

Short Title: The Mobilizing Potential of Mass Emigration

# The Mobilizing Potential of Mass Emigration: Experimental Evidence from Honduras

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## Abstract

Does mass emigration affect the political attitudes among those who stay in the country? Emigration, being a personal decision made by households, can accumulate into a collective expression of discontent against the status quo. This paper examines whether large-scale emigration affects protest support and participation. Using a survey experiment conducted in Honduras, we assess how the salience of emigration affected public opinion about anti-government demonstrations in 2021. Our findings reveal that respondents primed with information about mass emigration expressed more favorable views toward protests and showed a greater propensity to participate in demonstrations. Estimated effects are larger for respondents residing farther from caravan routes. This supports an information-saturation mechanism and suggests that emigration information acts as a coordination signal that reduces uncertainty about the scope of shared grievances. These findings show that mass emigration can strengthen political dissent among those who remain.

*Keywords:* anti-government protests, emigration, migrant caravan, survey experiment, Honduras

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Does emigration help or hurt political dissent? Emigration can weaken opposition movements by removing dissenting voices (Auer and Schaub, 2024; Lim, 2023), but it may also signal collective grievances and foster support for opposition among those who remain (Pfaff and Kim, 2003; Peters and Miller, 2022). Resolving this question empirically is difficult because emigration and protest may reinforce one another (Hirschman, 1993), and just as protests can shape political attitudes through partisan identity (Yeandle and Doyle, 2026), emigration information may itself influence views toward dissent.

This article presents the results of a survey experiment in Honduras that tests the effect of mass emigration on support for protest and participation intentions. By randomly assigning information about large-scale Honduran emigration, we isolate its causal effect on protest attitudes while avoiding the endogeneity problems of observational studies. The experiment was conducted in 2021, when Honduras was among the highest migrant-sending countries in Latin America and had undergone significant democratic erosion since the 2009 military coup, marked by the fraudulent 2017 presidential election and violent repression of subsequent protests. Even in this context of high dissatisfaction and available exit alternatives, several protest movements emerged (Sosa and Almeida, 2019).

We argue that emigration can serve as a signal of collective dissatisfaction, thereby mobilizing those who remain. When citizens observe others leaving *en masse*, it signals widespread grievances about economic decline, government performance, and security that may not otherwise be perceived. Information about mass emigration can reduce the social costs of expressing political dissent by demonstrating that grievances are widely shared. Visibility amplifies this signal: when departure is public and large-scale, it is harder to dismiss as isolated or unrepresentative, and the conclusion that grievances are broadly shared becomes more credible. This signaling effect should be strongest when emigration is highly visible, as in the case of the Honduran migrant caravans.

Using a survey experiment in Honduras, we find that information about mass emigration increases support for protest and participation intentions, especially among those living far from caravan routes. This geographic pattern supports the signaling mechanism: individuals with less direct exposure to migration movements are more responsive to new information about emigration's scale, consistent with emigration information reducing uncertainty about the breadth of shared grievances rather than simply reinforcing pre-existing attitudes.

## Context: Mass Emigration and Protests in Honduras

Honduras experienced large-scale emigration alongside significant protest movements amid democratic erosion, making it well-suited for examining the relationship between the two (see SI Section A for more details on the context). The 2009 military coup marked a pivotal turning point. The United States' decision to recognize the interim government effectively legitimized the post-coup regime and accelerated democratic decline (Ruhl, 2010; Frank, 2018). In the years that followed, growing state repression and political unrest pushed tens of thousands of people to emigrate.

Despite an increasingly repressive environment, protest movements emerged throughout the post-coup period. Notable cycles occurred in 2015 (anti-corruption movements), 2017 (contesting President Hernández's controversial reelection), and 2019 (challenging privatization policies) (Gallardo, 2018; Sosa and Almeida, 2019). State responses grew increasingly harsh, with security forces using arbitrary detentions and violent tactics against demonstrators (Frank, 2018; Pérez and Wade, 2023). Yet protests remained a crucial avenue for channeling opposition amid democratic backsliding.

This political turmoil coincided with a large-scale exodus from the country. Honduras has one of the highest emigration rates in Latin America and the fastest-growing Latino immigrant group in the United States (Cohn, Passel, and Gonzalez-Barrera, 2017). Emigration notably increased following the 2009 coup and Hernández's 2017 reelection (Figure A.1 of SI). Political instability, economic hardship, high levels of violence, and climate change all contributed to Honduran emigration (Hiskey et al., 2018; Bermeo and Leblang, 2021; Corson and Hallock, 2021; Perelló, 2025).

The migrant caravans that began in 2018 generated unprecedented visibility of Honduran emigration, as thousands congregated in San Pedro Sula and walked toward the Guatemalan border (Frank-Vitale, 2023). These caravans emerged in response to increased militarized enforcement against Central American migrants in Mexico to provide safety in numbers during the journey (Frank-Vitale, 2023). Although caravans increased the visibility of undocumented migration, participants do not appear to differ demographically from migrants traveling through Mexico before the 2018 caravans (Quijada and Sierra, 2019; Ramírez, 2020). Mass emigration from Honduras resumed in 2021 after a brief lull during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This context allows us to test whether large-scale emigration encourages or suppresses support

for anti-incumbent protests. In particular, the Honduran case presents a scenario in which both protest and emigration involve high costs. Protests in Honduras have faced government repression, while emigration often involves dangerous journeys through Mexico to reach the United States. As a result, one might expect that observing the costly exit of Hondurans could reduce the perceived political efficacy of protests. Yet such a costly and large-scale exit may also amplify the signal of deteriorating conditions in Honduras, fueling collective grievance and support for protests.

## Data

We conducted an original survey of 2,231 Honduran residents in October and November 2021, concluding one week before the presidential election.<sup>1</sup> The survey was administered by FLACSO at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras across five regions, with each regional sample containing at least 400 respondents.<sup>2</sup> The sampled departments represent 70% of the Honduran population and include the country's two major cities in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula.

Our dependent variables measure two aspects of protest behavior. The first asks respondents about their approval of recent protests against President Hernández. The second asks a hypothetical question about whether the respondent would participate in an upcoming protest. These variables capture both attitudes toward existing protests and behavioral intentions among respondents with varying levels of prior protest experience.

The survey incorporated an embedded experiment designed to prime respondents with information about Honduran emigration. Respondents were randomly assigned to a control group or one of two treatment groups: (1) high emigration depicted as a result of *personal* decisions, informing respondents of the many Hondurans who emigrate using their own resources; and (2) high emigration characterized by migrant *caravans* departing from San Pedro Sula, emphasizing the caravan as a central feature of Honduran emigration and including images of the caravan as presented in the international press.<sup>3</sup> The rationale behind the use of

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<sup>1</sup>The study was pre-registered with EGAP/OSF available at <https://osf.io/4gnb2/> and approved by the University of Denver's IRB, number DU-1759834.

<sup>2</sup>Due to the challenges of collecting a nationally representative sample at the time, regional samples were chosen to examine the role of emigration and transit migration as part of a larger project on Honduran politics.

