Expanding the Scope of US Party Politics: An Examination of Membership and Campaign Activism in *Democrats Abroad Canada*

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Prepared for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Los Angeles, CA, August 31-September 3, 2023.

Introduction¹

The United States has long considered itself a nation of immigrants. With approximately 45 million foreign-born residents now living in the country, this label aptly applies. At the same time, the US is a nation of emigrants. While the exact number of Americans living outside the territorial boundaries of the country is not known, reasonable estimates suggest that four to five million citizens reside abroad, a number that is larger than the population of twenty or more American states (Federal Voting Assistant Program 2023).

Per the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986, Americans over eighteen who live in other countries are permitted to take part in federal elections via absentee ballot, with voting registration based on their most recent address in the United States. The US is hardly unique in allowing expatriates to vote. Over one-hundred countries permit this, and many – France, Italy, Portugal, Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia, among others – set aside seats in their national legislature to represent emigrants. The United States hasn't taken this latter step. US House members and Senators represent geographical areas only within the territorial boundaries of the country. However, since the 1960s, one major political party – the Democrats – has allowed for the incorporation of supporters from abroad. In this paper, we take a close look at such partisan involvement and its implications for political representation.

Efforts to build a transnational Democratic partisan network began informally following the 1964 election, when party supporters in London and Paris formed local committees with an eye on gaining state-level recognition from the Democratic National Committee. In 1972, the organization Democrats Abroad sent nine non-voting delegates to the Democratic convention, and the group was granted the status of a state committee in 1976. This meant that convention delegates from abroad could vote on presidential nominations and other party business. At present, there are officially recognized committees of Democrats Abroad in 48 countries. These committees engage in the kinds of activities that state and local Democratic Party organizations in the US sponsor, such as get-out-the-vote drives, campaign fundraising, and the hosting of candidate forums. Since 2008, Democrats Abroad has conducted a global presidential primary for American expatriates who do not vote by absentee ballot in a state-level Democratic primary.

For its part, the Republican Party has not invested nearly as much in mobilizing supporters and sponsoring partisan events abroad. In fact, the organization Republicans Overseas, which was founded in 2013, is registered in the United States as a "social welfare group" under 501(c)4 of the Internal Revenue Code rather than as a partisan entity (Kalu and Scarrow 2020; see also Dark 2003). The Republican National Committee does not extend voting rights at its convention to delegates from abroad. Consequently, Republicans Overseas holds no primary elections; nor does the group have any formal standing within the Republican Party. Instead, as the banner heading of its website states, Republicans Overseas seeks to inspire Americans away from the US to engage more fully in democratic political processes by providing "briefings, policy research, and advocacy" – a mission statement that is more in keeping with an interest group or club than a political party.

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¹ Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the annual meeting of the Western Political Science Association (San Francisco, CA, April 7-10, 2023) and the workshop on "Americans Abroad: Voting Rights and Political Behavior" (Rothermere American Institute, Oxford University, June 30 – July 1, 2023). We thank Vicki Finn, Susan Scarrow, Amanda Klekowski von Koppenfels, Tara Ginnane, Michelle Bueno Vásquez, Claudio Holzner, and Rachel Eugster for helpful comments.

Much is known about the demographic profile, attitudes, and political decisions of party activists within the US (see, e.g., Rapoport et al. 1986; Grossman and Hopkins 1986; Campbell et al. 2020; Stone et al. 1995; McCann 1995; Redlawsk et al. 2010). In marked contrast, there is strikingly little research on transnational partisan engagement. How widespread is such involvement within the Democratic Party? How representative are Democratic activists abroad? To what extent is Democrats Abroad successful in facilitating involvement from the distance in American campaigns? And since every *e*migrant is an *im*migrant, how does incorporation into social and civic life in a destination country shape political transnationalism?

In the analyses below, we consider these questions. We focus specifically on Democratic Party activism among Americans in Canada, which is the leading settlement destination for voting-age emigrants (Federal Voting Assistance Program 2023). An estimated 350,000 to 580,000 adult US citizens currently reside north of the border. Drawing from an original survey of this population conducted in the fall of 2022 and a complementary survey of Democrats Abroad members administered at the same time, we investigate models of party activism that are comparable to those that have been examined in the US context (e.g., McCann et al. 1999). To preview the results from these models, we find that among Americans in Canada who identify as Democrats, about one out of five report membership in Democrats Abroad — a minority, but a substantial minority. The socio-demographic and attitudinal biases in party involvement that researchers have long documented in the US are markedly apparent in Canada. But after controlling for these biases, we find that the political events sponsored by Democrats Abroad serve as an independent conduit into transnational campaigning.²

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

In his classic writings on political representation and institutional design, Robert Dahl highlighted a fundamental dilemma in democratic theory, the challenge of setting boundaries for inclusion (Dahl 1956, 1989; see also Whelan 1983 and Umpierrez de Reguero et al. 2023). In a democracy, the "people" are said to have a collective right to decide how to configure representative institutions and ultimately hold leaders accountable for policies. But who are the "people" in the first place who should be rightfully included and represented within the boundaries of the democracy?

