leaders, to practice civic engagement and learn important organizing skills within a tightly controlled political sphere.

Establishing a distinction between partisan and community politics during Balaguer's government was both a survival strategy in the days of the feared *Banda Colorá* and a thoughtful lesson that could help bring together residents with diverse ideological persuasions. But as less authoritarian governments took office, political parties began to court voting citizens and community leaders in Villa Sombrero became more involved in partisan circles. Loyalty to the party was often rewarded with government jobs and other economic benefits—crucial to making ends meet—which made them dedicated adherents. Nevertheless, many SOPROVIS members who had been introduced to politics through community organizations have skillfully

maneuvered through this more complex terrain, often attempting to place the interest of Villa Sombrero before those of the party.

Marcial C., who presided over SOPROVIS and the PRD in Villa Sombrero, explained:

> Right now I am the President of SOPROVIS [in Villa Sombrero], but I am also a political leader. Pascual R. is Vice President of SOPROVIS, but Pascual R. is a political leader of the PLD, an opponent; ironically we're political opponents. But the relationship between Pascual R. and Marcial C. is excellent because we don't see [everything through the prism of] politics, we see [it through] community. So we work towards the development of our community. But the current *síndico* is not a communitarian. He got there because of his political roles, not his work for the community.

Although respected leaders like Pascual and Marcial are able to overcome partisan differences and work well together, their experience cannot be generalized to the rest of the organization. Members in New York and Boston often complain about the divisions fomented by partisan cliques within the hometown chapter that hinder the unity and productivity of the organization. They argue that partisan blinders limit their ability to become truly empowered with respect to state authorities, since they cannot effectively monitor and denounce *El Síndico*, other bureaucrats and party brethren who engage in suspect activities. For many hometown leaders, these critiques are insensitive to the lack of economic opportunities that leads many local residents to choose partisan sides. Furthermore, it overlooks the complex political identities that they have forged over time. The years of commitment and numerous sacrifices that they have voluntarily made in favor of their community are not washed away because of their stated allegiances. As many hometown residents argue, they have learnt to distinguish and operate through both partisan and community channels, and there are key benefits that come with having party leaders embedded within their ranks (Tsai

260

2007a; 2007b). As Nadia E., who presided over SOPROVIS in Villa Sombrero explained,

> [In the organization] there are politicians from both parties...the people from the current administration [at the national level] are people who provide a lot of assistance...for example, when we have to solicit something we need from the *diputado* of our province we do it through Jessica R., and Jessica knows how to reach out to him. And Pascual R. knows how to reach out to the governor...There's different options to reach them...And with the opposition party we also know how to reach out to them...When we organize a *kermesse* and fundraising marathons, all of the different sides contribute...But those are channels that we activate politically from within the organization, and it benefits [all of] us.

Finding overlap between community and partisan interests is an important key to success within SOPROVIS, since it allows the organization to seek opportunities for coproduction with state local and national authorities. It is also demonstrates a different kind of political capability that can complement the propositions and negotiating efforts of the stateside and Santo Domingo chapters.

Partisan connections become important tools for community development in several ways. Sometimes, contacts are used to cut through bureaucratic red tape and avoid the commonplace disregard of community claims, especially when dealing with national bureaucracies. During a SOPROVIS-Villa Sombrero meeting I attended in July of 2011, a petition made by the local police to upgrade their barracks was discussed. Although a high ranking officer was recently assigned to that post, the building was in serious disrepair and they even lacked the capacity to power the lights in the event of an outage—which occur on a daily basis and for prolonged periods. All of the members present agreed that something needed to be done, but Antonio C., who travels frequently between New York City and Villa Sombrero, and attends meetings in both places, argued that any assistance would have to be

accompanied by an improvement in police services, which were very deficient. After an interesting debate about how to make the most of the opportunity, they decided to appeal directly to the top regional administrator. Elsa B., a member of SOPROVIS in Villa Sombrero who works for the central government and is active in the PLD, explained that she had already met with the new ranking officer, and he agreed to meet a *comisión* from SOPROVIS to talk about police services. The members entrusted Elsa to be the primary liaison and asked her to relay a message: the meeting should take place in Villa Sombrero, not in the regional headquarters in Baní "so that he can see that we have standing".

Another way that inroads into the partisan sphere are utilized is to apply pressure and follow up on established agreements. During another meeting, the Villa Sombrero leaders activated their political channels to access rations for the local fire squad, which had been promised but not delivered. A request had been made to the governor through Pascual R., who's employed in her office and is a trusted aide. Pascual explained to the members how these provisions are channeled from the central authorities and the reasons for the delay. He also committed to making sure that they be expedited to Villa Sombrero. Sensing that further postponement would place serious burdens on the fire service, harm his standing within the organization and hurt the governor's image, he mobilized important contacts. In a matter of days a consignment of food supplies was delivered to the community center, where the firehouse is located.

Having party operatives embedded within the organization often blurs the line between community and partisan politics, which usually raises tensions and distrust within and amongst chapters. However, these important actors who are both loyal to their community and pursue opportunities in partisan circles are able to produce important benefits that facilitate the organization's work: fostering communication channels between local and

regional authorities, connections to government agents and access to key power structures. It is also integral to a development strategy that relies on experimentation and utilizes problem troubleshooting to seek innovative solutions.

Beyond learning how to distinguish and sometime blur the lines between community and partisan interests, the SOPROVIS leadership has also accumulated important lessons from their experiences carrying out complex, community projects transnationally. As Levitt and Lamba-Nieves (2011) have pointed out, migrant's experiences in the United States have an important effect on their perceptions of how development is defined and should be carried out. Over time, these encounters and brushes with different systems and institutions affect both their individual "outlook" and their collective pursuits. In the case of SOPROVIS, the changing vision of the stateside leaders and the process of *transnational realignment* paved the way for projects like the college scholarship program, ambulance service and the 9-1-1 emergency hotline, the creation of a fire squad, and the construction of a sports complex. As argued earlier, these proposals were sometimes welcomed by the Santo Domingo and hometown leaders, but were also met with skepticism by organizational and government actors. As experimental efforts, they also exhibited varying degrees of success. Despite the mixed outcomes, they have yielded learning opportunities that have impacts within and beyond the organization.

Leaders in the Dominican Republic are not impervious to the notions of community development promoted by their stateside counterparts through big projects like the sports complex. Marcial C., a former president of SOPROVIS in Villa Sombrero, argues: "because they are in a developed country, they are looking at other types of constructions and edifices, other sports complexes, and they want to bring those ideas to their community".

For *Don Sergio*, Boston's proposal presents an important challenge that the organization is willing to meet, and a valuable learning opportunity:

> Because they've resided in the United States for so long, they have some attributes of things from there. [...] It's not bad to share their ambition of having that [sports complex] in our community, that's very good. Human beings and organizations should aim to have the best. I see that as something good, I see it as normal; what's more, I see it as a challenge...SOPROVIS Boston has challenged the members of SOPROVIS, and SOPROVIS has accepted the challenge. That's something of value.

Asides from the ambulance, New York City members have championed a yearly health drive, worked closely with the local clinic and established a condom distribution program in Villa Sombrero. This last undertaking was initially met with much resistance from elder members in the Dominican Republic who argued that the effort would promote promiscuity amongst hometown youngsters. But with time, condom distribution gained acceptance in the community, thanks to careful interventions from people like Giovanni Q., who sought the support of young folks eager to be part of a progressive effort aimed at their well-being.

According to hometown leaders like Marcial C. and Nadia E., many of the projects proposed by the stateside chapters can create opportunities for learning about what's possible in Villa Sombrero in important domains like economic development and health services. Initially, their ideas sometimes seem grandiose and far-fetched, but not impossible. When Marcial was president, the Boston chapter also proposed building an asphalted road that linked the sports complex (which is somewhat removed from the center) to the community, and to an avenue that leads to the beach. As he explained,

> They have a futuristic idea, with a vision that I said: 'that's not for now,' but we have to start thinking about those things. Now we see it as difficult, but we have to start somewhere, then it gets easier...because they're in big countries, they're teaching us

264

to think big. Many times we do not share that view, because one thinks as one is. We think smaller.

Nadia shared a similar idea when discussing a project proposed by the New York chapter, which focused on expanding Villa Sombrero's public health clinic.

Because they're in that country [the US] they're thinking big...They see how that country is fully developed, and think about sending their ideas and projects here, but analyzing about what can be done here, even if it's at a smaller scale. They develop a mindset from the places where they're involved on a day-to-day basis... and they're also transmitting that to us.

Nadia, who presides Villa Sombrero's health committee, explained that this "big" idea was met with resistance from the national authorities, who were reticent to assign more doctors to a larger clinic despite the organization's willingness to cover all of the remodeling and equipment costs. But these reservations didn't dampen Nadia's drive. After taking her claims to the provincial and regional health authorities, SOPROVIS was able to revamp the existing structures and add important amenities, like vaccination and dental care services. Thinking big did not lead to a larger clinic, but it made a better one possible. It also allowed the organization to push for larger government involvement, which given their experience in a different system, is what good governments should do for its citizens.

Some of the lessons garnered are also related to service delivery capacity and project evaluation. In its early stages, SOPROVIS' scholarship program suffered from numerous administrative issues, like fluctuating enrollment and lack of student accountability, given migrants' desire to get the program off the ground quickly. But over time, the organization's leaders began to seek guidance and assistance from hometown experts. To fill some of their knowledge gaps, they enlisted the help of local school administrators and expert allies who have advised them on issues like attrition, retention and incentives. These consultations led to the drafting of formal bylaws for the

scholarship program, and the celebration of awards ceremonies for student achievement (where the most accomplished receive monetary incentives and a laptop) that have helped with the recruitment of younger members. Not surprisingly, many of the scholarship awardees have shown a disposition to participate actively in SOPROVIS and its youth group, SOPROVIS *Juvenil.* The organization's hope is that these future college graduates will also gain leadership experience and become long-standing members. The evolution of the scholarship effort highlights how continual revision and fine-tuning of experimental projects, based on experience gathered along the way, can lead to larger development consequences than those originally conceived.

Despite not being able to maintain the ambulance and the fire squad running, the projects created important opportunities for *diffuse collaborations* that led to changes in *El Síndico's* relationship with SOPROVIS and offered several lessons regarding the coproduction of public services. In the early months of 2013, I had the chance to re-interview Juan Peña, and asked him to reflect on both projects, which by then had already been suspended. His reluctance to assume a larger fiscal responsibility for keeping the firehouse open and the truck in working condition, as described above in the meeting at *El Chapuzón,* gave way to a more collaborative disposition. According to Peña, the project was a success during the initial years, but increases in gasoline prices and in the general cost of living, made it unsustainable over the long term. Throughout the latter years, his administration did as much as possible, even going as far as cutting his office's payroll to sustain the operation.