<sup>3</sup>The scripts of the vignettes are available in Table B.2 of SI. The survey employed multistage random sampling at the department and municipality levels, with respondents randomly assigned to experimental groups.

images was to reinforce the visible nature of the migrant caravan in contrast to the mass emigration of individuals from Honduras. See SI Section B.3 for details. To measure geographic proximity to migration flows, we geocoded respondents to their reported neighborhoods using the Google Maps Geocoding API, matching each unique barrio-municipality combination in the survey data with 98.4% successfully geocoded at the neighborhood level.<sup>4</sup> We then calculated distances from these coordinates to the nearest of the three documented caravan routes.<sup>5</sup>

## Design

We estimate treatment effects using models with department and days-to-election fixed effects, where the former controls for local socioeconomic conditions by ensuring estimation relies only on within-unit variation (Kropko and Kubinec, 2020), and the latter accounts for how proximity to elections can affect willingness to express protest support (Maradiaga, 2019), addressing potential bias from the staggered survey fieldwork and reachability issues during data collection (Muñoz, Falcó-Gimeno, and Hernández, 2020).<sup>6</sup>

Since both treatment arms produced similar effect sizes and consistent positive coefficients, we combine them into a single binary treatment indicator where respondents who received either emigration treatment are coded as treated.<sup>7</sup> Both frames convey the same underlying signal—that large numbers of Hondurans are choosing to leave—and formal tests confirm that effect sizes are statistically indistinguishable across treatments (SI Table E.8). We return to the separate treatment effects in the results, where we discuss how they may operate through related but distinct mechanisms.

We estimate four model specifications for each outcome: (1) baseline with fixed effects only, (2) addition of demographic covariates (age, gender, education, and urban residence), (3) entropy balancing weights (Hainmueller, 2012) to address any remaining covariate imbalances, and (4) models without fixed effects. Balance tests show treatment and control groups are similar on key

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<sup>4</sup>IRB restrictions prevented the collection of exact GPS coordinates, making this the most precise method available.

<sup>5</sup>See Figure A.2 for a map of sampled departments and caravan routes. Full details of the geocoding procedure are reported in SI Section E.2.

<sup>6</sup>See SI B.1 for survey dates by department and a cumulative distribution plot by regional sample.

<sup>7</sup>See Table E.7 in SI for separate treatment effects. This represents a deviation from our pre-analysis plan, which hypothesized differential effects between the two emigration frames; see Section B.3 for deviations from the PAP.

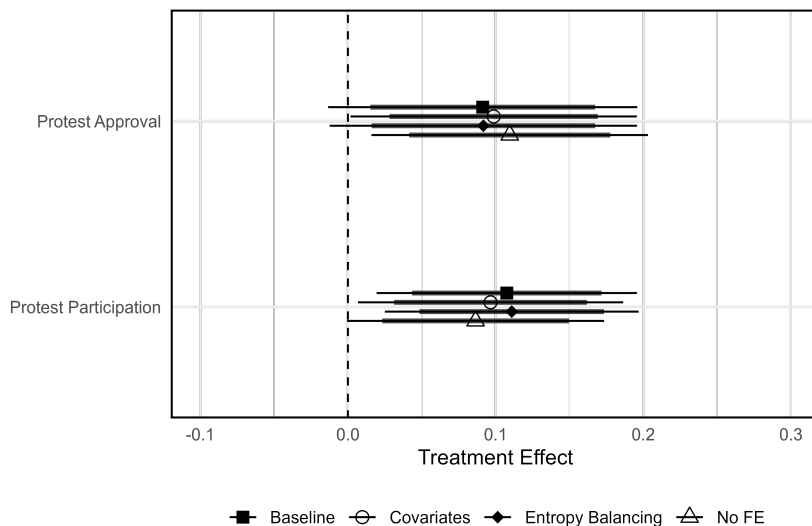
sociodemographic variables.<sup>8</sup> Standard errors are clustered at the department level.

To test whether geographic proximity to the migrant caravan moderates treatment effects, we interact the combined treatment indicator with the distance from caravan routes. We estimate models using linear, logarithmic, and quadratic functional forms to capture potential non-linearities in how information saturation varies with distance. Full model specifications are available in SI Section D.

## Results

Exposure to emigration information does not deter mobilization, contrary to arguments that mass emigration weakens network effects or diminishes prospects of collective action (Sellars, 2019; Pfaff and Kim, 2003). Figure 1 shows that priming respondents with information about high Honduran emigration led to a statistically significant increase in both protest approval and protest participation compared with the control group. For protest approval, the treatment effect is approximately 0.09 points (2.4% over the control group mean); for protest participation, the effect is slightly larger at about 0.10 points (4.4% over the control group mean). The effects remain consistent across all four model specifications.

Figure 1: Effect of Emigration Treatment



Note: Error bars show 90% (thick) and 95% (thin) CIs. Baseline models include fixed effects only. Covariates models add demographic controls. Entropy balancing models use weights to balance treatment and control groups on observables. Full models available in Table E.1 (protest approval) and Table E.2 (protest participation).

In the Honduran context, many citizens likely have prior exposure to emigration information through direct observation of mass exit. To better understand how this affects treatment

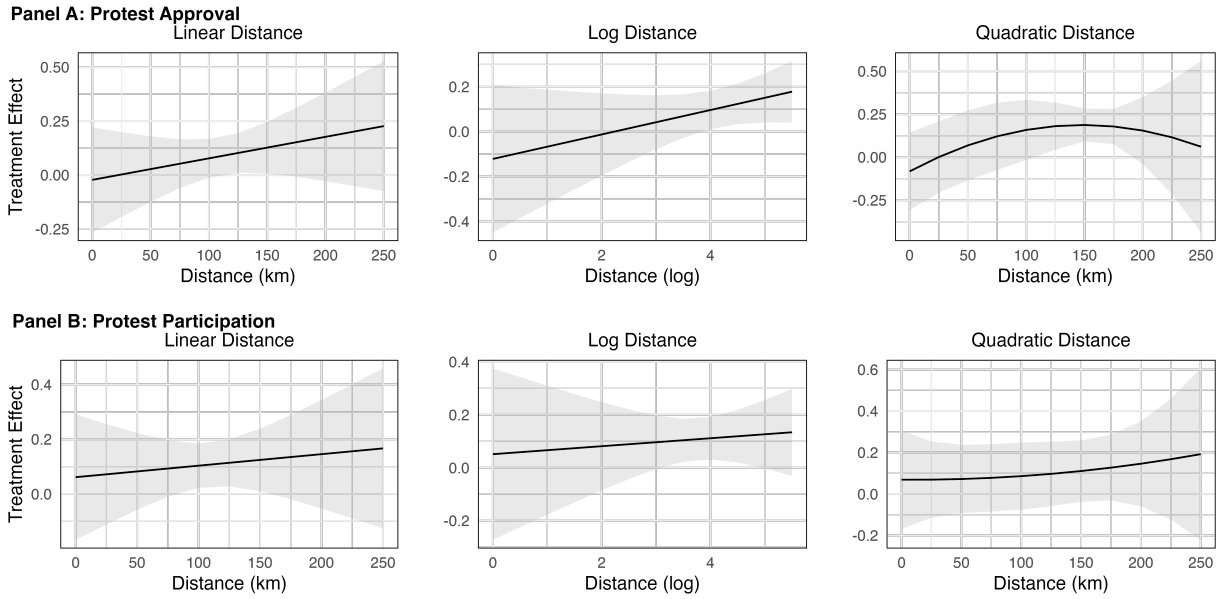
<sup>8</sup>Covariate balance tests available in SI Section C.3.

responses, we examine whether effects vary based on geographical proximity to caravan routes. Proximity shapes information availability: those near caravan routes experience sustained exposure through direct observation and local discussion, which may create information saturation. In contrast, individuals farther away have less direct knowledge of emigration’s scale and collective nature and are therefore more responsive to new information about mass departure.

We measure proximity using the continuous distance from respondents’ neighborhoods to documented caravan routes, to capture the gradual nature of information saturation. According to Andrews, Beyerlein, and Farnum (2016), proximity to protests is a key factor shaping opinions about political demonstrations. A similar pattern emerges for proximity to other political events (Wallace, Zepeda-Millán, and Jones-Correa, 2014). Respondents near the caravan routes in Western Honduras are more likely to have direct exposure to emigration flows (Acevedo and Richards, 2026), and thus less likely to update their attitudes in response to additional emigration information.

