

The Mobilizing Potential of Mass Migration: Experimental Evidence from Honduras

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Abstract

Does mass emigration encourage or undermine protests? Emigration, being a personal decision made by households, can potentially aggregate into a collective expression of discontent against the prevailing status quo. In this paper, we focus on whether large-scale emigration influences protest support and participation. Using a survey experiment conducted in Honduras, we assess how emigration's salience affected public opinion about anti-government demonstrations in 2021. Our findings reveal that respondents primed with information about migration expressed more favorable opinions toward protests, although their participation in demonstrations was unaffected. This study contributes to a better understanding of the link between emigration and public opinion for those who stay in their origin country, and also its limitations to mobilizing for change during periods of political turmoil.

Keywords: anti-government protests, protest support, survey experiment, emigration, public opinion

Introduction

Does migration help or hurt anti-government protests? Since Hirschman (1970), scholars have used the concepts of exit and voice to understand the political consequences of migration and whether it fosters or hinders political change. On the one hand, migration can be detrimental to protest prospects due to the loss of dissenting citizens and the reduction of the opposition’s possibility of success (Sellars, 2019; Pfaff and Kim, 2003). For example, as Fidel Castro consolidated his power in Cuba, many detractors chose to leave the country which resulted in the attrition of opposition voices (Hoffmann, 2005). However, migration can also be a signal of common grievances for those who remain in the origin country. For instance, after joining the European Union in 2004, Lithuania experienced an increase in emigration, and those who stayed were overwhelmed by feelings of entrapment and impoverishment (Woolfson, 2010). Other countries, such as Ireland, have historically responded to hardships with either revolution or migration (Power, 2018). This has led the literature to view emigration as one possible manifestation of discontent, simultaneously producing a “quiet exit” and mobilizing critical voices. Debates continue about whether emigration and local political mobilization undermine or complement each other.

Most research on migration and political participation focuses on the dynamics that unfold after migration. A few studies have shown that concurrent outflows of citizens could affect political behavior and social unrest (Pfaff and Kim, 2003; Sellars, 2019; Karadja and Prawitz, 2019). In the last decade, Latin America has seen a rise in anti-government protests while also experiencing large-scale emigration. Such is the case with Nicaragua in 2018, where protests broke out and were met with a brutal response from the Ortega regime (Bermúdez and Robles, 2022; Orozco, 2019). Before and since then, Nicaragua has returned to being a major migrant-sending country in Latin America. But Nicaragua is not alone in experiencing protests and migration simultaneously. Honduras, Haiti, and Puerto Rico are among several countries that have also experienced large emigration parallel to political protests. Despite this recurrent phenomenon, we still

know relatively little about the relationship between emigration and other forms of public discontent. Witnessing mass migration could increase disaffection or apathy toward the regime, leading to citizens' distrust of political institutions (Dalton, 1999). It is relevant to better understand the effect of mass migration on the opinion of those individuals who remain in the country, as they could potentially mobilize for political change, or conversely, contribute to the consolidation of the status quo.

Comprehending how migration influences public opinion and political behavior is a critical challenge due to endogeneity and confounding factors. For instance, emigration can be triggered by worsening economic conditions, concomitantly leading to increased individual dissatisfaction with government performance and subsequent street mobilization. In this study, we aim to disentangle emigration's distinct impact by examining its potential to independently shape political attitudes. We argue that residing in an environment with high emigration rates can lay the groundwork for political participation, such as protests. While the voice-exit framework has been valuable in comprehending how emigration affects political behavior, further investigation is warranted to understand how those who remain respond to the departure of substantial portions of their compatriots. Emigration can serve as both a motivator and a deterrent for citizens concerning the prospects of political change and grassroots mobilization.

This paper tests the effect of emigration on anti-government protest support. Specifically, we explore the mobilization potential of emigration as a display of discontent and grievances. We assess this relationship using the Honduras case, one of the highest migrant-sending countries in Latin America. Through a survey experiment, we randomly assigned subjects to receive a treatment that provides information about Honduran emigration. We particularly emphasize how Honduras is one of the largest contributors to migration flows from Central America and that emigration continues to increase despite the rising costs, dangers, and barriers to migrating to the United States, which signals deteriorating conditions in the home country. We expect this priming to make the link between migration and local conditions more salient in order

to assess whether respondents change their views about anti-government demonstrations that have occurred parallel to migration. We find that our treatment makes people hold more positive views about protests, but it does not affect their propensity to participate in these demonstrations. We argue that the mechanism behind this is related to both changes in how the context is perceived, and how group and individual identities are modified when exposed to mass migration.

Our findings offer two contributions to the literature on the local effects of migration. On the one side, we study the mobilizing potential of migration as a politically motivated action that can, under certain circumstances, impact the political attitudes and behaviors of those who stay. This represents a novel perspective on migration effects, extending the predominant focus on the political and economic consequences of overseas migration. On the other, we offer a novel empirical framework to understand the impact of emigration on public opinion at the local level, focusing not only on how the context is perceived differently after observing mass migration but also on how collective and individual identities are transformed because of it. This framework helps to understand the circumstances under which social movements are able to foster adherence, which is key to comprehending how movements survive and grow, and how they ultimately enter and achieve goals within the political arena (Ennis, 1987).

The Relationship Between Migration and Political Dissent: Expectations from the Literature

As nations grapple with economic or political instability, their citizens often resort to two distinct responses: emigration and protests. While both manifestations reflect discontent, protests have emerged as a dominant channel through which citizens express their grievances (Tilly, 2003). Emigration, on the other hand, constitutes a more passive form of discontent, characterized by private decisions and actions that may not require the coordination demanded by protests. However, it is important to note that these different types of discontent can happen at the same time, which calls for a deeper understanding of the connection between emigration and protests. This study aims to unravel how witnessing mass emigration can influence individuals' attitudes toward protests and whether migration holds the potential to mobilize citizens to a greater acceptance of street mobilization. By shedding light on this complex interplay, we contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics surrounding citizen dissent and political mobilization.

Exposure to large-scale emigration from one's home country can trigger multiple changes that reverberate through political behavior and attitudes toward street mobilization. Extant literature identifies two key pathways through which migration can induce shifts in political attitudes regarding protests: the *contextual mechanism*, which pertains to how individuals perceive their environment, and the *identity mechanism*, which relates to how individuals perceive themselves and others. Through both mechanisms, witnessing or being proximate to mass migration can potentially alter individuals' stances on anti-government demonstrations.

Contextual Mechanism

Mass migration can significantly influence individuals' perceptions of their context, which, in turn, affects their attitudes toward government-targeted street demonstrations. Deprivation theory offers valuable insights into this phenomenon.

When people migrate *en masse*, their departure can be seen as a rejection of the current political regime, sending a clear signal about the status quo to those remaining (Hirschman, 1970; Hirschman, 1993). This visibility of exit and the transformation of individual grievances into collective concerns can lead to changes in attitudes toward protests aimed at the government. Just as protests serve as information-providing activities (Lohmann, 1993), migration can enhance political mobilization through a signaling mechanism, particularly when individuals perceive their situation as unjust, deteriorating, or potentially modifiable (Klandermans, Stekelenburg, and Toorn, 2008).

A significant driving force behind migration is economic hardship, as numerous citizens depart their homeland seeking improved conditions. This outward movement not only reflects individual circumstances but also evolves into a national concern. This phenomenon is in alignment with the concept of relative deprivation, a well-established determinant of individual mobilization (Gurr, 1970). The perception of deprivation and injustice plays a pivotal role in explaining expressions of discontent. Recent research further supports this notion by highlighting that individuals who perceive a decline in their living conditions are more likely to engage in street demonstrations (Grasso and Giugni, 2016). Moreover, this effect appears to be amplified when individuals compare their financial losses to those of others, perceiving their own losses as greater (Bernburg, 2015). Similarly, emigration itself can have a mobilizing effect, as it represents a private manifestation of discontent with the prevailing status quo, which can subsequently translate into increased mobilization among those who choose to stay behind.

The phenomenon of mass migration plays a crucial role in the transformation of individual grievances into collective concerns, as it serves as a mobilization signal indicating that the challenges faced by emigrants are shared issues affecting both migrants and those who remain in the country (Meyer, 2021; Karadja and Prawitz, 2019). With emigration occurring on a large scale, it becomes widely known, signaling to the non-emigrating population that those who choose to leave are expressing dissatisfaction with the current system, and this discontent could potentially impact

them as well (Pfaff and Kim, 2003). Furthermore, migration acts as a public display of discontent, carrying significant informational and mobilization potential (Pfaff and Kim, 2003).

A second way migration can affect how the context is perceived is through the evaluation of the political environment. Changes in the assessment of the political context, particularly related to the government's political power, are crucial in explaining activists' capacity for advancing their claims, exerting influence, and mobilizing potential supporters (Meyer, 2004). Migration can do this by decreasing the authorities' political power, or at least the perception of it, which can provide new opportunities for conducting mobilizing frames (McVeigh, 2009). Just as elements of contentious activities that can act as informational providers, such as the repression of protests that inform bystanders about the government's resolve and effectiveness (Aytaç, Schiumerini, and Stokes, 2018), migration can also signal the government's lack of resolve and inability to address the issues that motivate so many people to leave.

