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Making nonresident citizens' votes count: external voting in Latin American and Southern European Countries (1962-2021)

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Chapter 4

Explaining Within-Country Variation of Nonresident Citizens' Voter Turnout: Evidence from Chile, Ecuador, and Spain

As concluded in Chapter 3, electoral rules incentivize or constrain the rates of nonresident citizens' voter turnout. In other words, the institutional factor significantly affects the electoral behavior of those citizens living abroad. This is not surprising, nor new, considering the existing contributions, both seminal and contemporary, at domestic and extraterritorial levels, which indicate that the institutional model explains the variations in electoral participation (e.g., Burgess & Tyburski, 2020; Giornei & Østergaard-Nielsen, 2020; Geys, 2006; Jackman, 1987; Powell, 1986).

Unlike mainstream electoral behavior studies, the institutional variables have been incorporated during the last decade to explain nonresident citizens' voter turnout (see Chapter 2). Although there is an increasing number of contributions that reflect this development, the mechanisms linking the institutions and political processes with the aforementioned type of suffrage, remain somehow overlooked by scholars interested in the electoral participation of emigrants and their descendants. So far, there is a rather informal consensus on the incidence of, for example, the registration process, as detailed in Chapter 3. Nonetheless, temporality is often neglected, and the apparently significant correlations may result in spurious explanations, as the distance between the variables of interest is as unknown as to whether there are confounders in the results (Collier *et al.*, 2010; Gerring, 2007). In this specific case, the significant correspondence between compulsory voting and the increase in the voter turnout from abroad does not precisely mirror the external voters' genuine motivations about the fact that they may be indirectly sanctioned if they fail to present themselves in the polls of their home countries. By 'indirectly', I refer not only to the possible difficulty of having to do paperwork through diplomatic offices, but also having to face additional bureaucratic procedures when visiting their country of origin. In that sense, a comprehensive analysis on the nature and degree of impact of the compulsory voting on nonresident citizens' voter turnout is required. In Chapter 3, I broadly coded this variable so that it displayed more statistical variability. However, in this chapter I explain why compulsory voting may be essential when determining higher or lower nonresident citizens' voter turnout.

On the base of these methodological and empirical motives to obtain a more far-reaching analysis of the nonresident citizens' voter turnout, in this chapter I delve into this entailment by

directly incorporating 26 key actors' interviews from political party members and civil society associations, emigrant representatives, as well as scholars and bureaucrats involved in electoral processes abroad (see the Section of Interviews in the Appendix¹ to obtain further details on the qualitative approach of this dissertation). Bearing this in mind, I expect to contribute to the burgeoning literature on electoral mobilization and political engagement of nonresident citizens by identifying mechanisms to explain variations in their voter turnout. Simultaneously, through this research technique I intend to provide more weight to partisan explanations, even though they are not very significant in the statistical models of Chapter 3.

4.1. Electoral Inclusion of Nonresident Citizens

The three country cases that I write about in this chapter have had different electoral trajectories concerning their external voting rights. Whereas Chile has had a restrictive and relatively new provision to organize its elections abroad, Ecuador and Spain have experienced more than 10 electoral processes in at least two levels of elections.

Chile and its emigrant enfranchisement

In Latin America, Chile is a latecomer to adopt, regulate and implement this type of suffrage (Erlingsson & Tuman, 2017; Palop-García & Pedroza, 2018). The promulgation of the emigrant enfranchisement occurred in 2014 (see Law 20.748) and it only allows the incorporation of Chileans living abroad in primary and presidential elections, as well as in national plebiscites. This limitation stood despite the proposals of some center-left parties, such as the Christian Democrats (DC) (CHL6, June 16, 2020), to also grant participation rights in legislative elections, for both the Senate and the House of Representatives. This excludes the legal possibility that nonresident Chileans can elect legislative representatives at the national level or that they can participate in local or regional elections from abroad.

The regulation of this law was established in 2016 (see Law 20.960). Accordingly, Chileans are obliged to change their place of residence from a location in Chile to an address abroad. Otherwise,

¹ As a summary, all interviews are anonymized, properly recorded, and literally transcribed in the first language of the participants. They are codified in accordance with ISO-3 country codes, along with a number to distinguish the number of participants (e.g., CHL1, CHL2, CHL3...). Each paraphrased or direct reference indicates when the interviews were conducted (e.g., ECU1, March 27, 2020, or ECU4, April 11, 2020).

they are required to prove a past residence of at least one year in Chile, presumably at any time in their lives (Finn, 2021). This obligation of presenting evidence that endorses lifetime residence can be perceived as an attempt to discourage voting from foreign-born Chileans as well as second and third generations, who do not necessarily have ‘proof’ of ‘solid ties’ to Chile (CHL7, June 8, 2020). Indeed, some testimonials that belong to this category of nonresident citizens indicated not feeling motivated to vote even when they complied with the residence-based condition. Yet, they pointed out that some of the second and third generations nonresident Chileans may still vote especially in salient elections such as the 2020 constitutional plebiscite (e.g., CHL2, March 30, 2020; CHL4, April 14, 2020).

The first application of these electoral rights focuses on Chilean party members and activists abroad, who seem to be extremely important in the promotion of external voting rights (CHL6, June 16, 2020; CHL7, June 18, 2020; CHL9, June 18, 2020). They voted for the first time in the presidential primaries, along with a couple of thousand other nonresident citizens. Considering this experience, Chilean emigrant enfranchisement was completed in 2017. Months later, previously registered nonresident Chileans partook in presidential elections (first-round and ballotage). In 2020, Chileans living abroad also participated in the national referenda for constitutional change that emerged because of a massive wave of social mobilizations framed in a process widely known as the ‘social outbreak’.² In particular, this direct democracy mechanism arises as part of the “Agreement for Social Peace and the New Constitution” signed on November 25, 2019, by the second government of Sebastián Piñera (2017–2021), along with the wide majority of the leaders from the left, center and right-wing parties. One of the great absentees in the signing of this agreement was the Communist Party (PC). In sum, so far Chileans residing abroad have been able to participate in the three types of elections that the current regulations stipulate: primary, presidential, and referenda elections at the national level.

Ecuador and its electoral rights for nonresident citizens³

In contrast to Chile, Ecuador has more experience organizing elections abroad and has another type of provision, which offers its nonresident citizens greater electoral inclusion. Although external voting rights in Ecuador result from a demand of a migrant civil organization – Federation of Ecuadorians Abroad (*Federación de Ecuatorianos en el Exterior*)– in the mid-1990s, the legal

² To get more information on the social outbreak, revolt, or generally unrest in Chile, see e.g., Garcés Durán (2020); Heiss, (2020); Paniagua (2021); Peña and Silva (2022).

³ This sub-section was largely inspired by Umpierrez de Reguero and Dandoy (2020).

provision of the right to vote for nonresident citizens was enacted for the first time in 1998 (Araujo, 2010; Boccagni & Ramírez Gallegos, 2013). The former Political Constitution of Ecuador (1998, art. 27) recognized that registered Ecuadorians living abroad could vote in national elections to choose the president and vice president. After two years, this mandate was introduced in the Electoral Law (2000, arts. 4 and 99) and ratified in the 2002 electoral reform. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), currently called the National Electoral Council (CNE), did not allow the participation of nonresident Ecuadorians in the 2002 presidential elections. Eight years after the constitutional change, Ecuadorian emigrant enfranchisement was applied for the first time during the 2006 first-round presidential election. Similar to Chile's current provision, the electoral system for the 2006 Ecuadorian elections was *external voting for home district*, which meant that overseas votes were issued extraterritorially but were counted as a part of the country's single-member nationwide district (Ramírez Gallegos, 2018; Umpierrez de Reguero *et al.*, 2019).

Following the victory of the maverick Rafael Correa in 2006 and the popular approval of a Montecristi Constituent Assembly in 2007 via referendum, Ecuadorian authorities called for legislative elections at the national level with the participation of nonresident citizens. This established the possibility for nonresident citizens to be elected at the national district-based level (ECU1, March 27, 2020). This reform was only discussed in the Plenary of the Supreme Electoral Court (Machado-Puertas, 2008) and once the Constitution was approved by the Ecuadorian electoral—including Ecuadorians residing abroad—, Ecuador moved to a system of *external voting in overseas districts* (Ramírez Gallegos & Umpierrez de Reguero, 2019). A year later, the CNE published the Organic Electoral and Political Organizations Law: Democracy Code (2009), validating the creation of three binomial overseas districts: two seats to be elected by Ecuadorians residing in other Latin American, the Caribbean, and African countries; two seats for Canada and the US district; and two seats in countries of Europe, Asia, and Oceania district (Democracy Code, 2009, arts. 4 and 150). This makes Ecuador one of the 17 countries, as of 2021, that grants its nonresident citizens 'direct' or 'special' representation rights whether in the national or the regional legislature (Collyer 2014b; Palop-García 2018; Umpierrez de Reguero *et al.* 2017).