Figure 2 shows how treatment effects on protest approval (Panel A) and protest participation (Panel B) vary continuously with distance from caravan routes. Across different functional forms (linear, logarithmic, and quadratic), estimated effects are larger at greater distances from routes, with interaction terms falling short of conventional significance levels. Treatment effects are statistically significant only among those living 150+ kilometers from routes (SI Table E.5 splits the sample at this threshold and estimates treatment effects separately for each subsample), while effects are near zero for those within 50 kilometers of caravan paths.

Figure 2: Treatment Effects by Proximity to Caravan Routes



Note: Shaded areas show 95% CIs. Each panel plots the marginal effect of the emigration treatment across values of distance from caravan routes. Models use baseline specification with department fixed effects and clustered standard errors. Full results in SI Table E.3 (protest approval) and Table E.4 (protest participation).

This pattern is consistent with an information-saturation mechanism: individuals living near caravan routes are more likely to have already encountered emigration’s scale through direct observation, local news coverage, and community discussion, and thus have less room to update their attitudes in response to the experimental information. Those farther from routes lack these ambient exposure channels and are therefore more responsive when presented with new information about the breadth of departure. Larger effects among distant respondents align with the collective grievance signaling mechanism (Hirschman, 1993; Pfaff and Kim, 2003; Lohmann, 1993), suggesting that large-scale emigration does not dampen protest support but instead signals widespread discontent without provoking backlash.

While our main analysis combines both treatment arms into a single binary indicator, justified by statistically indistinguishable effect sizes (see Table E.8 in SI), examining them separately reveals a meaningful pattern. The personal decision emigration treatment increases both protest approval and participation intentions across most specifications, whereas the caravan treatment yields a larger estimated effect on protest participation than on approval (Table E.7). This differential pattern points to two related but distinct mechanisms: individual emigration information functions as a grievance signal that shapes protest attitudes broadly, revealing that dissatisfaction is widespread and thereby shifting how people evaluate protest. Observing thousands depart together, by contrast, signals that others are willing to act collectively and bear the costs of doing so—a signal about the feasibility of mobilization rather

than the desirability of protest as such. This is why the caravan treatment affects participation without necessarily shifting approval. It reduces coordination barriers (Lohmann, 1993) without changing underlying attitudes toward protest.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This article examined how information about mass emigration affects the political attitudes of citizens who remain behind. Exposure to emigration information increases both support for protests and willingness to participate in public demonstrations, with stronger effects among respondents living far from caravan routes. Two patterns in the data support this mechanism over alternatives: the treatment does not shift general government evaluations—consistent with a floor effect given that 91% of respondents already disapproved of the incumbent government—and it does not affect respondents’ own emigration intentions (Tables E.11 and E.12). Building on research showing that protests serve as information-providing activities (Lohmann, 1993), we find that emigration can operate through a similar signaling mechanism. By revealing that grievances are widely shared, mass departure reduces uncertainty about the scope of dissatisfaction and thereby facilitates coordination around protest (Basta, 2018).

While emigration may weaken opposition movements by removing dissenting voices and depleting social networks over time (Pfaff and Kim, 2003; Sellars, 2019), our findings show that information about mass departures can also serve as a domestic coordination mechanism among those who remain. This reflects what Kapur (2010) terms the ‘absence channel,’ where political consequences arise from mass departure itself rather than from diaspora influence. This is supported by our interaction analysis with transnational linkages (SI Section E.4), which finds no significant moderation effects. If diaspora connections were driving the results, we would expect respondents with direct ties to emigrants to be more responsive to the treatment (Escribà-Folch, Meseguer, and Wright, 2022; Lopez Garcia, 2025; Peters and Miller, 2022). Yet effects do not differ by transnational linkage, indicating that the information effects operate through domestic signaling rather than through the diaspora channel.

Honduras represents a hard case for detecting these effects. Political turmoil since the 2009 coup has produced the lowest levels of democratic support in Latin America (Pérez, Pizzolitto, and Plutowski, 2021), leaving little room for further movement in baseline dissatisfaction. That emigration information nonetheless increases protest support under these conditions speaks to

the robustness of the signaling mechanism. Insights from the Honduran case may travel to other Latin American countries under similar conditions. Since 2020, Venezuela, Guatemala, and Ecuador have all experienced large-scale emigration alongside major protest mobilization. These cases share high emigration and anti-government protest with Honduras, though they differ in regime type, party system, and institutional trust. Whether these dynamics extend to more closed political systems, and how individual versus collective migration frames shape political engagement across contexts, remain open questions for future research.

Future work could also examine whether emigration shapes electoral behavior, increasing voter turnout (Castro and Retamal, 2024) or reducing presidential popularity (Acevedo, 2024), and how these effects vary across the electoral calendar. More broadly, as the costs of emigration and protest vary across contexts, understanding how citizens weigh these trade-offs offers deeper insight into the relationship between voice and exit.

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Supplementary Information

The Mobilizing Potential of Mass Migration:  
Experimental Evidence from Honduras

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## A Context

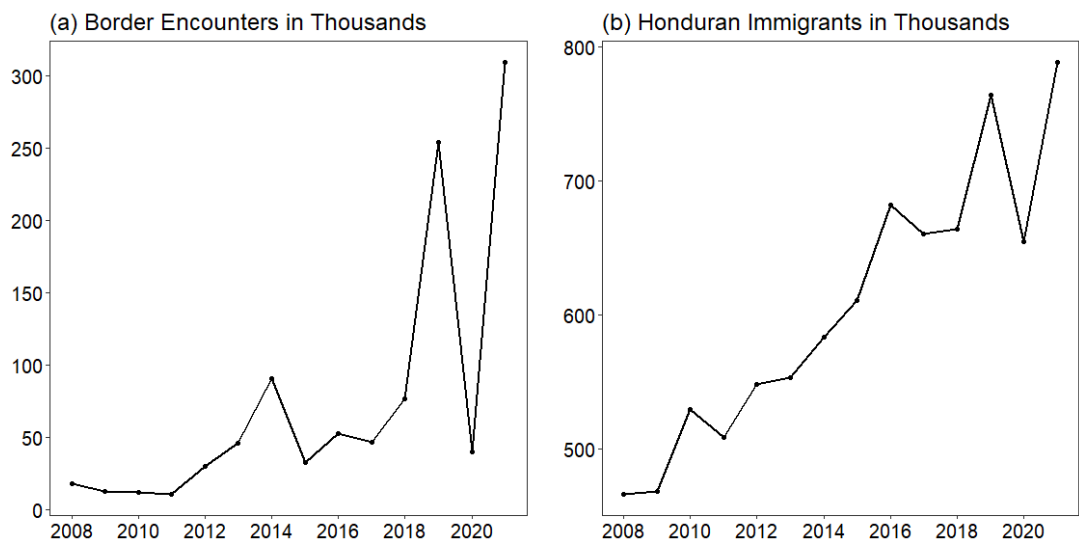
Even though Honduras did not experience the large-scale civil conflicts that engulfed several of its neighbors, it faced similar obstacles to democratic consolidation. By the late twentieth century, two conservative parties—the Liberal and National parties—dominated the political arena, relying on patronage and clientelism to sustain electoral support (Taylor-Robinson and Ura, 2013). During this period, the Honduran military maintained substantial influence over domestic affairs, reflecting the broader regional trend of militarization that limited civilian governance (Pérez and Wade, 2023). Honduran politics unraveled in 2009 when President Zelaya was ousted in a military coup after calling for a referendum on constitutional reform (Ruhl, 2010). The aftermath of the political crisis led to a sharp decline in democratic governance, marked by corruption, repression, and authoritarianism under subsequent National Party rule (Frank, 2018; Pérez and Wade, 2023). U.S. support, aimed at maintaining stability, often supported militarization and undermined the rule of law, deepening public discontent (Frank-Vitale, 2018; Pérez and Wade, 2023).