Migration could negatively impact perceptions of government power and resolve, opening new opportunities for mobilization for those who stay. The government's inability to prevent a large-scale flight of its citizens out of the country can signal a serious and general decline in its authority (Pedraza, 2013). In the GDR and Cuba, the mass exodus of citizens was viewed with apprehension by many. But, as Hirschman (1993) argued, it impressed and alerted other citizens who had no thought of leaving, so they finally decided to speak out against the regime. In that sense, migration can represent a threat to the government because even in a context where states care very little about what people think, they can potentially be concerned if a significant number of people start to migrate (Herbst, 1990). Large-scale migration can reflect a loss of legitimacy for a political system that fails to address basic demands from their citizens (Vargas-Ramos, 2018).

Identity Mechanism

Through what we call *identity mechanism*, migration can alter not only how individuals perceive others, but also how they perceive themselves. In terms of group considerations, when individuals feel that claimants' problems are legitimate, they may feel greater identification with the cause. Through collective identity processes, movement actors develop a shared cultural repertoire of protest methods; if collective identity does not resonate with potential recruits or adherents, they will decide not to join the movement, or leave it altogether (Robnett, 2002). In this way, witnessing processes of mass migration can change how the group leaving the country is perceived by those who stay. If the general population perceives their exit as justified considering the country's political situation, group identification can emerge. On the contrary, group identification may not flourish if the exit option is viewed as a private solution, disconnected from the current political context.

Perceptions regarding migration play a crucial role in understanding group identification dynamics. Some citizens may perceive migration as a peaceful means of expressing discontent, leading them to empathize with the cause of emigrants and potentially offer active support to their fellow nationals' decision to leave the country (Murdie and Purser, 2017). However, when migration occurs on a large scale and becomes a public spectacle, it can disrupt the functioning of the political system, resulting in workforce reduction, social and economic imbalances, and undermining the legitimacy of the ruling elites. Consequently, the extent of group identification can be influenced by how individuals perceive migration: whether it is seen as a legitimate and non-disruptive way to express discontent with the regime or as an inappropriate display of dissent. In cases where migration is considered inappropriate, a backlash effect may occur, hindering group identification and reducing support for the emigrants' cause. This lack of support for emigration, in turn, could undermine willingness to endorse and participate in protest movements, as individuals may fail to recognize the shared grievances affecting both emigrants and the non-emigrating population.

In terms of individual identity, migration can have significant implications for

individual political efficacy, which refers to the belief in the potential impact of individual actions on the political process (Campbell, Gurin, and Miller, 1971). This sense of political efficacy is relevant to understanding citizen support and participation in street mobilizations (Pfaff and Kim, 2003). When people choose to migrate, those who remain in their home country may become aware that discontented individuals are leaving, but they also recognize the importance of having a critical mass of people to fight against injustices. This can lead to a signaling mechanism that increases protest support, as mentioned earlier. However, excessive emigration may lead to challenges in coordination and cooperation (Pfaff and Kim, 2003; Sellars, 2019).

When a large number of regime opponents decide to leave the country, it weakens dissent voices and hinders collective action (Hoffmann, 2005). For example, mass emigration, as observed in twentieth-century Cuba, can undermine protest support by eroding political efficacy. Similar cases in other contexts also highlight how emigration of regime opponents can consolidate authoritarian rulers by reducing opposition and dissent (Kelemen, 2020; Peters and Miller, 2022; Sellars, 2019; Pfaff and Kim, 2003). As a result, emigration can create an environment where dissident voices are less likely to be heard, and incumbents face less pressure to implement concessions or reforms, leading to political stabilization and the preservation of the status quo. The availability of exit options can also make citizen coordination more challenging, as those who have the option to migrate may be less inclined to engage in collective action (Sellars, 2019). In this perspective, emigration can hinder the effectiveness of voices within civil society by depleting it of motivated individuals who would otherwise articulate grievances (Pedraza, 2007).

Argument and Hypotheses

Based on the existing literature, we hypothesize that mass migration will positively influence attitudes toward protests through the *contextual mechanism*, for two key reasons. Firstly, migration serves as a signal of grievances and a decline in the political power of the incumbent regime. Secondly, it modifies political opportunities not only

for those already involved in mobilization but also for bystanders. Emigration accentuates individual concerns, transforming them into collective issues, which can have a mobilizing effect by demonstrating that the issues faced by individuals are part of a broader collective problem (Meyer, 2021). The public and collective nature of emigration can heighten people’s sensitivity to collective grievances, even extending to non-emigrants who continue to reside in the country (Pfaff and Kim, 2003). Furthermore, migration can expand mobilizing frames by altering perceptions of government power. Considering these aspects together, the interplay between migration and protests acts as an informational cue, signaling an unsustainable status quo and potentially facilitating mobilization for change (Basta, 2018).

We should expect citizens to update their prior beliefs upon observing mass emigration and change their attitudes toward protests. The signaling effect of emigration should lead citizens to depress their outlooks on the national political and economic situation. As these evaluations worsen, citizens will sympathize more with anti-government protests. Given that mass emigration can raise the salience of factors that motivate leaving the country, citizens may feel that protests are appropriate to raise those concerns for those who remain. Therefore, citizens may feel motivated to participate in a protest to address those push factors.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *Information about mass emigration will increase support for anti-government protests.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *Information about mass emigration will increase motivation to participate in protests.*

The observable implications from the contextual mechanism are that mass emigration can reinforce support for protests among citizens with lower evaluations of the incumbent. The political efficacy of protests may increase among citizens who observe mass migration and hold pessimistic views of the government. Thus, we should expect citizens with low approval of the incumbent government to increase their support for and motivation to participate in protests when faced with mass emigration.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): *Information about mass emigration will increase support for anti-government protests among citizens with a low evaluation of the incumbent government.*

Hypothesis 4 (H4): *Information about mass emigration will increase motivation to participate in protests among citizens with low evaluations of the incumbent government.*

Through the identity mechanism, the relationship between migration and attitudes toward protests can take a twofold path. The relative prominence of the individual effect in shaping identities can lead to a decline in political efficacy, which, in turn, negatively impacts attitudes toward protests. Conversely, if the group effect plays a more significant role, identification with the migrant group and their objectives may increase, positively affecting attitudes toward protests. This positive effect occurs when individuals recognize migrants' prerogatives as legitimate and perceive the migration process as nonviolent and non-disruptive. Successful mobilization is a gradual process that involves converting bystanders and opponents into supporters of a social movement's goals and associated organizations (Klandermans, Stekelenburg, and Toorn, 2008, 369). As such, the focus is on the structural shifts that provide the necessary resources for collectively addressing longstanding grievances (Polletta and Jasper, 2001).

We can observe the identity mechanism through emigration demographics. Emigration is not random and emigrants do not reflect the general population. The costs of emigration drive self-selection into migrating among those with resources, which tend to be middle-income households (Massey et al., 1993; Hatton, Williamson, et al., 2005). Thus, citizens from similar demographics as emigrés will be more likely to understand the grievances that motivate mass exit. With better reception of emigration's signaling mechanism, we should expect these citizens from similar demographics as emigrants to provide more support for anti-government protests. Furthermore, given that they remain in the country and have not left, they may raise their voice through participation in protests.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): *Information about mass emigration will increase support for anti-government protests among citizens with similar demographic profiles as emigrants.*

Hypothesis 6 (H6): *Information about mass emigration will increase motivation to participate in protests among citizens with similar demographic profiles as emigrants.*

Case and Research Design

Honduras

Honduras is our case study for testing the effects of emigration on attitudes toward protests. Honduras has been a major migrant-sending country since the early 2000s. Since the 2009 coup of President Zelaya, the Central American country has faced political and economic turmoil that further exacerbated emigration. Several protest movements have emerged there and the state has responded with violent repression (Sosa, Menjívar, and Almeida, 2022). In 2018, thousands of Hondurans congregated in San Pedro Sula to form migrant caravans. These caravans were also a response to the increasing dangers migrants face traveling through Mexico and the rising barriers to migrating to the United States (Frank-Vitale, 2023). The departure of migrant caravans from Honduras increased the visibility of emigration as a collective act. This public display of exit presents an opportunity to test whether migration affects political attitudes, such as support for protests. Given our theory, observing mass flight should motivate Hondurans to support and participate in anti-incumbent protests.