Spain and its external voting rights

Analogous to the current Ecuadorian provision for the exercise of external voting, the Spanish legal provision has also been generous in terms of electoral inclusion. The Constitution of Spain (1978, art. 68 [5]), in force since December 1978, because of an agreed democratic transition process, expressly indicates that "all Spaniards who are in full use of their rights are electors and

eligible politicians.” Although it could be argued whether residence could be a sufficient reason for the deprivation of the ‘full use of political rights’, a window of opportunity was opened for Spaniards living abroad in the late 1970s, especially in countries such as Argentina, Portugal, and Venezuela, where the former head of government Francisco Franco previously signed reciprocity agreements (Rhodes & Harutyunyan, 2010). However, the logistical obstacles to voting and exercising other citizenship rights from abroad conditioned the effective practice of external voting up to the end of the 1980s (Lugilde Pardo, 2010). Since then, Spaniards living abroad have been able to vote without major inconvenience at various levels of election.

Organizations that support nonresident Spaniards and their families, as well as other CSOs dedicated to rescuing historical memory, began to exert pressure for extraterritorial citizenship legislation in the Second Republic (García Arias, 2004). The Spanish authorities responded with a limited extension of the membership criteria in 1982, which allowed migrants who had lost their nationality to apply again at the Spanish diplomatic offices in Latin America, both for themselves and for their first-line descendants (either maternal or paternal). In the 2000s, both the government of the Popular Party (PP) headed by José María Aznar, and the government of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) led by José Luís Rodríguez Zapatero, softened the rules on the acquisition of dual citizenship for emigrants and their descendants (Vink *et al.*, 2021). With this, the *demos* grew, and more Spaniards fitted in the Electoral Census of Absent Residents (CERA) vote.

The first registered election at the national level, in which Spaniards registered in the CERA could cast their vote, was the Chamber of Deputies in 1986. A year later, the electoral rights of Spaniards living abroad were extended to other levels of election such as regional and supranational. Before 2011, Spaniards could even vote in municipal elections. However, possibly due to the swing effect in various local governments, this level of elections was restricted (Rodríguez, 2013). “Many Argentineans [with Spanish citizenship] installed and removed mayors in Galicia... because in small cities with 500–800 inhabitants, there were 100 voters who were registered in Buenos Aires” (ESP4, May 20, 2020). Hence, the 2011 electoral reform (LOREG, Art. 2) established that residing in Spain was mandatory to vote or to stand as a candidate in municipal elections. From 2011 to 2021, Spanish external voting rights allow nonresident citizens to elect representatives of the National Parliament, European Parliament, and Regional Parliaments (Arrighi *et al.*, 2019; Rodríguez, 2013), along with voting in referenda.

4.1.1. Ease or Difficulty to Vote from Abroad: Institutional Design Matters

While Chile extended emigrant enfranchisement with skepticism and various electoral design restrictions (see Luna *et al.*, 2016); the origins or the first steps of both Ecuadorian and Spanish external voting rights are marked by constitutional changes, reciprocity policies and rather expansive measures for their nonresident populations (Erlingsson & Tuman, 2017; Rhodes & Harutyunyan, 2010). However, with the latest reforms over the last decade, it seems that Ecuador has taken a very different pathway as compared to Spain. While Spain, with the 2011 reform for the ‘begged vote’ (*voto rogado*), limits the participation of the CERA, not only at electoral levels but also by requiring that whoever wants to vote from abroad must register prior to any election; Ecuador, in its last electoral reform of 2019–2020, intends to make voting more flexible to increase nonresident citizens’ voter turnout (Castellanos Santamaría *et al.*, 2021). Ecuadorians living abroad cannot only vote in person at the diplomatic offices and voting centers rented abroad by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Electoral Council (CNE), but they can also participate in elections in their country of origin via postal and online, as well as by voting in person in an electronic ballot box (or on-site electronic vote, see Dandoy & Umpierrez de Reguero, 2021).

Chile: before and during external voting

Why is the path for the adoption, regulation, and implementation of external voting rights in Chile characterized by skepticism? The voting franchise process for nonresident Chileans had several unsuccessful attempts before its promulgation in 2014. According to the official file of constitutional reform that details the chronology of emigrant enfranchisement, and several of my interviews (e.g., CHL9, June 18, 2020), the first project that tried to guarantee the vote for Chileans living abroad dates to 1971, during the administration of the Popular Unity headed by Salvador Allende (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015). Strangely enough, this occurred before Augusto Pinochet’s civic-military regime exiled thousands of Chileans, and that was denominated as the ‘self-exile’ of sectors from the right-wing due to Allende’s victory (CHL6, June 16, 2020). Most Chileans who emigrated during this period were in fact people of working-class origin from the southern part of the country who mainly moved to Argentina (Frapiccini *et al.*, 1995). Many of these Chileans emigrated as a sign of rejection of the Popular Unity government (1970–1973), this being the case of a temporary or transitory exile, since after a short time, with the military coup, they returned (Del Pozo, 2004).

In 1991, almost automatically after the authoritarian administration of Pinochet, the first government of the former center-left coalition, *La Concertación*, led by Patricio Aylwin (DC), made the second attempt to incorporate Chileans living abroad into the *demos* (Law 18.700). This discussion remained inactive until 2005 when another proposal to modify the electoral law was rejected. Despite this legislative failure, external voting rights as a matter of public domain began to appear in Congress periodically (Finn, 2021; Luna et al., 2016).

In 2009, Michelle Bachelet proposed automatic registration and voluntary voting for Chileans living abroad, being this the third failed attempt. In 2010, Piñera formulated a similar project to modify Law 18.700, but this one required some type of tie with Chile to vote from abroad. Apparently, the Senate reasoned that this tie was a restrictive initiative and, consequently, the fourth attempt to enact emigrant enfranchisement was rejected (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015).

In 2013, the National Congress reopened the debate on emigrant enfranchisement and a group of senators outlined the registration of nonresident citizens before each election. With this restriction, the right-wing parliamentarians were convinced and did not block it. A year later, Bachelet marked this debate as urgent in the Chamber of Deputies and added the right to vote in the presidential primary elections. The Chilean legislature finally approved the constitutional reform project in April 2014, with the last reforms of the former president, published in 2016 as Law 20.960. Facing this, Bachelet commented:

“We believe that with this law we are honoring democracy, by allowing each of our compatriots to effectively have the possibility of marking their preference in our national elections [...] by promulgating the law that will regulate the right to vote for Chilean women and men residing abroad”. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016)

Based on this macro-reform, Chilean electoral law establishes that external voting will only be in person. “In each country where there is at least one consulate, there will be an Electoral Board” (CHL11, July 3, 2020 [interpreting the law]). Electoral boards abroad will be supervised by a consul or by an ambassador, alongside another official of the Chilean Chancellery. The setting of the ballot boxes and polling stations abroad will be overseen by the delegates of the respective electoral board, having to provide the tables, chairs, and secret cameras required for the development of the electoral process. Each table must receive the number of votes cast by the voters enrolled in the electoral registry of Chilean residing abroad and will be made up of three members chosen randomly from a previous selection of nine possible names among those registered. This means that the polling stations have the same rules to elect their members inside and outside of Chile (see Law 18.700, Title XIII).

During the voting, which –as usual in Chilean territory– takes place on a Sunday, the president, secretary, and the other delegate must open the polling station. One day prior to the voting begins, these members may go to check the ballot boxes with the electoral material (Law 18.700). It should be noted that election day is the same as in Chile (Law 20.960, 2016, art. 205). The ballot boxes should be open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. “Once the voting is closed, the scrutiny is carried out in the same place where the ballot box would have operated, in the presence of the public, civic and/or party observers, if any, as well as the proxies of the candidates present” (CHL11, July 3, 2020). Each electoral board abroad prepares three tally sheets and preliminary results, which are directly sent electronically to the Chilean Electoral Service (SERVEL), the Election Qualifying Court (TRICEL), and the Scrutineer Center. Nonresident citizens’ voter turnout is revealed through official bulletins delivered by the SERVEL during the election day, starting at 6:00 p.m. in Chile.