Interestingly, Peña believes that the fire squad is a needed service that should be part of Villa Sombrero's public service system. In his view, it could come back to life, but the responsibility should not fall only on the shoulders of his office or SOPROVIS. Because it is a public good that also services nearby communities, they are faced with a free rider problem: other communities benefit from Villa Sombrero's substation, but don't contribute to

the operational costs. This experience has led him to think more about sectorial collaboration, and the importance of planning and coordination in public management.

> Institutions like the Department of Interior and the Police, and other municipal districts did not support our cause. We did all that was possible. We met our responsibility. It cannot work if the [financing] pressure is only on our side. But it could work if we limit the service, if it only services Villa Sombrero. But this cannot be done because it's a national service. The firemen should be supported by a collaborative effort of several key sectors: the municipal district, the *patronato*, and the private sector.

But while the fire truck seems like a worthy cause, *El Síndico* has a different opinion of the ambulance. In his view, this was an impulsive project that was not well planned and had to be shut down as a result.

> When projects are not planned, they don't turn out well…it was a great project [idea], but it wasn't well planned. It was a whimsical project. They [the New York City chapter] should have looked for consensus amongst all groups, so that the *patronato* that handled it had a stronger structure. If it wasn't done in a unified manner…and this would mean that all of them are in agreement that the vehicle should have been purchased…it becomes a whimsical project.

Although his remarks serve to underscore the tensions that exist between stateside leaders and his administration, they also highlight an important lesson raised by several local leaders: hometown input and influence over project decisions is key. Collective social remittances can often lead to positive spillovers that improve organizational capacity and improve coproduction arrangements. But when some of these "big" ideas are pursued or executed without taking hometown input into account, or are not adequately debated with those entrusted to implement them, transnational coordination problems will surface, and local empowerment will be limited.

Staring an ambulance service or opening a fire station are experimental projects that aim to introduce new solutions to old problems, but they may not be priority issues for hometown residents who are interested in advancing other ventures centered around jobs, education and health. Migrants mean well, but very visible and large projects also serve as powerful signals that stateside leaders may use to showcase their financial ability or to reposition themselves in the status hierarchy of their home and host communities[47]. The competitive spirit that exists between nearby towns and amongst chapters motivates them to aim high, but ambition can make migrants insensitive to the desires and preferences of hometown residents. When priorities and expectations are misaligned, as MODEBO's experience demonstrates, tensions between chapters are bound to surface.

During my time in the field, it was not uncommon to hear stateside leaders complain about the locals' foot dragging or lack of interest in helping the ambulance and the fire squad run smoothly. But it was also common to hear locals refer to these ventures as *"el proyecto de Boston"* or *"la idea de Nueva York"* [Boston's project or New York's idea], which demonstrated that a sense of ownership was missing. Non-migrants understand that "big" ideas help them look beyond their horizons, but the process of realizing and sustaining those proposals inevitably requires hometown commitment and agency for it to yield the desired development effects, as emphasized in ADEFU's *transnational cooperation* experience. Villa Sombrero's residents have shown an ability to effectively run complex public services, like the town's water system, so the underlying issue is not necessarily geared towards lack of capabilities. The challenge they face goes to the heart of the pursuit of transnational community development: arriving at shared understandings

---

[47] Numerous scholars have debated issues of status and hierarchy in the context of transnational HTA projects. See Levitt (2001), Fitzgerald (2008), Mazzucato and Kabki (2009), Waldinger, Popkin and Magana (2008).

through deliberation and figuring out the right balance of cross border collaboration and local control.

Learning from New York City and Boston

Although they share an unwavering commitment to the betterment of their home community and a persistent desire to promote "big" ideas within SOPROVIS, there are significant differences between the stateside chapters that call to attention how their experiences in host cities like Boston and New York have an influence on their trajectories. Previous scholarship has highlighted how a community's local politics, types of public policies, norms and social class relations, amongst other types of geographically delimited elements, shape the work and behavior of organizations (Marquis and Battilana 2009). It has also underscored how the multi sited social fields that encompass migrants and non-migrants, are also shaped by home and host communities and their local institutions (Landolt 2008; Glick-Schiller and Caglar 2011). In other words, we must pay attention to host community contexts, and how they have influenced the types of skills the stateside leaders bring to the organization, the chapter's organizational capacities and group norms, and the valuable lessons each migrant chapter has accumulated that help define how they envision and practice development.

Before Boston became a key destination for migrants from Villa Sombrero, New York was considered the place to be if you were searching for better economic opportunities. Most of those who made the voyage up north worked in factories or bodegas and by the 1980s, when SOPROVIS-New York was born, there was already a cluster of successful bodega owners from Villa Sombrero who had learned how to survive and prosper in a tough city with a growing Dominican population, but where most Latinos were Puerto Rican. Many of those early leaders, like Néstor F., joined bodega owners associations and established ties with Latino organizations in New York that linked them

to the influential small merchant community, and offered important benefits. Amongst these was the opportunity to develop a support base, or a host community cooperation network, that would help SOPROVIS in their early fundraising efforts. Asides from money, local entities transmitted behavioral and cultural norms that helped shape the budding group. As Néstor explained,

> When you belong to other organizations, you start developing friendships, and when you have an activity, those friends support you. In the same way, one is committed to helping them...When I started SOPROVIS, I would buy many tickets to [help support] other organizations...but when I started organizing [SOPROVIS] activities, those leaders would support me as well. It was very difficult for them to say no.

Owning or working in bodegas also offered opportunities to leverage their business relationships and sell many tickets to store suppliers and distributors. The stores also provided accessible points of sale and where they could promote the organization and their events to wider publics. From the outset, leaders in New York understood the importance of nurturing relationships with the broader Latino community.

Developing bridging ties to other groups has been a constant practice amongst New York members that sets them apart from their Boston counterparts. When a massive earthquake rocked Haiti in 2010 and left great parts of the country's capital in shambles, the New York chapter made a financial donation to help the relief efforts. Months later, they supported an activity organized by Villa Sombrero's youth to visit and feed the residents of an old age home in the nearby town of Baní. Several Boston leaders criticized New York's actions, arguing that the funds should've been invested in on-going projects in their home community.

Giovanni Q., then president of the New York chapter, believes that the difference in opinions and approaches stems from their more "open minded"

mentality, which is a product of living in a cosmopolitan environment like New York City: "we don't live in a box". He stressed how "other communities [we have helped] may reciprocate in a different way". For example, by supporting their fundraising activities in New York. In his view, Boston's approach is shortsighted and fails to consider the benefits of building connections with other groups that yield new learning opportunities.

> Around us there are many organizations that operate magnificently. You have the people from Villa Fundación that do a wonderful job. They're very organized and very serious. There are also organizations that work for the benefit of the [US-based] Dominican, Puerto Rican and Mexican community. So one is nurtured by all of their ideas...For example, you have *Alianza Dominicana*, that has a series of educational and health programs, which have nurtured my thinking around health and education.

> We learn from each other. For example, the president of the Villa Fundación group went to one of our cruise ship fundraising activities and took that idea to his organization. They wanted to implement that idea and I helped them...the next year they organized a cruise ship activity. Collaboration is not exclusive, so we learn from each other's ideas. My role has been to take these ideas, which may not exist in Santo Domingo and Villa Sombrero, and start by implementing them in SOPROVIS New York.

New York's mindset has also led them to consider the possibility of organizing projects in New York City neighborhoods with large Dominican populations, following the model set forth by *Alianza Dominicana*[48]. Using their status as bona fide non-profit organization in the United States, they have approached local politicians and government authorities—mostly Dominican or Latino councilpersons from the Bronx borough—to examine the possibilities of receiving state funding for neighborhood-based projects.

---

[48] Established in the early 1980s, *Alianza Dominicana* is one of the primary Dominican community development organizations in the United States. Its services range from alcohol and substance abuse prevention, and domestic violence deterrence, to childcare and housing services for low-income families in upper Manhattan.

Although time and resource constraints have limited their ability to pursue these ideas further, they influence their plans for the future, and inspire some of the projects they are undertaking in Villa Sombrero like the health drives and the scholarship program.

Much like their New York counterparts, Boston's leaders have established links with other Dominican HTAs from nearby hometowns in the Dominican Republic that operate in Massachusetts, such as: MODEBO, *Banilejos Unidos en el Exterior* and *Llaneros Unidos*. But their interactions are limited to sporadic attendance to fundraising parties and participating in sporting tournaments. Moreover, despite having similar goals, they mostly work independently and seldom come together to share ideas or pursue common objectives. Because their hometown investments and projects are close by, they often see each other as competitors, not collaborators. These kinds of interactions limit the opportunities to benefit from collective learning.

An exclusive focus on hometown issues has led many of these groups to establish few links with local government officials or neighborhood-based organizations that provide assistance to Boston's growing Latino population. For David L., this is due to the fact that they're not incorporated entities, and are therefore invisible to local authorities. Non-profit incorporation is an issue that has been brought up repeatedly in meetings, but members agree that the legal and administrative requirements do not outweigh the foreseeable benefits. In the past, the New York chapter has struggled to keep up with all the reporting guidelines and has been subjected to much scrutiny; these are burdens that the Boston chapter is not willing to bear. The local political landscape also limits their points of entry to the governmental sphere since there are no Dominican elected officials and few high-profile Latino politicians in Boston they can approach. With limited access to the city's political gatekeepers, they've tried to take their claims to local consular officers but most of their requests have fallen on deaf ears.

272

Unlike the New York chapter, the SOPROVIS-Boston chapter has been unable to rely on a substantial and age diverse core membership that brings fresh ideas and political contacts to the group. Former board members argue that the organization has been led by a small group of male leaders who are unwilling to cede control and thus discourage the formation and attraction of new directors. Despite having an official board of directors composed of 20 persons, mostly first-generation migrants, few attend their meetings or consistently participate in the group's activities due primarily to difficult working schedules—since they're mostly service workers who rely on several part-time jobs in the janitorial trades to make ends meet. Some of their core members are small business owners, but they have few connections to merchant networks and associations that can help them broaden their support network or open inroads into the state's structures. Labor union membership, which is prevalent amongst Dominican workers in the cleaning trades, hasn't opened avenues for local civic engagement either.

Limited access to local state structures and few opportunities for collaboration have not deterred Boston's leaders from identifying opportunities to improve their organizational capacity and structure. Shortly after SOPROVIS Inc. was established, David L. proposed that they use the organization's non-profit status in the Dominican Republic to approach potential donor agencies and foundations in the United States. During a visit to the Dominican Republic, he also conversed with officers from a local philanthropic foundation to plan a seminar series for NGOs on organizational planning and development. Recognizing the limitations present in Boston, some leaders have tried to take advantage of formal arrangements in the Dominican Republic to realize opportunities in the United States. Implicit in their logic is the idea that within a well-established transnational social field, opportunities in the home community can be leveraged in the host context. Although this strategy has not yielded results, it seems highly likely that

they will stay true to their proven method: continue experimenting with a trial and error process that may not yield the ideal results, but possibly a feasible solution and certainly a series of transnational lessons.

