Headed for the Exits

An Empirical Assessment of the Key Factors Driving Honduran Emigration

Ryan C. Williams

ABSTRACT

With the surge in Central American families and unaccompanied children arriving at the United States' southern border, there has been renewed interest and debate about why people are leaving the region in such great numbers. Despite the increased attention being paid to this phenomenon, there is a disconnect in the literature about what is driving individuals to leave their homes. While some researchers point to clear economic underpinnings of the mass emigration, others claim that the majority of people are fleeing violence and insecurity. By analyzing survey data from Honduras, I measure the relationship between economic and security factors and the individual decision to emigrate. My analysis reveals that in the aggregate, Hondurans are more likely to express an intention to emigrate due to insecurity than they are as a result of economic distress.

Table of Contents

Introduction

In recent years there has been widespread renewed interest in Central American migration, starting in 2014 with a significant surge in unaccompanied Central American minors arriving at the United States' southern border, and continuing through today with the arrival of "caravans" of migrants and refugees travelling from the "Northern Triangle" countries of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. There are compelling reasons to look at these events through a regional lens and indeed reporting on the uptick in Central American migration has frequently employed broad characterizations of regional conditions. However, in order to develop a deeper and better understanding of the circumstances surrounding these large-scale migration events, it is useful to narrow our focus to a single country, and to consider factors at the subnational and individual household level.

This paper endeavors to map out a better understanding of what causes people to emigrate from Honduras. There are several reasons for the selection of Honduras as my country of focus: (1) the country has been the starting point for recent migrant caravans travelling from Central America to the United States, making it an intriguing sample population to study broader factors of emigration from the region;[1] (2) the population of immigrants from Hondurans living in the United States has risen more sharply in the past decade than that from Guatemala and El Salvador;[2] and (3) Honduras holds the twin distinctions of being both one of the poorest and one of the most violent countries in all of Latin America,[3] allowing me to analyze which factor is a greater determinant of the decision to emigrate.

Country Conditions

Honduras is one of the most violent countries in Latin America. Drug trafficking networks, street gangs (or *maras*), and cartels from Mexico and Colombia all add to the extreme levels of violence. Criminal groups are emboldened due to high levels of corruption within the country's security forces and elite class. The country's murder rate is astronomically high - 43.6 per 100,000 residents in 2017 – which was down significantly from its peak of 86.5 per 100,000 in 2011,[4] but still one of the highest rates in the entire world. Figure 1 provides a visualization of homicides at the subnational state (*departamento*) level, which reveals that murder rates remain high in the north of the country along the Atlantic

[1] El Colegio De La Frontera Norte. *La Caravana de Migrantes Centroamericanos en Tijuana 2018: Diagnostico y Propuestas de Accion*. Tijuana: 2018. Accessed February 21, 2019. https://www.colef.mx/estudiosdeelcolef/la-caravana-de-migrantes-centroamericanos-en-tijuana-2018-diagnostico-y-propuestas-de-accion/

[2] D'Vera Cohn, Jeffrey S. Passel, Ana Gonzalez-Barrera, "Immigration from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador Up," *Pew Research Center,* June 04, 2018, http://www.pewhispanic.org/2017/12/07/rise-in-u-s-immigrants-from-el-salvador-guatemala-and-honduras-outpaces-growth-from-elsewhere/.

[3] "Honduras Profile," InSight Crime, last modified August 29, 2018, https://www.insightcrime.org/honduras-organized-crime-news/honduras/.

[4] "Honduras 2018 Crime & Safety Report," Overseas Security Advisory Council, last modified April 3, 2018, https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=23798.

coastline and where the country borders Guatemala. This is largely attributable to the fact that drug trafficking organizations take advantage of Honduras' unprotected northern coast to land narcotics by boat and plane before moving them across the border into Guatemala and ultimately to North America.[5] While the murder rate has been trending lower, the percentage of Hondurans reporting that they were victims of crime has gone up, according to national surveys conducted by the Latin American Public Opinion Project.
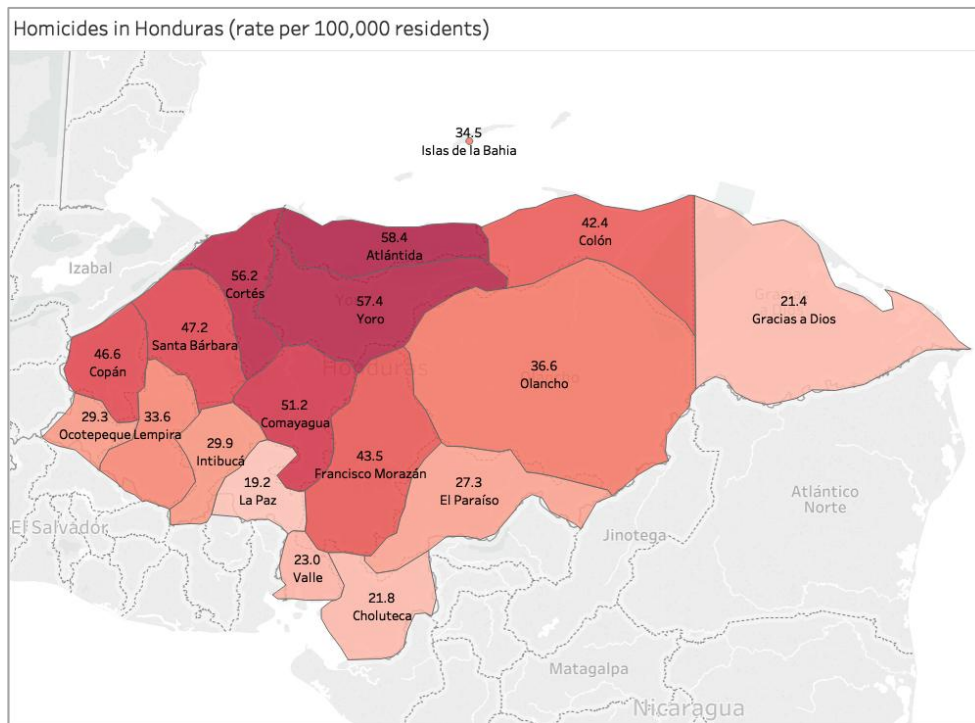