Chileans residing abroad, meanwhile, must change their domicile if they want to vote from their countries of residence: “one hundred and forty days prior to each election or on the date of publication of the decree calling for a plebiscite, resuming from the first day of the month following the election or plebiscite” (Law 20.960, 2016, art. 28). The procedure is relatively simple, but as indicated in the first sub-section of this Chapter, the Chilean authorities do not seek to include all categories of nonresident citizens in practice. To request the procedure in person citizens must go to a SERVEL office, consulate, or any other diplomatic office designated abroad by the Chilean government. The criteria for this application are based on age (over 17 years) and on having Chilean citizenship, demonstrable in the passport or unique national registry (generically known as RUN, RUT, or identity card), current or expired up to 12 months, as well as a certificate of past residence (*certificado de vecinamiento*). According to the 1980 Constitution, the Chilean citizen must have lived in Chile for more than one year. This requirement is certified by the International Police office in Chile in accordance with what was specified in the update of the SERVEL website in July 2020. Once the request for a domicile change has been submitted, SERVEL authorities formally notify the applicant, within a period of 20 working days of their new residence or by email confirming whether they appear or not in the electoral register as overseas voters.

Since the preparations for the plebiscite of October 2020, there is an alternative way to change the domicile. Through the Unique Password (*Clave Única*), which is a Chilean digital ID, any Chilean national regardless of where (s)he resides can change her/his electoral address. To apply, a certificate of residence is not required, and the process takes up to 20 working days. The filter here lies in obtaining the Unique Password. The citizen must often require it in Chile, since this is a digital identity that is used to electronically access various services of the Chilean State, such as

obtaining a criminal record certificate or a copy of the car license. In either case, this procedure can be reviewed by the Chilean international migration police members to verify that the applicant complies with the requirement of residence.

Ecuador: almost universal access for nonresident citizens

Similar to Chile, the voting method for both Ecuadorians inside and outside the country has been in person from 2006 until the last elections of 2019, except for voting for people with disabilities and reduced mobility (see voting at home program at the CNE website; Encalada Ortega, 2019). Although voting at home is contemplated within electoral processes abroad, in practice there is no empirical evidence to support that this voting modality is applied in any of the three overseas districts. Furthermore, no testimony of its implementation could be obtained in my interviews.

The latest electoral reform, one year prior to the general elections of 2021, included a pilot to complement in-person voting with postal and e-voting (on-site voting in an electronic ballot box and internet voting) to increase electoral mobilization abroad (El Comercio, December 5, 2019; ECU1, March 27, 2020; ECU4, April 11, 2020). Normatively, this mandate sought to increase the participation of Ecuadorians abroad, which has been decreasing since 2017. Empirically, the pilot was implemented in precincts, with a reduced number of voters (Buenos Aires, Ottawa, and Phoenix). Despite this restrictive scenario, results of a quasi-natural experiment concluded that internet voting, followed by postal voting and on-site electronic voting helped to moderately improve turnout rates, compared to previous years and neighboring precincts with paper-based face-to-face voting (Dandoy & Umpierrez de Reguero, 2021). As of 2020, in-person voting has constrained the ability of Ecuadorians who do not reside near a consulate or voting precinct abroad to participate in elections. Although turnout rates augment when there are presidential elections (Ramírez Gallegos & Umpierrez de Reguero, 2019), “...studies show that only people who could drive two hours around a consular point would vote,” said the then counselor Luis Verdesoto Custode from the CNE (El Comercio, December 5, 2019).

This electoral reform, which apparently made the voting method for nonresident citizens more flexible, seems to have partially considered the main countries of residence of Ecuadorians living abroad, but not precisely the polling stations most populated. According to the latest United Nations census (UN DESA, 2021), more than 90% of Ecuadorians residing abroad are residing in Spain, the United States, and Italy, countries with a high rate of internet access and relatively good postcard services.

In the Ecuadorian case, the Democratic Code (2009) and the multiple regulations approved by the plenary session of the CNE before any electoral process abroad, establish the demarcation of three overseas districts in electoral zones, which in turn indicate in which countries a precinct will be opened.

As in Chile, election day is the same date within and outside Ecuador. Likewise, three members are also elected per polling station. In the medium and large precincts (> 500 voters), a coordinator who acts as a representative of the CNE is usually hired. (S)he trains each member of the polling stations and accompanies the diplomatic personnel deployed to organize electoral processes abroad (ECU2, April 1, 2020). Contrary to Chile, electoral boards abroad are not chosen randomly or by lottery from among those enrolled in the electoral registry, but rather the representative of the CNE (or by default a diplomatic officer), gathers possible profiles among Ecuadorians living abroad. To do this, at the time of changing the domicile (usually from an address in Ecuador to an address abroad) that every nonresident Ecuadorian must do to enroll on the electoral registry, they are consulted on whether they would like to be members of the polling station in the future. If it is impossible to summon a sufficient number of nonresident Ecuadorians to exercise this function, polling stations should be opened with diplomatic personnel, and even inactive Ecuadorian military and police living abroad (ECU2, April 1, 2020).

Ecuador has no active electoral registry for each election, but neither does it have an automatic process like Argentina or Slovenia (see Introduction and Chapter 3). The change of domicile serves as a filter to enroll in the electoral registry. Once registered, nonresident citizens do not have to enroll again, unless they later change their place of residence, either because they changed their country of residence or because they returned to Ecuador. Indeed, if a nonresident Ecuadorian lives first in Belgium and then in Canada, they must make two changes of domicile. This is a simple procedure that requires presenting an Ecuadorian identity card (*cédula de identidad*) or passport, valid or expired, at a diplomatic office in the country of residence. Unlike in Chile, there is no deadline for the expired document to function as proof of citizenship. Since 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also included the possibility of processing the change of domicile online, through its website, or that of the CNE (Ramírez Gallegos, 2018).

Spain: eligibility and voting access

With regard to the Spanish case, external voting has traditionally been cast by post. However, in the latest electoral reform of 2011, where the begged vote was incorporated, Spaniards are also allowed to approach their consulates to cast their vote at the polls (Ruiz González, 2013).

Therefore, the voting method for Spaniards living abroad is by post or in person. In theory, this decision of the Spanish electoral management body brought greater facilities for voting. Overall, the combination of voting methods can solve access problems for nonresident citizens and increase their institutional trust (see Nemčok & Peltoniemi, 2021). However, the quantitative assessment in Chapter 3 indicated that multiple methods are associated with low voter turnout rates.

The begged vote – or as a leader of a Podemos branch abroad calls it, “the stolen vote” (ESP7, June 3, 2020) – restricts the electoral participation of the nonresident Spaniards. As a result of this reform, “in 2008, there was a 30% of Spaniards abroad who participated [on average], and in the elections of April and November of last year, it fell by around 6%” (ESP5, May 19, 2020). Although the reason behind the electoral reform may be understood – for safety –, especially after the several incidents of local governments in Spain (ESP7, June 3, 2020); other factors prompted this amendment. Presumably, irregularities that were affecting the turnout rates of Spaniards living abroad. Before the begged vote, 120-year-old voters were registered and there were suspicions of vote-buying by the mainstream parties (ESP5, May 19, 2020; ESP6, May 14, 2020). Even before the modification introduced in the Spanish Electoral Law (LOREG) by Organic Law 3/1995 that improved the transparency in the CERA enrollment, the electoral registry of nonresident Spaniards depended largely on the diplomatic offices (*Registro de Matrícula Consular*) (Lugilde Pardo, 2010), which made external voting rely largely on the efficiency of the consulates. Once nonresident citizens were enrolled on the electoral registry, competent homeland authorities sent them the materials for their postal vote. Since 2011,

“We have to beg for the vote. It is a truly complicated procedure that generates uncertainty. It is very rigorous for older people because they give us a deadline to beg the vote, so that later in a certain period, which may not be met, we receive the empty ballot, and we need to send the marked ballot according to each constituency by fax. The fax is something prehistoric perhaps for this time, which makes it even more complicated. We understand as a [political] party that this is a limitation to suffrage”. (ESP7, June 3, 2020)

However, unlike Chile and Ecuador, the Spanish authorities allow personal votes to be deposited in the polls located at the nearest diplomatic office during the last three days of the electoral campaign (Ruiz González, 2013). This means more time for voters to decide their vote. As suggested in Chapter 3, a longer time to register and vote may create higher probabilities to turn out.