6. Conclusion

Night had fallen and we were traveling on Baní's dimly lit roads. I had
convinced Pascual R. and Lázaro P., two community leaders and members of
SOPROVIS, to attend an ADEFU meeting with me. Pascual is a well-
educated and eloquent farmer who became an important political figure and
powerful right hand man. He's a loyal executive assistant to the Province
Governor, but also a generous and wonderful host. Lázaro is an up and
coming youth leader, an avid member of several community groups who went
up through the SOPROVIS *Juvenil* [youth group] ranks and already has a
seat at the organization's main table. Over the years, Pascual and Lázaro had
become more than great informants. They are cool guys with a great sense of
humor who are easy to talk to, who bring up all sorts of subjects while we
hang around until late hours, and can be relied upon. They are friends.

On the way to Villa Fundación, we engaged in the usual banter. The
conversations shifted from national politics, to community gossip and
SOPROVIS. Pascual is a member of the PLD who gets easily rattled if
someone, especially a political opponent, takes a jab at his party comrades. I
like to bring up thorny political issues around him, just to hear him come up
with some defense or justification for his party's position on the matter.
Lázaro, on the other hand, likes to talk about politics but is seemingly
unaligned with any specific partisan tribe. This allows him to continue
building bridges with different community leaders and, most importantly,
gather valuable information from all sides.

We arrived several minutes before the start of the meeting and crossed paths
with the town mayor, *La síndica*, as we made our way to the community
center. Pascual and Katerine Pimentel exchanged pleasantries, given they
knew each other from prior professional engagements. Although she did not
say anything about the encounter, there was a puzzled look in her face since

Pascual is from a rival party and a different town. Realizing the possible awkwardness of the situation, I jumped in to explain that my goal was to introduce Pascual and Lázaro to ADEFU, since it seemed odd that there were almost no links between the two most well-known HTAs in the region.

With the meeting underway, Pascual turned to me and said in a hushed voice: "that's interesting, Katerine comes to the meetings". As I had come to learn over time, this was not an uncommon occurrence. But what seemed surprising was the fact that she sat amongst the public, not at the director's table—where important guests and politicians are usually accommodated—and just like any of the other attendees, raised her hand to speak and waited patiently for her turn. When given the chance to address the room, she did not make the usual political speeches; interestingly, she had words of praise for the national literacy program, which is commanded by her rival party, and is being soundly implemented in Villa Fundación. Her comments also focused on progress made in a joint effort between ADEFU and her office to solve a long standing dispute with the national water company, and a controversial accord with the governor's office to extend the town's road system. All of which generated numerous reactions from the attendees and directors, who were eager to speak their minds. Her interventions were informative and brief; they did not seem scripted or pompous. In carefully observing the interactions, I sensed that she was engaged in productive deliberations with her community's primary development institution.

While I had no doubt that Pascual's presence inspired some of the topics of conversation during the meeting and our presence may have contributed to the overall harmonious tone of the conversations—since we were asked to introduce ourselves early on and were generously welcomed as guests of the organization—it became clear that there was a close working relationship between ADEFU and the town's mayor. On the drive back to Villa Sombrero, and several times during the night, Pascual commented, "she seems to work

hand-in-hand with her community". This type of synergistic dynamic was something altogether different for the residents of Villa Sombrero, whose *síndico* rarely attends SOPROVIS meetings and has an erratic relationship with the organization. But for me, the biggest revelation had to do with power. During the hour-long meeting, it did not seem like Katerine held sway over the organization or that she was facetiously playing the part of dutiful public officer. Rather, the conversations during the meeting seemed to reveal that the links between the always-hegemonic state and a highly influential social group were being worked out. This did not mean that the asymmetrical power relationship between the state and society was being turned on its head, but that the scales were not completely tipped towards *La síndica*. It also does not indicate that partisan loyalties have been abandoned for some ideal communitarian allegiance, but then again, it seemed clear that the country's long tradition of patrimonial rule and clientelist practices find less fertile ground in Villa Fundación. In short, what we had witnessed that night was one manifestation of how community empowerment is practiced through ADEFU.

After his first visit, and without additional prodding, Lázaro took the initiative to visit Villa Fundación on his own several months later, during ADEFU's 40th anniversary celebrations. He was warmly welcomed, given a book that traced the organization's history and their accomplishments, and was further informed about their most notable efforts. Although he's eager to begin building bridges and translating some of their lessons for the benefit of his *campo,* he also understands that this will take time, especially because most HTAs in Baní are fueled (and somewhat hindered) by a competitive drive that limits opportunities for openness and collaboration. Furthermore, because most of the learning in these HTAs is acquired through experimentation and problem solving, Lázaro will need to carefully determine

the right moment and circumstances to usher in new ideas inspired by the successes of a nearby town.

Several months later, I attended a MODEBO meeting in Boston that seemed like a routine gathering but proved to be something significantly different. After the treasurer went over the financial tally of their most recent fundraising event, Martín S., a relatively new but engaged and energetic member made an announcement: "I want to take this opportunity to say that I am quitting MODEBO". Unhappy with the lack of coordination and communication with the hometown chapter, unilateral decision-making of some elder leaders, and paltry attendance during meetings, Martín had decided to leave: "this is a disorganized committee, and I cannot work like this". But instead of accepting his resignation and moving on with the meeting's agenda, his announcement sparked an important discussion that centered on how to improve the organization's performance and learn from their mistakes. The directors talked about the importance of meeting frequently to share information and project updates from their counterpart committee in Boca Canasta, and holding new elections to reorganize the board to assign clear roles and responsibilities for the members. A date for the selection of a new board was set. It seemed like the group had reached an important turning point.

After airing out his concerns, Martín took note of his peers' requests and decided to continue working in MODEBO. Energized about the prospects of a new board, they began to discuss new project opportunities. Martín went on, "we have to change the vision of what we want to accomplish". Thereafter, the handful of members present began to delineate a new project. One attendee stated, "more than recreation, we have to focus on improving public security". Others talked about having more police presence in their home community while one pledged the monthly salary of a police officer. In a matter of minutes, the tides had shifted within the group. They were revved

up with the new idea. But what was most revealing was that they quickly realized the need to run the new designs by their sister chapter in Boca Canasta, "First, we have to talk to Eugenio." "Let's come up with a pilot plan and take it to the committee in Boca Canasta". After experiencing a series of major setbacks, caused primarily by their failure to deliberate and negotiate project ideas with their hometown counterparts, they were slowly relearning how to become better organized in order to work collaboratively across borders.

At that moment I realized that fieldwork was over, at least for a while. Over five years had passed since I started observing meetings, scribbling notes and asking all sorts of questions, to everyone. Part of me wanted to continue, since there was always something new to learn or things could change from one gathering to the other. But it was time to take pause. I could sense that all of us had come a long way.

Summing Up Arguments and Findings

In this dissertation, I have tried to heed the call of critical scholars within the migration and development literature who argue in favor of a broader understanding of development; one that moves away from conventional approaches that privilege economistic understandings and metrics, and pays closer attention to political and social dimensions (Goldring 2008; Skeldon 2008; Bakewell 2012). Taking the experience of three Dominican HTAs as my empirical basis, I unpack how transnational community development is defined, negotiated and practiced over time, by carefully examining the processes through which state and other social actors engage in "messy" local projects. In doing so, my research attempts to shift the emphasis within the scholarly debates, from measuring how much development occurs, to what kinds of development processes emerge in communities impacted by transnational migration.

As part of the analysis, I identified two interrelated factors, based on prior scholarship and empirical observations, that help explain the differences and commonalities in how the organizations under study muddle through transnational community development processes: the intra organizational dynamics that take shape as HTAs engage in cross border efforts, and types of project-based engagements between the associations, the state and other development actors. Using these two broad strands as analytical guideposts, I also developed some ideal-type categories that allow me to produce a more refined analysis of how power is negotiated and exercised in cross border development situations, and the ways in which the blueprints that govern the transnational relationships between diverse development actors are shaped.

As has been foreshadowed in the vignettes from the preceding section, I argue that the more promising processes of transnational community development are those characterized by the coexistence of well-articulated *transnational cooperation* networks that allow migrant and home country HTA chapters to contribute effectively to a common development agenda, and *empowered exchanges* that enable the effective coproduction of projects while allowing local community leaders to play a protagonist role in development efforts. Based on the case study evidence, I also identify three key factors— increased levels of trust, opportunities for establishing synergistic ties, and the pursuit of deliberative decision-making—that are evidenced when organizations are able to build transnational cooperation networks, or when HTAs projects are characterized by empowered exchanges. More than a mechanistic cause and effect story, what the data confirms is a coevolving relationship between the patterns of organizational politics and the project-based engagements. Thus, instead of attempting to derive a comprehensive mapping of theoretical possibilities based on different combinations of the ideal type categories identified, my analysis shows how categorical overlap

emerges and evolves at distinct moments, and the consequential effects of these oscillations.

Moreover, by dissecting projects and processes I also take note of the routines and tactics that HTAs employ to achieve their goals. For the most part, all of the study organizations have a tendency to seek answers to complex development issues through experimentation and problem-oriented strategies (Sabel 2004; Sabel and Zeitlin 2012; Andrews 2013). This is due, in great part, to the absence of a specific set of national programs or formal policy structures that encourage and prioritize specific HTA investments, and to contextual factors that influence how development is worked out. Being able to experiment and troubleshoot, the organizations sidestep the strictures of policy and programmatic "monocropping" (Evans 2004; Portes 2010), which, in turn, provides them increased opportunities to learn from practical experience. That is, in the absence of formal structures, learning becomes a continuously evolving exercise. Nevertheless, learning opportunities come in many guises, so development trials can lead to important process innovations, but also costly mistakes. In light of this, the ability to identify and make the most out of unforeseen development consequences or "side effects" (Hirschman 1967; Ferguson 1994) stemming from experimental projects becomes a fundamental skill for HTAs.

The absence of national or regional schemes to incentivize HTA formation and channel their contributions, as has been the case in Mexico and El Salvador, means that we must look elsewhere to understand how transnational community development took root in the Baní region. As explained in Chapter 2, the historical record offers valuable insights. A slow, turbulent, violent, and highly uneven process of national state formation, brought about by Spanish and American colonial rule, Trujillo's dictatorship and Balaguer's despotic rule, contributed to the creation of a highly dysfunctional and undemocratic national development apparatus in the

Dominican Republic. As a result, industrialization and needed infrastructure improvements were slow to arrive in many places, including many villages in the Baní region, where the majority survived mostly through small scale agriculture until well into the mid-twentieth century. This type of agricultural production had to rely on mutual aid efforts and pre capitalist practices like the *convite*, a communal farming activity that helped engender collaboration, trust and solidarity. Engrained in the cultural repertoire of numerous rural communities, the *convite* system served as the institutional scaffolding for future collective efforts and associational practices. Furthermore, some of the cultural practices of the rural countryside also revealed a "disciplinary ethos" (Davis 2004) that later influenced their developmental pursuits.