Dahl could not find a satisfying theoretical resolution to this chicken-egg dilemma. The standards for inclusion in a democracy tend instead to be settled in practice. Norms develop over time to stipulate who is rightfully included or excluded in the political system based on perceptions of fairness and feasibility. In the United States, it is generally accepted that all citizens of the country have a right and even a duty to take part in politics regardless of race, gender, religion, level of education, and age, among other traits (Almond and Verba 1962; Schildkraut 2006). There is also a consensus, which is codified in federal law, that Americans who reside outside of the country should retain their right to participate in national elections. Such boundaries of political standing, however, may be subject to change, should this normative consensus break down.

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² As detailed below, the number of self-identified Democrats in our sample far exceeds – by a factor of approximately four to one – the number of self-identified Republicans. While Republican activists in Canada occasionally sponsor events for expatriate Americans and the party has a presence on various social media platforms, there is no centralized organization for party supporters from which we could sample. For all practical purposes, then, any assessment of sustained and coordinated transnational partisan activism among Americans in Canada would necessarily have to center on members of the Democratic Party.

Along similar lines, the two major American parties wrestle as well with questions of boundaries and standing as political climates change and new opportunities for growth present themselves. By way of illustration, in the 1970s, both parties sought to make themselves more accessible to the public and reduce barriers to engagement. More presidential primary elections were held, participation in these primaries was often not restricted to registered party members, and the number of delegates representing candidates at conventions was tied more directly to the candidates' showing in these primaries (Polsby 1983). The Democrats further extended these reforms by increasing the representation of women, minorities, and younger people at their conventions.

Schattschneider's classic (1975) Semisovereign People neatly articulates the incentives that the major parties have to enlarge their participatory base in these ways. Democrats and Republicans must be forever on the lookout for new constituencies to incorporate to stay competitive. Widespread protest movements in the 1960s and 70s for civil rights, gender equity, and an end to the Vietnam War presented fresh avenues for partisan networking and recalibrating agendas. The parties, especially the Democrats, naturally sought to capitalize on these opportunities.

The Democrats and Republicans had to be somewhat tentative in this outreach, however, because parties in the US are also by their very nature coalitional. The coalition partners under a party's umbrella tend to be most interested in forming "long" coalitions that can deliver benefits reliably into the future (Bawn et al. 2012). Such patterns imply that there is an inherent amount of inertia in party politics. The Democrats and Republicans have a strong incentive to reach out to potential new supporters and activists, but they often do so in a measured, small-c conservative fashion so as not to disrupt or distort existing coalitional arrangements within the party (Cohen et al. 2008).

This tentativeness characterizes partisan outreach to emigrants. There is no denying that voters living abroad are tempting targets for incorporation. Most of these Americans, like Americans in the US, would undoubtedly identify to some extent as a Democrat or Republican. Party identification is after all among the most widespread, salient, and stable of political attitudes, a disposition that is liable to persist long after emigration (Green et al. 2002; Krosnick 1991; Rosenblum 2008). There is thus the potential to cultivate an expansive party following abroad. As one report on National Public Radio put it on the eve of the American midterm elections last fall, Americans living abroad are an "untapped voting bloc" (Sprunt 2022).

However, the parties must make strategic choices about where and how to invest organizational resources.³ They understandably aim to direct their mobilization efforts to competitive swing states and swing districts. The fact that American emigrants do not collectively have congressional seats set aside to represent them and their interests, coupled with the fact that to participate, expatriates must be registered in a particular state – many of which might not be electorally competitive – means that parties could lack the willingness and wherewithal to deploy resources abroad (Klekowski von Koppenfels 2020). Setting up grassroots organizations outside of the United States would be costly, with only small or uncertain returns. Voting rates from abroad tend to be low. The Federal Voting Assistant Program (2021) estimates that in 2020, just under eight percent of eligible American citizens overseas turned out to vote. While it is certainly possible to boost participation rates through greater mobilization

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³ In this respect, Democrats and Republicans in the US are no different from parties in other migrant-sending democracies. All such parties invest in extraterritorial outreach to potential supporters to the extent that they anticipate a payoff in future election cycles (see, e.g., Paarlberg 2019).

efforts, the expected gains for a party could be difficult to gauge when compared to the known benefits of political outreach within the territorial boundaries of the United States (Green and Gerber 2019).

Another factor that could limit transnational partisan outreach is the possibility that such mobilization may offend the native-born residents of other countries, and even draw scrutiny from government officials. Polls from the Pew Research Center (2003, 2021) suggest that the United States has a mixed reputation and image abroad. In some circles, the country is held in high regard; in other places, there is a streak of anti-Americanism or ambivalence about the US. An American political party would need to tread lightly if and when it seeks to mobilize emigrants in countries where the United States is not well liked, in that potential supporters could face a backlash if they become visibly active in US politics. The Republican Party may have been especially cognizant of this risk in recent years, since the reputation of the United States suffered in many countries when Republican President Donald Trump occupied the White House (Datta 2020).