The origins of contemporary protest movements trace back to the 1990s, when broad coalitions mobilized against privatizations and free trade agreements (Sosa, 2017; Sosa and Almeida, 2019). Building on these earlier experiences, Hondurans swiftly responded to the interim government in 2009, laying the groundwork for future waves of activism such as the anti-corruption movements in 2015 and protests against the disputed presidential elections of 2017. A surge of protests emerged as the November 2021 elections approached, with 1,106 protests reported between the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 and October 2021 (Sosa, Menjívar, and Almeida, 2022, 175)

While large-scale migration from Central America began in the 1980s due to civil conflict, Honduran migration began to rise at the turn of the century due to economic stagnation, criminal violence, and natural disasters (Bermeo and Leblang, 2021; Corson and Hallock, 2021). Figure A.1 presents Honduran migration to the United States using two different measures. The left panel shows border encounters with Honduran nationals as reported from the U.S. Border Patrol, while the right panel shows the immigrant population from the American Community Surveys produced by the U.S. Census Bureau. The data reveal notable increases following the 2009 coup and Hernández’s 2017 re-election. Due to increased barriers to migration, a significant share of Hondurans arrive in the United States as unauthorized immigrants (Quijada and Sierra, 2019;

Batalova, 2023). The decrease in migration in 2020 could be due to the undercounting of Hispanic populations during that year’s census as well as the decline in emigration from the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (Khubba, Heim, and Hong, 2022). Emigration rates returned to high levels after 2021.

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



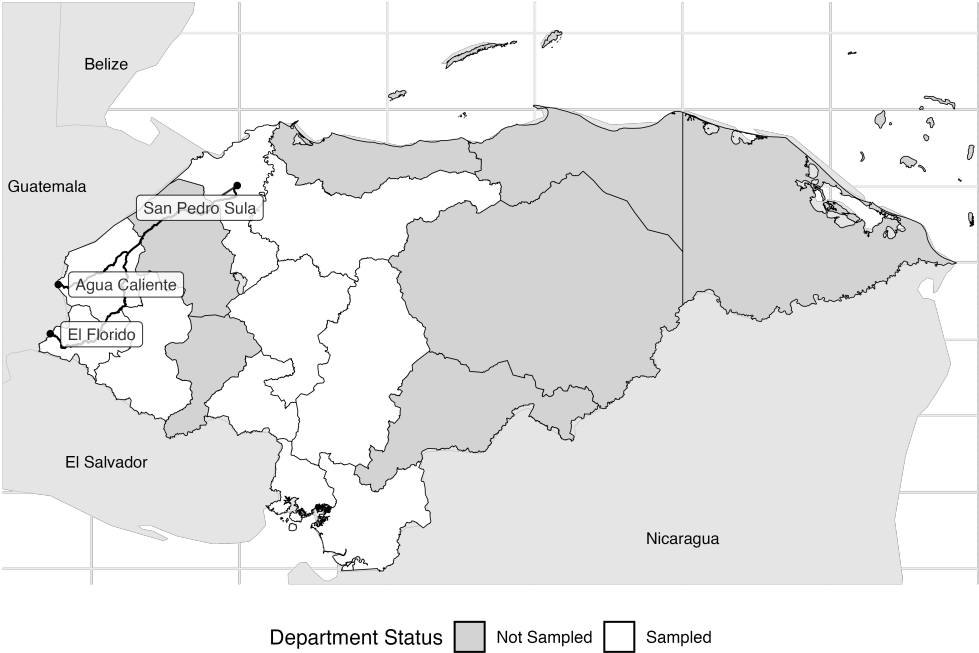
Note: Left panel (a) uses data from Customs and Border Protection (Ruiz Soto, 2022). Right panel (b) uses data from IPUMS/US Census Bureau (Ruggles et al., 2023).

Before 2018, migrant caravans were typically organized in southern Mexico to improve safety during the journey toward the United States. However, due to increasing cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico in restricting mobility, caravans began forming within Honduras in 2018 (Frank-Vitale, 2023). The motivations for emigration remained consistent with earlier patterns, as a dismal economy and high levels of violence continued to be major reasons for leaving the country (Pradilla, 2019; Frank-Vitale, 2018). Thousands of Hondurans from across the country gathered in San Pedro Sula and began walking toward the Guatemalan border. San Pedro Sula, the second-largest city in Honduras and a major economic hub, became the starting point for these caravans, which followed major highways leading to eastern Guatemala (Figure A.2). These highways also connect the rural municipalities of western Honduras to San Pedro Sula and the border with Guatemala, making exposure to the caravans likely in this region. News coverage of the movement sparked political debate over immigration policy in the United States (Madrigal and Soroka, 2021). In 2021, caravans reemerged after a brief decline in emigration caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. By then, large-scale emigration had drawn the attention of the Honduran

government, with public officials accusing the political opposition of organizing the caravans (La Vanguardia, 2020).

The 2021 election year in Honduras was marked by political uncertainty and tension. Since the beginning of his presidency in 2012, Hernández had militarized the state and weakened institutional checks and balances (Pérez and Wade, 2023). Deteriorating economic, political, and social conditions both spurred migration among Hondurans and turned the election into a referendum on his government. Meanwhile, protest mobilizations drew attention to these structural issues and galvanized opposition to Hernández. Despite state repression, newly-formed opposition parties maintained ties with social movements throughout the Hernández administration (Sosa, Menjívar, and Almeida, 2022; Freeman and Perelló, 2022).

Figure A.2: Departments in the Survey Sample and Caravan Routes in Honduras



Note: San Pedro Sula is a city in Cortés department, representing one of Honduras’s main transportation hubs.

## B Survey Experiment

We used an original survey of Honduran residents conducted in October and November of 2021. The study was pre-registered in EGAP/OSF and an anonymized pre-analysis plan is submitted with the supplementary materials. The survey fieldwork was administered by the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) based at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras.<sup>1</sup> Data collection began on October 16 and concluded on November 25 (B.1). This survey was conducted as part of a larger project that focused on understanding emigration from Honduras and transit migration within the country.

Due to the challenges of collecting a nationally representative sample at the time, regional samples were chosen. Certain regions such as the far eastern areas of Honduras were omitted due to safety reasons. Respondents were randomly selected from randomly selected municipalities within randomly selected departments within each region. In total, the sample comprises 2,231 respondents, with each regional sample having at least 400 respondents. The selected regions and departments in the sample represent 70% of the Honduran population. The face-to-face surveys required enumerators to wear masks and logistical issues led to delays in collecting data in other regions of the country. This staggering in data collection led us to justify the inclusion of fixed effects into the experiment (Section D).

The survey experiment tested the different priming effects of emigration. The treatments were randomized at the respondent level. The first treatment describes migration, emphasizing the volume of the current migratory wave. The second treatment frames emigration as a process occurring through a migrant caravan. The treatments are translated into English from Spanish in Table B.2. As previously explained, the Caravan Frame treatment also included a visual prompt of an image of the caravan and an international newspaper depicting it (Figure B.3).