Just as in Ecuador, the possibility of implementing e-voting in the 2011 reform of the LOREG was also discussed. As indicated by the Council of State, e-voting could favor the vote of Spaniards registered in the CERA (2009, February 24).

In the three cases presented, it is possible to contrast adjustments to the *de facto* emigrant enfranchisement over time, which directly affect the electoral processes abroad. Although Chile is a latecomer in this regard, Ecuador and Spain show clear-cut signs that external voting is a complex process that requires changes to boost nonresident citizens' voter turnout, but that simultaneously outlines regulatory and safety *trade-offs*.

4.1.2. Territorial Coverage and Political Representation in Chile, Ecuador, and Spain

Aligned with the discussion on voting methods abroad, a recurring question arises: which of them ensures better territorial coverage? Namely, what alternatives make countries able to reach out to all, or at least the majority, of their compatriots around the world? In this regard, globalization and the accelerated growth of international migration reveal a dilemma in this type of discussion. On one side, when democratic countries enact electoral rights for their nonresident population, they want the greatest number of individuals to be able to vote, at least if they subscribe to the '*all affected*' principle (see Chapter 1). On the other hand, there are structural difficulties such as the lack of diplomatic offices in each country of residence, some of which may have a small community of nonresident citizens, that obstruct a subset of nonresident citizens to vote.

By having postal voting, Spain ensures better coverage than countries with in-person voting. Spanish authorities can automatically reach out to all Spaniards living in countries with postal services. Today, postal services operate globally, with greater or lesser efficiency (see Figure A1). In this way, Spain –since it implemented external voting rights in the 1980's– ensured greater geographic coverage by using postal voting.

For the 2021 general elections, by proposing that the voting method should be remote and in-person, Ecuador paved the way to remove obstacles caused by geographical distances and lack of institutional infrastructure. Accordingly, Ecuadorian authorities slightly increased the current territorial coverage based on 40 countries of residence on average (Umpierrez de Reguero & Dandoy, 2021). In parallel, this practice possibly sought to reduce expenses related to the opening of consulates in countries where almost no Ecuadorian lives, the training of electoral board members, and other operational expenses associated with Election Day abroad. In the 2013 elections, for instance, five diplomatic offices (Ankara, New Delhi, Tapachula, Tehran, and

Jakarta) became polling stations with fewer than 25 registered Ecuadorians. In the Ecuadorian consulate in Ankara, which had 5 registered Ecuadorians, none of them even voted; nonetheless, the Ecuadorian government disbursed resources for the organization of the electoral process in Turkey.

Although Chile only has in-person voting, meaning that many of its overseas voters must travel for roughly more than two or three hours to change their domicile and thereafter, to vote (CHL13, July 20, 2020); it has policies that are not as well-known as the constitution of extraordinary polling stations at the prior request of a group of no less than 50 Chileans anywhere in the world.

“If 50 Chileans register in Siberia - they place in their electoral party that they live in a city in Siberia - the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is obliged to send a diplomat to set up a polling station and hold elections wherever they may”. (CHL7, June 18, 2020)

This means that there may be mechanisms to improve the current Chilean territorial coverage of about 85 countries of residence (SERVEL, 2020).

Besides the limited or extended capacity of these three states to reach out to their nonresident citizens, the type of representation and the voting system for counting votes can have repercussions on territorial coverage. Whether referring to general versus special representation (Palop-García, 2019), or discrete versus assimilated representation (Hutcheson & Arrighi, 2015), the three countries have experimented with different representation modalities. In the cases of Chile and Spain, the possibility of having a direct representation as in the Ecuadorian experience since 2007 (CHL7, June 18, 2020; ESP5, May 19, 2020; ESP6, May 14, 2020) remains latent. In this regard, territorial coverage plays an important role in how countries decide to allocate overseas votes as well as make geographical divisions when establishing overseas districts.

As mentioned, Ecuador has three overseas districts, two of them made up of a set of geographic regions (the district of Europe, Asia, and Oceania, as well as the district of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa), and the remaining one, comprising a territorial zoom-in from just two countries, with a considerable concentration of nonresident citizens (the district of Canada and the US). Ecuador does not only count its votes across its borders but also allocates two seats to the National Assembly for each overseas district, causing over (Collyer, 2014b) or quasi-proportional representation in reference to domestic voting (Palop-García, 2018). Ecuadorians from the district of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa are overrepresented compared to other districts abroad (Umpierrez de Reguero & Dandoy, 2021), and even more as compared to several provinces within Ecuador (Navia & Umpierrez de Reguero, 2021; Ramírez Gallegos, 2018).

Although in Chile, as a result of the constitutional plebiscite in October 2020, a formal request was raised to the Presidency of the Republic for the creation of an international district so that Chileans residing abroad have direct representation (El Mostrador, 2020a; 2020b, December 3). As indicated, the system that Chile currently applies is limited to territorial coverage assimilated by an abstract framework for counting votes within the country. Without necessarily assigning the votes to the biographical district of the nonresident citizen, it adds these votes to the overall electoral results within the country. Therefore, territorial coverage does not extend to more than 85 countries of residence where there is at least one diplomatic representation.

Similar to Chile, Spain has no overseas district for organizing extraterritorial voting. However, both the report of the Council of State and the latest discussions within parties and parliament suggest this policy for the future (Consejo de Estado de España, 2009, February, 24). While the Unidos Podemos coalition agrees with the creation of an overseas district for the CERA vote (ESP6, May 14, 2020), those belonging to PSOE set their agenda to change the begged vote, avoiding an in-depth discussion on the district matter (ESP5, May 19, 2020). Correspondingly, territorial coverage – directly assimilated to the province of Spain where the voter had their biographical residence, or in the case of Spaniards foreign-born, bounded by the residence of their (grand)parents (Consejo de Estado de España, 2009, February, 24) – is expansive due to the postal vote and the wide presence of diplomatic offices abroad, but not because of the establishment of an overseas district.

In short, the three countries show incentives and constraints for nonresident citizens' voter turnout. As countries experience more electoral processes abroad, it seems that this structure resembles the carrot-stick game. In the Spanish example, this is clearly evidenced by the reform of the begged vote. While the transparency and ability of the registered voters to cast their ballot by different methods improve (carrot), the electoral register becomes stricter (stick).

Table 4.1 summarizes the different pathways taken by the three cases. By creating a different scenario in 2011, Spain has been divided into two columns, as if they were two examples. According to this applied typology, Spain (pre-2011) and Ecuador would have, and indeed underline, higher electoral participation rates as compared to Chile and Spain (post-2011) (see Section 3 of this Chapter).

Table 4.1. Country Cases per Institutional-Approach Analytic Categories

	Chile	Ecuador	Spain (pre-2011)	Spain (post-2011)
Electoral inclusiveness	Low	High*	High	High
Ease to vote from abroad	Low	Medium	High	Low
Territorial coverage and representation	Low	High	High	High

Source: author's own elaboration.

Note: (*) as the latest electoral reform (2019–2020) incorporated postal and e-voting in the possibilities for nonresident citizens to vote from abroad, the electoral inclusiveness and territorial coverage of Ecuador increased.

4.2. Party-Led versus State-Led Emigrant Outreach and Voter Turnout

As emphasized throughout this dissertation, electoral rules are important to explain the variation in nonresident citizens' voter turnout, but these explanations are often accompanied by the mobilization of parties and candidates. An exhaustive review of the existing literature is not necessary to underline that the interaction between rules and political actors largely explains political competition (e.g., Colomer, 2005; Cox, 1997; Duverger, 1954; Sartori, 2005). As suggested in Chapter 1, one of the clearest assumptions in this matter lies in the strategic calculation of political parties to reform an electoral law (Boix, 1999; Teele, 2018). Taking this assumption to the study of emigrant enfranchisement, some scholars illustrate how the incumbent party has withdrawn and reactivated external voting rights allegedly to benefit its strategic voting (Turcu & Urbatsch, 2020b; Umpierrez de Reguero *et al.*, 2021; Wellman, 2021). To a large extent, this might explain why there are countries such as South Africa that have implemented external voting, reversed their policy twice, and have applied it again when the perception of the electoral success of the ruling party has aligned itself with the interests of the diaspora (Wellman, 2015). Similarly, party ideologies and families gauge support or rejection of the extension of electoral rights for citizens residing abroad, both in Europe and in Latin America (Escobar, 2015; Østergaard-Nielsen *et al.*, 2019).