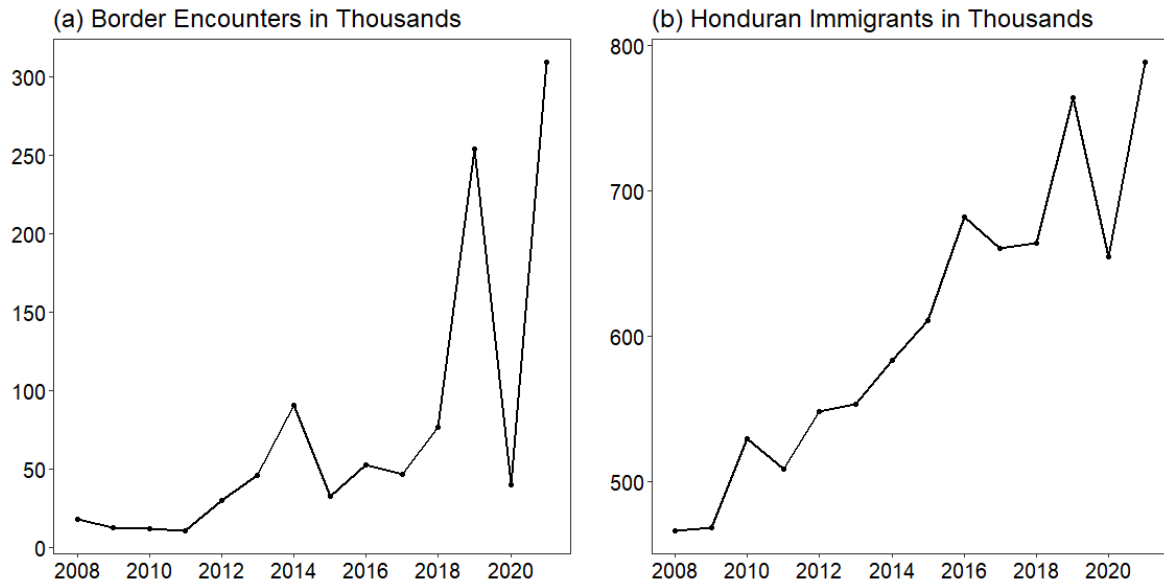
Honduras has experienced decades of economic and political turmoil that has contributed to emigration and protest mobilization in the twenty-first century. Prior to the 2009 military coup and during military rule, two parties dominated Honduran politics. The Liberal and National parties represented economic elites with little ideological difference between them (Taylor-Robinson, 2009; González-Ocantos, Jonge, and Nickerson, 2015). Both parties relied on clientelism to maintain support from lower-income communities. This political stability was interrupted by the military overthrow of President Zelaya of the Liberal Party in 2009. Zelaya's alliance with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez alarmed the opposition as well as members of his own party. Opposition to Zelaya grew when he called for a referendum to consider a constitutional reform that would allow for the reelection of the president. With support from political and economic elites, the Supreme Court ordered Zelaya's arrest (Ruhl, 2010; Llanos and Marsteintredet, 2010).

Since the 2009 military coup in Honduras, various protest movements have emerged. The foundation of protest movements following the coup was based on previous social movements against neoliberal policies of the 1990s (Sosa, 2017; Sosa and Almeida, 2019). A broad coalition of popular organizations came together to oppose major economic reforms, such as privatizations and free trade agreements. Protests against the military coup and interim government quickly emerged and provided the grounds for long-term mobilization against the political establishment (Sosa, 2017). There was a significant cycle of mobilization against corruption during 2015, the fraudulent and controversial reelection of President Hernandez between 2017 and 2018, and the privatization of public health care and education during 2019 (Sosa and Almeida, 2019; Vommaro and Briceño-Cerrato, 2018; Gallardo, 2018; Ramirez and Trochez, 2022). Protests and social mobilization were often met with repressive responses from a militarized state, yet these mobilizations provided crucial support for the growing opposition parties that broke Honduras' two-party system. Protests continued as the 2021 presidential election was approaching. From the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 to October 2021, one month before the presidential elections, a total of 1,106 protests were reported (Sosa, Menjívar, and Almeida, 2022, 175).

While large-scale migration from Central America began in the 1980s due to civil conflict, Honduran migration, in particular, began to rise at the turn of the century due to economic stagnation, civil violence, and natural disasters (Bermeo and Leblang, 2021; Corson and Hallock, 2021). Honduras has among the highest emigration rates from Latin America and is the fastest-growing Latino immigrant group in the United States (Cohn et al., 2017). Due to increasing barriers to migration, a significant share of Hondurans arrive in the United States as unauthorized immigrants (Quijada and Sierra, 2019; Batalova, 2021). Figure 1 presents Honduran migration to the United States using two different measures. The left panel (a) shows the number of encounters with Honduran citizens at the U.S.-Mexico border as reported by U.S. Customs and Border Patrol. We can see that there was a significant increase at the beginning of 2018. The right panel (b) shows the Honduran immigrant population in the United States from

the Census Bureau. Figure 1b suggests a steady increase in Honduran migration to the United States despite the volatility in border encounters.¹

Figure 1: Honduran Migration to the United States (2008-2021)



Note: Left panel (a) uses data from Customs and Border Protection (Ruiz Soto, 2022). Right panel (b) uses data from IPUMS/US Census Bureau (Ruggles et al., 2023).

The migrant caravans generated visibility of the Honduran exodus. Before 2018, migrant caravans typically formed in Mexico in smaller groups as a way to improve their safety as they attempted to cross to the U.S. Migrant caravans in Honduras from 2018 onward were a response to the increasing cooperation between the United States and Mexico in raising barriers to migration from Central America (Frank-Vitale, 2023). Thousands of people from different parts of Honduras congregated in San Pedro Sula, the economic hub in the northwestern part of the country, and walked towards the border with Guatemala (Figure 2). The caravan represents a public and collective display of exit from a country that was already experiencing high emigration for decades. Honduras emerged and surpassed its Central American neighbors as the largest migrant-sending country to the United States (Cohn, Passel, and Gonzalez-Barrera, 2017). The large

¹The decrease in 2020 could be due to the undercounting of Hispanic populations during that year's census (Khubba, Heim, and Hong, 2022).

number of people traveling through the caravan reinforces the high levels of emigration Honduras has produced in the previous decade. Our expectation is that learning about high levels of emigration from Honduras should signal to citizens that the individual grievances that motivate migration may be shared throughout the country. As a result, information about this large-scale emigration will lead to greater support for protests against the incumbent and a willingness to join them.

Figure 2: Caravan Routes in Honduras



Note: San Pedro Sula is in the Cortés department, and represents one of the main transportation hubs in Honduras.

Survey Experiment

We used an original survey of Honduran residents conducted in October and November of 2021.² The data collection was completed one week before the November 28 presidential election. The survey fieldwork was done by the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) based at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de

²The study was pre-registered with EGAP/OSF and an anonymized pre-analysis plan is submitted with the supplementary materials.

Honduras. The face-to-face survey followed COVID-19 protocols for the safety of enumerators and respondents.³

The survey involved over 2,000 respondents from five different regions in Honduras.⁴ Two of the regions comprise the most urban areas of the country. The capital region encompasses municipalities within and around Tegucigalpa. Respondents from the north region come from the departments of Yoro and Cortés, with the latter being home to San Pedro Sula, the country’s economic hub. The central region samples are from the departments of Comayagua and La Paz. The survey also included respondents from the border regions adjacent to Guatemala and Nicaragua. The west region samples are from departments near the Guatemalan border, such as Copán, Lempira, and Ocotepeque. The South region includes Choluteca and Valle, which are close to the border with Nicaragua.⁵ In total, the sample comprises 2,231 respondents, with each region having at least 400 respondents.

Regarding our dependent variables, the first protest variable asks respondents about their approval of recent protests against President Hernández on a five-point scale from strong disagreement toward protests to strong agreement. The approval variable indicates whether respondents expressed approval for recent protests. The second protest variable asks a hypothetical question about whether the respondent would participate in an upcoming protest. This variable is on a four-point scale from definite no to definite yes. This participation variable can be interpreted as a public act of voice and discontent. These two variables allow us to determine how respondents feel about protests against the Hernández presidency. They also provide more flexibility for respondents to address recent protests as it does not restrict the survey to a question of retroactive participation in a protest.

The survey incorporated an embedded experiment designed to prime respondents

³The study was approved by the Author Institution’s IRB (1759834-1).

⁴This survey was conducted as part of a larger project focused on understanding emigration from Honduras and transit migration within the country. Due to the challenges of achieving a nationally representative sample at the time, regional samples were chosen to examine the role of emigration and transit migration and to compare the border regions with the interior.

⁵A map of Honduras’ departments is available in Figure A.2.

with two distinct sets of information concerning Honduran migration: (1) high emigration depicted as an aggregation of individual decisions, and (2) high emigration characterized by the presence of migrant caravans. Respondents were randomly assigned to either the control group or the experimental groups. However, since our main focus is on understanding the impact of information about high emigration on attitudes toward protest, the two experimental groups were subsequently combined into the same treatment status.⁶ This approach allows us to effectively analyze the effect of high emigration information on attitudes toward protest, irrespective of the specific priming condition.

Both treatments focus on large-scale emigration from Honduras. In the first treatment group, respondents were informed that Hondurans emigrate using their own resources, without any mention of congregating with others. On the other hand, the second treatment emphasizes the migrant caravans that departed from San Pedro Sula, Honduras.⁷ Additionally, respondents in this treatment group were exposed to a photo of the caravan and an image of the front page of the Spanish newspaper *El Pais*, which serves to highlight the visibility of mass emigration (Figure A.1). This inclusion of an international newspaper image further accentuates the visibility of Honduran emigration beyond local media, underscoring the importance and widespread attention that the exodus receives.

Estimation

We use fixed-effects models to estimate treatment effects on anti-government protest support. Department-level fixed-effects account for invariant, non-observed factors such as local socioeconomic conditions or cultural differences. Given the proximity to presidential elections, we control for days until the election, since it is possible that as the election approaches, respondents may be more or less willing to show support for

⁶Appendix E includes the results when disaggregating the treatment between high emigration and high emigration through the caravan.