The central difference between the two migration treatments is the visibility of the caravan. Both describe travel through Mexico to the United States, but the personal decisions treatment emphasizes individual resource use, whereas the caravan treatment highlights collective travel for protection and the size of the group. There is limited research comparing Honduran emigrants before and after the emergence of the caravans, as well as those who traveled outside them. Quijada and Sierra (2019) and Ramírez (2020) provide data for comparison: the former relies

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<sup>1</sup>The study was approved by the Author Institution's IRB (1759834-1).

on interviews with potential emigrants in Honduras, and the latter on a sample of Honduran emigrants in Mexico. Both studies report similar average ages and education levels. Whereas prior to 2018 Hondurans would join caravans originating in southern Mexico, after 2018 caravans have departed from western Honduras (Frank-Vitale and Núñez Chaim, 2020; Frank-Vitale, 2023). Thus, the two treatments do not differ in the type of emigrant leaving Honduras; rather, the caravan departing from Honduras emphasizes the visibility of undocumented emigration to the United States.

## B.1 Data Collection

Table B.1: Survey Fieldwork Dates by Department and Region

Region	Department	First Survey	Last Survey
Capital	Francisco Morazán	Oct 16	Oct 28
Central	Comayagua	Oct 16	Oct 26
Central	La Paz	Oct 17	Oct 26
North	Cortes	Oct 14	Nov 09
North	Yoro	Oct 28	Nov 04
South	Choluteca	Oct 17	Oct 21
South	Valle	Oct 17	Oct 20
West	Copan	Oct 19	Nov 25
West	Lempira	Nov 09	Nov 25
West	Ocotepeque	Nov 10	Nov 25

Figure B.1: Cumulative Distribution of Days to Election

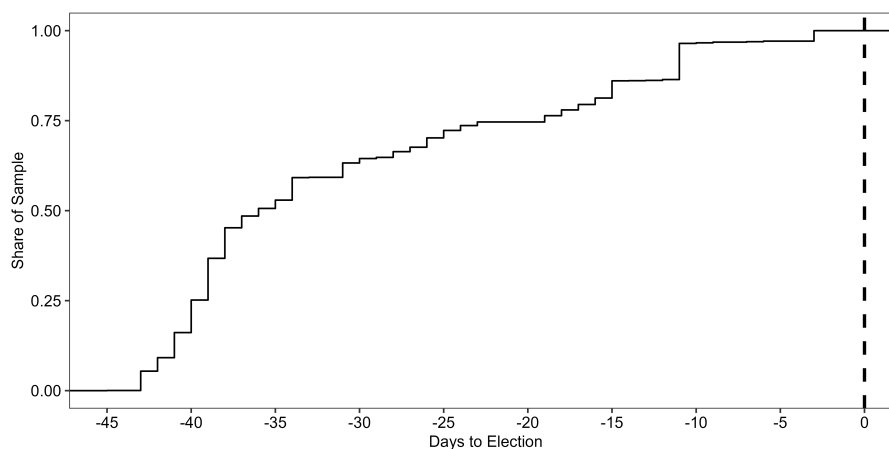
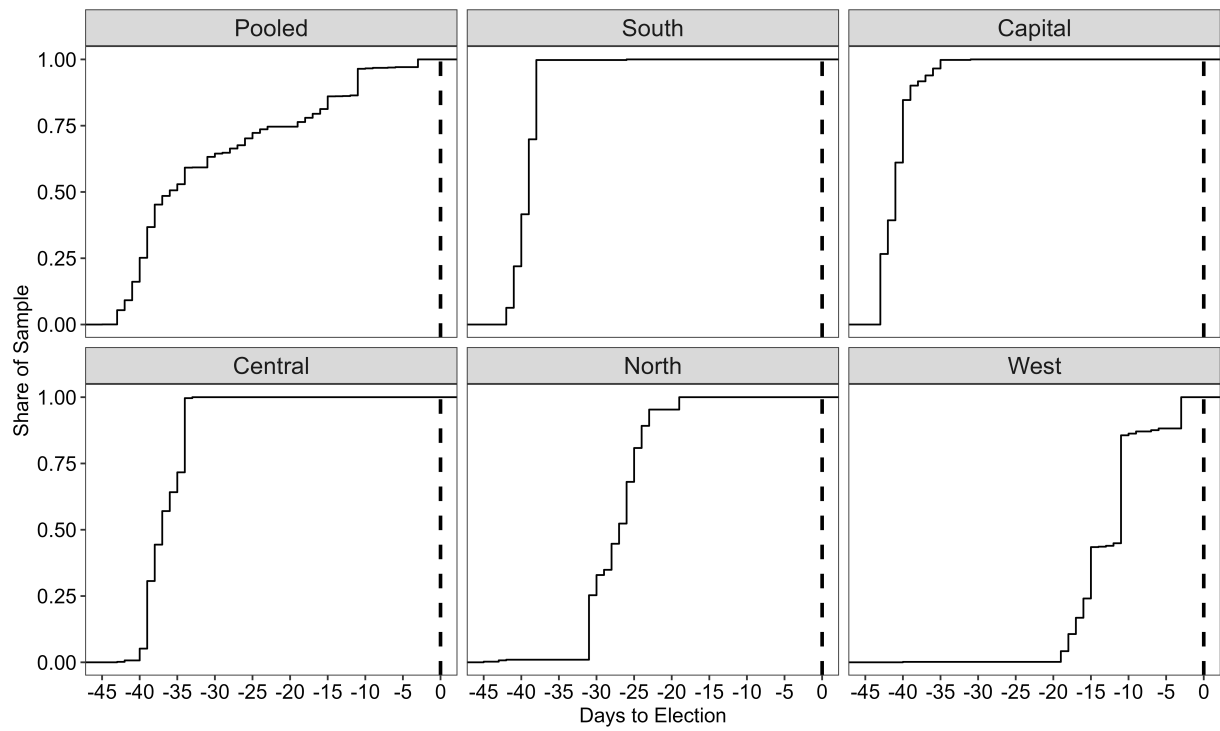


Figure B.2: Cumulative Distribution of Days to Election by Regional Samples



## B.2 Experimental Treatments

Table B.2: Scripts for Experimental Treatments

Type of treatment	Survey Treatment (English Translation)
Personal Frame	<p>This survey will ask you a series of questions about the migration of your fellow Hondurans and the state of Honduras as the presidential election campaign begins. In recent years, tens of thousands of Hondurans have emigrated to the United States, making Honduras one of the countries that contributes most to migration flows in Latin America. Men, women, and children use their own resources to emigrate. Many choose to travel by land through Guatemala and Mexico despite the risks because they are desperate to flee the country. The questions in this survey will address what you believe are the most important problems facing the country and how we can improve Honduras' trajectory. Your answers will help us understand what the most important problems in the country are and the best ways to combat them.</p>
Caravan Frame	<p>This survey will ask you a series of questions about the migration of your fellow Hondurans and the state of Honduras as it enters the presidential election campaign. For a long time, Honduras has been one of the countries that contributes most to migration flows in Latin America. In recent years, tens of thousands of Hondurans from across 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 the overland journey. The large size of the caravans has attracted the attention of the international media, further highlighting the country's problems to the world to explain the current exodus. The questions in this survey will address what you believe are the most important problems facing the country and how we can improve Honduras' trajectory. Your answers will help us understand what the most important problems in the country are and the best ways to combat them. [Show images to interviewee]</p>

Figure B.3: Images used in the Caravan Frame Experimental Group



### B.3 Deviations from Pre-Analysis the Plan

The pre-analysis plan (PAP) included pre-registered hypotheses regarding the treatment effects. The literature contains several debates about whether emigration has a positive or negative effect on political participation. Accordingly, the pre-registered hypotheses were bidirectional, as the study was designed to explore the causal effects of information about emigration on political attitudes. The inspiration for the two treatments comes from Hirschman (1993), who hypothesized that public and visible forms of emigration are more likely to influence political attitudes and behaviors than private and “quiet” forms of exit.