Ironically, the modern seeds of Baní's HTAs were planted during Balaguer's oppressive regime. Wary of the possibility that radical ideas emanating from the Cuban revolution might seep into the rural countryside, the government supported peasants through strategic community projects that stressed self-help and mutual aid. Additionally, and with the financial and ideological backing of the U.S. government, they promoted the creation of youth clubs and community groups that were supposed to advance conservative cultural values and keep the youngsters involved in non-political activities. Once organized, the youth took these experiences further and became more civically engaged and outspoken against the regime. Balaguer's policy to control the youth produced a powerful unintended consequence: the clubs became breeding grounds for new community leaders with a thirst for social justice and a desire to bring advancement and progress to their communities. Other migrant youths who left the countryside for the capital city in search for new economic opportunities took advantage of the civic momentum and their commercial fortunes to help establish HTAs. Later on, as migration to Santo Domingo turned into a massive population flow towards the U.S., the

club tradition was taken northward, and HTAs became stronger, thanks to an increased flow of funds and development ideas stemming from international migrants.

Although history matters a great deal in this larger story, it is not a straightjacket. Despite sharing a common past, the HTAs under study exhibit different trajectories and development proficiencies, which means that the actions and decisions of each collective have been fundamental to their accomplishments. ADEFU's experience, highlighted in Chapter 3, demonstrates how an HTA is able to accomplish a series of complicated projects that have significantly impacted the prospects for socioeconomic advancement, and transformed how community development is conceived and practiced within and beyond Villa Fundación. ADEFU's list of completed projects is long and impressive, especially when compared to the familiar tally of HTA projects. In their 40-year history, they have been instrumental in endowing their hometown with a high school, a hospital, paved roads, potable water service, irrigation channels, two of the largest mango plantations in the country, and two community-run microenterprises, amongst other significant projects.

Several factors have contributed to their success. First, their continual disposition to experiment with different tactics to address development problems and their willingness to adapt processes and rules to changing contexts, allow them to make continual adjustments in their organizational structure and in their relationship with state actors. Second, their ability to collaborate with their New York City chapter through the efficient completion of a series of transnational projects—made possible through effective deliberation strategies—convinced stateside members that their financial contributions were well administered and helped build trusting bonds between faraway development actors. Working across borders also provided numerous learning opportunities for stateside members who have tried to

experiment with independent projects in New York City, albeit with mixed results. Third, the opportunity to become the town's first municipal administrators allowed hometown leaders to expand and improve their community development practice, and empowered them to become the primary interlocutors of the community's development agenda. The success of the communal governing exercise in Villa Fundación also established important precedents for sound governance and state-society synergies that still serve as yardsticks for local politicians and government actors. Fourth, hometown empowerment and expertise allowed local leaders to enter into novel coproduction arrangements between ADEFU, state actors, NGOs and international development agencies that allowed the organization undertake impactful economic development projects in Villa Fundación. Focused mostly on improving agricultural opportunities, the projects have had a direct impact on the *fundacioneros'* livelihoods. Because hometown leaders have been able to control diverse aspects of these ventures, a different power relationship between funders and beneficiaries has been established, which has also led to new opportunities to rethink how international development agencies intervene in local communities. Moreover, these transnational coproduction efforts have also generated far-reaching development lessons and impacts, evidenced in the Dominican Republic and abroad.

The successful execution of transnational community development projects can yield substantial benefits, but building lasting and fruitful cross-border partnerships, and synergies with state actors is easier said than done, as MODEBO's members can attest. Chapter 4 examines the struggles that migrant and non-migrant *boca canasteros* have endured to develop a common project agenda and garner the needed attention of municipal authorities. Despite a long and rich tradition of organizing and working collectively to achieve important projects in Boca Canasta, the HTA has struggled in recent years to define what constitutes a community priority. As the primary project

financiers, stateside leaders feel entitled to propose and pursue projects that reflect their needs and what they believe are important infrastructures and services that a transnational community should aspire to. These social remittances are inspired by migrants' experience with modern installations and services in the U.S., but they also reflect an "ossified" (Levitt 2007; 2009) perspective that equates life in Boca Canasta with a simpler, less developed past. At times, these exigencies are not well received by hometown leaders who are more attuned to the contemporary realities and want to uphold the organization's primary mission of serving those in greater need. At the center of these disputes is a critical conundrum that many HTAs face: who holds the power and moral authority to set development goals?

MODEBO's struggles with *transnational realignment* underscore the importance of establishing fluid communication channels and generating opportunities for cross border deliberation. For the most part, constant and open communication between chapters allows migrant and non-migrant members to gather valuable information—especially with regards to how money is being raised, spent and how projects are progressing—and allows leaders to debate important issues related to goal setting. Lack of deliberation tends to fuel distrust and unilateral decision-making, leading to disagreements and lasting divisions that demoralize members and generate periods of inactivity. Chapter dormancy further complicates matters since it leads to "organizational forgetting" (de Holan, Phillips and Lawrence 2004; Argote 2013). Prolonged and recurring periods of dormancy, mostly evidenced in the organization's stateside chapter, have limited their ability to routinize patterns of communication and rely on important knowledge that can help the group avoid mistakes and seek the most appropriate solutions—given the entrance of new members lacking the requisite experience. Under these conditions, iterative problem solving (Andrews, Pritchett and Woolcock 2013)

is hard to accomplish since the organizational knowledge base needs to be continually rebuilt, and opportunities for strategic reflection are lacking.

Unlike their counterparts from Villa Fundación and Villa Sombrero, the town of Boca Canasta is not a municipal district, so MODEBO's leaders have had to engage the state through an arms-length approach that limits the possibilities for synergistic coproduction. Despite their *arms-length* relationship, MODEBO has been able to make important claims and receive state backing for community development projects. But because most gains are achieved through a political bargaining strategy that fosters a "semiclientelistic" (Fox 1994) relationship, few opportunities emerge to shift the power imbalance and enter into different kinds of coproduction arrangements with the local authorities. In addition, because MODEBO lacks access to elite interlocutors in the capital city, unlike SOPROVIS and ADEFU, the organization has few inroads into the national government bureaucracy, which still maintains important controls over local development investments.

While increased access and interaction with the public authorities can often lead to greater opportunities for coproduction, the gradual shifts in power relationships that are required to transform traditional state-society divides can be fraught with tension and resistance, especially from those who stand to benefit from the status quo. Moreover, engaging the state for development purposes inevitably leads to brushes with partisan politics, which in a politically divided society like the Dominican Republic, can lead to rifts and divisions within organizational ranks. These are some of the challenges that the members of SOPROVIS (Chapter 5) have faced for years.

SOPROVIS' successful experience realizing community projects over a four-decade span shares several elements in common with those of Villa Fundación: they have strategically leveraged the political clout of elite

members in Santo Domingo, relied on the monetary contributions of stateside chapters, and on the local knowledge and implementation expertise of hometown leaders to address important public needs, sometimes with support from the state, but also independently. But unlike the *fundacionero* experience, the opportunities for *empowered exchanges* have been few and far between. The members of SOPROVIS have been able to coproduce several community projects and strike unique accords with numerous public entities, but overall, their experience with the local authorities has been one characterized by continuous friction and power tussles. Negotiations over municipal support for community projects, especially between the *síndico* and migrant leaders, are shaped by an uneasy distrust that stems from partisan divisions and power calculations. This allows both sets of actors to ultimately engage in *diffuse collaborations*, but hardly move beyond them. This particular brand of state-society engagement does generate opportunities for the coproduction of community development projects—since both groups understand the benefits they can accrue by working together—but the overall working dynamic is more conflictual than collaborative. Partisan battle lines also create tension within the hometown leadership and can hinder their ability to articulate and control a common community development agenda.

But SOPROVIS' experience demonstrates that having party operatives embedded in the organization (Tsai 2007b) can also yield significant benefits. Political party insiders can become instrumental agents for the organization that cut through bureaucratic red tape, expedite community demands within government units, and build valuable communication and information links with public officers. While stateside leaders are wary of the persistent partisan undertow, since it limits hometown leaders' capacity to become truly empowered with respect to the state and can lead to government commandeering of projects, they overlook how some local directors have learnt how to operate through both partisan and community networks. This

valuable organizational capability has proven essential in a country where having the right political connections can make all the difference when solving problems and getting things done.

Relying on the effort of four chapters—two in the U.S. and two in the Dominican Republic—means that the SOPROVIS leadership has had to develop a series of formal and informal mechanisms to coordinate work across borders and take advantage of its broader structure. In keeping with their experimental and problem-focused approach, they have come up with a series of internal, decision-making rules that allow each chapter to have a say and a seat at the table when the time comes to design the community development agenda. This means that chapters can come up with their own projects but must also rally behind agreed-upon collective efforts.

Stateside chapters have taken advantage of this arrangement to propose big project ideas that reflect their changing "outlook" on development and their lived experiences in the United States—like opening a fire station, starting a college scholarship program, building a sports complex, and expanding Villa Sombrero's the health clinic, amongst others. Some of these collective social remittances (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011) are well received, but others are met with skepticism, especially from public authorities that are hesitant to meet their demands. The experimental nature of these varied projects means that they exhibit varying degrees of success. Yet, despite their mixed record, the SOPROVIS leadership has been open to learning from these experiences. Furthermore, these ventures have also led to important development effects, like turning the skeptical and at times uncooperative *síndico* into a more supportive coproduction partner and collaborator who is also able to extract important public management lessons from these pursuits. Ultimately, the introduction of "big ideas" allows the organization to stretch the boundaries of what is possible, while also calling attention to an important aspect of transnational community development: hometown agency and commitment,

matter. When the right balance of transnational cooperation and local control is struck, positive development impacts are likely to surface.

Process, Migration and Development

My desire to study the migration-development nexus debates from a critical perspective inevitably led me to employ a process-oriented approach that enables a more insightful mining into the "black box" of development. As scholars have argued elsewhere (Mosse 1998; Iskander 2010) this vantage point allows us to take note of the numerous twists and turns, power shifts, unforeseen consequences and learning opportunities that emerge as development ideas become really existing policies and projects. In this study, focusing on process allowed me to look at Dominican HTA interventions as dynamic efforts, having farther-reaching impacts that stretch beyond the initial intentions and plans—what Ferguson (1994) calls "side effects" and Hirschman (1967) alluded to in his "hiding hand" concept. My goal is not limited to gaining a better grasp of the organizations under study; I am also interested in promoting a different way to think about development interventions and studying its consequences in communities transformed by transnational migration.