⁷Scripts for the treatments are available in Appendix A, Table A.1.

protests. There were reports of electoral violence and uncertainty over the results could affect responses (Maradiaga, 2019). The results are robust to the inclusion of this temporal variable. In additional models, we control for socio-demographic variables to deal with minor imbalances between the treatment groups.⁸

We estimated the following models for each dependent variable:

$$protest\ approval_{i,d} = \gamma_d + \delta(Treated_i) + \beta_1 \mathbf{X}_c + \beta_2 \mathbf{W}_i + \epsilon_{i,d} \quad (1)$$

where *protest approval* is a 5-level scale response to the question “To what extent do you agree or disagree that the recent anti-government protests are justified?” that ranges from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. We estimated the second model using the following equation:

$$protest\ participation_{i,d} = \gamma_d + \delta(Treated_i) + \beta_1 \mathbf{X}_c + \beta_2 \mathbf{W}_i + \epsilon_{i,d} \quad (2)$$

where *protest participation* is a 4-level scale response to the question “If there were a protest next week to address the problems in the country, would you consider participating?” that ranges from *no* to *yes*. For both equations (1) and (2), γ_d represents the fixed effects by department. The vector \mathbf{X}_c denotes country-level controls, such as the days leading up to the election. The vector \mathbf{W}_i denotes individual controls, such as age, gender, education, and an urban binary variable, and $\epsilon_{i,m}$ is the error term, clustered at the department level. δ is the treatment effect that captures the effect of the treatment group in relation to the control group.

⁸However, as seen in Table B.1, the control and treatment groups are similar in key sociodemographics.

Results

As was previously mentioned, our main expectation was to find a positive effect of migration on attitudes toward protests. Table 1 shows that those treated individuals show, on average, 0.10 points more approval of protests than untreated individuals, which is statistically significant at 95 percent.⁹ Priming respondents with information about high Honduran emigration led to this effect. Conversely, we do not find a statistically significant effect on protest participation.

Table 1: Effect of migration treatment on protest approval and participation

| | DV: Protest Approval | DV: Protest Participation |
|---------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| ATT | 0.104** (0.032) | 0.068 (0.038) |
| Observations | 2008 | 1931 |
| R^2 | 0.151 | 0.157 |
| R^2 Adj. | 0.143 | 0.148 |
| Clustered SE | Department | Department |
| FE Department | ✓ | ✓ |

Note: Full models available in Table C.1 and C.2 of Appendix C (Model 3). * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

We interpret the baseline results in two key ways. Firstly, the evidence suggests that the contextual mechanism, wherein migration influences perceptions of grievances and changes in political opportunities, is at play. This is supported by the positive outcome in the treatment of our first dependent variable, protest approval. It indicates that exposure to information about migration has an impact on how individuals view protests in the context of their grievances and political opportunities. Secondly, we observe that the treatment does not significantly affect protest participation. This leads us to infer that while migration may influence protest approval, it might not be sufficient to directly spur actual participation in protest activities. Nevertheless, the absence of a negative effect

⁹We also estimated weighted models to take into account the different sample sizes between the control and the treatment groups. Results are available in Table C.3 of Appendix C, showing similar coefficients.

on both outcomes implies that the identity mechanism, which potentially undermines individual efficacy, does not seem relevant in this particular context. The idea that mass migration and the availability of an exit option could erode protest mobilization by weakening network effects or diminishing prospects of success (Sellars, 2019; Pfaff and Kim, 2003) is not supported by our findings. Our results do not indicate that exposure to information about high emigration negatively affects individuals' political efficacy, challenging this particular argument.

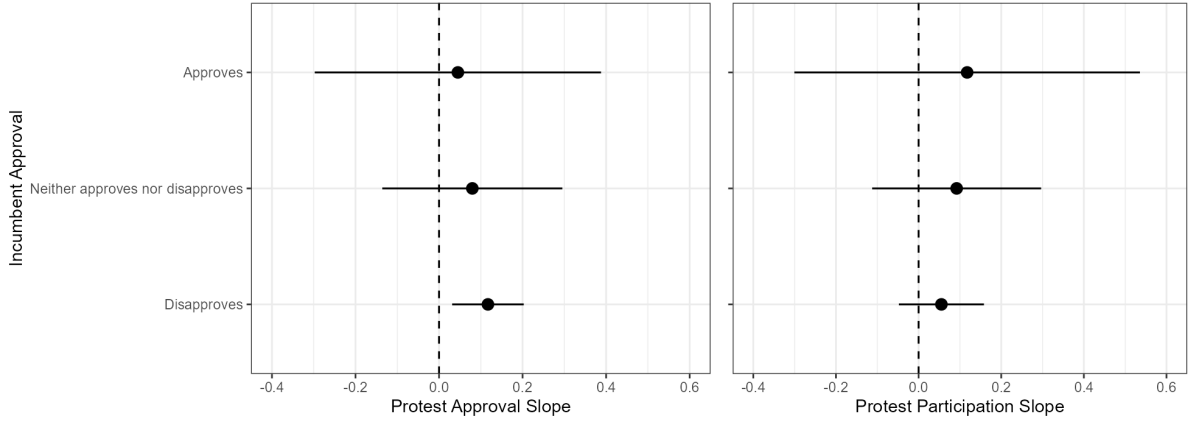
We investigate whether the identity mechanism plays a role in the treatment effect. We anticipate that migration may have a mobilizing effect if the grievances expressed by departing individuals are perceived as legitimate by the non-migrant population and if migration is seen as a nonviolent form of contention. To explore this aspect, we analyze the treatment effect across different groups based on their approval of the government. Intuitively, it is reasonable to expect that individuals who strongly approve of the government's performance would be less inclined to support anti-government demonstrations, a pattern that has been observed in various contexts.¹⁰ Examining the treatment effect within different government approval groups will help us understand how attitudes toward protests may vary based on the level of identification individuals feel with the claims made by migrants. By investigating these aspects, we can gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between migration, identity, and political attitudes.

Figure 3 shows the interaction effect between treatment and incumbent approval. The incumbent's approval plays a major role in influencing the relationship between migration and protest mobilization. In this model, the effect of the treatment remains statistically significant and positive on protest approval for respondents who disapprove of the government, with a similar effect size to that in the previous model. In light of this result, we can conclude that the group effect that produces mobilization is indeed explained by the identification of the claims and their assessment of legitimacy since

¹⁰Recent studies by Cheung, Kun Ma, and Chan (2021) and Johnston, Hamann, and Field (2022) corroborate this phenomenon.

migration only mobilizes those who already have negative opinions about the government.

Figure 3: Marginal Effects of Treatment on Protest Approval and Protest Participation



Note: Bars show 95% C.I.s. Full models available in Table C.1 and C.2 of Appendix C (Model 5).

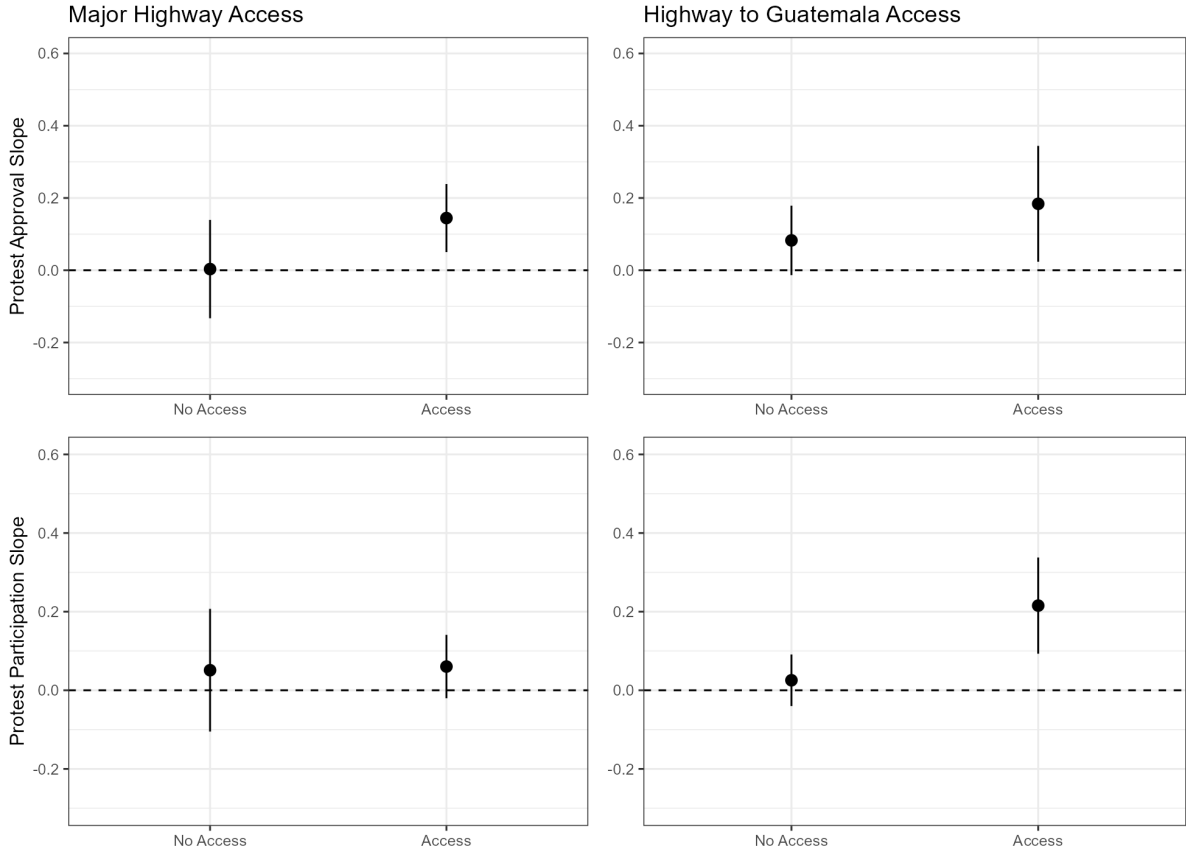
Regarding the second aspect of potential group identification, we need to assess if the treatment effect changes based on whether individuals regard the caravan as a disruptive or non-disruptive form of political demonstration. To do so, we condition the treatment effect on respondents' geographical proximity to different migration routes. According to Andrews, Beyerlein, and Farnum (2016), proximity to protests is a key element in understanding individuals' opinions about these forms of political demonstration. Focusing particularly on demonstrations that occurred in the context of the Civil Rights Movement, they show that exposure to specific tactics, such as sit-ins, fostered sympathy for African Americans and to activists' claims in the South among White Americans living near protest sites. Other authors have provided more nuance to this finding, arguing that proximity to small marches increases political efficacy, whereas large-scale events have the opposite effect (Wallace, Zepeda-Millán, and Jones-Correa, 2014). We are particularly interested in whether the act of migrating is seen as something disruptive that can generate a backlash against the migrants' claims, or whether it is seen as an appropriate form of manifesting political discontent.