Due to such considerations, national Republican leaders have largely bowed out of mobilizing expatriate Americans in any coordinated fashion; too few potential gains are to be had given the substantial costs of building party organizations abroad that are comparable to those in the United States (Sprunt 2022; Kalu and Scarrow 2020). In contrast to the Republican Party, Democrats have extended delegate voting rights at conventions to Americans living abroad, just as the party has done for delegates from commonwealth territories. The party has also set up extensive and closely linked "Democrats Abroad" networks throughout the world. Yet the challenges of organizing overseas are such that we would expect significant biases in Democratic Party membership and activism, probably more significant than what are found within the US. The Americans who formally affiliate with the party from abroad would likely be more highly educated, older, more strongly identified with the party, more interested in general in American politics, and more liberal vis-à-vis Americans who formally claim membership in the Democratic Party in the US proper. This is our first hypothesis.

The second hypothesis we pursue concerns pre-migration experiences that might shape involvement in Democrats Abroad. Within the research literature on migration, it is well established that the political activities one undertook and the attitudes about politics one acquired prior to emigration shape engagement following settlement in a new country (e.g., Wals 2011; Dollman 2021; White et al. 2008; Rodriguez et al. 2020). We therefore hypothesize that expatriates who have a history of taking part in campaigns before emigrating would be more inclined to participate from the distance in the Democratic Party. More generally, we anticipate that early childhood experiences would fundamentally shape one's dispositions towards party membership and activism. Growing up in a family where parents and other family members are politically active would predispose an individual to become involved throughout the life course (Jennings and Niemi 1981; Bacovsky and Fitzgerald 2023). This should hold even for individuals who no longer live within the United States but have opportunities to remain part of the American party system while abroad.

A third hypothesis regarding mobilization into Democrats Abroad pertains to current political conditions. Evaluations of well-known party leaders who elicit strong reactions, such as Donald Trump and Joe Biden, could shape involvement. Research on contemporary political activism within the United States finds that reactions to Donald Trump sparked considerable oppositional mobilization (Gose and Skocpol 2019). For Americans living abroad, we expect similar effects when tracing recruitment into Democrats Abroad. We further expect, however, that more sustained and intense engagement in transnational politics on behalf of the Democratic Party would depend on positive assessments of Biden, in that he is not only the incumbent president but the leader of the party.

Finally, we hypothesize that as Americans become better settled in the receiving country and come to identify with that country and its political institutions, their enthusiasm for remaining members of the Democratic Party would diminish, even if they continue to identify strongly as a Democrat, espouse a liberal ideology, have been previously active in American politics, think highly of President Biden, and have a strong antipathy towards former President Trump. Classic "assimilation" models of immigrant incorporation hold that as migrants put down deeper roots in a new society, their attitudes and behavior tend to conform more to that of native-born residents (Brown and Bean 2006; Gordon 1964; Alba and Nee 2003). If such assimilation occurs, the attention of emigrants may drift away from party politics in the United States (Waldinger and Duquette-Rury 2016).

As noted above, our analysis focuses specifically on American Democrats living in Canada, who comprise the vast majority of Americans living in Canada. Canada attracts more American emigrants of voting age than any other country (Federal Voting Assistance Program 2021). Given the similarities between the US and Canada with respect to language, culture, and general level of affluence, some authors suggest that Americans in that country tend to retain their political identities and practices long after migration. As Croucher (2011, 127) puts it, Americans in Canada "are cavalier about their entitlement to and comfort with multiple political memberships... American emigrants continue to practice their US citizenship, while acquiring new forms of belonging" (see also Bloemraad 2006 and Hardwick 2010). This suggests that, in contrast to the hypothesis raised immediately above, there may not be a great deal of tension between integration into Canadian politics and society and incorporation into the Democratic Party among American expatriates.⁴

Research Design and Findings

Our analysis draws from two online surveys of Americans in Canada that were conducted in August and September of 2022, as competition in the midterm elections became quite intense. The first survey was directed to members of Democrats Abroad in Canada. Americans living north of the border can join Democrats Abroad through a membership portal. No dues are required to join. The registration portal simply asks members to confirm their American citizenship and report their date of birth, current address in Canada, and most recent address in the US.

At the time of the survey, the email contact list for Democrats Abroad in Canada contained approximately 23,000 members. Privacy restrictions prevented the organization from sharing contact information with us. Democrats Abroad leaders, however, agreed to distribute a link to the survey form that we created in its mailings to members.⁵ The first invitation to study participants was distributed in mid-August. Over the next six weeks, three follow-up invitations were circulated to DA members. In total, 1,189 surveys were completed. Because we did not have direct control over the dissemination of invitations, we cannot gauge response rates with any precision. We do not know how many solicitations

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⁴ Other studies of political transnationalism similarly suggest that there is no inherent conflict between incorporation as an *im*migrant and engagement as an *e*migrant. In an analysis of Latin American-born migrants in the US, for example, Guarnizo et al. 2003 find a positive relationship between immigrant incorporation and transnational participation. Spending a greater amount of time in the receiving country and more closely identifying with it could be associated, according to this argument, with economic stability and more resources to devote to political causes in the country of origin (Guarnizo et al. 2003, 1229; see also Tsuda 2012 and Finn 2020). ⁵ The institutional review boards of both our institutions approved the study, and it was also reviewed within Democrats Abroad to make sure it conformed to privacy protection standards under the European General Data Protection Regulation Law.

were undeliverable or were delivered but never opened. However, the findings from a second more general survey of Americans in Canada suggest that the 1,189 respondents recruited from the Democrats Abroad list were a representative sample of party members.