As many planners who engage in international development work can attest, traditional assessments privilege results over processes. More often than not, practitioners are beholden to donor evaluations that center on whether or not progress on development was made based on a series of generalized expectations and metrics. To be sure, outcomes should matter. But their definition should be broadened to include an accounting of the lessons and insights that emerge on the way to a desired destination. Discounting process, for example, may lead us misclassify Villa Sombrero's currently inoperative fire station and ambulance as purely whimsical endeavors, or failed ventures. Doing so would ignore a more complex understanding of transnational

community development that takes into account some of the local transformations that these migrant-driven efforts have spurred in terms of: government accountability, planning and public management, and organizational capabilities, amongst others.

Focusing on process also reveals the importance of time in otherwise static assessments of development. As the case studies show, HTAs march at different paces and must grapple with the sometimes out-of-sync tempos of their chapters. In some cases, stateside members want projects to be completed at a speed that they have grown accustomed to in the United States; one that does not coincide with the bureaucratic and procedural rhythm of their home country. At the same time, as MODEBO's experience demonstrates, migrants also tend to "ossify" or preserve an idealized notion of their community that clashes with the contemporary realities lived by those who stay behind. Identifying these temporal contradictions reveals some of the diverse outlooks of development actors at home and abroad, and allows for a more precise reading of the challenges that HTAs face as they embark on transnational projects.

Taking process seriously also enables us to consider how, and over time, HTAs incorporate particular lessons into their organizational routines and produce new knowledge that slowly transforms their relationship with different development actors. As Roy (2011a) reminds us, planners should be attuned to these "slow learning" exercises, because they serve as antidotes to the "fast policies" or globally fashionable planning ideas that are frequently ushered into territories of the Global South and often lead to dismal results. "Slow learning" is what best describes ADEFU's lengthy engagement with NGOs and international aid agents, and their efforts to chart a new course by taking on economic development projects. Rather than uncritically accepting the standards and pace proposed by outside donors and their new development partners, they took the lead in establishing local priorities and

290

employed their tested methods while at the same time remaining open to new learning opportunities.

Lastly, a process-oriented approach to development facilitates a more thorough understanding of how the local and transnational scales intersect, and how power relationships are articulated and continuously reworked as HTAs pursue development projects. As the empirical chapters reveal, the different kinds of transnational relationships that are forged through the practices of HTAs are significantly influenced by the local dynamics and contextual specificities (including the structural conditions) of the places where relevant social actors are located (Landolt 2008; Glick-Schiller and Caglar 2011). As a result, the social fields that link HTA members in origin and destination communities, and the connections that define the relationship between state and social actors (both near and afar), are built through a series of interactions that are influenced both by local conditions and transnational practices. Because these are inherently social relationships built by actors who share some values and interests, but not others, many of these links are formed through conflict and negotiation. In short, questions of power lie at the center of these issues (Castells 2009). Attention to process allows us to understand how power is distributed across space and time, and to make better sense of how certain conflicts and negotiations transform extant social, political and economic relationships—at the organizational level and between the state and social actors. These issues are especially relevant for communities impacted by migration and the transnational development practices of HTAs.

Questions and Themes for Further Analysis and Research

Beyond advancing a more complex understanding of transnational community development and how three Dominican HTAs pursue it, some of the findings and ideas advanced in this project have spurred a series of

questions and themes that should be addressed in future rounds of research and analysis. First, given the proven development potential of HTAs, what kinds of policies and programs can help bolster their work and performance? Although Mexico's 3-for-1 experience serves as a signpost for many countries interested in linking migrant HTAs to development efforts, its genesis and permanence has been associated with a "creative state" apparatus (at the national and local scales) that has been able to engage in a series of unique engagements with its migrant population to bring about innovative policy solutions for development (Iskander 2010). But not all states are as "creative" or demonstrate such a disposition. Thus, in the absence of these institutional conditions, as is the case in the Dominican Republic, HTAs have moved forward as best they can. Along the way, they have taken advantage of a policy and programmatic vacuum to experiment and come up with a series of informal strategies. They have demonstrated that both organizational and state actors can build the needed capacities and skills to link migration and development. But while experimentation and problem-solving approaches can lead to policy and program innovation, bureaucrats and practitioners can and should develop more supportive policy infrastructures that takes these efforts further and allows their lessons to spread over a wider terrain.

Second, given the primarily first-generation migrant member profile of stateside HTA chapters, how long will migrant support for HTAs last? Second-generation involvement in HTAs and other ethnic associations has been an ongoing concern for academics interested in understanding the longevity of migrant organizational practices and traditions (Levitt and Waters 2002; Smith 2006; Levitt 2009; Bada 2014). Amongst many of these studies, the consensus seems to be that while first generation migrants primarily populate HTAs, some of the second-generation children who have been socialized into their values and norms tend to leverage these social skills to engage in other forms of host country civic engagement, like

professional ethnic networks or sports leagues. While this bodes well for migrant civic engagement in host societies, it still leaves us with few answers regarding the future of HTAs, especially given increasingly restrictive migratory policies that curb first generation arrival into countries of the Global North. Some of the study HTAs, like SOPROVIS-New York, have taken steps to socialize and incorporate 1.5[49] and second-generation youngsters into their ranks. This has forced them to begin conversing about host city community development issues, which are increasingly appealing to the new recruits. Thus, although more analysis is needed, it seems likely that HTA survival in migrant communities will involve a gradual shift in organizational focus, and perhaps more opportunities to become truly engaged in community development at both ends of the transnational spectrum.

Third, while HTA practices have become transnational, their impacts are mostly one-sided, evidenced in hometown environments. Given this uneven scenario, what opportunities exist to channel HTAs' development capacity towards host community issues? Levitt's assertion (2001: 128) that "transnational practices do not automatically produce transnational results" applies, albeit in different ways, to the experience of the three Dominican HTAs studied. Contextual factors play an important role in defining the opportunity and support structures that migrant organizations can take advantage of, so attention to certain geographically delimited elements (policies, norms, social class relations, etc.) is important in these discussions (Marquis and Battilana 2009). Nonetheless, not all HTAs exhibit one-sided effects. Researchers have documented how numerous Mexican HTAs have begun to mobilize around domestic political issues or practice "civic

---

[49] The term "1.5 generation" is commonly used to describe migrants who were born abroad but arrived in the host destination during the early adolescent years. See Kazinitz et. al. (2008: 2).

binationality" (Fox 2005b; Ramakrishnan and Viramontes 2010) with successful results (Escala-Rabadán, Bada and Salgado 2006). In major Mexican enclaves like Chicago and Los Angeles, HTAs and their federations have built partnerships with national Latino organizations to rally against anti-immigrant proposals, and mobilize in favor of expanding certain migrant rights. Partnering with established groups has led to numerous benefits for the HTAs, including their formalization as non-profit organizations, increased female and second-generation participation and new possibilities for leadership training. But we must not take for granted the fact that these possibilities came at very distinct political moments and were facilitated by the efforts of increasingly powerful HTA federations, which are a rare occurrence outside the U.S. Mexican community. HTAs interested in gaining more of a presence in host country issues must learn how to work within coalitions and build bridges with different communities of interest. Therefore, opportunities exist for planners and other intermediaries to act as go-betweens and help structure stable and effective partnerships that might lead towards increased civic capacity and much-needed pubic problem solving (Briggs 2008).

Finally, in light of their achievements and potential, what way forward do HTAs signal for international development practice? As Villa Fundación's experience demonstrates, opportunities exist for the establishment of productive partnerships between international development agencies, local governments, and grassroots transnational development organizations. As has been shown here and elsewhere (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011), these cross sector alliances yield numerous lessons that often scale "up" and "out" to other domains, and present promising opportunities to transform some of the power imbalances that are all too common in international development interventions. Nevertheless, we must also consider that these kinds of experiences are not the norm, at least for now.

The HTAs examined in this dissertation are not models for the Dominican Republic, let alone for the rest of the world. By highlighting their accomplishments and concerns, this research does not aim to produce a new roadmap for community development that others should follow. Yet their stories inspire some further thinking about how development is conceived and carried out, particularly because they reveal some of the possibilities that can be generated when migrants and non-migrants engage in efforts to improve their life chances. As a result, their most salient contribution to the development discourse lies in what Hirschman (2013 [1971]) called "A passion for the possible". Their pursuit of complex projects may or may not lead to the most desired outcomes, but their overall approach is anchored in a "possibilist" spirit that "underline[s] the multiplicity and creative disorder of the human adventure, to bring out the uniqueness of a certain occurrence, and to perceive an entirely new way of turning a historical corner" (Hirschman 2013 [1971]: 21). Because development is a process that enables possibilities, what the HTAs examined have accomplished is a new understanding of how collaborating in transnational projects can stretch the boundaries of what is achievable, while at the same time unlocking transformative and sometimes unforeseen changes for communities that are constantly on the move.

Bibliography

Adams, Richard H., and John Page. 2005. "Do International Migration and Remittances Reduce Poverty in Developing Countries?" *World Development* 33 (10): 1645–1669.

Adams, Walter. 1969. *The Brain Drain*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Agyeman, Julian, and Jennifer Sien Erickson. 2012. "Culture, Recognition, and the Negotiation of Difference: Some Thoughts on Cultural Competency in Planning Education." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 32 (3): 358–366.

AID (Agency for International Development). 1968. *Project Budget Submission, FY 1970: Dominican Republic*. Washington DC: Department of State.

Alarcón, Rafael. 2002. "The Development of the Hometown Associations in the United States and the Use of Social Remittances in Mexico." In *Sending Money Home: Hispanic Remittances and Community Development*, edited by Rodolfo O. De la Garza and B.L. Lowell, 101–124. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Allen, Ryan, and Mary Small. 2013. "Urban Planners and Immigrant Communities". Unpublished Working Paper.

Amnesty International. 2007. *Dominican Republic– A Life in Transit: The Plight of Haitian Migrants and Dominicans of Haitian Descent*. London: Amnesty International, International Secretariat.

Andrews, Matt. 2013. *The Limits of Institutional Reform in Development: Changing Rules for Realistic Solutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Andrews, Matt, Lant Pritchett, and Michael Woolcock. 2013. "Escaping Capability Traps Through Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA)." *World Development* 51: 234–244.

Angiotti, Tom. 2012. "Placemaking in New York City: From Puerto Rican to Pan-Latino." In *Diálogos: Placemaking in Latino Communities*, edited by Michael Ríos, Leonardo Vázquez, and Lucrezia Miranda, 113–125. New York: Routledge.

Aparicio, Francisco Javier, and Covadonga Meseguer. 2012. "Collective Remittances and the State: The 3×1 Program in Mexican Municipalities." *World Development* 40 (1): 206–222.