With this in mind, we explore whether an interaction between treatment and accessibility to the routes used to migrate in the respondents' municipalities yields a statistically significant effect. We include two different types of access: access to a

major highway, and access to a highway that leads to Guatemala.¹¹ For the latter, we code municipalities with access to highways towards the Agua Caliente and Florido border crossings, which were often reported as the main routes for the migrant caravan to enter Guatemala (Avila, 2019). Therefore, these municipalities are more likely to be exposed to caravans. Figure 4 shows that respondents with access to a major highway have significantly higher protest approval levels. However, when examining protest participation, we see that the positive effect of access only happens for respondents who live in municipalities that have access to a highway that leads to Guatemala. Given that political mobilization takes place when there is a demand for political protests in society, along with a supply of chances for people to participate (Klandermans, Stekelenburg, and Toorn, 2008, 361), access to highways can be regarded as a supply of opportunities for participation, having a considerable effect on protest participation.

¹¹We consider highways with the prefix “CA-” as a major highway.

Figure 4: Effect of Treatment on Protest Approval and Participation by Type of Highway Access



Note: Bars show 95% C.I.s. Full models available in Table C.4 of Appendix C.

Long-lasting, street-level tactics that disrupt public space tend to be viewed as more hostile, and can even deteriorate democratic attitudes (Ketchley and El-Rayyes, 2021). Under this perspective, disruptive tactics carry the risk of alienating support, making it difficult for bystanders to identify with movement activists (Simpson, Willer, and Feinberg, 2018), a relevant factor if we consider that support for the movement can be conditioned by the extent to which a bystander can identify with those carrying out a protest (Muñoz and Anduiza, 2019). However, large-scale emigration does not seem to negatively affect anti-government protest support. For Hondurans, emigration may not be seen as a violation of norms or a significant disruption but as a regular manifestation of discontent that does not involve physical confrontation or property damage. According to the survey, at least 75 percent of respondents agreed that emigration reflects the national state of affairs.

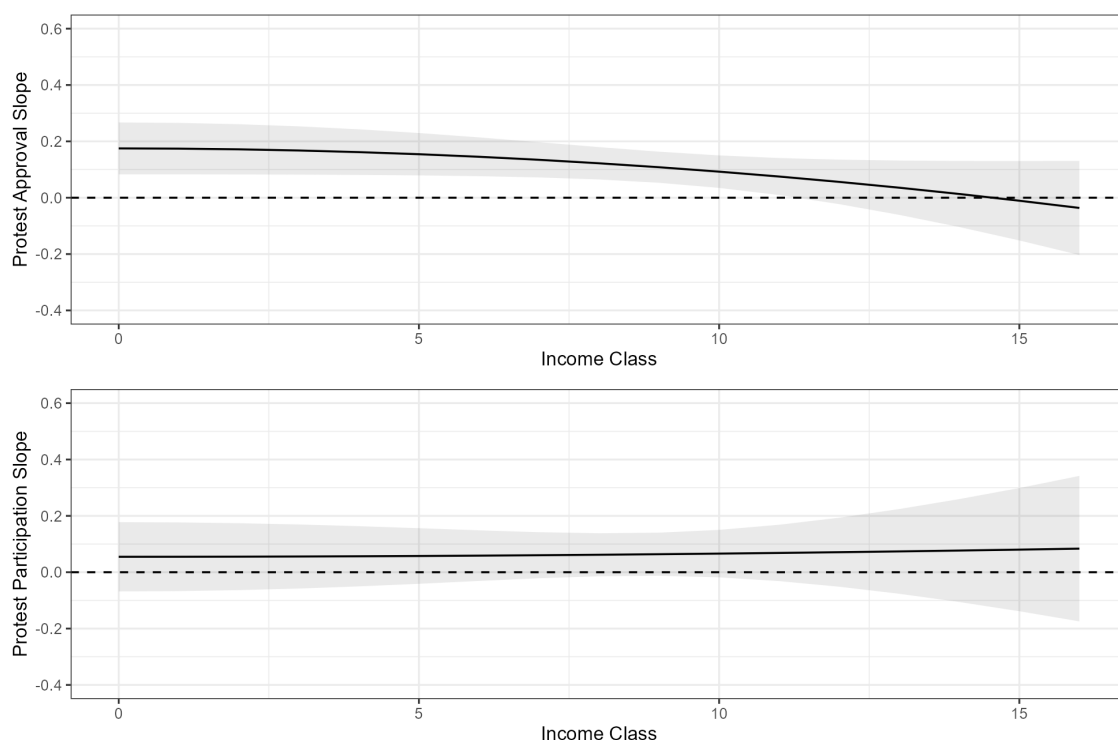
Given that for our main estimations we combined both treatments into a single group, we also assessed whether there were different effects according to treatment type. Results from Table E.1 from Appendix E show consistent, but smaller effects, for protest approval. For the case of protest participation (Table E.2), only the public treatment produces statistically significant results. When people know that others are emigrating in a mass caravan, it may be seen as a group decision and a response to specific circumstances – in this case, economic and social grievances caused by government mismanagement. This may produce a stronger frame alignment, which is crucial to explain protest sympathizers and potential participation, particularly the alignment of individual interests, values, and beliefs with the social movement activities, goals, and ideology (Snow et al., 1986). Non-migrating individuals pay attention to migration as an indicator of the general population’s sentiment toward the country’s situation when it is done publicly through a caravan, which may explain its effect on protest participation, contrary to the private treatment.

Emigrants are not representative of the population and perhaps respondents are reacting to who is emigrating in the survey experiment. Given the costs and resources to emigrate, emigrants will hold distinct characteristics apart from the general population (Massey et al., 1993; Bastia, 2011). As Hear (2014) points out, “patterns and outcomes of migration are shaped by the resources migrants can mobilize, and those resources are largely determined by socioeconomic background.” That not only affects where they migrate to but also *how* they get there. In the last few decades, protests around the world have been driven by educated but unemployed people who, at the same time, are also the group with a higher probability of emigrating than the rest of the population (Hear, 2014). Therefore, it is necessary to examine whether a class component regarding the caravan’s inability to produce mobilizing effects on the population is playing a role.

In Honduras, the social status of the respondent might be influenced by the perceived social status of emigrants presented in the treatments. Self-selection into emigration among Hondurans allows for an examination of how treatment effects vary across income groups. According to Quijada and Sierra (2019), Honduran migrants differ based on

documented and undocumented migration, with documented migrants typically having incomes just above the minimum wage, while undocumented migrants tend to come from households earning below the minimum wage. A plausible hypothesis is that lower-income groups may demonstrate greater empathy for caravan participants, as overland migration requires fewer resources compared to other official migration channels. The migration treatment in this study specifically refers to Hondurans who can migrate using their own resources, even if it involves undertaking a land trek through Mexico. Figure 5 illustrates the marginal effects of the interaction between respondents' income and treatment on protest approval and participation. Notably, the reported household income of respondents moderates the relationship between treatment and protest attitudes, but this effect is evident only for protest approval and not for high-income individuals.