In this framework, it is worth emphasizing that, above all, in countries where electoral systems are flexible enough for a competition based on districts, the strategic entry of the parties is essentially a calculation of rational choice (Umpierrez de Reguero & Dandoy, 2021). The mobilization of political parties to the transnational arena, including the creation of full emigrant

parties, is key to understanding the variations in nonresident citizens' voter turnout (Burgess, 2020; Østergaard-Nielsen & Ciornei, 2019b; Van Haute & Kernalegenn, 2020; 2021).

In this context, this chapter incorporates the typology of Burgess (2018) on emigrant outreach. She combines nonresident citizens' voter turnout with how parties versus states reach out to indicate different patterns of electoral behavior. Burgess employs the cases of Mexico and the Philippines claiming that they are convincing examples of electoral mobilization promoted by the state; similarly, she uses Lebanon and the Dominican Republic to highlight the predominant role of parties in reaching out to nonresident citizens.

According to Burgess' (2018) theoretical argument, state-led versus party-led outreach produces variations in nonresident citizens' voter turnout. While, in the first scenario, voter turnout is low; in the second, is rather high. By refining this theoretical construction, I attempt to provide a stronger weight to the temporal factor, since electoral behavior abroad tends to not only be very volatile but also change significantly over time, as seen in several cases in Latin America and Southern Europe (as suggested by the Chapter 3). At first glance, this theoretical argument holds true for several cases; however, it is not deterministic. Not all examples of state-led outreach display a marginal turnout, just as not all examples of party-led outreach depict high rates of nonresident citizens' voter turnout. Hence, through a comparative historical analysis of Chile, Ecuador, and Spain, this chapter provides an input to this discussion. Table 4.2 describes a 2x2 applied typology, where the degrees of nonresident citizens' voter turnout and emigrant outreach are combined, placing one or two cases in reference per quadrant. For this typology, the cases are multiplied by the drastic, or at least prominent, changes that they have had over time in accordance with their nonresident citizens' voter turnout. Thus, Ecuador and Spain are equivalent to two cases per country (e.g., Spain pre-2011 and Spain post-2011).

Table 4.2. Typology of Emigrant Outreach versus Nonresident Citizens' Voter Turnout

		Emigrant Outreach	
		Party-led	State-led
Nonresident Citizens' Voter Turnout	-	Chile (2017–2020) Spain (post-2011)	Ecuador (2018–2021)
	+	Spain (pre-2011)	Ecuador (2006–2017)

Source: Author's own elaboration, based on Burgess (2018).

4.2.1. Party-Led Emigrant Outreach and Low Voter Turnout: Chile

In Chile, the discussion of who are the ones interested in the niche of voters abroad has two avenues. The first lies in the origins of Chilean emigration and the second includes how the political parties are reaching out to overseas voters. As anticipated in the Introduction of this dissertation and Section 4.1, there are several waves of emigration in Chile and the country is currently classified as a receiving country of intra-regional migrants since the return of democracy (Cano & Soffia, 2009; Doña-Reveco, May 2021; Finn & Umpierrez de Reguero, 2020). Until the early 1990s, Chile had a greater number of Chileans living permanently abroad as opposed to foreigners residing within the country. These migratory flows are directly associated with the development of the government of Salvador Allende (1971–1973), and the civic-military regime led by Augusto Pinochet (1973–1990), where critical stages of institutional and economic breakdowns took place.

During the first period, thousands of individuals emigrated from Chile to countries such as Argentina, Australia, and the United States, in rejection of Allende's victory (Del Pozo, 2004). However, it was during the second wave, during the Pinochet dictatorship, that the largest exile of Chileans in the entire history of the republic took place: the repression and persecution of militants, representatives or individuals related to the left spectrum of the political system, who opposed the Military Junta (Bolzman, 2011; Perret, 2015).

Through the automatic loss of citizenship or the veto of Chilean authorities for the entry of nationals, the authoritarian regime sought to reduce the interference of the diaspora in the political life of the country. Many exiles managed to obtain international protection as refugees or political asylees (Perret, 2015), with the support, for instance, of embassies from socialist countries such as the former Soviet Union and Cuba (Albuquerque *et al.*, 2018). Among the exiles of this period, some returned to Chile in the mid-1980s, when lists were published so that Chileans who had the 'L' in their passports could enter the country (CHL6, June 16, 2020).

Not all the reasons that promoted this emigration responded to political criteria. There were also economic reasons, originated from internal imbalances, that encouraged the search for new opportunities outside of Chile. The “deterioration of income distribution as a consequence of privatizations, the effects of the new labor legislation, changes in the tax system and the increase in urban-rural disparities” (Perret, 2015, p. 4), were on average, factors attributable to Chilean emigration. Over time, the waves of Chilean emigration increased to other countries, for example, Venezuela in Latin America; Germany, France, and Sweden in Europe; as well as Australia and Canada in the anglophone world (Cano & Soffia, 2009).

Despite this dispersion, Argentina was, and continues to be, the country with the largest number of nonresident Chileans, receiving more than 200,000 emigrants during the 17 years of the civil-military regime in Chile (Jensen & Perret, 2011). It was during this period that thousands of expatriates, framed in the Democratic Chile (*Chile Democrático*) movement, started an “intense political activity of resistance to the dictatorship and fight for the restoration of democracy in Chile” while living in Argentina (Perret, 2015, p. 7). A large part of those who formed this group had previously been militants in different Chilean political parties such as the PC, Socialist Party (PS), Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR), Unified Popular Action Movement (MAPU), and the DC while residing in Chile; these political groups were kept informed of Chilean political affairs and began to create links with local movements and organizations of a social nature in Argentina with shared interests (Perret, 2015).

At the end of the civil-military regime, many Chilean residents abroad (including refugees) could return to Chile, especially those who maintained marked political participation in opposition to the Military Junta. Yet, the return policies formulated in the 1990s were not fully aligned with the “needs of the exile” (Cano & Soffia, 2009, p. 8; CHL13, July 20, 2020).

After almost 30 years, Chileans living abroad have been able to vote in elections at the national level, in a restrictive way (Finn, 2020a). After several bills, the ‘Nueva Mayoría’ coalition managed to enact a regulation that, although it has the logistical support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the SERVEL, does not seem to matter much to the government of Sebastián Piñera’s cost-benefit calculation. This reaction draws on the left-right axis regarding the support/blocking of the vote of Chileans living abroad. In fact, if one goes back to the parliamentary discussions, the mainstream right-wing parties have continually had a negative perception about the possibility of extending suffrage to the diaspora, reasoning that Chileans living abroad will favor the left since most of them are exiles of the dictatorship (CHL13, July 20, 2020). Indeed, “there was a deep stigmatization that every Chilean who is abroad is from the left” (CHL6, June 16, 2020). Regardless, it was evidenced in the presidential elections of 2017 that this argument based on the political perception of the right was probably spurious, since a significant vote share from abroad opted for Piñera, from Renovación Nacional (RN), a mainstream right-wing party.

Beyond the blocking mainly from the Christian Democratic Union (UDI) to the various parliamentary debates on the subject, it seems that the mainstream right does not invest resources in attracting overseas voters. In fact, Piñera’s government does not seem to be interested in expansive external voting, but rather voting with minimal repercussions. On one hand, Piñera proposed, in his first government (2010–2014), a bill for the vote of nonresident Chileans classified by the opposition parties as restrictive (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015). On the other, with the

latest actions, specifically with the postponement of the constitutional plebiscite (from April to October 2020), apropos of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government eliminated a significant part of the Chilean registry abroad, forcing them to register again four months before the second assigned date. Although this may sound like an electoral irregularity, it is a law-based decision according to the mandate of external voting rights in Chile. Yet, several interviewees highlight this event as exceptionally negative in promoting nonresident citizens' voter turnout—from almost 200,000, the number of registered Chileans was reduced to 60,000.