Argote, Linda. 2013. *Organizational Learning: Creating, Retaining and Transferring Knowledge.* Second Edition. New York: Springer.

Bada, Xóchitl. 2014. *Mexican Hometown Associations in Chicagoacán: From Local to Transnational Civic Engagement.* Kindle Edition. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Báez Melo, Juan Emilio. 2012. *A dos voces.* Santo Domingo: Librería La Trinitaria.

Baiocchi, Gianpaolo. 2003. "Emergent Public Spheres: Talking Politics in Participatory Governance." *American Sociological Review* 68 (1): 52–74.

Baiocchi, Gianpaolo, Patrick Heller, and Marcelo K. Silva. 2011. *Bootstrapping Democracy: Transforming Local Governance and Civil Society in Brazil.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bakewell, Oliver. 2012. "Introduction." In *Migration and Development,* edited by Oliver Bakewell, xii–xxiii. International Library of Studies on Migration. Cheltenham, U.K.: Edward Elgar.

Barber, Llana. 2010. "Latino Migration and the New Global Cities: Transnationalism, Race, and Urban Crisis in Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1945-2000". PhD Dissertation, Boston College.

Bardhan, Pranab. 2002. "Decentralization of Governance and Development." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 16 (4): 185–205.

Barkan, Elliott. 2006. "Introduction: Immigration, Incorporation, Assimilation, and the Limits of Transnationalism." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 25 (2/3): 7–32.

Baron, James N., Michael T. Hannan, and M. Diane Burton. 1999. "Building the Iron Cage: Determinants of Managerial Intensity in the Early Years of Organizations." *American Sociological Review* 64 (4): 527–547.

Basch, Linda G., Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc. 1994. *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States.* Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach.

Basilia Valenzuela, M. 2004. "Retos y perspectivas de la sociedad civil migrante: entre la participación política transnacional y la quimera del desarrollo local." In *Clubes de migrantes oriundos mexicanos en los Estados Unidos*, edited by Guillame Lanly and M. Basilia Valenzuela, 455–488. Mexico: Universidad de Guadalajara.

Betances, Emelio. 1995. *State and Society in the Dominican Republic*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

BID (Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo). 2012. *Perfil de proyecto: Fortalecimiento de la gestión e inversiones del Programa 3x1 Para Migrantes, fase II*. Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID). Accessed August 17, 2014. http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=36805654.

Booth, John A., and Mitchell A. Seligson. 2009. *The Legitimacy Puzzle in Latin America: Political Support and Democracy in Eight Nations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bosch, Juan. 1989. *El PLD, un partido nuevo en América*. Santo Domingo: Editora Alfa & Omega.

BRA (Boston Redevelopment Authority). 2009. *Imagine All the People: Dominican Immigrants in Boston*. Boston: Boston Redevelopment Authority. Accessed August 17, 2014. http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/getattachment/932352e8-5676-4a2c-9c1e-5114425abe76/.

Brenner, Neil. 2004. *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Briggs, Xavier. 2008. *Democracy as Problem Solving: Civic Capacity in Communities Across the Globe*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Burgess, Katrina. 2006. "El impacto del 3x1 en la gobernanza local." In *El Programa 3x1 Para Migrantes: ¿Primera política transnacional en México?*, edited by Rafael Fernández de Castro, Rodolfo García Zamora, and Ana Vila Freyer, 99–118. México: Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas.

———. 2012. "Collective Remittances and Migrant-State Collaboration in Mexico and El Salvador." *Latin American Politics and Society* 54 (4): 119–146.

Burgess, Katrina, and Beatriz Tinajero. 2009. "Remittances as Non-State Transnational Transfers? Lessons from Mexico and El Salvador." *International Studies Review* 11 (2): 404–413.

Caglar, Ayse. 2006. "Hometown Associations, the Rescaling of State Spatiality and Migrant Grassroots Transnationalism." *Global Networks* 6 (1): 1–22.

Castells, Manuel. 2009. *Communication Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chatman, Daniel G., and Nicholas Klein. 2009. "Immigrants and Travel Demand in the United States Implications for Transportation Policy and Future Research." *Public Works Management & Policy* 13 (4): 312–327.

Christiansen, C.C. 2008. "Hometown Associations and Solidarities in Kurdish Transnational Villages: The Migration-Development Nexus in a European Context." *European Journal of Development Research* 20 (1): 88–103.

CONEVAL (Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social). 2013. *Informe de la evaluación específica de desempeño 2012-2013: Programa 3x1 para migrantes*. Accessed August 17, 2014. http://web.coneval.gob.mx/Informes/Evaluacion/Especificas_Desempeno2012/SEDESOL/20_S061/20_S061_Completo.pdf.

Contreras, Randol. 2013. *The Stickup Kids: Race, Drugs, Violence, and the American Dream*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Crassweller, Robert D. 1966. *Trujillo: The Life and Times of a Caribbean Dictator*. New York: Macmillan.

Davis, Diane E. 2004. *Discipline and Development: Middle Classes and Prosperity in East Asia and Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

De Haas, Hein. 2006. *Engaging Diasporas: How Governments and Development Agencies Can Support Diaspora Involvement in the Development of Origin Countries*. Oxford: International Migration Institute, University of Oxford.

———. 2010. "Migration and Development: A Theoretical Perspective." *International Migration Review* 44 (1): 227–264.

———. 2012. "The Migration and Development Pendulum: A Critical View on Research and Policy." *International Migration* 50 (3): 8–25.

De Holan, P. Martin, Nelson Phillips, and Thomas B. Lawrence. 2004. "Managing Organizational Forgetting." *MIT Sloan Management Review* 45 (2): 45–51.

De la Garza, Rodolfo O. 2004. "Latino Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 7 (1): 91–123.

Delgado Wise, Raúl, and Héctor Rodríguez Ramírez. 2001. "The Emergence of Collective Migrants and Their Role in Mexico's Local and Regional Development." *Revue Canadienne D'études Du Développement. Canadian Journal of Development Studies* 22 (3): 747–764.

Derby, Lauren H. 2009. *The Dictator's Seduction: Politics and the Popular Imagination in the Era of Trujillo*. Durham: Duke University Press.

DeSipio, Louis. 2004. "The Pressures of Perpetual Promise: Latinos and Politics, 1960-2003." In *The Columbia History of Latinos in the United States Since 1960*, edited by David G. Gutiérrez, 421-465. New York: Columbia University Press.

Despradel, Carlos. 2005. *40 años de economía dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Editorial Búho.

Díaz Melo, Ismael. 2001. "Villa Sombrero, 'El campo del Coronel': Notas y apuntes de una comunidad banileja". Manuscript.

Domínguez, Jorge I. 1997. *Technopols: Freeing Politics and Markets in Latin America in the 1990s*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Doner, Richard F. 2009. *The Politics of Uneven Development: Thailand's Economic Growth in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Drennan, Matthew. 1991. "The Decline and Rise of the New York Economy." In *Dual City: Restructuring New York*, edited by John Mollenkopf and Manuel Castells, 25–41. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Duany, Jorge. 2011. *Blurred Borders: Transnational Migration Between the Hispanic Caribbean and the United States*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Duquette, Lauren. 2011. "Making Democracy Work from Abroad: Remittances, Hometown Associations and Migrant-State Coproduction of Public Goods in Mexico". PhD Dissertation, The University of Chicago.

EIU (The Economist Intelligence Unit). 1999. *Country Profile: Dominican Republic, Haiti, Puerto Rico*. London: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Entzinger, Han. 1985. "Return Migration in Western Europe: Current Policy Trends and Their Implications, in Particular for the Second Generation." *International Migration* 23 (2): 263–290.

Escala-Rabadán, Luis, Xóchtil Bada, and G. Rivera-Salgado. 2006. "Mexican Migrant Civic and Political Participation in the US: The Case of Hometown Associations in Los Angeles and Chicago." *Norteamérica, Revista Académica Del CISAN-UNAM* 1 (02): 127-172.

Escobar, Cristina. 2010. "Exploring Transnational Civil Society: A Comparative Study of Colombian, Dominican and Mexican Immigrant Organizations in the USA." *Journal of Civil Society* 6 (3): 205–235.

Espinal, Rosario. 1994. *Autoritarismo y democracia en la República Dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Argumentos.

———. 1998. "Elecciones dominicanas en la década de los 90s." In *Elecciones y democracia en América Latina, 1992-1996: urnas y desencanto político*, edited by Juan Rial Roade and Daniel Zovatto, 263-284. San José, Costa Rica: Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos, Centro de Asesoría y Promoción Electoral.

Evans, Peter. 1995. *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

———. 1996. "Government Action, Social Capital and Development: Reviewing the Evidence on Synergy." *World Development* 24 (6): 1119–1132.

———. 2004. "Development as Institutional Change: The Pitfalls of Monocropping and the Potentials of Deliberation." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 38 (4): 30–52.

Faist, Thomas. 2008. "Migrants as Transnational Development Agents: An Inquiry into the Newest Round of the Migration-Development Nexus." *Population, Space and Place* 14 (1): 21–42.

———. 2009. "Transnationalization and Development: Toward an Alternative Agenda." *Social Analysis* 53 (3): 38–59.

Faist, Thomas, Margit Fauser, and Eveline Reisenauer. 2013. *Transnational Migration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Ferguson, James. 1992. *Dominican Republic: Beyond the Lighthouse*. Washington, DC: Latin America Bureau.

Ferguson, James. 1994. *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development", Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Figueroa, Juan. 2012. *Estado situacional y perspectivas de la descentralización en la República Dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Ediciones Voces.

Fitzgerald, David. 2000. *Negotiating Extra-Territorial Citizenship: Mexican Migration and the Transnational Politics of Community*. San Diego, CA: Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of California San Diego.

————. 2008. "Colonies of the Little Motherland: Membership, Space, and Time in Mexican Migrant Hometown Associations." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50 (1): 145–169.

Foner, Nancy. 1997. "What's New About Transnationalism?: New York Immigrants Today and at the Turn of the Century." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 6 (3): 355–375.

Fox, Jonathan. 1994. "The Difficult Transition from Clientelism to Citizenship: Lessons from Mexico." *World Politics* 46 (2): 151–184.

————. 2005a. *Empowerment and Institutional Change: Mapping" Virtuous Circles" of State-Society Interaction*. México: Universidad Iberoamericana, Instituto de Investigaciones sobre Desarrollo Sustentable y Equidad Social. Accessed August 17, 2014. http://www.iberoamericana.edu.mx/campus/publicaciones/IIDSES/2Empowerment.pdf.

————. 2005b. *Mapping Mexican Migrant Civil Society*. UC Santa Cruz: Center for Global, International and Regional Studies. Accessed August 17, 2014. http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/9wn0j4fk.