Figure 1 - 2017 Homicide Data by Department.
Data Source: La Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras, Observatorio Nacional de la Violencia

Economic conditions are also dire. Honduras ranks as one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere and more than 60% of residents live in poverty. [6] Honduras also suffers from the highest level of economic inequality in Latin America.[7] Roughly a third of the country's residents are underemployed, and the economy relies on remittances from other countries (primarily from the United States). In 2017, the gross domestic product (at purchasing power parity) per capita was $5,600, ranking Honduras as the 170th wealthiest country globally, just ahead of Pakistan.[8]

[5] Crisis Working Group. *Corridor of Violence: The Guatemala-Honduras Border.* Belgium : 2014. Accessed May 01, 2019. https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/central-america/guatemala/corridor-violence-guatemala-honduras-border

[6] "The World Factbook: Honduras," Central Intelligence Agency, last modified February 1, 2018, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ho.html

[7] "Honduras Overview," The World Bank, last modified October 4, 2018, https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/honduras/overview.

[8] Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook: Honduras."

Beyond the key economic and security factors, there are significant issues with governance, major flaws in the justice system, rampant corruption and high levels of impunity, widespread social inequality,[9] and serious environmental risks due to climate change.[10]

Mass Emigration

Honduras has served as a net "sending" country for many years, meaning there are more emigrants leaving the country on an annual basis than there are new immigrants coming in. According to the Migration Policy Institute (2018), 722,000 migrants from Honduras lived in other countries around the world in 2017, while only 39,000 migrants from other countries were residing in Honduras. However, beginning with the mass movement of unaccompanied children out of the region in 2014, there has been a significant uptick in the number of people leaving Honduras. Reports indicate that somewhere between 200-400 people leave the country each day[11] and a growing portion of these migrants are unaccompanied minor children and families.

From a United States perspective, this mass exodus seemed to lull following the 2014 surge but has again picked up in 2018 and 2019. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, U.S. Border Patrol apprehended 47,260 Hondurans along the Southwest border, of which nearly 64% were unaccompanied minors (7,784) or family members (22,366). In FY 2018, the total number of Hondurans apprehended rose to 76,513, 66% of which were either unaccompanied minors (10,913) or family members (39,439). In the first half of FY 2019 (October through March) alone, the number of border apprehensions of Hondurans jumped to 102,449, and 80% were unaccompanied children (9,138) or family members (72,728).[12]

Recently, large caravans of migrants have banded together to make the journey from the Northern Triangle to the United States. Many of the Central Americans arriving at the Southern U.S. border over the past year made their way north with one of these caravans. The largest caravan to date, estimated at its peak to be around 7,000 migrants, set out from Honduras in October 2018.[13] Three similar convoys have set out in subsequent months, including a group of nearly a thousand traveling north from San Pedro Sula, Honduras at the time of writing.[14]

---

[9] "World Report 2019: Rights Trends in Honduras," Human Rights Watch, last modified January 17, 2019, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/honduras.

[10] Muzaffar Chishti and Faye Hipsman, "Increased Central American Migration to the United States May Prove an Enduring Phenomenon," *Migration Policy Institute*, February 18, 2016, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/increased-central-american-migration-united-states-may-prove-enduring-phenomenon.

[11] Azam Ahmed, Katie Rogers and Jeff Ernst. "How the Migrant Caravan Became a Trump Election Strategy." *New York Times,* October 25, 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/24/world/americas/migrant-caravan-trump.html.

[12] "U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Apprehensions by Sector Fiscal Year 2019," U.S. Customs and Border Protection, accessed April 24,2019, https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/sw-border-migration/usbp-sw-border-apprehensions.

[13] El Colegio De La Frontera Norte. "La Caravana."

[14] Noe Leiva, "Hondurans defy Trump to head north for US border," *Yahoo News,* April 10, 2019, https://news.yahoo.com/hondurans-defy-trump-head-north-us-border-224745018.html.