This more general survey was fielded at the same time as the Democrats Abroad study. Working with Asking Canadians, a well-established and nonpartisan research firm based in Canada, we administered a survey to individuals in the firm's respondent database who were known to have been born in the United States. Asking Canadians initially anticipated that approximately 300 American-born respondents would be available to take part in the survey. By the end of the fielding period, this target had been greatly exceeded, with 597 American emigrants being recruited for the study. Among these respondents, 76 (12.7 percent of the sample) indicated that they were current members of Democrats Abroad, a proportion that is broadly in keeping with what would be expected given party records. Appendix Table A1 shows a comparison of the demographic profile of these self-identified Democrats Abroad members to that of the respondents in the sample collected through the Democrats Abroad email list. We find that with respect to gender, completion of a college degree, median age, and time spent in Canada, the two groups are quite similar. This helps to cross-validate these samples, giving us confidence that we successfully captured the population of Democratic Party members in Canada through two distinct survey approaches.

Appendix Table A2 provides further validation for the general survey of Americans by comparing these respondents to participants in the 2021 Canadian Election Study (CES), which was also conducted online (Stephenson et al. 2022). In the CES, 210 respondents reported having emigrated from the United States to Canada. Sampling for this study was not conditional on having Canadian citizenship, so the 210 Americans here are in principle similar to those whom we targeted for the 2022 survey. As illustrated in Table A2, the US-born respondents in the CES are quite comparable in their demographic profile to participants in our survey. Indeed, the two samples are essentially identical with respect to gender, percentage of college graduates, median age, and time spent in Canada. Such findings suggest that the sampling of Americans in 2022 was as comprehensive in its coverage as the Canadian Election Study.

<u>Contours of Democrats Abroad Membership</u>. The findings in Table 1 provide a preliminary assessment of the representativeness of Democrats Abroad membership. In the general survey of Americans in Canada, 362 respondents stated that they were "leaning," "weak," or "strong" Democrats, based on the standard branching format that has been used for decades to measure partisan identification.⁷ If we take this set of Democrats as the population that the Democratic Party should

⁶ With an estimated 350,000 to 580,000 US citizens of voting age living in Canada, we would expect approximately four to seven percent of respondents in a large sample of Americans to be members of Democrats Abroad, given that the organization's contact list contains about 23,000 records. It is possible that a small number of respondents in our general survey of Americans knowingly misreported their membership in Democrats Abroad. We believe it more likely, however, that some respondents who had attended Democrats Abroad events without having previously registered with the organization considered themselves members of the party. In private correspondence, the chair of the Ottawa chapter of Democrats Abroad told us that information about party events is shared widely through social media such as Facebook. It is thus certainly possible that Democrats in Canada who are not on the party's email contact list but learn about Democrats Abroad events through other means come to see themselves as having "joined" the party informally when they attend an event.

⁷ This branching is as follows: respondents were first asked if they generally think of themselves as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or something else in American politics. Those who identified as a Democrat were

primarily seek to incorporate, how well does Democrats Abroad do? What biases in party membership surface? Previous research would lead us to expect significant biases with respect to socioeconomic background, with higher status Americans who consider themselves Democrats being more apt to join the party. We would also expect party members to express stronger identification as a Democrat and be more ideologically minded.

[Table 1 about here]

We see this to be the case in Table 1. To benchmark results from the 2022 survey, we pull findings from the 2020 Cooperative Election Study (Schaffner et al. 2020), selecting out respondents who lived in one of the 31 states that allow for party registration and identified as a Democrat to some degree. For our purposes, we take formal registration as a Democrat among Democratic identifiers in the US to be broadly equivalent to Americans in Canada opting to sign up as Democrats Abroad members if they still consider themselves Democrats after emigrating. Within the US, we see that among registered Democrats, women are slightly overrepresented relative to all Democratic identifiers. There is a more noteworthy bias on education, a key marker of socioeconomic status, with more highly educated Democrats being more likely to register with the party. Registered Democrats in the US also tend to be older, stronger in their identification as a Democrat, and more liberal. Such patterns in party membership are in keeping with earlier work on socioeconomic and attitudinal biases in the American party system (e.g., Verba et al. 1995).