Figure 5: Marginal Effects of Income and Treatment on Protest Approval and Participation



Note: Income categories range from 0 (no income) to 16 (more than 25,000 Honduran Lempiras, around 1,000 US Dollars)

Transnational Linkages and Protests

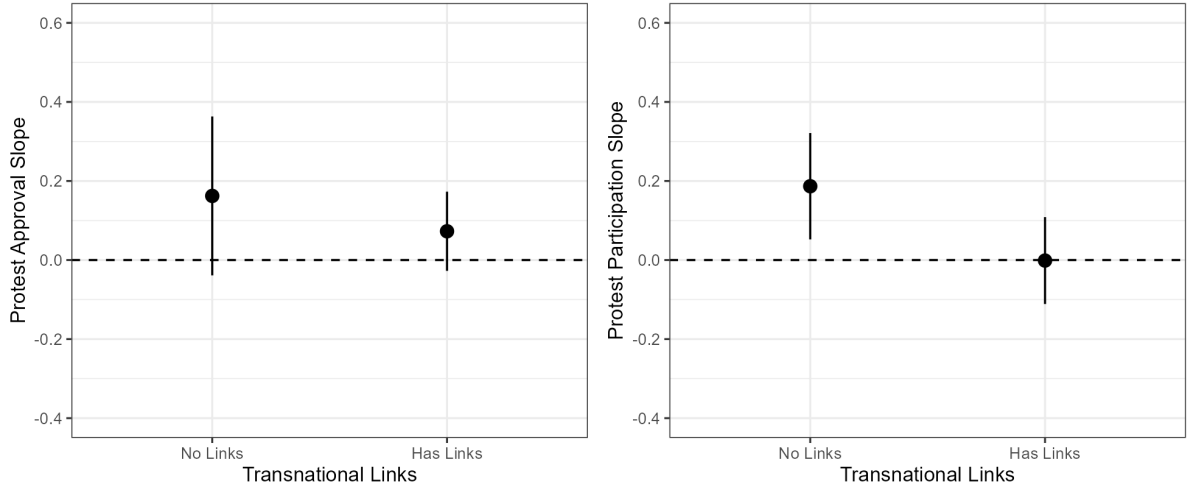
Emigration can transmit financial remittances and social remittances that affect political attitudes. The economic benefits from financial remittances can dampen the prospects for political contestation (Tertytchnaya et al., 2018; Ahmed, 2017) or lower the costs of political participation (Escribà-Folch, Meseguer Yebra, and Wright, 2015). Social remittances can raise the prospect of political participation among migrant households receiving democratic norms (Pérez-Armendáriz and Crow, 2010; Córdova and Hiskey, 2015). It could be that Hondurans' response to the survey experiment depends on having transnational connections. Those Hondurans with family abroad may perceive information about recent Honduran migration in a way that reinforces their prior beliefs about the country's state of affairs. Information about the country's high emigration levels will more likely update the priors of respondents with no transnational linkages. The survey asks questions that measure different types of transnational linkages: communication abroad and receiving financial remittances. In our sample of Honduran citizens, 35 percent of respondents communicate at least weekly or more with family members overseas, and 20.5 percent receive financial remittances. In contrast, 58 percent of respondents have no such links.

We examined the treatment effects considering transnational links as a binary variable. We considered Hondurans with no transnational linkages – no communication abroad and no remittances. The other category includes respondents that either receive remittances, communicate with family abroad weekly or more, or both. Figure 6 presents the marginal effects of the interaction between treatment and transnational links. The results show that treated individuals who do not possess transnational links show a higher participation potential than nontreated individuals. As Moseley (2015) identifies to explain the disparities in contentious activities in Latin America, citizens engaged in community organizations are more likely to protest than those individuals with low levels of involvement in civic life.

In contrast, our findings reveal that treated individuals who do not possess transnational links exhibit a greater potential for participation than their non-treated

counterparts. Information about Honduras’ high emigration level may be more novel to a respondent with no linkages than one with linkages. They are more likely to see their priors updated with information about the exodus of their co-nationals. Possessing transnational linkages is associated with a higher likelihood of protest participation. These respondents are already aware of the grievances that drive migration. Thus, the information treatment did not yield as strong of an effect. Furthermore, the motivation to act could be from receiving democratic norms from abroad or the reduced costs of political participation from abroad.

Figure 6: Treatment Effects by Transnational Linkages



Note: Bars show 95% C.I.s. Full models available in Table D.3 of Appendix D.

Given the literature, we should expect those with frequent communications overseas to be more supportive of protests. Latin Americans with frequent communication abroad tend to be critical of their home country’s democracy (Crow and Pérez-Armendáriz, 2018). Recent information about emigration may resonate among those with regular contact with family members overseas. Therefore, one would expect that communication abroad would bolster support for protests as migrants abroad could reinforce negative views about the home-country government. Table D.1 of Appendix D shows that frequent communication with family members overseas significantly increases protest approval. Nevertheless, the interaction between treatment and communication is only statistically significant for protest participation

and negative. The null interaction effects for protest approval may indicate a ceiling effect given the high coefficient for the communication variable. As for protest participation, one can interpret the negative coefficient as representing how exit substituted voice for transnational households.

Regarding remittances, it is possible that receiving income from abroad can bolster or damage protest support. Remittances have been found to increase protest participation in autocracies (Escribà-Folch, Meseguer Yebra, and Wright, 2018; 2022). However, they could also weaken support for protests against incumbents as recipients tend to have favorable views of the government (Ahmed, 2017; Tertytchnaya et al., 2018). The results in Table D.2 suggest that receiving remittances increases protest support reflecting the possible anti-incumbent sentiments (Crow and Pérez-Armendáriz, 2018). Remittances increase motivations for protest participation but it is not robust to controls. Remittance recipients were not responsive to the treatment. There could be several reasons why financial remittances may not encourage protest support. Among those with transnational linkages, Hondurans' ongoing migration may not be perceived as a reflection of a crisis. For example, those receiving remittances are likely to misattribute their economic situation to local political conditions (Tertytchnaya et al., 2018; Ahmed, 2017). Another interpretation could be that some remittance recipients have already "exited" without leaving (Goodman and Hiskey, 2008).

The interaction models with transnational linkages reveal the importance of migration on protests through information signaling. The marginal effects of the treatment were pronounced among those without transnational connections. Therefore, those with no family members overseas are more likely to have their priors updated by migration. Frequent communication and remittances have their own independent effects on protest support, which corroborates the literature's findings on their democratic effects. Nevertheless, it is relevant that those with transnational linkages may already be exchanging contemporary information about Honduran migration information. Thus, grievances and signals are constantly shared between transnational

households. For those with no linkages, migration strongly affects their perceptions of local politics. Given that a majority of citizens and households do not have transnational linkages, even in a high-sending country like Honduras, the political effects of migration have the potential to mobilize citizens throughout the country. These interaction results suggest that migration can have political effects. Nonetheless, the mechanisms will vary based on whether one holds any transnational linkages.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study examines the role of migration framing in attitudes toward mass mobilization in the context of ongoing anti-government demonstrations. We initially hypothesized that the Honduran exodus could positively impact individuals' attitudes toward protests through a change in how context was perceived (contextual mechanism) and how identities were defined, both by the group and the individual (identity mechanism). Using a survey experiment aimed at making the migration issue salient to respondents, we found that our expectations were partially fulfilled. On the one side, migration does spark support for protests, but it does not affect the propensity to participate in public demonstrations. In terms of mediating variables, we find that the treatment is stronger for those who do not approve of the government and those who have access to highways through where the migrant caravan passes. We interpret these results in light of the mobilizing potential that migration has due to its capacity to signal grievances and to open political opportunities, both part of the contextual mechanism, and of the group effect that grants migration as a legitimate manifestation of those grievances, which is part of the identity mechanism.

Earlier research found that emigration impedes social movements by reducing the resources available, particularly manpower and leadership (Peters and Miller, 2022; Sellars, 2019; Pfaff and Kim, 2003). Since dissidents have the option to leave the country, the availability of these organizational resources and latent grievances decreases, which limits the possibility of political contestation. Our results run counter to this literature by showing that emigration can potentially foster mobilization, even when it is conducted privately. Emigration can also signal grievances that could trigger feelings of relative deprivation (Folger, 1986; Galais and Lorenzini, 2017). As recent research has found, grievances are one of the most influential factors of street protest participation, especially in anomalous periods such as the pandemic, where perceived health risks did not diminish the propensity of protest participation (Donoso et al., 2022).

Honduras provides a special case to test the effect of emigration and protests, but

there are also limitations to the analysis. Since the 2009 coup, Honduras has experienced political turmoil that contributed to its high emigration rates. The political environment in Honduras caused it to rank among the Latin American countries with the highest level of government dissatisfaction and lowest support for democracy (Pérez, Pizzolitto, and Plutowski, 2021). Hence, there is a possibility of a ceiling effect caused by baseline perceptions of the country. The distribution of specific variables, particularly the incumbent's approval and the country's evaluation, could make it difficult to detect the mechanism through which migration prompts mobilization. It is also critical to consider how easy or accessible the exit option is. When the exit option is easy, migration tends to be the strategic choice instead of voice (Herbst, 1990). We cannot overlook that the recent migration wave in Honduras is different from the wave that occurred after the 2009 coup, where the U.S. was an implicit supporter.

Future research could address two potential lines of inquiry, given the results of our study. The first one is how formal political behavior, such as voting, could change when faced with migration and protest proximity. Recent studies of elections that occurred after a protest cycle have found an increase in turnout for individuals living in localities where demonstrations developed (Castro and Retamal, 2023). Given the mobilizing effect of migration, it would be worthwhile investigating if turnout or electoral preferences could be affected by this phenomenon as well. Secondly, since transnational networks are a relevant factor to explain the mobilizing effect of migration, assessing how diaspora communities perceive or are motivated by protests inside their destination countries is also a topic worth exploring. Recent social movements, such as the ongoing Iranian protests, or the 2019 *Estallido Social* that occurred in Chile, have triggered widespread demonstrations of support around the world. Examining how individuals abroad use their networks to promote mobilization and influence specific political outcomes is definitely a topic worth exploring when assessing the relationship between migration and protest mobilization.