Clearly, many more Hondurans are deciding to leave their country and head for the United States, but those startling statistics don't tell the whole story. Chishti and Hipsman (2016) point out that we tend to view the flow of migrants and refugees through the lens of those that arrive on the Southwest U.S. border, but doing so fails to properly acknowledge the consistency of Central Americans fleeing the Northern Triangle countries. Mexico established the Southern Border Plan (Programa Frontera Sur), at the behest of the United States government, and in doing so began to interrupt the flow of migrants and refugees bound for the United States. Figure 2 shows the population of people of concern (which includes refugees, asylees, and internally displaced individuals) in the United States and those in other countries around the world. This chart illustrates two important points, 1) that the number of vulnerable people leaving their homes in Honduras has exploded over the past five years, and 2) that only a moderate portion of those individuals were destined for the United States.

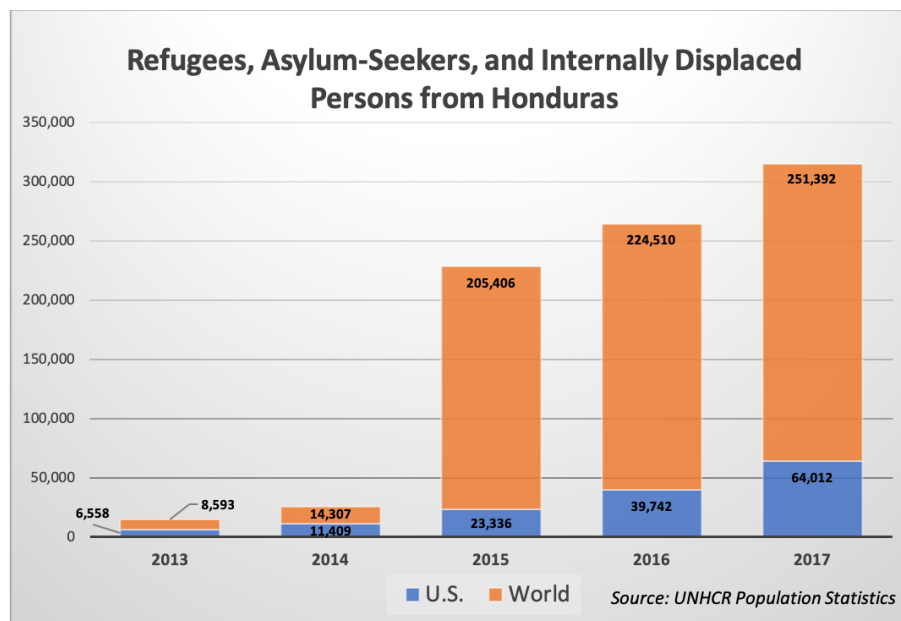**Refugees, Asylum-Seekers, and Internally Displaced Persons from Honduras**

Figure 2 - People of Concern from Honduras

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) the number of people of concern from Honduras has continued to rise unabated since 2010. In 2017, the most recent year for which data is available, more than 177,000 Hondurans were displaced within their own country. Thousands more have sought asylum or been admitted as refugees in countries around the world including in Canada, Spain, Italy, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Belize. This data reveals the massive movement of Honduran individuals and families who have left home while also highlighting the fact that the United States is not the only country affected by this flow of people.

Relevant Theoretical Framework

In order to better understand why Hondurans decide to emigrate, we need to start with a theoretical framework for migration. Ravenstein's (1889) "push-pull" theory of migration is widely seen as forming the basis of most contemporary scholarship on the issue. According to his theory, unfavorable conditions in one place (such as "bad or oppressive laws, heavy taxation, an unattractive climate, uncongenial social surroundings, and even compulsion" [p.286]) push people to emigrate, while favorable conditions elsewhere have the effect of pulling them in.

There are theorists who criticize the simplicity of push-pull analysis, saying it overlooks important factors that influence movement (see for example O'Reilly [2015]). Despite the relevant concerns such critiques raise, I choose to use the push-pull dichotomy as the foundation of my research for the reasons outlined by Kivisto and Faist (2010), because "it offers a remarkably intuitive and parsimonious account of the (migration) process" (p.35). Building off of Ravenstein's base understanding of migration, Lee (1966) is credited with giving "expression" to the push-pull theory of migration, asserting that when the factors pushing a person out of a place are stronger than the factors keeping them there, migration will occur.

There is debate in the United States about whether push factors in Central America or pull factors in the United States are more responsible for the increasing number of individuals making the journey north. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported that between 2008 and 2015, countries surrounding the Northern Triangle (including Mexico, Belize, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama) received a 13-fold increase in the number of asylum claims coming from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala.[15] This fact, Musalo and Lee (2017) argue, suggests that Central Americans are more likely leaving their homes behind as a result of worsening country conditions rather than as a result of pull factors in other countries.