In the Canadian context, more significant biases in Democrats Abroad membership surface. Among Democratic identifiers overall in that country, 52 percent are female, 33 percent have a post-graduate degree, 72 percent are over sixty years old, 46 percent strongly identify with the party, and 69 percent place themselves on the left of the ideological continuum. Clearly, Democrats who have emigrated to Canada are quite different from Democrats in the US with respect to education level and age. As shown in Table 1, the Democratic Party in Canada does not incorporate these identifiers as thoroughly as the party does in the United States. There is a significant gender bias, with two out of three Democrats Abroad members being female. Party members also identify far more strongly as a Democrat and are nearly uniform in their ideological positioning on the left. The first hypothesis about transnational partisan representation is confirmed: the socio-demographic and attitudinal biases that we observe in Democratic Party membership in the United States are magnified abroad.

The models in Table 2 elaborate on this point. Here we formalize the analyses of biases through logistic regression models fit to a pooled sample of Democratic identifiers in Canada. The dependent variable in this case is coded 1 for members of Democrats Abroad and 0 for nonmembers. The predictors in these models include those items from the preceding table plus several others that are relevant for the hypotheses discussed in the previous section:

- Feeling thermometer ratings of Donald Trump and Joe Biden (0 to 100-point scale)
- Level of political activity among family members when the respondent was growing up (4-point scale ranging from "not active at all" to "very active")
- General interest in American politics (4-point scale ranging from "not interested at all" to "very interested")

asked whether they were "strong" or "weak" Democrats. Respondents who did not consider themselves a partisan were asked if they "leaned" towards one of the parties.

- Involvement in American campaigns before emigrating to Canada (index based on whether
 the respondent had contributed money to campaigns, persuaded others to back candidates,
 made phone calls or canvassed neighborhoods, attended meetings and rallies, and wrote
 letters or blog postings in support of a campaign)
- Number of years one has lived in Canada
- Degree of identification as a "Canadian" (4-point scale ranging from "not strongly at all" to "very strongly")
- Likelihood of remaining in Canada indefinitely (5-point scale ranging from "almost certainly will not" to "almost certainly will")
- Identification with a Canadian political party (dummy-coded, with three parties taken into account: Liberal, Conservative, and New Democratic)
- Contact since the start of the year from a Democratic congressional, gubernatorial, or state legislative campaign through text, telephone, email, or social media, where support is requested (dummy-coded)

[Table 2 about here]

We estimate two models, one without this latter item on having been contacted by campaign organizations, and another with this predictor included. Being in touch with a campaign can surely prompt membership in the Democratic Party. But the relationship between campaign contacts and party membership is also surely reciprocal to an extent. Since the estimated effect of campaign contacts may suffer from endogeneity biases, we present in the first instance a model without this predictor. In each specification, coefficients are calculated through "rare events" logistic regression. This is an appropriate approach when choice-based samples are pooled for analysis (King and Zeng 2001; cf McCann et al. 1999).8

The first model in Table 2 confirms the significance of gender, strength of identification as a Democrat, and ideology (coded here in its original 1 to 11-point scale ranging from "very right" to "very left," with "center" coded as a 6). The other highly significant predictor in this model is interest in American politics, which comports with expectations. In keeping with the second hypothesis, premigration campaign experience has a significant effect on affiliating with Democrats Abroad, though this effect is somewhat more muted. Considering the third hypothesis regarding attitudes towards political leaders, evaluations of Donald Trump had a modest impact in the expected direction (p < .10); Americans who felt "colder" towards the former president were somewhat more inclined to join Democrats Abroad. At the same time, feelings towards President Biden had little impact on Democratic Party membership.

The fourth hypothesis raised above focused on the potential impact of integration into Canadian politics and society. In the logit model, we observe only slight evidence that such integration makes a difference in shaping transnational partisan membership. The number of years that an American has spent in Canada is not significantly related to affiliating with Democrats Abroad. Nor does one's

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⁸ To estimate rare events logit models, the presumed proportion of "1"s and "0"s within the population is integrated into the likelihood function. In this case, we set the proportion at .2, because approximately twenty percent of the Democratic identifiers in the general sample of Americans in Canada reported membership in Democrats Abroad. Varying the assumed proportion of members does not materially change the coefficient estimates for predictors, but the value of the constant term changes.

intention to remain in Canada or identification with one of the principal Canadian political parties have any noteworthy impact on membership. We find, however, that personal identification as a "Canadian" lowers the probability of joining Democrats Abroad to a significant degree, in keeping with theoretical expectations. On the whole, though, it appears that putting down roots as an *im*migrant has relatively little effect on partisan belonging as an *e*migrant (cf. Croucher 2011).

The second model in this table adds the dummy predictor indicating contact with Democratic campaign organizations from the United States since the start of the calendar year. Not surprisingly, the coefficient for this predictor is quite significant. Yet it does not diminish the estimated effects of most of the other predictors. The impacts of gender, strength of identification as a Democrat, ideology, and general interest in US politics remain quite pronounced. The chart in Figure 1 illustrates how profound these effects are. Controlling for all of the other predictors in this model, the probability of membership in Democrats Abroad increases by over .30 when Americans who express great interest in American politics are compared to those with no interest. This is by far the most significant swing in the model, telling us that a continuing desire to follow American politics after settlement abroad is more consequential for transnational partisan membership than the intensity of identification with the party itself, an ideological tilt towards the party's liberal agenda, or even contact with Democratic campaign organizers, though of course, these latter variables as well as gender shape party membership to a substantial extent.