Fox, Jonathan, and Xóchtil Bada. 2008. "Migrant Organization and Hometown Impacts in Rural Mexico." *Journal of Agrarian Change* 8 (2-3): 435-461.

Frank, Reanne. 2005. "International Migration and Infant Health in Mexico." *Journal of Immigrant Health* 7 (1): 11–22.

Fung, Archon, and Erik Olin Wright. 2003. "Introduction." In *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance*, edited by Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright, 3-42. London: Verso.

Georges, Eugenia. 1984. *New Immigrants and the Political Process: Dominicans in New York*. New York University, Faculty of Arts and Science, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

———. 1992. "Gender, Class, and Migration in the Dominican Republic: Women's Experiences in a Transnational Community." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 645 (1): 81–99.

Glick Schiller, Nina, and Ayse Caglar. 2011. "Introduction." In *Locating Migration: Rescaling Cities and Migrants*, edited by Nina Glick Schiller and Ayse Caglar, 1–19. New York: Cornell University Press.

Goldring, Luin. 2002. "The Mexican State and Transmigrant Organizations: Negotiating the Boundaries of Membership and Participation." *Latin American Research Review* 37 (3): 55–99.

———. 2004. "Family and Collective Remittances to Mexico: A Multi-Dimensional Typology." *Development and Change* 35 (4): 799–840.

———. 2008. "Migrant Political Participation and Development: Re-Politicizing Development and Re-Socializing Politics." Paper Presented at Social Science Research Council Conference— Migration and Development: Future Directions for Research and Policy, New York, 28 February – 1 March 2008.

González, Evelyn. 2004. *The Bronx*. New York: Columbia University Press.

González, Nancie L. 1970. "Peasants' Progress: Dominicans in New York." *Caribbean Studies* 10 (3): 154–171.

González Ortíz, Felipe, and Liliana Rivera. 2004. *Migrantes y políticas públicas. Apuntes desde la experiencia del programa "Iniciativa Ciudadana Tres Por Uno"en los estados de México y Puebla*. México: El Colegio Mexiquense y CIESAS.

González, Raymundo, Baud Michiel, Pedro L. San Miguel, and Roberto Cassá. 2000. "Introducción." In *Política, identidad y pensamiento social en la*

República Dominicana (Siglos XIX y XX), edited by Raymundo González, Baud Michiel, Pedro L. San Miguel, and Roberto Cassá. Madrid: Editorial Doce Calles.

Grasmuck, Sherri, and Patricia R. Pessar. 1991. *Between Two Islands: Dominican International Migration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gregory, Stephen. 2007. *The Devil Behind the Mirror: Globalization and Politics in the Dominican Republic*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Guarnizo, Luis Eduardo, Alejandro Portes, and William Haller. 2003. "Assimilation and Transnationalism: Determinants of Transnational Political Action among Contemporary Migrants." *The American Journal of Sociology* 108 (6): 1211–1248.

Hartlyn, Jonathan. 1998. *The Struggle for Democratic Politics in the Dominican Republic*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press.

Harwood, Stacy Anne. 2005. "Struggling to Embrace Difference in Land-Use Decision Making in Multicultural Communities." *Planning, Practice & Research* 20 (4): 355–371.

Harwood, Stacy, and Dowell Myers. 2002. "The Dynamics of Immigration and Local Governance in Santa Ana." *Policy Studies Journal* 30 (1): 70–91.

Hendricks, Glenn. 1974. *The Dominican Diaspora: From the Dominican Republic to New York City*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

Hernández, Ramona. 2002. *The Mobility of Workers Under Advanced Capitalism: Dominican Migration to the United States*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Hirschman, Albert O. 1967. *Development Projects Observed*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

———. 2013 [1971]. "Political Economics and Possibilism." In *The Essential Hirschman*, edited by Jeremy Adelman, 1–34. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hoffnung-Garskoff, Jesse. 2008. *A Tale of Two Cities: Santo Domingo and New York After 1950*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Iskander, Natasha N. 2010. *Creative State: Forty Years of Migration and Development Policy in Morocco and Mexico.* Ithaca, NY: ILR Press.

Itzigsohn, José. 2012. "A 'Transnational Nation'? Migration and the Boundaries of Belonging." In *Politics from Afar: Transnational Diasporas and Networks,* edited by Terrence Lyons and Peter Mandaville, 181–196. New York: Columbia University Press.

Itzigsohn, José, and Daniela Villacrés. 2008. "Migrant Political Transnationalism and the Practice of Democracy: Dominican External Voting Rights and Salvadoran Home Town Associations." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31 (4): 664–686.

Kapur, Devesh. 2004. "Remittances: The New Development Mantra?" *G-24 Discussion Paper Series. Research Papers for the Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four on International Monetary Affairs.* New York and Geneva.

———. 2010. *Diaspora, Development, and Democracy: The Domestic Impact of International Migration from India.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Kasnitz, Philip, John H. Mollenkopf, Mary C. Waters, and Jennifer Holdaway. 2008. *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Kerr, William R. 2008. "Ethnic Scientific Communities and International Technology Diffusion." *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 90 (3): 518–537.

Khagram, Sanjeev, and Peggy Levitt. 2007. *The Transnational Studies Reader: Interdisciplinary Intersections and Innovations.* London: Routledge.

Kindleberger, Charles Poor. 1967. *Europe's Postwar Growth: The Role of Labor Supply.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kirchheimer, Anne. 1974. "Bay State Becoming Home for Thousands of Dominican Natives." *The Boston Globe,* March 5.

Krohn-Hansen, Christian. 2013. *Making New York Dominican: Small Business, Politics, and Everyday Life.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Kurlansky, Mark. 2010. *The Eastern Stars: How Baseball Changed the Dominican Town of San Pedro de Macoris.* New York: Riverhead Books.

Lacomba, Joan, and Luis Escala Rabadán. 2013. "Limits and Challenges for the Participation of Migrants' Associations in State Development Policies in Morocco and Mexico." *International Review of Sociology* 23 (1): 161–179.

Landolt, Patricia. 2008. "The Transnational Geographies of Immigrant Politics: Insights from a Comparative Study of Migrant Grassroots Organizing." *The Sociological Quarterly* 49 (1): 57–77.

Levitt, Peggy. 2001. *The Transnational Villagers*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. 2007. *God Needs No Passport. Immigrants and the Changing Religious Landscape*. New York: The New Press.

———. 2009. "Roots and Routes: Understanding the Lives of the Second Generation Transnationally." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35 (7): 1225–1242.

Levitt, Peggy, and Nina Glick Schiller. 2004. "Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society." *International Migration Review* 38 (3): 1002–1039.

Levitt, Peggy, and Deepak Lamba-Nieves. 2011. "Social Remittances Revisited." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37 (1): 1–22.

———. 2013. "Rethinking Social Remittances and the Migration-Development Nexus from the Perspective of Time." *Migration Letters* 10 (1): 11–22.

Levitt, Peggy, and Mary C. Waters. 2002. *The Changing Face of Home: The Transnational Lives of the Second Generation*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Lewis, W. Arthur. 1954. *The Theory of Economic Growth*. London: Allen & Unwin.

Li, Tania Murray. 2007. *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Lipton, Michael. 1980. "Migration from Rural Areas of Poor Countries: The Impact on Rural Productivity and Income Distribution." *World Development* 81 (1980): 1–24.

Locke, Richard M. 2001. "Building Trust." Paper presented at the *Annual Meetings of the American Political Science Association*. San Francisco, September 1, 2001.

Logan, John R., Wenquan Zhang, and Richard D. Alba. 2002. "Immigrant Enclaves and Ethnic Communities in New York and Los Angeles." *American Sociological Review* 67 (2): 299–322.

López, Mark Hugo, Ana Gónzalez-Barrera, and Danielle Cuddington. 2013. *Diverse Origins: The Nation's 14 Largets Hispanic-Origin Groups*. Pew Hispanic Center. Accessed August 17, 2014. http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/2013/06/summary_report_final.pdf.

Lora H., Quisqueya. 2010. "Historia dominicana y sociedad civil, 1935-1978." In *La sociedad civil dominicana: contribución a su historia*, edited by Mujeres en Desarrollo (MUDE), 51–105. Santo Domingo: MUDE, CIES/UNIBE, Alianza ONG.

Maríñez, Pablo A. 1984. "Luchas campesinas y reforma agraria en República Dominicana." In *Historia política de los campesinos Latinoamericanos*, edited by Pablo González Casanova, 1st ed., 143–207. México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores.

Marquis, Christopher, and Julie Battilana. 2009. "Acting Globally but Thinking Locally? The Enduring Influence of Local Communities on Organizations." *Research in Organizational Behavior* 29: 283–302.

Martí, Fernando, Christine Selig, Lupe Arreola, Antonio Díaz, Amie Fishman, and Nick Pagoulatos. 2012. "Planning Against Displacement: A Decade of Progressive Community-Based Planning in San Francisco's Mission District." In *Diálogos: Placemaking in Latino Communities*, edited by Michael Ríos, Leonardo Vázquez, and Lucrezia Miranda, 126–139. New York: Routledge.

Mazzucato, Valentina, and Mirjam Kabki. 2009. "Small Is Beautiful: The Micro-Politics of Transnational Relationships Between Ghanaian Hometown Associations and Communities Back Home." *Global Networks* 9 (2): 227–251.

McGregor, Douglas. 2006 [1960]. *The Human Side of Enterprise*. Annotated Edition. McGraw-Hill Companies.

Mercer, Claire, Ben Page, and Martin Evans. 2009. "Unsettling Connections: Transnational Networks, Development and African Home Associations." *Global Networks* 9 (2): 141–161.

Meseguer, Covadonga, and Francisco Javier Aparicio. 2012. "Supply or Demand? Migration and Political Manipulation in Mexico." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 47 (4): 411–440.

Milanovic, Branko. 2012. "Global Income Inequality by the Numbers: In History and Now--An Overview--." *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*, no. 6259.

Miraftab, Faranak. 2011a. "Faraway Intimate Development: Global Restructuring of Social Reproduction." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 31 (4): 392–405.

————. 2011b. "Symposium Introduction: Immigration and Transnationalities of Planning." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 31 (4): 375–78.

Mitlin, Diana. 2008. "With and Beyond the State: Co-Production as a Route to Political Influence, Power and Transformation for Grassroots Organizations." *Environment and Urbanization* 20 (2): 339–360.

Morawska, Ewa T. 2004. "Exploring Diversity in Immigrant Assimilation and Transnationalism: Poles and Russian Jews in Philadelphia." *International Migration Review* 38: 1372–1412.

Morgan, Jana, and Rosario Espinal. 2010. *Cultura política de la democracia en República Dominicana, 2010: consolidación democrática en las Américas en tiempos difíciles*. Santo Domingo: USAID/Santo Domingo; Vanderbilt University.