If we adjust our scope to investigate just the push factors that lead to migration, we find a range of potential explanatory factors. O'Reilly (2015) points out that Ravenstein's concept of push factors was primarily concerned with economics and labor migration, and that less has been written about individuals fleeing violence and insecurity.[16,17] More recent theorists have applied the push-pull dynamic to classify other factors that compel people to leave their home countries. UNHCR defines push factors of migration to include unemployment, conflict, threats to life and liberty, a lack of educational opportunities,

[15] UNHCR, *Women on the Run: First-Hand Accounts of Refugees Fleeing El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico*, Washington, DC: UNCHR, 2015. Accessed February 21, 2019. https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/publications/operations/5630f24c6/women-run.html.

[16] Michael Clemens, "Violence, Development and Migration Waves: Evidence from Central American Child Migrant Apprehensions," Washington, DC: Center for Global Development (2017). Accessed March 11, 2019. https://www.cgdev.org/publication/violence-development-and-migration-waves-evidence-central-american-child-migrant.

[17] David Scott Fitzgerald, Rawan Arar, "The Sociology of Refugee Migration," *Annual Review of Sociology* 44, no.1 (2018): 387-406, doi:10.1146/annurev-soc-073117-041204

poverty, famine, and environmental factors. Musalo and Lee cite Central America's high homicide rates, violence against women and children, gender-motivated murders, household violence, and extreme poverty as primary push factors from the region. In addition to the well-defined push factors of violence and poverty, Chishti and Hipsman (2016) point out that Central America is experiencing a terrible drought, which is also contributing to people's decision to emigrate.

Some argue that people escaping violence or persecution are not migrants at all, and that they must be understood and treated as refugees, distinctly.[18] However, FitzGerald and Arar (2018) worry that classifying individuals as either refugees or economic migrants does not capture the complexity of individual circumstances. According to Clemens (2017), the three factors that influence migration (violence, economic conditions, and social networks) are all significantly interrelated and difficult to fully distinguish from one another. Seelke (2014) and Jaitman et al. (2017) provide useful illustrations of this complexity. Seelke notes that economic factors strain social cohesion and limit individual opportunity, causing young people to turn to gangs and violence. Jaitman et al. establish that violent communities suffer economically as a result of that violence. In Central America, this exacerbates the economic depression communities already face due to structural, social, and governance problems.

Despite the complexity and inter-relatedness of push factors driving migration from Central America, observers and analysts often try to boil down the issue to one single predominant factor. There are frequently attempts to prove a point by characterizing the "most important" push factor of migration. In the United States, debate over which factor is most important has evolved into a political dispute, with anti-immigration commentators pointing to the clear economic underpinnings of the mass emigration (making migrants easier to turn away), and pro-immigration voices arguing that the flow can only be characterized as refugees fleeing the region due to violence and insecurity (making them thus deserving of humanitarian protection).

Key Drivers: Security vs. Economics

The debate about whether economics or security is the key factor driving Honduran emigration has by now become well established. However, there is little consensus among observers about which is the more significant cause.

Security

Hiskey et al. (2018) analyzed data from Vanderbilt's Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) 2014 AmericasBarometer survey to determine whether violence and insecurity have a measurable influence on the decision of Central Americans to emigrate. They found that in Honduras and El Salvador, concerns about personal security are more closely

---

[18] Erika Feller, "Refugees are not Migrants," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 24 no.4 (2005): 27-35, doi:10.1093/rsq/hdi077

related to emigration intentions than economic factors. Orozco (2018) asserts that recent migration trends from the region are being spurred by violence and insecurity brought about by organized crime networks. His research shows that in Honduras, a 1% increase in homicides drives migration by 120%. A survey of Central American migrants by Médecins Sans Frontières showed personal experience with violence as the most important triggering factor in a person's decision to leave their country of origin.[19] In the survey, 50.3% of Central Americans cited violence as at least part of the reason they left home.

Several authors have focused their research specifically on the emigration of children. For instance, Clemens determines that the impact of a short-term increase in violence on unaccompanied child migration is roughly equivalent to long-term economic characteristics like income and poverty levels, and is much greater than short-term economic changes such as a rapid rise in unemployment. Ameudo-Dorantes et al. (2016) find that a high homicide rate in the country of origin is highly correlated to the decision of unaccompanied children to emigrate. Carlson and Gallagher (2015) survey the literature to assess the impact of violence on the decision by children to emigrate, and they ultimately make the case that violence is a primary cause for recent surges of unaccompanied children arriving at the Southwest U.S. border.

Economics

On the other side of the debate, Luna (2018) uses a survey conducted by the Honduran nonprofit Company of Jesus (ERIC-SJ), to argue that Hondurans emigrate primarily for economic reasons and not, as many suggest, to escape violence and insecurity. Luna claims that of the respondents who had a family member emigrate within the previous four years, 82.9% reported that the family member emigrated due to lack of employment or to generate income. Only 11.3% reported their family member had migrated due to violence and insecurity.

Quijada and Sierra (2018) conduct a mixed methods study into the causes of emigration from Honduras. The authors state very directly that "the prevalence of violence in areas where potential migrants live is unrelated to their migration decisions". Instead, they find that the propensity to migrate is increased for individuals in low-income households who lack access to basic services or means of self-improvement.