The emergent right represented by Evopoli – a relatively new center-right party, but which took part in the same pre-electoral coalition '*Chile Vamos*' with RN and the UDI in the 2017 general elections – has a two-fold narrative on the issue. On one side, this party perceives external voting as unfavorable for the right in general, including them in this diagnosis. Evopoli has even cast serious doubts about the relative importance of this vote. One of its militants indicated: “the people who are outside, what can they do? Their political message is not very relevant” (CHL14, October 12, 2020). Other active members of Evopoli argue that, although it is difficult to campaign abroad, nonresident Chileans have a renewed image of them and feel that in the future they could capture a large part of the overseas votes merely because they do not belong to the same right related to the dictatorship (CHL15, October 21, 2020; CHL16, October 23, 2020).

Parties of the former pre-electoral coalition '*La Concertación*' have their own criteria and strategies regarding their presence abroad. Despite their interest in enticing overseas votes, their strategies and electoral campaigns are based primarily on social networks. They do not have permanent party branches abroad. Instead, parties such as the DC use: (1) their militants abroad as a bridge between external voters and the party; and (2) their ideological affinity, particularly their networks with other host-country parties.

“Networks have always existed. We have generational networks. Those of us who have been on the international division of the party, have established networks abroad, beyond the fact that the DC had its relationship with the Germans, its relationship with the *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung* and everything else. There is also the Basque Nationalist Party and the People's Party in Spain. There were always social links and our people who went to study or work, those who are in Washington...”. (CHL6, June 16, 2020)

Another coalition that is also left-wing, but emerging, and relies on its militants to actively organize electoral campaigns abroad, is the Broad Front (*Frente Amplio*, FA). In 2017, the FA did not only manage to place their presidential candidate, Beatriz Sánchez, as the most-voted option in several countries of residence, but they have also been the ones to promote the new constitution and the

constitutional convention with the loudest voice abroad. The campaign ‘Let Chile decide!’ (*¡Qué Chile decida!*) has been disseminated in social networks of migrant civil associations and on Facebook groups of Chileans living abroad.

“¡Qué Chile decida! managed, especially in Europe, to organize territorial assemblies of Chileans in Mailchimp, WhatsApp groups, and other social and physical networks.... I found out, that is, I was placed as a member of a political party abroad, worried about spreading it, but the notice reached me first from many places, that is, from people who know me saying: Hey, CHL7, did you change your domicile already? Even emails that appeared everywhere broadcasting that you must change your domicile. I don’t think it has a sufficient impact. I think that it is still not going to cover all Chileans abroad. [However,] I believe that this network, ¡Qué Chile Decida!, is going to be quite positive in achieving greater voter turnout”. (CHL7, June 18, 2020)

In sum, Chilean parties have reached out in different ways to overseas voters. Some have been very active, such as the parties belonging to the FA, and others in a more focalized way like those of the mainstream left- and right-wing parties. The state of Chile, without a doubt, has had a leading role in the promulgation, regulation, and implementation of emigrant enfranchisement, but its policy of approaching emigrants and their descendants does not seem to be proactive, mutually beneficial or clientelist (CHL13, July 20, 2020).

4.2.2. State-Led Emigrant Outreach and Variant Voter Turnout: Ecuador⁴

Unlike Chile, the presence of Ecuadorian parties abroad is more institutionalized. In fact, the EMIX (Emigrant Policies Index) places Ecuador as the leader in Latin America in terms of political competition abroad (see Figure 4.1; Palop-García & Pedroza, 2021). This is because Ecuador is one of the few countries in the region with party branches abroad. Although Ecuadorian parties do not have the same institutionalization as, for example, the French *En Marche* (Kernalegenn & Pellen, 2020) or the US *Democrats abroad* (Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2020), some of them – such as the *Movimiento / Alianza Patria Altiva I Soberana* (APAI) / Citizen Revolution (RC) and the *Movimiento Creando Oportunidades* (CREO) – have been exceedingly active during the electoral campaign (Fliess, 2021; Umpierrez de Reguero *et al.*, 2019).

⁴This section relies largely on the chapter “Extending incumbent presence abroad. The case of MP AIS in Ecuadorian Elections” (Umpierrez de Reguero & Dandoy, 2020).

Despite this favorable outlook regarding the presence of political parties in the transnational arena, Ecuador is an emblematic case for discussing the active role of the state in promoting and strengthening migrant’ transnational political practices, particularly during Rafael Correa’s administration (2007–2017) (Boccagni, 2011b; 2014; Margheritis, 2011; Ramírez Gallegos, 2018). For the reasons I detail below, I place this case in the quadrants of state-led outreach while outlining a brief contextualization of Ecuadorian emigration.

Ecuador witnessed several waves of emigration. Ecuadorian migration outflows have been triggered mainly by economic reasons (Iglesias *et al.*, 2015; Jara-Alba, 2017), coupled with an environment characterized by political instability and corruption (Hurtado, 2018).

Figure 4.1. Transnational Political Competition in Latin America and the Caribbean



Source: Pedroza *et al.* (2016).

Note: ‘1’ is the maximum value of transnational political competition and ‘0’ otherwise.

Despite its significant oil revenues and public investments in infrastructure, education, and public health, Ecuador remained one of the most unequal countries in Latin America by the end of the 20th century (Ramírez Gallegos & Ramírez Gallegos, 2005). In fact, the 1980s were characterized by rampant poverty, high inflation, and significant external debt. Ecuadorian authorities halted intervening in the economy and economic policies shifted toward free trade, moderate neoliberal measures, and austerity in public spending. From 1980 to 2000, social investment plummeted from 50% to 18%, whereas debt payments expanded from 18% to more than 50% (Jara-Alba & López-Guzmán, 2015). These processes generated larger migratory flows, both rural-urban and international (Acosta *et al.*, 2006).

In the mid-1990s, rising political instability, along with a deficient administration and high levels of corruption (Basabe-Serrano *et al.*, 2010), unleashed the country's largest economic crisis (also known as the Banking Crisis or *Feriado Bancario*). In 1998, unsatisfied basic needs among Ecuadorian inhabitants amounted to 53.3%, and the richest 10% of the inhabitants consumed 16.9 times more than the poorest 10% (Jara-Alba, 2017). As a result, Ecuadorians lost confidence in the public institutions and requested gradually more US dollars, leading to the depreciation of the local currency –*Sucre*– (Jara-Alba & López-Guzmán, 2015).

In March 1999, private banks closed their doors for four days to prevent a leak of foreign currency and the insolvency of the banking system (Hurtado, 2018). Numerous protests were organized against the government's economic policy and the country was left paralyzed. To reduce mistrust, inflation and successive devaluations, the Ecuadorian government decided to adopt the US dollar as its official currency. Correspondingly, the government lost its ability to execute its own monetary policy, and these changes brought additional problems such as unemployment and a reduction in public investment (Jara-Alba & López-Guzmán, 2015).

The combination of these political and socioeconomic phenomena incited the largest wave of emigration in the history of Ecuador (Cortés & Sanmartín, 2010; Herrera *et al.*, 2005; Ramírez Gallegos & Ramírez Gallegos, 2005). Between 1999 and 2004, more than 1.5 million Ecuadorians left the country. The emigrants replaced their residence in Ecuador with Spain, Italy, and the US as well as, to a lesser extent, countries in the same region such as Argentina, Chile, and Venezuela (Jara-Alba, 2017). More than three-quarters (77.7%) of the total Ecuadorian population that emigrated to Spain did so during the 1998–2003 period, and a 2014 survey revealed that 40.4% of those Ecuadorians indicated the banking crisis in Ecuador as the main reason for their emigration to Spain (Iglesias *et al.*, 2015)

“The banking crisis of 1999 forced many Ecuadorians to leave as a means of emergency relief. That is, years of history [in Ecuador] where migration was not an option, but an obligation. They left because they could not support their families”. (ECU14, October 5, 2017)

This large presence of Ecuadorian emigrants in richer countries increased the remittances that nonresident citizens have sent over the years for the subsistence of their families (and indirectly for the development of Ecuador). Remittances gradually shifted public opinion about emigrants: from ‘traitors’ to ‘heroes’, particularly from the perspective of the political supply (Boccagni, 2011a; Ramírez Gallegos, 2018). This change in perception may explain the interest of the Ecuadorian state in regulating migrants’ transnational political practices after 2002 and in providing them a way to channel their remittances within the country.

In 2006–2007, the then newly elected president Rafael Correa improved the state-led outreach toward emigrants (Cortés & San Martín 2010; ECU15, October 5, 2016), and nonresident Ecuadorians emerged as relevant actors in their homeland decision-making process. During his inaugural speech in 2007, Correa described Ecuadorians living abroad as the ‘Fifth Region’, to seek discursively their integration (Ramírez Gallegos, 2018). Since then, many scholars and practitioners have seen Correa’s rise into power as a favorable milestone for the nexus between the state and the diaspora (Echeverría, 2015; Herrera, 2011; Margheritis, 2011).