Mosse, David. 1998. "Process-Oriented Approaches to Development Practice and Social Research." In *Development as Process: Concepts and Methods for Working with Complexity*, edited by David Mosse, John Farrington, and Alan Rew, 3–30. London: Routledge.

Moya, José. 2005. "Immigrants and Associations: A Global and Historical Perspective." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31 (5): 833–864.

Moya Pons, Frank. 1998. *The Dominican Republic: A National History*. Princeton NJ: Marcus Wiener.

————. 2011. "Transformaciones Estructurales, 1900-2010." In *Historia de la República Dominicana*, edited by Frank Moya Pons, 295–364. Madrid: Editorial Doce Calles.

Nijenhuis, Gery, and Annelet Broekhuis. 2010. "Institutionalising Transnational Migrants' Activities: The Impact of Co-Development Programmes." *International Development Planning Review* 32 (3): 245–265.

Nussbaum, Martha C. 2001. *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

NYC (Department of City Planning, City of New York). 2013. *The Newest New Yorkers: Characteristics of the City's Foreign-Born Population*. Department of City Planning, City of New York. Accessed August 17, 2014. http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/census/nny2013/nny_2013.pdf.

Okamura, Jonathan Y. 1983. "Filipino Hometown Associations in Hawaii." *Ethnology: An International Journal of Cultural and Social Anthropology* 22: 341–353.

ONE (Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas). 2013. *Panorama Estadístico* 57. Santo Domingo: Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas, Departamento de Investigaciones.

Orozco, Manuel. 2003. *Hometown Associations and Their Present and Future Partnerships: New Development Opportunities*. Washington DC: USAID.

———. 2004. *Remittances to Latin America and the Caribbean: Issues and Perspectives on Development*. Washington, DC: Organization of American States.

Orozco, Manuel, and Rachel Fedewa. 2005. *Regional Integration? Trends and Patternsof Remittance Flows Within South Asia*. Washington, DC: Inter-American Dialogue.

Orozco, Manuel, and Eugenia García-Zanello. 2009. "Hometown Associations: Transnationalism, Philanthropy, and Development." *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 15 (2): 57–76.

Orozco, Manuel, and Katherine Welle. 2006. "Hometown Associations and Development: Ownership, Correspondence, Sustainability and Replicability." In *New Patterns for Mexico: Observations on Remittances, Philanthropic Giving, and Equitable Development,* edited by Barbara J. Merz, 157-179. Cambridge, MA: Global Equity Initiative, Harvard University Press.

Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

————. 1996. "Crossing the Great Divide: Coproduction, Synergy, and Development." *World Development* 24 (6): 1073–1087.

Pantoja, Adrián D. 2005. "Transnational Ties and Immigrant Political Incorporation: The Case of Dominicans in Washington Heights, New York." *International Migration* 43 (4): 123–146.

Peña Franjul, Marcos. 1991. *Franjul, una familia del banilejismo.* Santo Domingo: Instituto Dominicano Ambiente y Sociedad.

Percot, Marie, and Irudaya Rajan. 2007. "Female Emigration from India: Case Study of Nurses." *Economic and Political Weekly* 42 (4): 318–325.

Pérez, César, and Leopoldo Artiles. 1992. *Movimientos sociales dominicanos: identidad y dilemas.* Santo Domingo: INTEC.

Pérez, Ruddy Germán. 2009. "Hace 30 Años Huracán David Azotó En RD." *El Nacional*, August 29, Electronic Edition. Accessed August 17, 2014. http://elnacional.com.do/hace-30-anos-huracan-david-azoto-en-rd/.

Pessar, Patricia, and Sarah J. Mahler. 2003. "Transnational Migration: Bringing Gender In." *The International Migration Review* 37 (3): 812-846.

Portes, Alejandro. 1996. "Global Villagers: The Rise of Transnational Communities." *The American Prospect* 2: 74–77.

————. 2006. "Migration and Development: A Conceptual Review of the Evidence." In *Migration and Development: Perspectives from the South,* edited by Stephen Castles and Raúl Delgado Wise, 17–41. Geneva: International Organization for Migration.

————. 2009. "Migration and Development: Reconciling Opposite Views." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32 (1): 5–22.

————. 2010. *Economic Sociology: A Systematic Inquiry.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Portes, Alejandro, Cristina Escobar, and Renelinda Arana. 2008. "Bridging the Gap: Transnational and Ethnic Organizations in the Political Incorporation of Immigrants in the United States." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31 (6): 1056–1090.

Portes, Alejandro, Cristina Escobar, and Alexandra W. Radford. 2007. "Immigrant Transnational Organizations and Development: A Comparative Study." *International Migration Review* 41 (1): 242–281.

Portes, Alejandro, and Luis Eduardo Guarnizo. 1991. *Capitalistas del trópico: la immigración en los Estados Unidos y el desarrollo de la pequeña empresa en la República Dominicana*. Santo Domingo: FLACSO, Programa República Dominicana.

Portes, Alejandro, Luis Eduardo Guarnizo, and William J. Haller. 2002. "Transnational Entrepreneurs: An Alternative Form of Immigrant Economic Adaptation." *American Sociological Review* 67 (2): 278–298.

Portes, Alejandro, and Patricia Landolt. 2000. "Social Capital: Promise and Pitfalls of Its Role in Development." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 32: 529–547.

Portes, Alejandro, and Min Zhou. 2012. "Transnationalism and Development: Mexican and Chinese Immigrant Organizations in the United States." *Population and Development Review* 38 (2): 191–220.

Ramakrishnan, S. Karthick, and Celia Viramontes. 2010. "Civic Spaces: Mexican Hometown Associations and Immigrant Participation." *Journal of Social Issues* 66 (1): 155–173.

Rey Pedreira, Silvia. 2006. *El Codesarrollo: instrumentos, metodologías y buenas prácticas*. Fundación CIDEAL de Cooperación e Investigación. Accessed August 17, 2014. http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/committees/fccd/Upload/library/instrumentosymetodolog%C3%ADascideal_en.pdf.

Ricourt, Milagros. 2002. *Dominicans in New York City: Power From the Margins*. New York: Routledge.

Roy, Ananya. 2011a. "Commentary: Placing Planning in the World— Transnationalism as Practice and Critique." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 31 (4): 406–15.

———. 2011b. "Urbanisms, Worlding Practices and the Theory of Planning." *Planning Theory* 10 (1): 6–15.

Sabel, Charles F. 2004. "Beyond Principal-Agent Governance: Experimentalist Organizations, Learning and Accountability." In *De Staat van de Democratie. Democratie Voorbij de Staat*, edited by Ewald Engelen and

Monika Sie Dhian Ho, 173–95. WRR Verkenning 3 Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Sabel, Charles F., and Jonathan Zeitlin. 2012. "Experimentalist Governance." In *The Oxford Handbook of Governance*, edited by David Levi-Faur, 169–183. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sandercock, Leonie, and Peter Lyssiotis. 2003. *Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities of the 21st Century*. London: Continuum.

Sandoval, Gerardo Francisco. 2013. "Shadow Transnationalism: Cross-Border Networks and Planning Challenges of Transnational Unauthorized Immigrant Communities." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 33 (2): 176–93.

Santana, Fidel. 2011. *Resistencia y colectivismo en los convites campesinos de la provincia San Cristóbal*. Santo Domingo: UASD.

Santana, Rafael. 2012. "The Life and Death of Hometown Associations". PhD Dissertation, The University of Chicago.

Sarmiento, Carolina S., and Victoria A. Beard. 2013. "Traversing the Border Community-Based Planning and Transnational Migrants." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 33 (3): 336–347.

Saxenian, AnnaLee. 2006. *The New Argonauts: Regional Advantage in a Global Economy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sen, Amartya. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Skeldon, Ronald. 2008. "International Migration as a Tool in Development Policy: A Passing Phase?" *Population and Development Review* 34 (1): 1–18.

Smith, Michael Peter. 2001. *Transnational Urbanism: Locating Globalization*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Smith, Michael Peter, and Matt Bakker. 2005. "The Transnational Politics of the Tomato King: Meaning and Impact." *Global Networks* 5 (2): 129–146.

Smith, Robert C. 2006. *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Tal, Gil, and Susan Handy. 2010. "Travel Behavior of Immigrants: An Analysis of the 2001 National Household Transportation Survey." *Transport Policy* 17 (2): 85–93.

Tejada, Adriano Miguel. 2011. "Estado, política y gobierno, 1795-2008." In *Historia de la República Dominicana*, edited by Frank Moya Pons, 393–444. Madrid: Editorial Doce Calles.

Thompson, Susan. 2003. "Planning and Multiculturalism: A Reflection on Australian Local Practice." *Planning Theory & Practice* 4 (3): 275–293.

Tilly, Charles. 1975. "Reflections on the History of European State-Making." In *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, edited by Charles Tilly, 3–83. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Torres-Saillant, Silvio, and Ramona Hernández. 1998. *The Dominican Americans*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group.

Treisman, Daniel. 2006. "Fiscal Decentralization, Governance, and Economic Performance: A Reconsideration." *Economics & Politics* 18 (2): 219–235.

Tsai, Lily L. 2007a. *Accountability Without Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2007b. "Solidary Groups, Informal Accountability, and Local Public Goods Provision in Rural China." *American Political Science Review* 101 (02): 355–372.

Vitiello, Domenic. 2009. "The Migrant Metropolis and American Planning." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 75 (2): 245–255.

Waldinger, Roger, and David Fitzgerald. 2004. "Transnationalism in Question." *The American Journal of Sociology* 109 (5): 1177–1195.

Waldinger, Roger, Eric Popkin, and Héctor Aquiles Magana. 2008. "Conflict and Contestation in the Cross-Border Community: Hometown Associations Reassessed." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31 (5): 843–870.

Watson, Vanessa. 2014. "Co-Production and Collaboration in Planning: The Difference." *Planning Theory & Practice* 15 (1): 62–76.

WB (The World Bank). 2012. *Worldwide Governance Indicators: Country Data Report for Dominican Republic 1996-2012*. The World Bank. http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/pdf/c64.pdf.

———. 2013. "Migration and Development Brief 20". The World Bank. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1288990760745/MigrationDevelopmentBrief20.pdf.

Williams, Heather. 2008. "From Visibility to Voice: The Emerging Power of Migrants in Mexican Politics." *George Mason University: Global Migration and Transnational Politics Series, Working Paper* 4.

Wise, Raúl Delgado, and Humberto Márquez Covarrubias. 2009. "Understanding the Relationship Between Migration and Development: Toward a New Theoretical Approach." *Social Analysis* 53 (3): 85–105.

Yin, Robert K. 2009. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Fourth Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Zamora, Rodolfo G. 2007. "El Programa Tres Por Uno de Remesas Colectivas En México. Lecciones y desafíos." *Migraciones Internacionales* 4 (1): 165–172.