Likewise, many conservative political figures in the United States have stated in clear terms that they see the Central American exodus as being economic in nature. In June 2018, speaking on NBC's Meet the Press, Oklahoma Senator James Lankford said, "the vast majority of [Central Americans] are coming for economic reasons…not just asylum, they're trying to come for economic gains."[20] A report issued by the Pew Research Center supports

---

[19] MSF, *Forced to Flee Central America's Northern Triangle: A Neglected Humanitarian Crisis*, New York: Médecins Sans Frontières, 2017. Accessed on March 17, 2019. https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/msf_forced-to-flee-central-americas-northern-triangle.pdf.
[20] James Lankford, Interview with Chuck Todd, *Meet the Press*, NBC, June 24, 2018.

this assessment, finding that 96% of Hondurans deported from the United States in 2016 cited work as a main reason for their initial migration.[21]

Research Goals and Methodology

In light of this puzzling disconnect in the literature about what is driving recent migration from Central America, and given the lack of quantitative empirical analysis of the root causes pushing Honduran emigration, I endeavor to measure and compare the influence of economic and security factors on the individual decision to emigrate.

To accomplish this, I analyze data from the 2016 AmericasBarometer Survey from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP). AmericasBarometer is a multi-country survey which focuses on political, economic, and quality-of-life issues in countries throughout Latin America. The most recent round of surveys took place in 2016 and 2017, and included surveys taken in 29 countries and totaling more than 43,000 interviews. The 2016 survey in Honduras was conducted among a nationally representative sample of 1,560 voting age adults through face-to-face interviews.

To analyze the survey data, I first cross-tabulated a number of variables to determine their bivariate relationship to the intention to emigrate. Secondly, I used a binary logistic regression model to run a predictive analysis that explains the relationship between economic and security factors and the intention to emigrate.

Dependent Variable

My dependent variable is the dichotomous question of whether an individual has any intention of going to live or work abroad in the next three years. The response to this question is representative of an individual's intention to emigrate, and research has shown that intentions to migrate are a statistically significant predictor of a person's decision to do so (see, for example, Creighton and De Jong). For ease of statistical interpretation, I recoded this variable from (1=yes, 2=no) to (0=no, 1=yes).

Independent Variables – Cross-Tabulation

- CRIME VICTIMIZATION – Respondents were asked if they have been a victim of any type of crime (robbery, burglary, assault, fraud, blackmail, extortion, violent threats, or any other type of crime) in the past 12 months.

- CRIME VICTIMIZATION - OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBER – Respondents were asked if any other member of their household was a victim of crime in the past 12 months?

---

[21] Cohn et al., "Immigration from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador Up."

- LEVEL OF FEAR OF BEING A VICTIM OF HOMICIDE – Respondents were asked what level of fear they have of being a direct victim of homicide. Response options include a lot of fear, some fear, a little fear, or no fear at all.

- PERCEPTION OF NEIGHBORHOOD INSECURITY – Respondents were asked how safe they feel in the neighborhood where they live, considering the possibility of being assaulted or robbed. Response options include very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe, and very unsafe.

- PERCEPTION OF PERSONAL ECONOMIC SITUATION – Respondents were asked if they think that their personal economic situation is better than, the same as, or worse than it was 12 months ago.

- HOUSEHOLD MONTHLY INCOME – Respondents were asked which income range their total monthly household income fits into, including remittances from abroad and income from all working adults and children.

- PERSONAL MONTHLY INCOME - Respondents were asked which of a series of ranges their personal monthly income falls into, without taking into account other household members.

Independent Variables – Logistic Regression

- HOUSEHOLD MONTHLY INCOME – Respondents were asked which income range their total monthly household income fits into, including remittances from abroad and income from all working adults and children. This is a scale variable consisting of 16 ranges of income.

- FREQUENCY OF CRIME VICTIMIZATION - To create this variable, I combined data from two questions "Have you been a victim of any type of crime in the past 12 months? That is, have you been a victim of robbery, burglary, assault, fraud, blackmail, extortion, violent threats, or any other type of crime in the past 12 months?", and "How many times have you been a crime victim during the last 12 months?". This required recoding the first question from (1=yes, 2=no) into a scale that incorporates frequency of victimization.

Results

Cross-Tabulation

Emigration Intention * Crime Victimization

		Intends to Live or Work Abroad		
		Yes	No	Total
Victim of Crime in the Last 12 Months	Yes	58.8% (197)	41.2% (138)	100.0% (335)
	No	35.5% (428)	64.5% (779)	100.0% (1207)
	Total	40.5% 625	59.5% 917	100.0% 1542

Chi(df) = 59.295(1), p = 0.000; Phi = 0.196

The relationship between emigration intentions and crime victimization was very significant, χ^2 (1, N = 1542) = 59.295, p = 0.000. Victims of crime were much more likely to express intentions to emigrate than those who had not been victimized. This result suggests that crime victimization is a significant indicator of a person's intention to leave Honduras.