In 2007, Correa’s first government created the National Secretariat for Migration (SENAMI) to forge ties between the state and the diaspora, as well as to promote return policies, by employing a ‘top-down’ approach to the ‘Fifth Region’ (Ramírez Gallegos & Umpierrez de Reguero, 2019). As a result of this new institutional effort, several transnational political practices were implemented in Correa’s decade: a more active role for diplomatic offices, return programs, legal defense of Ecuadorians residing in Spain, and bilateral agreements to transfer security funds from residence countries to Ecuador (Boccagni, 2011a; Minteguiaga & Carmel, 2020; Sánchez Bautista, 2020). In fact, the CNE hired Ecuadorians living abroad as electoral promoters for the 2013 general elections, precisely to facilitate the mobilization of consulates to rural and urban areas where Ecuadorians lived. With this, the electoral registry increased significantly. From the referendum and popular consultation of 2011 to the general elections of 2017, the registry of Ecuadorians living abroad increased by 83.4% (i.e., from 206,255 to 378,251 nonresident citizens).

Without a shadow of a doubt, Correa’s former party, AP AIS, took advantage of the ‘gratitude model of emigrant enfranchisement’ (see Turcu & Urbatsch, 2020b) to capture the votes of nonresident Ecuadorians (see Chapter 6), conducing to the reduction of party fragmentation to an average of three effective parties and the increase of patronage practices (Umpierrez de Reguero & Dandoy, 2021). Indeed, 21 out of 24 seats corresponding to the direct representation of

nonresident citizens in the National Assembly were obtained by APAIS between 2007 and 2017 (Ramírez Gallegos & Umpierrez de Reguero, 2019). In the same period, this party obtained significant percentage differences in nonresident citizens' voter turnout compared to the domestic vote (Umpierrez de Reguero & Dandoy, 2020). In sum, APAIS was able to capture the vote of the coined "migratory stampede" (see Ramírez Gallegos & Ramírez Gallegos, 2005, p. 121), waving a populist moral discourse, where the 'pure people' equate to 'migrant heroes' and the 'corrupt elite' are represented by the 'usual politicians', the 'mainstream parties', but above all the 'bankers' who were involved in the banking crisis (Jakobson *et al.*, 2022). This discursive logic was voiced by Correa and APAIS to attack their main adversary, Guillermo Lasso, who founded Banco de Guayaquil (Navia & Umpierrez de Reguero, 2021).

With Lenín Moreno's win in 2017, also from APAIS, who shortly after taking office distanced himself from Correa by adopting austerity measures in economic terms and by looking for right-wing allies, such as the Social Christian Party (PSC) and CREO, Moreno induced a diametric change in Ecuadorian political competition (Abad *et al.*, 2022; Castellanos Santamaría *et al.*, 2021; Olivares & Medina, 2020; Wolff, 2018). This shift indirectly reduced the state-led attention to the electoral mobilization of nonresident Ecuadorians, and in the last elections (from 2018 to 2021), this weight produced a negative impact on the nonresident citizens' voter turnout.

For all the reasons highlighted in this sub-section, Ecuador is a case of state-led outreach toward its nonresident citizens, even though this case has party branches abroad. Nonetheless, it is important to make a clear division of Ecuador during Correa's administration and Lenín Moreno's government, since less mobilization of the state has coincided, although it is still present abroad, with low rates of electoral participation in the period 2018–2021.

4.2.3. High and Low Nonresident Citizens' Voter Turnout with Partisan Presence: Spain

Contrary to the Ecuadorian experience, Spanish parties have played a predominant role in including Spaniards living abroad, even before the democratic transition and the constitutional reform in 1985. This role has been extended to promoting electoral reforms to point out precisely which Spanish residents abroad can vote and how. Although in recent decades noncitizen residents have gained relevance in Spain (ESP1, May 13, 2020), particularly since the last quarter of the Twentieth Century when Spain became a receiving country (Arango & Finotelli, 2009), parliamentary debates on issues related to emigration have always revolved around in the political supply (Østergaard-Nielsen & Ciornei, 2019a).

The great demographic, economic, and social transformations, as well as the political and military conflicts that took place in the European continent between 1840 and 1930, mobilized thousands of people to the other side of the Atlantic in search of new opportunities (Arango & Finotelli, 2009). Latin America received about 85% of Spanish migration, of which 57% returned to Spain (Pérez, 2002). Heirs of a culture that mixes various religions and ideologies, Spaniards belong to a traditional community of emigrants. This classification responds to a typology of emigrants whose characteristics allude to those of a habitual resident.

During the ‘massive emigration’ (1880–1930), around 5 million Spaniards sought new opportunities in Latin America, France, and Algeria (Fernández Vicente, 2007). The 1929 crisis, as well as the civil war and the Second World War, briefly halted migration. However, this –along with the expansion of the Latin American economies and the autarky in Spain– led to the reactivation of the Spanish migratory movement. Between 1945 and 1980, 3 million Spaniards left Spain for Latin American countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela, as well as Western European countries such as France and Switzerland (Arango & Finotelli, 2009; Fernández Vicente, 2007). Many of them abandon the myth of returning someday. Part of those who emigrated in this period did so for political purposes, configuring, for instance, the French militancy of the Spanish Communist Party (Lillo, 2019).

The decades between the end of the 19th century and the last third of the 20th century include the emigration of Spaniards as one of the phenomena that have most affected the social and economic development of Spain (Romero-Valiente, 2018). When comparing the volume of emigration by Spaniards in the first and second decades of the 21st century, the rate of migratory growth accelerates (Pérez-Caramés *et al.*, 2019; Romero Valiente, 2016). In 2011, the number of departures stood at 55,000. Four years later, that number doubled; reversing the migratory balance according to records of the National Institute of Statistics (INE) of Spain.

The various waves of Spanish emigration share similar characteristics in their economic, social, and psychological causes and motivations (e.g., Arango, 2003; Martínez Veiga, 2000). Left-wing political parties and the media, as well as various specialists in the field of migration, citizenship, and political participation, have linked the growth of emigration with the effects of the economic crisis, government austerity policies, and cuts in public spending (e.g., Gil Lázaro and Fernández Vicente, 2015). In the last decade (2008–2018), the emigration of young people born and raised in Spain has generated a political discourse that discusses issues such as the ‘brain drain’ and a consequent acceleration in the decline of the birth rate (Romero-Valiente, 2018).

There is a before and after the Great Recession (2008) for the scope of Spanish residents abroad by the political supply. Since the mid-1980s, the mainstream parties – the PP and PSOE –

have spearheaded different strategies to capture their votes. Although the PP has traditionally prioritized the domestic arena (i.e., within Spain), it has established direct contact with Spaniards living abroad, mainly through its militancy and its party branches in the main countries of residence of Spanish emigrants and their descendants (ESP4, May 20, 2020). On occasions, the PP has also promoted electoral campaigns for national-level elections abroad (ESP10, July 8, 2020).

“...Mariano Rajoy [former president of Spain, representative of the PP] appeared on the buses in the city of Buenos Aires, on the posters that appear the static advertising of the buses”. (ESP10, July 8, 2020)

Alongside the PP, the PSOE is another party that has captured overseas votes through militancy and its party infrastructure since the late 1980s. To a certain extent, the PSOE has converted this strategy to create loyalties abroad. Specially left-leaning Spaniards, who did not want to lose their prior political engagement, have been participating in periodic groups in Latin American countries and France for decades, some regularly visiting PSOE’s party branches (ESP5, May 19, 2020). Although as of 2021 much of PSOE infrastructure is inactive, there are still meeting points abroad to discuss Spanish politics and encourage nonresident Spaniards to participate in the elections. “For example, in Mexico, there is a group of the historical socialist party and its children... the so-called ‘war children’” (ESP5, May 19, 2020).

Other parties with less electoral success or with a marked regionalist stance did not usually participate in the late 1980s, but they were gradually incorporated into the competition, especially from traditional emigrant communities such as the Galician (ESP11, June 17, 2020). For parties such as *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* or *Partido Democrático*, transnational militancy and the ‘Catalan houses’ around the world have been *par excellence* the best ally to disseminate the electoral statements to their compatriots abroad (ESP9, July 3, 2020; ESP10, July 8, 2020).