Both treatments (caravan and personal decision) provided information about large-scale emigration from Honduras. The caravan treatment was intended to represent a public and visible form of mass emigration that had not been seen in Honduras before 2018, analogous to the large exodus of Germans from East Berlin in 1989. The personal decision treatment was intended to show that mass emigration from Honduras and emphasize it as a result of individual decisions. Thus, the pre-registered hypotheses acknowledged that both treatments could have either negative or positive effects, with the caravan treatment expected to have a stronger effect than the personal emigration frame. The use of images from international press sources was intended to convey the international visibility of the caravans and to avoid using

local newspapers that could be perceived as politically biased.

We decided to collapse the treatments into a single large-scale emigration indicator based on both theoretical and empirical considerations. Formal tests show that effect sizes are statistically indistinguishable across treatments (SI Table E.8), and both consistently produce positive coefficients across specifications. This convergence suggests that the core signal (that large numbers of Hondurans are choosing to leave) drives the effect on protest attitudes regardless of whether emigration is framed as private family decisions or organized collective action. This may reflect the long-standing normalization of emigration in Honduras, where the scale of departure signals structural problems irrespective of its organizational form. We nonetheless examine the treatments separately in SI Section E.3, where their differential effects on protest approval versus participation point to related but distinct mechanisms operating beneath the pooled result.

## C Variables and Measurement

### C.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table C.1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	All Respondents		Control Group		Treatment Group	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Female	0.52	0.50	0.52	0.50	0.52	0.50
Urban	0.72	0.45	0.72	0.45	0.73	0.45
Age	33.50	12.83	33.00	12.98	33.73	12.75
Ideology	5.72	2.30	5.78	2.33	5.70	2.29
<i>Education</i>						
No Education	0.04	0.20	0.05	0.22	0.04	0.18
Primary	0.16	0.37	0.15	0.36	0.17	0.38
Secondary	0.48	0.50	0.47	0.50	0.48	0.50
University or more	0.30	0.46	0.31	0.46	0.30	0.46
<i>Income (Lempiras)</i>						
Up to L2450	0.28	0.45	0.29	0.45	0.27	0.45
L2451 - L5000	0.16	0.36	0.15	0.36	0.16	0.37
L5000 - L9000	0.18	0.39	0.18	0.38	0.18	0.39
More than L9000	0.28	0.45	0.26	0.44	0.28	0.45
<i>Vote Intention</i>						
Would not vote	0.07	0.26	0.08	0.27	0.07	0.26
Partido Nacional	0.16	0.36	0.15	0.36	0.16	0.36
Partido Liberal	0.09	0.29	0.10	0.30	0.09	0.29
Partido LIBRE	0.22	0.41	0.22	0.42	0.22	0.41
Partido Salvador	0.05	0.21	0.04	0.20	0.05	0.21
PINU Social Demócrata	0.01	0.11	0.01	0.10	0.01	0.11
PSH-Libre-PINUSD Alliance	0.07	0.25	0.08	0.27	0.06	0.24
Other party	0.04	0.20	0.04	0.18	0.04	0.21
Blank/null vote	0.05	0.23	0.05	0.23	0.05	0.23
Don't know/No answer	0.24	0.42	0.23	0.42	0.24	0.43

### C.2 Variables

**Dependent Variables:** Protest approval measures respondents' agreement with recent protests against President Hernández on a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Protest participation asks whether respondents would participate in an upcoming protest on a 4-point scale (1=No to 4=Yes). Non-response rates were 5% for approval and 7.8% for participation.

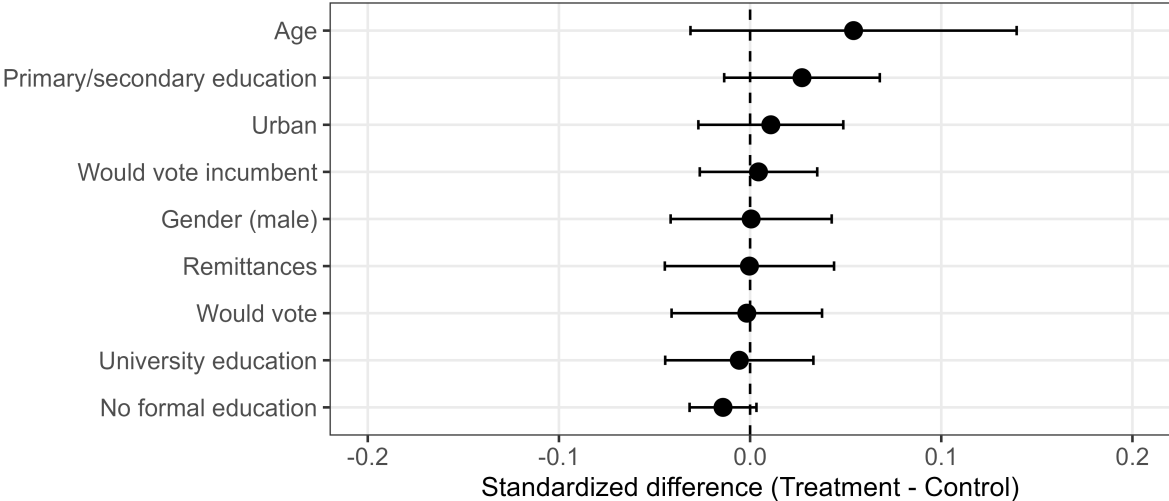
**Treatment Variable:** Binary indicator for receiving emigration information treatment (combining both original treatment arms as explained in Section B).

**Geographic Variables:** Distance to caravan routes calculated from respondents' geocoded neighborhoods (barrios) to three documented caravan paths, measured as the straight-line distance in kilometers from each respondent's coordinates to the nearest point along any route.

**Control Variables:** Age (continuous), female (binary), urban residence (binary), and education (four categories: no education, primary, secondary, university or higher) for robustness models.

### C.3 Covariance Balance Test

Figure C.1: Covariate balance tests between treatment and control groups



Note: Error bars show 95% confidence intervals.

## C.4 Additional Figures and Tables

Table C.2: Baseline Attitudes by Proximity to Caravan Routes (Control Group)

Threshold	Protest Approval			Protest Participation			Migration View		
	Far	Near	p-value	Far	Near	p-value	Far	Near	p-value
3km	3.802 (0.047)	3.756 (0.093)	0.656	2.264 (0.049)	2.271 (0.086)	0.938	3.153 (0.041)	3.164 (0.087)	0.905
5km	3.802 (0.047)	3.756 (0.093)	0.656	2.264 (0.049)	2.271 (0.086)	0.938	3.153 (0.041)	3.164 (0.087)	0.905
15km	3.844 (0.048)	3.628 (0.086)	0.029	2.287 (0.051)	2.193 (0.079)	0.321	3.161 (0.042)	3.136 (0.077)	0.776

## D Estimation

We estimated the following models for each dependent variable:

$$protest\ approval_{i,d} = \gamma_d + \delta(Treated_i) + \beta_1 X_i + \epsilon_{i,d} \quad (1)$$

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?” ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. We estimated the second model using the following equation:

$$protest\ participation_{i,d} = \gamma_d + \delta(Treated_i) + \beta_1 X_i + \epsilon_{i,d} \quad (2)$$

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?” ranging from *no* to *yes*.

We estimated three specifications for each outcome: (1) baseline with fixed effects only, (2) inclusion of demographic covariates, and (3) entropy balancing weights. The demographic covariates include age, gender, urban residence, and education categories.