Emigration Intention * Crime Victimization - Other Household Member

		Intends to Live or Work Abroad		
		Yes	No	Total
Other Household Member Was a Victim of Crime	Yes	53.3% (209)	46.7% (183)	100.0% (392)
	No	36.0% (413)	64.0% (733)	100.0% (1146)
	Total	40.4% (622)	59.6% (916)	100.0% (1538)

Chi(df) = 36.201(1), p = 0.000; Phi = 0.153

The relationship between emigration intentions and victimization of another member of the household was very significant, χ^2 (1, N = 1538) = 36.201, p = 0.000. Individuals who lived in a home where another household member was a victim of a crime were much more likely to express intentions to emigrate than those who had not been victimized. Similar to individuals who had been the victim of crime themselves, victimization of another household member led to higher rates of emigration intentions.

Emigration Intention * Level of Fear of Being a Victim of Homicide

		Intends to Live or Work Abroad		
		Yes	No	Total
Level of Fear of Being a Victim of Homicide	A Lot of Fear	49.7% (249)	50.3% (252)	100.0% (501)
	Some Fear	38.1% (119)	61.9% (193)	100.0% (312)
	Little Fear	34.1% (117)	65.9% (226)	100.0% (343)
	No Fear at All	36.9% (142)	63.1% (243)	100.0% (385)
	Total	40.7% (627)	59.3% (914)	100.0% (1541)

Chi(df) = 26.160(3), p = 0.000; Phi = 0.130

The relationship between emigration intentions and fear of homicide victimization was very significant, χ^2 (3, N = 1541) = 26.160, p = 0.000. Those with a higher level of fear of being a victim of homicide were much more likely to express intentions to emigrate than those who had less fear. This reveals that in addition to the experience of crime victimization, the feeling of insecurity also led a higher number of people to express their intentions to emigrate.

Emigration Intention * Perception of Neighborhood Insecurity

		Intends to Live or Work Abroad		
		Yes	No	Total
Perception of Neighborhood Insecurity	Very Safe	32.9% (143)	67.1% (292)	100.0% (435)
	Somewhat Safe	42.6% (186)	57.4% (251)	100.0% (437)
	Somewhat Unsafe	43.8% (173)	56.2% (222)	100.0% (395)
	Very Unsafe	46.3% (120)	53.7% (139)	100.0% (259)
	Total	40.8% (622)	59.2% (904)	100.0% (1526)

Chi(df) = 16.633(3), p = 0.001; Cramer's V = 0.104

The relationship between emigration intentions and perceived insecurity was significant, χ^2 (3, N = 1526) = 16.633, p = 0.001. Individuals who perceived their

neighborhood as unsafe were more likely to express intentions to emigrate than those who perceived their neighborhood as safe. The perception of neighborhood security is another important factor in whether or not someone expressed an intention to leave Honduras.

Emigration Intention * Perception of Personal Economic Situation

| | | Intends to Live or Work Abroad | | |
		Yes	No	Total
Perception of Personal Economic Situation	Better	35.5% (99)	64.5% (180)	100.0% (279)
	Same	38.9% (223)	61.1% (350)	100.0% (573)
	Worse	44.0% (303)	56.0% (385)	100.0% (688)
	Total	40.6% (625)	59.4% (915)	100.0% (1540)

Chi(df) = 7.078(2), p = 0.029; Cramer's V = 0.068

The relationship between emigration intentions and perceived personal economic situation was significant, χ^2 (2, N = 1540) = 7.078, p = 0.029. Individuals with a worse perception of their personal economic situation were more likely to express intentions to emigrate than those who had a better perception. This is the only economic question that showed a worse economic situation leading to higher levels of emigration intentions. It's interesting to note here that this question is based on perception of economic circumstances, not measured income. This raises an interesting question which I do not explore here, and that is whether there is a difference in the decision to emigrate based on perceived rather than measured economic conditions.

Emigration Intention * Household Monthly Income

| | | Intends to Live or Work Abroad | | |
		Yes	No	Total
Household Monthly Income	Low	36.4% (164)	63.6% (287)	100.0% (451)
	Medium	40.4% (173)	59.6% (255)	100.0% (428)
	High	45.6% (195)	54.4% (233)	100.0% (428)
	Total	40.7% (532)	59.3% (775)	100.0% (1307)

Chi(df) = 7.717(2), p = 0.021; Cramer's V = 0.077

The relationship between emigration intentions and household income was significant, χ^2 (2, N = 1307) = 7.717, p = 0.021. Members of a household with a higher monthly income were more likely to express intentions to emigrate than those with a lower household income. Perhaps the most surprising finding in my analysis, this table reveals that households with higher income levels are more likely to have an intention to leave than those with lower income levels. This suggests that families are more likely to leave when they have the means to do so.

Emigration Intention * Personal Monthly Income

		Intends to Live or Work Abroad		
		Yes	No	Total
Personal Monthly Income	Low	39.4%	60.6%	100.0%
		(82)	(126)	(208)
	Medium	40.6%	59.4%	100.0%
		(82)	(120)	(202)
	High	45.0%	55.0%	100.0%
		(103)	(126)	(229)
	Total	41.8%	58.2%	100.0%
		(267)	(372)	(639)

Chi(df) = 1.555(2), p = 0.460; Cramer's V = 0.049

The relationship between emigration intentions and personal income was not significant, χ^2 (2, N = 639) = 1.555, p = 0.460. However, those with a higher personal monthly income did express a slightly higher interest in emigrating. The fact that this relationship was insignificant is in and of itself quite significant. I certainly expected to see a clear relationship between personal income and the decision to emigrate, and was surprised to learn there was not one.