[Figure 1 about here]

<u>Campaign activism</u>. We next consider transnational campaign activism among Democratic partisans, asking whether these predictors further condition remote involvement in the 2022 midterms on behalf of Democratic Party candidates. In the Democrats Abroad survey (but not in the survey administered to the more general sample of Americans in Canada), we asked whether party members had engaged or intended to engage in a wide array of campaign activities:

- Sending postcard and letters on behalf of candidates
- Posting supportive material on social media or in letters to an editor
- Contributing money to a candidate or campaign
- Trying to convince others to back a candidate or party
- Traveling back to the US to volunteer on a campaign

Responses to these items are grouped into a three-point scale: non-activists (no reported campaign involvement), modest activism (one or two activities), and high activism (three or more activities). Within the sample, 56 percent reported no engagement, 29 percent were modestly engaged, and 15 percent were highly engaged – a considerable amount of variation in cross-border involvement. On what does this involvement depend? What do the factors that shape more active membership in the party say about political representation through Democrats Abroad?

Table 3 presents ordered logistic regression models to gauge the effects of the predictors from the preceding table. In the first specification in this table, we find a somewhat different configuration of effects compared to those in Table 2. Interest in American politics remains quite consequential in shaping transnational engagement in the 2022 midterms, as does contact with Democratic Party campaign organizers. But we see more of an impact of current politics, as captured by the strongly significant effect of feeling thermometer evaluations of President Biden (p < .01). Democrats Abroad members who held the president in high regard were far more inclined to be involved in the midterm

campaigns. On the other hand, antipathy towards former President Trump, which had a modestly significant effect on Democrats Abroad membership, had little to do with shaping activism. Party members who were raised in families where politics was more central and those who were active in campaigns before coming to Canada were more readily drawn into the midterm elections. These latter findings speak to the persistence of early-life socialization and habituation as a force that shapes political involvement in extraordinarily different contexts.

[Table 3 about here]

The second model in Table 3 draws attention to the importance of grassroots partisan organizations abroad in conditioning cross-border campaign involvement. In the survey administered to Democrats Abroad members, we asked whether the respondent had ever taken part in various events that the party had sponsored:

- Get-out-the-vote drives
- Forums with candidates and party leaders
- Debate-watching parties
- Election results-watching parties
- Caucuses
- General membership meetings

As with the measure of transnational campaign activism, we placed respondents into three categories: 49 percent of Democrats Abroad members reported no involvement in such events; 42 percent had taken part in one or two events; and 9 percent engaged in three or more. This item is added to the second regression model in Table 3. Even after controlling for contact with Democratic campaign organizations and the rest of the predictors, involvement in these kinds of internal Democrats Abroad activities carries over quite significantly to on-the-ground engagement in the 2022 midterms from the distance. Having a well-established party apparatus abroad that offers opportunities for networking, socializing, and learning about issues and agendas pays dividends for the Democrats when the party most needs support.

Figure 2 illustrates the association between involvement in Democrats Abroad events and campaign activism. For party members who had attended several such events, the probability of taking a very active part in the midterm campaigns is estimated at .23 after holding all of the other predictors in the regression model constant at their means. Democrats Abroad members who reported no involvement in internal partisan events have an expected probability of activism at this level that is less than half this size - .10 - and a .60 probability of no involvement at all in the 2022 midterm campaigns. Even though the Democratic Party has not committed major resources to organizing expatriate Democrats, partisan organizing where members live clearly matters in the deployment of activists during major election cycles.

Conclusion

The extension of absentee voting rights to emigrants raises complex and important normative questions about democratic inclusiveness in an era when the meanings of "national identities" and

⁹ As with partisan organizations within the United States, the leaders of Democrats Abroad get little to no compensation for their work, and operating budgets are quite limited.

"national boundaries" are increasingly contested. Our goal in tracing the contours of transnational partisan engagement among American expatriates is to offer fresh empirical insights that may inform these normative discussions. One recurring finding in the scholarly literature on party activism in the United States is that participants tend to be better resourced, better networked, more enthusiastic about politics, and more ideologically minded. These biases could lead to biased agenda setting within the American party system and ultimately biased policymaking.

In the case of Democratic identifiers in Canada, we find somewhat more significant socio-demographic and attitudinal biases in Democrats Abroad membership compared to Democratic identifiers in the US who choose to affiliate formally with the Democratic Party when registering to vote. Members of Democrats Abroad are substantially more attentive to US politics than Democratic identifiers who have not joined the party, and they bring with them a history of campaign activism from the time that they lived in the United States. Not surprisingly, the strength of identification as a "Democrat" drives party membership. But we also observe some signs of a more negative form of partisanship prompting affiliations with Democrats Abroad; Democratic identifiers who felt especially "cold" towards former President Trump were more inclined to join the party. Such negative partisanship, however, disappears in models of transnational campaign activism on behalf of Democratic candidates. In this case, positive assessments of President Biden helped to propel involvement.