For the heterogeneous effects analysis, we estimated interaction models:

$$\begin{aligned}
outcome_{i,d} = & \gamma_d + \delta(Treated_i) + \beta_1(Near\ Caravan_i) + \beta_2(Treated_i \times Near\ Caravan_i) \\
& + \beta_3 X_i + \epsilon_{i,d}
\end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

where  $Near\ Caravan_i$  is a binary indicator for respondents living within 5 kilometers of documented caravan routes, and  $\beta_2$  captures the differential treatment effect for those near caravan routes.

For all equations (1), (2), and (3),  $\gamma_d$  represents the fixed effects by department. The vector  $X_i$  denotes individual-level controls, such as demographic characteristics and days leading up to the election.  $\epsilon_{i,d}$  is the error term, clustered at the department level, and  $\delta$  is the treatment effect that captures the effect of being in the treatment group compared to the control group. All models include department fixed effects and days-to-election controls to address potential biases from the staggered nature of data collection and reachability (see B.1). Standard errors are clustered at the department level. The entropy balancing specification uses weights constructed to balance treatment and control groups on age, gender, urban residence, and education, with survey weights as base weights.

## E Models

### E.1 Main Models

Table E.1: Effect of Treatment on Protest Approval

	Baseline	Covariates	Entropy Balancing	No FE
Treatment	0.093*	0.100**	0.093*	0.112**
	(0.047)	(0.044)	(0.047)	(0.042)
Age		-0.003		-0.005
		(0.004)		(0.005)
Female		-0.024		-0.031
		(0.101)		(0.080)
Urban		-0.035		-0.015
		(0.068)		(0.088)
Primary Education		0.297		0.220
		(0.299)		(0.327)
Secondary Education		0.516*		0.412
		(0.237)		(0.299)
University or Higher		0.648**		0.627*
		(0.278)		(0.327)
Observations	2377	2311	2377	2313
R <sup>2</sup>	0.070	0.091	0.070	0.035
R <sup>2</sup> Adj.	0.053	0.071	0.053	0.032
AIC	7176.8	6927.0	7177.0	6987.1
BIC	7425.1	7208.5	7425.3	7033.0
RMSE	1.08	1.06	1.08	1.09
SE Department	✓	✓	✓	✓
FE Department	✓	✓	✓	
FE Days to Election	✓	✓	✓	

Notes: Models used to produce Figure 1. \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01

Table E.2: Effect of Treatment on Protest Participation

	Baseline	Covariates	Entropy Balancing	No FE
Treatment	0.109** (0.039)	0.098** (0.040)	0.112** (0.038)	0.088** (0.038)
Age		-0.007** (0.003)		-0.009** (0.003)
Female		-0.072 (0.080)		-0.067 (0.073)
Urban		0.084 (0.097)		0.112 (0.109)
Primary Education		0.154 (0.124)		0.243** (0.083)
Secondary Education		0.217** (0.077)		0.306*** (0.078)
University or Higher		0.510*** (0.123)		0.670*** (0.091)
Observations	2312	2245	2312	2248
R <sup>2</sup>	0.101	0.129	0.100	0.053
R <sup>2</sup> Adj.	0.085	0.111	0.084	0.050
AIC	7168.3	6903.1	7168.4	7020.1
BIC	7409.5	7177.5	7409.7	7065.8
RMSE	1.12	1.10	1.12	1.15
SE Department	✓	✓	✓	✓
FE Department	✓	✓	✓	
FE Days to Election	✓	✓	✓	

Notes: Models used to produce Figure 1. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

## E.2 Proximity to Caravan Models

Geographic coordinates for survey respondents were obtained by geocoding respondent barrios (neighborhoods) using the Google Maps Geocoding API. Of 1,165 unique barrio-municipality combinations in the survey data, 1,146 (98.4%) were successfully geocoded at the neighborhood level. For the 19 remaining combinations, we used municipality centroids when the API returned coordinates outside Honduras or provided implausible locations (N=6), geocoded directly when municipality information was missing but barrio names were available (N=12), or could not geocode at all (N=1). This process assigned geographic coordinates to 99.9% of unique location combinations, with nearly all at the neighborhood level rather than broader administrative units.

We calculated distance as the straight-line (Euclidean) distance in kilometers from each respondent's coordinates to the nearest point along the caravan route. Using these distance measures, we estimated models with three functional forms to test how distance from caravan routes affects treatment responsiveness. The linear specification assumes treatment effects

increase at a constant rate with distance. The logarithmic specification allows for diminishing returns, where information saturation occurs primarily within a certain radius and additional distance matters less beyond that threshold. The quadratic specification captures potential non-linearities, including the possibility that treatment responsiveness peaks at intermediate distances before leveling off.

Table E.3: Treatment Effects on Protest Approval by Distance to Caravan Routes

	Linear Distance	Log Distance	Quadratic Distance
Treatment	-0.022 (0.124)	-0.122 (0.167)	-0.082 (0.115)
Distance (km)	-0.002*** (0.001)		0.004 (0.006)
Distance (log)		-0.066** (0.028)	
Treatment × Distance (km)	0.001 (0.001)		0.004 (0.002)
Treatment × Distance (log)		0.055 (0.039)	
Distance <sup>2</sup> (km)			0.000 (0.000)
Treatment × Distance <sup>2</sup> (km)			0.000 (0.000)
Observations	2377	2377	2377
R <sup>2</sup>	0.073	0.073	0.077
R <sup>2</sup> Adj.	0.056	0.055	0.059
AIC	7173.0	7174.6	7166.2
BIC	7432.8	7434.4	7437.6
RMSE	1.07	1.07	1.07
SE Department	✓	✓	✓
FE Department	✓	✓	✓
FE Days to Election	✓	✓	✓

Notes: \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. Results show baseline specifications (without sociodemographic controls).

Table E.4: Treatment Effects on Protest Participation by Distance to Caravan Routes

	Linear Distance	Log Distance	Quadratic Distance
Treatment	0.061 (0.117)	0.051 (0.165)	0.069 (0.121)
Distance (km)	-0.002*** (0.001)		0.007** (0.002)
Distance (log)		-0.074** (0.024)	
Treatment × Distance (km)	0.000 (0.001)		0.000 (0.002)
Treatment × Distance (log)		0.015 (0.043)	
Distance <sup>2</sup> (km)			0.000*** (0.000)
Treatment × Distance <sup>2</sup> (km)			0.000 (0.000)
Observations	2312	2312	2312
R <sup>2</sup>	0.105	0.104	0.110
R <sup>2</sup> Adj.	0.088	0.087	0.092
AIC	7162.5	7164.9	7153.9
BIC	7414.4	7417.7	7418.3
RMSE	1.12	1.12	1.11
SE Department	✓	✓	✓
FE Department	✓	✓	✓
FE Days to Election	✓	✓	✓

Notes: \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. Results show baseline specifications (without sociodemographic controls).

To further examine the distance-based pattern, Table E.5 presents treatment effects estimated separately for respondents living near (less than 150km) versus far (150km or more) from caravan routes. The 150km threshold was chosen to ensure sufficient observations in both subsamples while capturing the distinction between departments with sustained caravan exposure and those with limited direct contact.

Table E.5: Treatment Effects by Distance from Caravan Routes

	Near (<150km)	Far (≥ 150km)	Near (<150km)	Far (≥150km)
Treatment	0.017 (0.086)	0.194 (0.105)	0.072 (0.080)	0.198* (0.097)
Observations	1327	1044	1312	994
R <sup>2</sup>	0.109	0.048	0.131	0.106
R <sup>2</sup> Adj.	0.081	0.028	0.104	0.087
SE Department	✓	✓	✓	✓
FE Department	✓	✓	✓	✓
FE Days to Election	✓	✓	✓	✓

Notes: \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. Near routes: <150km from caravan paths. Far routes: >150km.