Logistic Regression

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Monthly Household Income	.024	.011	4.694	1	.030	1.024
Number of Victimizations	.251	.054	21.284	1	.000	1.286

Figure 3 - Binary Logistic Regression (Y=Intention to Emigrate)

- For each additional step up in reported monthly household income, the odds of an individual expressing an emigration intention is higher by 2.4%.

- For each additional reported crime victimization, the odds of an individual expressing an emigration intention is higher by 28.6%

Summary and Conclusions

My analysis reveals that in the aggregate, Hondurans are more likely to express an intention to emigrate if they have been a victim of crime. This likelihood increases by 28.6 percent for each additional crime victimization survey respondents reported. On the other hand, there appears to be a weak relationship between individual or household economic conditions and the intention to emigrate. Moreover, contrary to what might be expected, the likelihood of an individual expressing their intention to emigrate actually increases by 2.4 percent for each step up in reported monthly household income. My results were slightly different when considering individuals' perception of their personal economic situation. In that case, those with a perception of being worse off were more likely to express intentions to emigrate than those with a more positive perception.

Based upon these findings, policy makers in the United States and elsewhere looking for ways to stabilize Honduras should look first at ways to reduce crime and enhance security. Similar research should be conducted using survey data from neighboring El Salvador and Guatemala to determine what factors are most influential in the decision to leave those countries.

Acknowledgements

References

Ahmed, Azam, Katie Rogers and Jeff Ernst. "How the Migrant Caravan Became a Trump Election Strategy." *New York Times,* October 25, 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/24/world/americas/migrant-caravan-trump.html.

Amuedo-Dorantes, Catalina and Thitima Puttitanun. "DACA and the Surge in Unaccompanied Minors at the US-Mexico Border." *International Migration* 54 no.4 (2016): 102–117.

Berk-Seligson, Susan, Diana Orcés, Georgina Pizzolitto, Mitchell A Seligson, and Carole J Wilson. *Impact Evaluation of USAID's Community-Based Crime and Violence Prevention Approach in Central America: Regional Report for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 2014. Accessed March 9, 2019. https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1862/impact-evaluation-usaids-community-based-crime-and-violence-prevention-approach.

Cantor, D. J. "The New Wave: Forced Displacement Caused by Organized Crime in Central America and Mexico." *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 33, no.3 (2014): 34-68. doi:10.1093/rsq/hdu008.

Carlson, Elizabeth and Anna Marie Gallagher. "Humanitarian Protection for Children Fleeing Gang- Based Violence in the Americas." *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 3, no.2 (2015): 129–158.

Central Intelligence Agency. "The World Factbook: Honduras." Last modified February 1, 2018. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ho.html.

Chishti, Muzaffar and Faye Hipsman. "Increased Central American Migration to the United States May Prove an Enduring Phenomenon." *Migration Policy Institute*, February 18, 2016. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/increased-central-american-migration-united-states-may-prove-enduring-phenomenon.

Clemens, Michael. *Violence, Development and Migration Waves: Evidence from Central American Child Migrant Apprehensions.* Washington, DC: Center for Global Development, 2017. Accessed March 11, 2019. https://www.cgdev.org/publication/violence-development-and-migration-waves-evidence-central-american-child-migrant.

Cohn, D'Vera, Jeffrey S. Passel, Ana Gonzalez-Barrera, "Immigration from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador Up." *Pew Research Center,* June 04, 2018. http://www.pewhispanic.org/2017/12/07/rise-in-u-s-immigrants-from-el-salvador-guatemala-and-honduras-outpaces-growth-from-elsewhere/.

Creighton, M. J. "The role of aspirations in domestic and international migration." *The Social Science Journal* 50, no.1 (2013): 79-88. doi:10.1016/j.soscij.2012.07.006.

Crisis Working Group. *Corridor of Violence: The Guatemala-Honduras Border.* Belgium: 2014. Accessed May 01, 2019. https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/central-america/guatemala/corridor-violence-guatemala-honduras-border.

De Jong, G. F. "Expectations, gender, and norms in migration decision-making." *Population Studies* 54, no.3 (2000): 307-319. doi:10.1080/713779089.

El Colegio De La Frontera Norte. *La Caravana de Migrantes Centroamericanos en Tijuana 2018: Diagnostico y Propuestas de Accion*. Tijuana: 2018. Accessed February 21, 2019. https://www.colef.mx/estudiosdeelcolef/la-caravana-de-migrantes-centroamericanos-en-tijuana-2018-diagnostico-y-propuestas-de-accion/.

Feller, Erika. "Refugees are not Migrants," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 24 no.4 (2005): 27-35, doi:10.1093/rsq/hdi077.

Fitzgerald, David Scott, Rawan Arar, "The Sociology of Refugee Migration," *Annual Review of Sociology* 44, no.1 (2018): 387-406, doi:10.1146/annurev-soc-073117-041204.