While such biases in party membership and activism abroad may be concerning, the findings from the second regression model in Table 3 showcase the role that local partisan organizations can play in facilitating robust engagement in elections, thereby perhaps making the distorted upper-class "accent" of political voices that troubled Schattschneider (1975) somewhat less pronounced. After holding education, interest in American politics, prior political involvement, and a host of other variables constant, we see that taking part in the social and civic enrichment events that Democrats Abroad hosts for expatriate Democrats boosts campaign activism.

Another noteworthy thread in this analysis is the relatively muted impact of incorporation into Canadian politics and society on transnational partisan engagement. As shown in the appendix tables, a good number of Americans have lived in Canada for decades. Yet time away from the US does nothing to lessen the likelihood of Democratic Party membership and activism. Planning to remain in Canada indefinitely and identifying as a partisan in the Canadian context also have little effect on transnational partisanship. Somewhat stronger effects were found for the item on personal identification as a "Canadian"; Americans who considered themselves Democrats while also identifying as Canadian were slightly less inclined to become members of Democrats Abroad (p < .10 in the second model of Table 2).

These rather weak findings deserve to be more fully fleshed out through comparative research on transnational partisan mobilization. It is possible that American emigrants can remain active in US politics as they acquire new identities and interests abroad, regardless of where they settle (Tsuda 2012). But just as plausible is the possibility that US-to-Canada migration is distinctive in this respect, given the close similarities between the two countries. Would Democrats in, say, Mexico, Britain, France, Germany, or Israel – all countries with substantial American emigrant populations – feel greater tension between transnational partisan engagement as an emigrant versus political incorporation as an immigrant? Such comparative research would shine still more light on the implications of expanding the scope of party politics beyond the country's borders.

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Table 1. Democratic Party Representativeness:

Biases in the Incorporation of Democratic Identifiers in the United States and Canada

	2020 Cooperative Election Study (CES)			2022 Surveys of Americans in Canada		
	Registered Democrats	Democratic <u>Identifiers</u>		Members of <u>Democrats Abroad</u>	Democratic <u>Identifiers</u>	
Gender						
Female	57	55		66	52	
Male	43	45		34	48	
<u>Education</u>						
High School or Less	26	33		2	4	
Some College	20	21		9	11	
Two-Year Degree	10	9		3	8	
Four-Year Degree	26	22		29	33	
Post-Graduate	18	15		57	44	
<u>Age</u>						
18-40	34	43		5	8	
41-60	32	29		18	19	
61 +	34	27		76	72	
Strength of Democratic ID						
Lean Democrat	9	20		5	13	
Weak Democrat	24	24		16	41	
Strong Democrat	67	55		79	46	
<u>Ideology</u>						
Right	7	9		6	9	
Center	23	26		8	22	
Left	70	65		86	69	
N	13,065	15,551		1,252	362	

Note: Respondents who did not identify as a Democrat are excluded from this table. CES respondents in states without partisan registration are also excluded. The *Democrats Abroad* sample includes Democrats who were contacted through the organization's email list (N=1,189) plus Democrats in the general survey of Americans living in Canada who reported current membership in *Democrats Abroad* (N=76). The percentages in the fourth column are based on the 362 respondents (out of 597) in the general survey of Americans in Canada who identified as Democrats.

Table 2. Rare Events Logit Models of Membership in Democrats Abroad

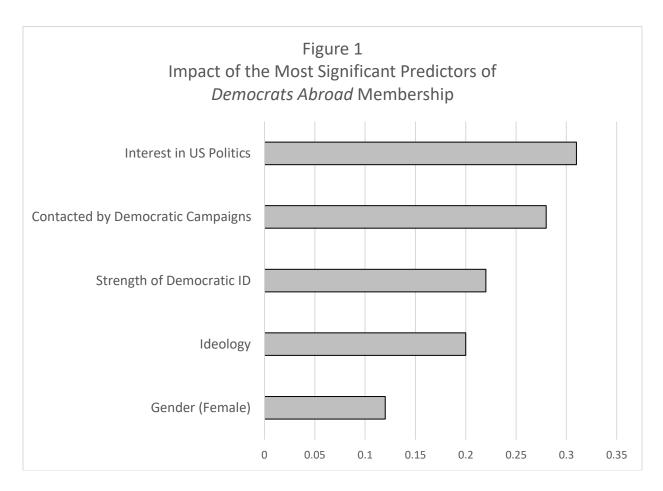
	<u>b</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>SE</u>
Education Level	.129	.067 #	.111	.070
Age (Years)	.009	.007	.011	.007
Gender (Female)	.571	.164 **	.592	.168 **
Strength of Democratic ID	.720	.128 **	.691	.133 **
Ideology	.123	.041 **	.115	.042 **
Thermometer - Trump	040	.020 #	034	.018 #
Thermometer - Biden	003	.005	004	.006
Political Activity of Family as a Child	.067	.091	.033	.092
Interest in US Politics	1.05	.152 **	.952	.154 **
Premigration Campaign Involvement	.231	.092 *	.121	.092
Years in Canada	191	.132	142	.131
Degree of Identification as "Canadian"	224	.105 *	198	.107 #
Remain in Canada	108	.100	116	.105
Identification with a Canadian Party				
Liberal	021	.228	.022	.232
Conservative	534	.423	606	.418
New Democratic	221	.228	192	.236
Contacted by Democratic Campaigns			1.36	.205 **
Constant	-10.2	1.06 **	-10.2	1.10 **