Table E.6 replicates the near/far analysis from Table E.5 separately for each treatment arm. Both treatments show larger effects among respondents living farther from caravan routes, consistent with the information saturation mechanism. For the personal decision treatment, the distance gradient is clearest for protest approval. For the caravan treatment, it is clearest for protest participation.

Table E.6: Treatment Effects by Distance and Treatment Arm

	Protest Approval		Protest Participation	
	Near	Far	Near	Far
Personal Decision Treatment	0.011 (0.074)	0.225* (0.103)	0.123 (0.069)	0.148 (0.126)
Caravan Treatment	0.023 (0.124)	0.164 (0.115)	0.024 (0.106)	0.247*** (0.071)
Observations	1327	1044	1312	994
R <sup>2</sup> Adj.	0.080	0.028	0.104	0.087

Notes: \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. Models include department and days-to-election fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at department level. Near: <150km from caravan paths. Far: ≥150km.

### E.3 Differential Treatment Effects: Grievance Signals versus Collective Action Signals

We estimated separate effects for the personal decision and caravan migration treatments to examine whether different framings of emigration information produce distinct effects on political attitudes. The personal migration treatment described individual family decisions to emigrate using personal resources, while the caravan treatment described collective, organized departure with international media attention. The separate treatment analysis reveals an important theoretical distinction between how these framings affect political attitudes. While both treatments produce positive effects on protest support with statistically indistinguishable magnitudes (Table E.8), they exhibit distinct patterns across outcomes (Table E.7).

Table E.7: Separate Treatment Effects: Personal Decision vs Caravan Migration

	Protest Approval	Protest Participation
Personal Decision Treatment	0.099* (0.045)	0.114* (0.058)
Caravan Migration Treatment	0.087 (0.069)	0.104* (0.046)
Observations	2377	2312
R <sup>2</sup>	0.070	0.101
R <sup>2</sup> Adj.	0.053	0.084
AIC	7178.8	7170.1
BIC	7432.8	7417.2
RMSE	1.08	1.12
SE Department	✓	✓
FE Department	✓	✓
FE Days to Election	✓	✓

Notes: \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . Results show baseline specifications (without sociodemographic controls).

The caravan treatment shows a larger estimated effect on participation than on approval, consistent with collective action theory, though the difference between outcomes does not reach conventional statistical significance across model specifications. Observing organized collective departure signals that coordination is possible, reduces individual costs through safety in numbers, and provides visible proof of turnout. In contrast, individual family-based emigration signals widespread dissatisfaction and regime failure, shaping general political evaluations rather than specifically addressing collective action barriers. This explains why individual migration information affects both approval and participation (grievances motivate both attitudes and action) while caravan information specifically facilitates participation by solving coordination problems.

To formally assess whether the observed differences between treatment effects were statistically meaningful, we conducted chi-square tests comparing the personal decision and caravan treatment coefficients (Table E.8). The tests yielded p-values of 0.86 for both protest approval and protest participation, indicating no statistically significant difference between the two treatment arms. This provides empirical justification for combining the treatments and demonstrates that both types of frames operate through coordination mechanisms: individual migration as a grievance signal and caravans as a collective action signal.

Table E.8: Statistical Tests for Equality of Treatment Effects

Outcome	Chi-Square	p-value
Protest Approval	0.0316	0.8590
Protest Participation	0.0205	0.8862

#### E.4 Testing the Diaspora Channel

To test whether the emigration information treatments operate through existing transnational networks (the diaspora channel), we conducted interaction analyses with two key measures of transnational linkages. We estimated models interacting the treatment indicator with binary variables for weekly communication with family in the United States (Table E.9) and household receipt of remittances (Table E.10). These models follow the same specification as our main analyses, using department and days-to-election fixed effects with standard errors clustered at the department level. The interaction terms test whether respondents with existing transnational connections respond differently to emigration information compared to those without such connections. Null interaction effects would indicate that the emigration treatments operate through domestic coordination mechanisms rather than through existing diaspora networks.

Table E.9: Interaction with Weekly Communication Abroad

	Protest Approval	Protest Participation
Treatment	0.119 (0.083)	0.200*** (0.061)
USA Communication	0.281 (0.158)	0.311*** (0.095)
Treatment $\times$ USA Communication	-0.086 (0.136)	-0.273** (0.103)
Observations	2285	2219
R <sup>2</sup>	0.077	0.104
R <sup>2</sup> Adj.	0.058	0.087
AIC	6867.2	6887.7
BIC	7125.2	7138.8
RMSE	1.07	1.12
SE Department	✓	✓
FE Department	✓	✓
FE Days to Election	✓	✓

Notes: \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. Results show baseline specifications (without sociodemographic controls).

Table E.10: Interaction with Remittances

	Protest Approval	Protest Participation
Treatment	0.158 (0.102)	0.159* (0.082)
Remittances	0.209* (0.114)	0.229 (0.137)
Treatment $\times$ Remittances	-0.136 (0.138)	-0.124 (0.134)
Observations	2200	2134
R <sup>2</sup>	0.069	0.100
R <sup>2</sup> Adj.	0.052	0.083
AIC	6632.5	6640.4
BIC	6866.1	6872.7
RMSE	1.07	1.12
SE Department	✓	✓
FE Department	✓	✓
FE Days to Election	✓	✓

Notes: \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ . Results show baseline specifications (without sociodemographic controls).

The results show that emigration information treatments operate through domestic coordination mechanisms rather than through existing transnational networks. Both tables show that the interaction terms between the treatment and transnational linkages (communication with family in the U.S. and being a recipient of remittances) are either statistically insignificant or, in the case of protest participation and USA communication, actually negative. This means that people with existing family connections abroad and those receiving remittances do not respond more strongly to the emigration information; if anything, those with weekly USA communication show a reduced treatment effect for protest participation.

## E.5 Additional Analyses

To assess whether the emigration treatment operates through coordination mechanisms specific to collective action, we tested treatment effects on two broader political evaluation measures: assessments of the country's situation and presidential approval. Table E.11 shows null treatment effects on both measures, indicating the mechanism works through collective action beliefs rather than general dissatisfaction.

Table E.11: Treatment Effects on Political Evaluations

	Country Situation	President Approval
Treatment	-0.022 (0.051)	-0.034 (0.042)
Observations	2446	2395
R <sup>2</sup>	0.135	0.125
R <sup>2</sup> Adj.	0.120	0.110
AIC	6608.1	6806.1
BIC	6857.6	7054.7
RMSE	0.92	0.98
SE Department	✓	✓
FE Department	✓	✓
FE Days to Election	✓	✓

Notes: \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. Results show baseline specifications (without sociodemographic controls).

Table E.12 tests whether the treatment increases respondents' own emigration intentions, suggesting that information triggers exit responses that could compete with voice. The null effects across all specifications indicate that learning about mass emigration increases protest support without prompting individual exit considerations, further supporting the coordination mechanism.

Table E.12: Treatment Effects on Migration Intentions

	Baseline	Covariates	Entropy Balancing
Treatment	0.023 (0.025)	0.033 (0.026)	0.025 (0.024)
Observations	2024	1971	2024
R <sup>2</sup>	0.080	0.130	0.080
R <sup>2</sup> Adj.	0.060	0.108	0.060
AIC	2828.4	2655.6	2828.3
BIC	3069.4	2929.4	3069.7
RMSE	0.48	0.46	0.48
SE Department	✓	✓	✓
FE Department	✓	✓	✓
FE Days to Election	✓	✓	✓

Notes: \* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01. Covariates model includes age, gender, urban, and educational level.

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