Hiskey, J. T., Abby Córdova, Mary Fran Malone, and Diana M. Orcés. "Leaving the Devil You Know: Crime Victimization, US Deterrence Policy, and the Emigration Decision in Central America." *Latin American Research Review* 53, no.3 (2018): 429-447. doi:10.25222/larr.147.

Human Rights Watch. "World Report 2019: Rights Trends in Honduras." Last modified January 17, 2019. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/honduras.

InSight Crime. "Honduras Profile." Last modified August 29, 2018. https://www.insightcrime.org/honduras-organized-crime-news/honduras/.

Jaitman, Laura, Dino Caprirolo, Rogelio Granguillhome Ochoa, Philip Keefer, Ted Leggett, James Andrew Lewis, José Antonio Mejía-Guerra, Marcela Mello, Heather Sutton, and Iván Torre. *The Costs of Crime and Violence: New Evidence and Insights in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank, 2017. Accessed March 18, 2019. https://publications.iadb.org/en/costs-crime-and-violence-new-evidence-and-insights-latin-america-and-caribbean.

Kivisto, Peter and Thomas Faist. *Beyond a border: The causes and consequences of contemporary immigration.* Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press, 2010.

Lankford, James. Interview with Chuck Todd. *Meet the Press.* NBC, June 24, 2018.

Latin American Public Opinion Project. "Honduras." Accessed February 10, 2019.
https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/honduras.php.

Lee, E. "A theory of migration." *Demography* 3, no.1 (1966): 47-57.

Leiva, Noe. "Hondurans defy Trump to head north for US border." *Yahoo News,* April 10,
2019. https://news.yahoo.com/hondurans-defy-trump-head-north-us-border-224745018.html.

Luna, Kausha. "Survey Shows Hondurans Emigrate for Economic Reasons." *Center for
Immigration Studies*, April 16, 2018. https://cis.org/Luna/Survey-Shows-Hondurans-Emigrate-Economic-Reasons.

Meyer, Peter. *Honduras: Background and U.S. Relations*. Washington DC: Congressional
Research Service, 2018. Accessed February 21, 2019.
https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=818159.

Meyer, Peter. *U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America: An Overview*. Washington
DC: Congressional Research Service, 2019. Accessed March 19, 2019.
https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/IF10371.pdf.

Migration Policy Institute. "Total Immigrant and Emigrant Populations by Country."
Accessed March 21, 2019. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/total-immigrant-and-emigrant-populations-country.

MSF, *Forced to Flee Central America's Northern Triangle: A Neglected Humanitarian Crisis*,
New York: Médecins Sans Frontières, 2017. Accessed on March 17, 2019.
https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/msf_forced-to-flee-central-americas-northern-triangle.pdf.

Musalo, K., and Eunice Lee. "Seeking a Rational Approach to a Regional Refugee Crisis:
Lessons from the Summer 2014 'Surge' of Central American Women and Children at
the US-Mexico Border." *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 5, no.1 (2017):
137-179. doi:10.14240/jmhs.v5i1.78.

Olson, Eric, Cristina Eguizabal, Matthew C. Ingram, Karise M. Curtis, Aaron Korthuis, and
Nicholas Phillips. *Crime and Violence in Central America's Northern Triangle: How
U.S. Policies are Helping, Hurting, and Can be Improved*. Washington, DC: Woodrow
Wilson International Center for Scholars, Latin American Program, 2015. Accessed
on February 28, 2019. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/crime-and-violence-central-americas-northern-triangle-how-us-policy-responses-are.

O'Reilly, Karen. "Migration theories: a critical overview." In *Routledge Handbook of
Immigration and Refugee Studies*, edited by Anna Triandafyllidou, 25-33. Abingdon,
Oxford: Routledge, 2015.

Orozco, Manuel. *Recent Trends in Central American Migration* (Issue brief). The Dialogue, 2018. Accessed March 2, 2019. https://www.thedialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Recent-Trends-in-Central-American-Migration-1.pdf.

Overseas Security Advisory Council. "Honduras 2018 Crime & Safety Report." Last modified April 3, 2018. https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=23798.

Quijada, Jose Alejandro and Jose David Sierra. "Understanding Undocumented Migration from Honduras." *International Migration*: (February 2018). doi:10.1111/imig.12429.

Ravenstein, E. G. "The Laws of Migration." *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 52, no.2 (1889): 241-305. doi:10.2307/2979333.

Seelke, Clare Ribando. *Gangs in central America*. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service. Accessed March 1, 2019. https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34112.pdf.

UNHCR. "Population Statistics: Persons of Concern." Accessed April 1, 2019. http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/persons_of_concern.

UNHCR. *Women on the Run: First-Hand Accounts of Refugees Fleeing El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico*. Washington, DC: UNCHR, 2015. Accessed February 21, 2019. https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/publications/operations/5630f24c6/women-run.html.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection. "U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Apprehensions by Sector." Accessed April 24, 2019. https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/usbp-sw-border-apprehensions.

The World Bank. "Honduras Overview." Last modified October 4, 2018. https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/honduras/overview.