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Online Appendix

The Mobilizing Potential of Mass Migration: Experimental Evidence from Honduras

August 2023

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A Survey Experiment

The survey experiment was to test different primes about migration. The first treatment describes migration as private. The second treatment, the caravan, frames migration as public and as an exodus. The treatment was in the introduction of the survey:

Table A.1: Scripts for Experimental Treatments

| Type of treatment | Survey Treatment (English Translation) |
|-------------------|---|
| Private | In recent years, tens of thousands of Hondurans have migrated to the United States, making Honduras one of the largest contributors to migration flows in Latin America. Men, women, and children use their own resources to migrate. Many choose to travel overland through Guatemala and Mexico despite the risks because they are desperate to flee the country. |
| Public | In recent years, tens of thousands of Hondurans from all over the country have gathered to form caravans to migrate to the United States by land. The men, women, and children who form these caravans are desperate to flee the difficult conditions facing the country. The caravans help reduce the risks of overland travel. The large size of the caravans has attracted international media attention, further highlighting the country's problems to the world to explain the current exodus. <i>Show the images to the interviewee.</i> |

Figure A.1: Images used for the Public Migration (Caravan) Treatment



Figure A.2: Departments in Honduras



B Variables and Measurement

Descriptive Statistics

Table B.1: Descriptive Statistics

| Variable | All Respondents | | Control Group | | Treatment Group | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|------|---------------|------|-----------------|------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| Female | 0.51 | 0.50 | 0.51 | 0.50 | 0.51 | 0.50 |
| Urban | 0.77 | 0.42 | 0.75 | 0.43 | 0.77 | 0.50 |
| Age | 33 | 13 | 33 | 13 | 34 | 13 |
| Ideology | 5.76 | 2.26 | 5.80 | 2.27 | 5.75 | 2.26 |
| <i>Education</i> | | | | | | |
| No Education | 0.04 | 0.19 | 0.05 | 0.21 | 0.03 | 0.18 |
| Primary | 0.14 | 0.35 | 0.14 | 0.34 | 0.14 | 0.35 |
| Secondary | 0.49 | 0.50 | 0.48 | 0.50 | 0.49 | 0.50 |
| University or more | 0.32 | 0.47 | 0.32 | 0.47 | 0.32 | 0.47 |
| <i>Income (Lempiras)</i> | | | | | | |
| Up to L2450 | 0.27 | 0.44 | 0.29 | 0.45 | 0.26 | 0.44 |
| L2451 - L5000 | 0.15 | 0.36 | 0.15 | 0.36 | 0.15 | 0.36 |
| L5000 - L9000 | 0.19 | 0.39 | 0.18 | 0.39 | 0.19 | 0.39 |
| More than L9000 | 0.29 | 0.45 | 0.27 | 0.45 | 0.30 | 0.46 |

C Models

C.1 Protest Approval

Table C.1: Effect of treatment on protest approval (Full models for Table 1 and Figure 3)

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Constant | 3.799*** (0.044) | | | |
| ATT | 0.095* (0.053) | 0.094* (0.050) | 0.104** (0.032) | 0.117** (0.044) |
| Days to Election | | | 0.010 (0.017) | 0.010 (0.017) |
| <i>Incumbent Approval</i> | | | | |
| Neither approves nor disapproves | | | -0.664*** (0.061) | -0.639*** (0.081) |
| Approves | | | -1.111*** (0.158) | -1.062*** (0.136) |
| Urban | | | -0.064 (0.057) | -0.063 (0.057) |
| Female | | | 0.011 (0.087) | 0.011 (0.087) |
| Age | | | 0.002 (0.004) | 0.002 (0.004) |
| <i>Education</i> | | | | |
| Primary | | | 0.154 (0.221) | 0.156 (0.224) |
| Secondary | | | 0.318 (0.215) | 0.318 (0.217) |
| University or More | | | 0.407 (0.252) | 0.407 (0.254) |
| <i>Interactions</i> | | | | |
| Treatment \times NAND | | | | -0.037 (0.130) |
| Treatment \times Approves | | | | -0.072 (0.200) |
| Observations | 2090 | 2090 | 2008 | 2008 |
| R^2 | 0.002 | 0.036 | 0.151 | 0.151 |
| R^2 Adj. | 0.001 | 0.032 | 0.143 | 0.142 |
| RMSE | 1.12 | 1.10 | 1.02 | 1.02 |
| Clustered SE | | Department | Department | Department |
| FE Department | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Note: Model 1 estimated through OLS. Models 2 to 4 have fixed effects at the department level and clustered SE.
 * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

C.2 Protest Participation

Table C.2: Effect of treatment on protest participation (Full models for Table 1 and Figure 3)

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Constant | 2.277*** (0.046) | | | |
| ATT | 0.099* (0.056) | 0.086** (0.034) | 0.068 (0.038) | 0.055 (0.053) |
| Days to Election | | | 0.020 (0.018) | 0.020 (0.018) |
| <i>Incumbent Approval</i> | | | | |
| Neither approves nor disapproves | | | −0.613*** (0.111) | −0.637*** (0.164) |
| Approves | | | −0.751*** (0.195) | −0.792*** (0.237) |
| Urban | | | 0.054 (0.072) | 0.053 (0.072) |
| Female | | | −0.066 (0.067) | −0.066 (0.067) |
| Age | | | −0.005 (0.004) | −0.005 (0.004) |
| <i>Education</i> | | | | |
| Primary | | | 0.171* (0.092) | 0.169* (0.092) |
| Secondary | | | 0.188** (0.074) | 0.189** (0.073) |
| University or More | | | 0.407** (0.138) | 0.408** (0.140) |
| <i>Interactions</i> | | | | |
| Treatment × NAND | | | | 0.037 (0.127) |
| Treatment × Approves | | | | 0.062 (0.231) |
| Observations | 2018 | 2018 | 1931 | 1931 |
| R^2 | 0.002 | 0.065 | 0.157 | 0.157 |
| R^2 Adj. | 0.001 | 0.060 | 0.148 | 0.148 |
| RMSE | 1.17 | 1.14 | 1.08 | 1.08 |
| Clustered SE | | Department | Department | Department |
| FE Department | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Note: Model 1 estimated through OLS. Model 2 to 4 have fixed effects at the department level and clustered SE. * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

C.3 Weighted Models

Table C.3: Weighted Models

| | DV: Protest Approval | DV: Protest Participation |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| ATT | 0.105** (0.033) | 0.066 (0.037) |
| Days to Election | 0.013 (0.017) | 0.020 (0.022) |
| <i>Incumbent Approval</i> | | |
| Neither approves nor disapproves | -0.657*** (0.056) | -0.619*** (0.126) |
| Approves | -1.094*** (0.144) | -0.764*** (0.196) |
| Urban | -0.070 (0.060) | 0.067 (0.078) |
| Female | -0.005 (0.089) | -0.010 (0.065) |
| Age | 0.001 (0.004) | -0.005 (0.003) |
| <i>Education</i> | | |
| Primary | 0.151 (0.167) | 0.213** (0.090) |
| Secondary | 0.313* (0.157) | 0.196* (0.091) |
| University or More | 0.395* (0.192) | 0.412** (0.141) |
| Observations | 2008 | 1931 |
| R^2 | 0.143 | 0.159 |
| R^2 Adj. | 0.135 | 0.151 |
| AIC | 5815.6 | 5820.5 |
| BIC | 5927.7 | 5931.8 |
| RMSE | 1.02 | 1.08 |
| Clustered SE | Department | Department |
| FE Department | ✓ | ✓ |

Note: Weighted versions of Model 3 in Tables C.1 and C.2 considering sample sizes of control and treatment groups.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

C.4 Access to caravan routes

Table C.4: Effect of treatment on protest approval and participation based on caravan routes (Full models for Figure 4)

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| ATT | 0.029 (0.068) | 0.087* (0.039) | 0.067 (0.091) | 0.021 (0.037) |
| Highway Access | -0.171 (0.147) | | -0.318* (0.147) | |
| Highway to Guatemala | | 0.098 (0.065) | | -0.275 (0.163) |
| Days to Election | 0.011 (0.018) | 0.008 (0.015) | 0.024 (0.020) | 0.022 (0.020) |
| <i>Incumbent Approval</i> | | | | |
| Neither approves nor disapproves | -0.665*** (0.063) | -0.666*** (0.061) | -0.616*** (0.109) | -0.620*** (0.109) |
| Approves | -1.120*** (0.162) | -1.111*** (0.158) | -0.740*** (0.205) | -0.751*** (0.196) |
| Urban | -0.059 (0.064) | -0.075 (0.059) | 0.117* (0.052) | 0.069 (0.061) |
| Female | 0.015 (0.087) | 0.013 (0.087) | -0.070 (0.068) | -0.073 (0.064) |
| Age | 0.002 (0.004) | 0.002 (0.004) | -0.005 (0.004) | -0.005 (0.004) |
| <i>Education</i> | | | | |
| Primary | 0.152 (0.219) | 0.158 (0.222) | 0.146 (0.090) | 0.164 (0.091) |
| Secondary | 0.320 (0.216) | 0.324 (0.215) | 0.166** (0.070) | 0.182** (0.070) |
| University or More | 0.411 (0.253) | 0.406 (0.254) | 0.403** (0.133) | 0.412** (0.140) |
| Treatment \times Highway Access | 0.110 (0.096) | | -0.017 (0.100) | |
| Treatment \times Highway to Guatemala | | 0.103 (0.093) | | 0.200*** (0.039) |
| Observations | 2005 | 2005 | 1928 | 1928 |
| R^2 | 0.153 | 0.153 | 0.170 | 0.160 |
| R^2 Adj. | 0.144 | 0.144 | 0.161 | 0.151 |
| RMSE | 1.02 | 1.02 | 1.07 | 1.08 |
| Clustered SE | Department | Department | Department | Department |
| FE Department | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Note: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