Note: ' $^{"}$ ' = p < .10; ' * ' = p < .05; ' ** ' = p < .01. Estimates are based on a pooled sample of Democratic identifiers from the 2022 general survey of Americans in Canada and the 2022 *Democrats Abroad* survey; the method of prior correction is used to correct for selection on the dependent variable (*Democrats Abroad* membership proportion assumed to be .2). N = 1,298.

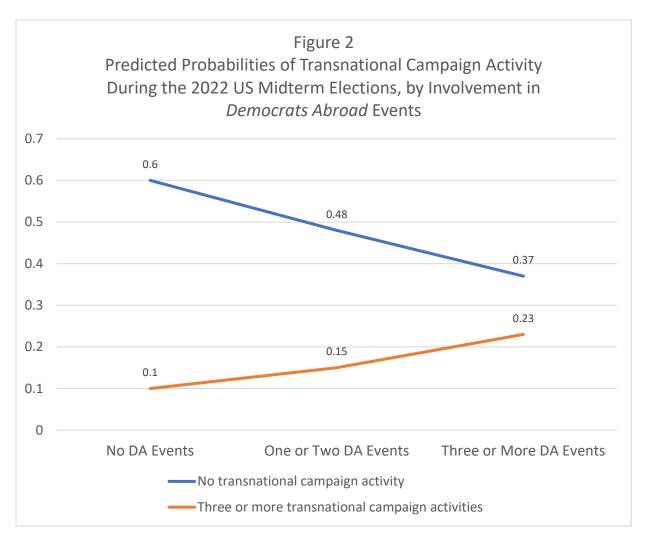
Table 3. Transnational Participation in the 2022 US Midterm Campaigns among Members of *Democrats Abroad* in Canada: Ordered Logit Models

	<u>b</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>SE</u>
Education Level	008	.066	030	.066
Age (Years)	032	.005 **	032	.006 **
Gender (Female)	006	.140	067	.142
Strength of Democratic ID	.094	.129	.101	.132
Ideology	.031	.038	.054	.038
Thermometer - Trump	027	.037	023	.038
Thermometer - Biden	.018	.005 **	.018	.005 **
Political Activity of Family as a Child	.295	.073 **	.289	.073 **
Interest in US Politics	.649	.179 **	.634	.180 **
Premigration Campaign Involvement	.197	.056 **	.147	.057 *
Years in Canada	.016	.086	016	.087
Degree of Identification as "Canadian"	003	.077	008	.078
Remain in Canada	102	.075	082	.075
Identification with a Canadian Party				
Liberal	243	.187	242	.188
Conservative	421	.552	415	.550
New Democratic	115	.191	200	.192
Contacted by Democratic Campaigns	.632	.134 **	.568	.136 **
Involvement in <i>Democrats Abroad</i> Events			.484	.105 **
Cut-1	3.48	1.12	3.61	1.13
Cut-2	5.24	1.12	5.41	1.13

Note: '#' = p < .10; '*' = p < .05; '**' = p < .01. Estimates are based on the survey of DACA members. The dependent variable is coded 0 for respondents who were not involved in the midterm campaigns (56 percent of the sample), 1 for those who reported one or two kinds of campaign activity (29 percent of the sample), and 2 for those who were involved in three or more campaign activities (15 percent of the sample). N = 979.



Note: These bars show the impact on the estimated probability of membership in *Democrats Abroad* as a given predictor increases from its lowest to highest value, with all other predictors in Table 2 (second regression specification) set to their mean values. All changes in probability estimates are statistically significant.



Note: These estimated probabilities are calculated based on the second regression model in Table 3, with all other predictors fixed to their mean value.

Appendix

Table A1. Comparison of Self-Identified Current Members of Democrats Abroad in Canada and Respondents Sampled from the Democrats Abroad Email Contact List

	Self-Identified Democrats Abroad Members from the Survey of Americans in Canada	Party Members Sampled from the Democrats Abroad Email Contact List
Male	43	33
Female	56	67
College Degree	87	87
Median Age	72	70
Time in Canada		
0-10 Years	7	13
11-30 Years	28	28
31 + Years	66	59

Note: N=76 (first column) and 1,189 (second column).

Table A2. Comparison of US-Born Respondents in the 2021 Canadian Election Study and the 2022 General Survey of Americans in Canada

	Canadian Election Study	Survey of Americans in Canada
Male Female	43 56	47 53
College Degree	68	73
Median Age	62	67
Time in Canada 0-10 Years	6	8
11-30 Years 31 + Years	29 65	25 67

Note: N=210 (first column) and 597 (second column).