D Interactions with Transnational Linkages

Table D.1: Interaction Results: Migration Treatment, Weekly Communication Abroad, and Protest Approval

| | Protest Approval | | | Protest Participation | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 |
| ATT | 0.082 (0.048) | 0.126 (0.082) | 0.132** (0.056) | 0.089** (0.037) | 0.143** (0.048) | 0.141*** (0.038) |
| USA Communication | 0.275* (0.142) | 0.361** (0.127) | 0.255** (0.109) | 0.138 (0.087) | 0.248** (0.102) | 0.185 (0.107) |
| Treatment \times USA Communication | | -0.124 (0.120) | -0.114 (0.092) | | -0.159 (0.091) | -0.182* (0.094) |
| Days to Election | | | 0.009 (0.019) | | | 0.020 (0.018) |
| <i>Incumbent Approval</i> | | | | | | |
| Neither approves nor disapproves | | | -0.622*** (0.071) | | | -0.626*** (0.119) |
| Approves | | | -1.086*** (0.166) | | | -0.743*** (0.190) |
| Urban | | | -0.046 (0.050) | | | 0.076 (0.063) |
| Female | | | -0.012 (0.080) | | | -0.080 (0.068) |
| Age | | | 0.001 (0.004) | | | -0.005 (0.004) |
| <i>Education</i> | | | | | | |
| Primary | | | 0.164 (0.208) | | | 0.164* (0.089) |
| Secondary | | | 0.307 (0.210) | | | 0.154* (0.081) |
| University or More | | | 0.378 (0.233) | | | 0.373** (0.157) |
| Observations | 2001 | 2001 | 1930 | 1928 | 1928 | 1855 |
| R^2 | 0.049 | 0.049 | 0.155 | 0.066 | 0.067 | 0.157 |
| R^2 Adj. | 0.043 | 0.043 | 0.145 | 0.061 | 0.061 | 0.147 |
| RMSE | 1.08 | 1.08 | 1.01 | 1.14 | 1.14 | 1.08 |
| Clustered SE | Dept. | Dept. | Dept. | Dept. | Dept. | Dept. |
| FE Department | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Note: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table D.2: Interaction Results: Migration Treatment, Remittances, and Protest Approval/Participation

| | Protest Approval | | | Protest Participation | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 |
| ATT | 0.089 (0.051) | 0.171 (0.112) | 0.160 (0.098) | 0.080 (0.045) | 0.120 (0.075) | 0.101 (0.077) |
| Remittances | 0.130* (0.067) | 0.242* (0.108) | 0.190 (0.115) | 0.152* (0.069) | 0.209 (0.129) | 0.166 (0.113) |
| Treatment \times Remittances | | -0.164 (0.141) | -0.157 (0.146) | | -0.083 (0.110) | -0.105 (0.103) |
| Days to Election | | | 0.013 (0.019) | | | 0.020 (0.019) |
| <i>Incumbent Approval</i> | | | | | | |
| Neither approves nor disapproves | | | -0.659*** (0.061) | | | -0.607*** (0.112) |
| Approves | | | -1.161*** (0.147) | | | -0.785*** (0.189) |
| Urban | | | -0.056 (0.068) | | | 0.050 (0.067) |
| Female | | | 0.013 (0.089) | | | -0.093 (0.069) |
| Age | | | 0.002 (0.004) | | | -0.005 (0.004) |
| <i>Education</i> | | | | | | |
| Primary | | | 0.180 (0.200) | | | 0.128 (0.119) |
| Secondary | | | 0.374 (0.212) | | | 0.126 (0.087) |
| University or More | | | 0.454 (0.252) | | | 0.336* (0.155) |
| Observations | 1931 | 1931 | 1865 | 1858 | 1858 | 1789 |
| R^2 | 0.036 | 0.037 | 0.157 | 0.066 | 0.066 | 0.156 |
| R^2 Adj. | 0.030 | 0.031 | 0.148 | 0.061 | 0.060 | 0.146 |
| RMSE | 1.09 | 1.09 | 1.01 | 1.14 | 1.14 | 1.08 |
| Clustered SE | Dept. | Dept. | Dept. | Dept. | Dept. | Dept. |
| FE Department | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Note: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table D.3: Interaction Results: Migration Treatment, Transnational Links, and Protest Approval and Participation (Full models for 6)

| | Protest Approval | | | Protest Participation | | |
|--|------------------|---------|-----------|-----------------------|---------|-----------|
| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 |
| ATT | 0.096* | 0.183 | 0.162 | 0.087** | 0.186** | 0.187** |
| | (0.049) | (0.129) | (0.103) | (0.033) | (0.080) | (0.069) |
| Transnational links | 0.149 | 0.244* | 0.156 | 0.137*** | 0.246** | 0.214* |
| | (0.088) | (0.118) | (0.116) | (0.034) | (0.101) | (0.095) |
| Treatment \times Transnational links | | -0.139 | -0.089 | | -0.160 | -0.188* |
| | | (0.144) | (0.141) | | (0.110) | (0.100) |
| Days to election | | | 0.010 | | | 0.020 |
| | | | (0.018) | | | (0.018) |
| <i>Incumbent Approval</i> | | | | | | |
| Neither approves nor disapproves | | | -0.657*** | | | -0.605*** |
| | | | (0.056) | | | (0.111) |
| Approves | | | -1.104*** | | | -0.742*** |
| | | | (0.159) | | | (0.191) |
| Urban | | | -0.062 | | | 0.057 |
| | | | (0.057) | | | (0.072) |
| Female | | | 0.005 | | | -0.072 |
| | | | (0.086) | | | (0.071) |
| Age | | | 0.002 | | | -0.005 |
| | | | (0.004) | | | (0.004) |
| <i>Education</i> | | | | | | |
| Primary | | | 0.151 | | | 0.166 |
| | | | (0.223) | | | (0.092) |
| Secondary | | | 0.315 | | | 0.186** |
| | | | (0.221) | | | (0.078) |
| University or More | | | 0.404 | | | 0.408** |
| | | | (0.260) | | | (0.142) |
| Observations | 2090 | 2090 | 2008 | 2018 | 2018 | 1931 |
| R^2 | 0.040 | 0.041 | 0.153 | 0.068 | 0.069 | 0.159 |
| R^2 Adj. | 0.035 | 0.035 | 0.144 | 0.063 | 0.063 | 0.150 |
| RMSE | 1.09 | 1.09 | 1.02 | 1.13 | 1.13 | 1.08 |
| Clustered SE | Dept. | Dept. | Dept. | Dept. | Dept. | Dept. |
| FE Department | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Note: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

E Models with Public and Private Treatments

Table E.1: Models for protest approval with two types of treatment

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Constant | 3.799*** (0.044) | | |
| Treatment Private | 0.114* (0.060) | 0.106* (0.056) | 0.104** (0.041) |
| Treatment Public | 0.076 (0.060) | 0.083 (0.061) | 0.104* (0.048) |
| Days to Election | | | 0.010 (0.017) |
| <i>Incumbent Approval</i> | | | |
| Neither approves nor disapproves | | | -0.664*** (0.062) |
| Approves | | | -1.111*** (0.158) |
| Urban | | | -0.064 (0.057) |
| Female | | | 0.011 (0.087) |
| Age | | | 0.002 (0.004) |
| <i>Education</i> | | | |
| Primary | | | 0.154 (0.220) |
| Secondary | | | 0.318 (0.213) |
| University or More | | | 0.407 (0.251) |
| Observations | 2090 | 2090 | 2008 |
| R^2 | 0.002 | 0.036 | 0.151 |
| R^2 Adj. | 0.001 | 0.031 | 0.143 |
| RMSE | 1.12 | 1.10 | 1.02 |
| Clustered SE | | Department | Department |
| FE Department | | ✓ | ✓ |

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table E.2: Models for protest participation with two types of treatment

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Constant | 2.277*** (0.046) | | |
| Treatment Private | 0.111* (0.065) | 0.074 (0.047) | 0.052 (0.047) |
| Treatment Public | 0.087 (0.064) | 0.097* (0.043) | 0.083* (0.044) |
| Days to Election | | | 0.020 (0.018) |
| <i>Incumbent Approval</i> | | | |
| Neither approves nor disapproves | | | -0.612*** (0.111) |
| Approves | | | -0.752*** (0.196) |
| Urban | | | 0.053 (0.072) |
| Female | | | -0.067 (0.068) |
| Age | | | -0.005 (0.004) |
| <i>Education</i> | | | |
| Primary | | | 0.167 (0.095) |
| Secondary | | | 0.185** (0.076) |
| University or More | | | 0.405** (0.137) |
| Observations | 2018 | 2018 | 1931 |
| R^2 | 0.002 | 0.065 | 0.157 |
| R^2 Adj. | 0.001 | 0.060 | 0.148 |
| RMSE | 1.17 | 1.14 | 1.08 |
| Clustered SE | | Department | Department |
| FE Department | | ✓ | ✓ |

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$