Overall, Argentina, or the Galician ‘fifth province’ (Lugilde Pardo, 2007) has configured an important political space for most Spanish parties.

“Argentina was the place where all the parties campaigned because there were many older people, many Spaniards, and descendants of Spaniards who voted”. (ESP5, May 19, 2020)

“Large parties like the PP or the PSOE held rallies in Argentina. For example, [sic] I was once in Argentina, on a work trip and it coincided with a meeting of the person who later became president: [José Luis Rodríguez] Zapatero”. (ESP10, July 8, 2020)

After the Great Recession and the 2011 electoral reform, there is a generational change, less militancy, and the emergence of new parties such as Ciudadanos, Podemos, and VOX. This idea was also reflected on the transnational arena of political competition. Party infrastructures seem to be more informal, except in countries where there is a migratory tradition and the historical infrastructure has made networks, mainly due to ideological affinities with parties and non-governmental institutions in the country of residence.

“I founded a PSOE group in Washington, United States because I had gone to live there. We did not have venues at the time. We met in bars and restaurants. We were a younger group. That’s how we organized, [sic] informally. [...]. In Paris, [instead,] we have the assistance of the French Socialist Party. There is a grouping of the French Socialist Party that allows us to rent, on very favorable terms, a small place where we meet”. (ESP5, May 19, 2020)

The political engagement toward the origin country is not only corroborated by voting from abroad, but also by becoming a party member or activist. For Podemos, affiliates and volunteers come and go. Young people appear to be the most active in getting informed about Spanish politics and wanting to vote.

“When we started in 2014, it was a huge buzz [sic], but then there have been its pluses and minuses. People sometimes either get discouraged, get tired, or have vital circumstances that make them come in or go out. There has always been a recycling process; entry of new people...” (ESP6, May 14, 2020)

In addition to the famous ‘circles’ of Podemos (understood in this dissertation as party branches abroad), this party has had an active campaign for Spaniards living abroad to beg their vote, participate in party meetings and assemblies, and ultimately vote (Dain, 2020). Together with the *Marea Granate* association, Podemos’ militants and volunteers have been highly recognized for their activism abroad. This, most likely, has brought them a bonus in terms of voter turnout in recent electoral processes. According to the electoral results, this party is not a minority abroad. In several countries, it is the most-voted option (Vintila *et al.*, forthcoming).

“It is almost like there is one more work of social activism, namely, it could be social movements, but (Podemos abroad), we do as its off hinge. We are the hinge between the problems of the people and the party”. (ESP6, May 14, 2020)

Beyond social activism, militancy, and party infrastructure, there is a consensus among the interviewees that electoral campaigns abroad are increasingly digital. Social networking platforms such as Facebook and Twitter serve as allies to reach nonresident Spaniards, who do not want direct contact with an institution in Spain, but who, nevertheless, remain informed of what is happening in their country of origin (e.g., ESP10, July 8, 2020).

Most definitively, Spanish parties have often shown leadership in relation to emigrant outreach, as opposed to the state. The strategies have been various and have strongly depended on the party position, the audience to whom the message is addressed, as well as the ideology and internal democracy of the party organizations themselves. The Spanish case illustrates a multi-level and diverse migrant outreach led by parties.

4.3. Between the Right and Obligation: Citizenship and Multiple Votes

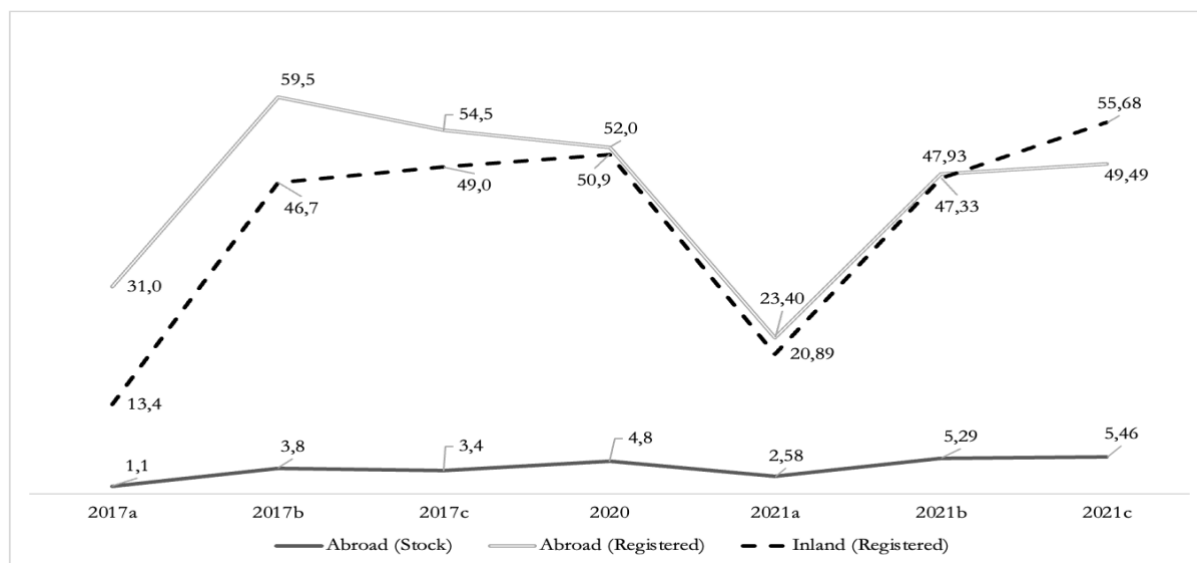
Beyond the novelty or the experience obtained in these three country cases, it is important to discuss the nature and within-country variation of external voting rights. In Chile, Ecuador, and Spain, electoral processes abroad are voluntary (i.e., *de jure* not compulsory). In fact, in Chile and Spain, voters must be greatly interested to exercise the right to vote from abroad given the non-permanent active registration (see Section 4.1). However, the perceptions of the interviewees seem to be based not only on external voting as a right but also as an obligation, even when it implies no monetary sanction. Phrases such as “it is a right that the current constitution gives us, and it is also a duty of the citizen to participate” (e.g., ECU4, April 11, 2020), are occasionally repeated in the narratives of both the Ecuadorian party members and voters. Whereas in Chile, allusion is made to external voting only as a right, even though its legality is still questioned; for many Spaniards, voting from abroad expressly is a right, that “no government has to impose on you” (ESP13, September 19, 2019). Moreover, “it is a matter of citizenship. If you are free and you feel like it, you vote” (ESP14, September 12, 2020).

As observed in Chapter 3, the variable of compulsory versus voluntary voting can be structured from pre-migratory experiences. Consequently, the nature of the vote within the cases could show other differences related to the nonresident citizens’ voter turnout. Simultaneously, it could explain why for Chile and Spain, it is merely a right; while, for some Ecuadorians, external voting can symbolically mean a duty or even an obligation. In this section, I am interested not only in identifying whether compulsory or voluntary voting is relevant to any electoral geography, but also in whether the rates of domestic electoral participation are high or low in each country case. These variations could also reveal guidelines for evaluating rates of nonresident citizens’ voter

turnout. This assumption emerges from the roots of the political socialization that citizens, whether residents or nonresidents have had before going to the polls.

Since the 1988 national plebiscite that implied a tangible beginning of the democratic transition in Chile, voter turnout at the domestic level, either national or local, has tended to experience a decrease election after election (Barsgted *et al.*, 2019; Navia, 2004). In relation to the population greater than or equal to 18 years of age, voter turnout within Chile went from 87% in the presidential elections of 1989 to 51% in the national plebiscite of 2020 (Fuentes, 2020). Although this reality could be another symptom of the democratic malaise (Segovia, 2017) and the crisis of political representation (Casteglioni & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2016; Luna, 2014),⁵ it could also indirectly explain why Chileans living abroad are somehow reluctant to register and actively vote. Although nonresident citizens' voter turnout is slightly higher as compared to the domestic electoral participation rates, which is an exception in a comparative perspective if we consider overseas votes divided by those that are registered (see Figure 4.2), the increasing post-democratic transition distance between political parties and civil society (Morgan & Meléndez, 2016; Oxhorn, 1995; Silva, 2009) may explain the political demobilization both within and outside Chile.

Figure 4.2. Comparison of Voter Turnout in Chile by Electoral Geographies (% , 2017–2021)



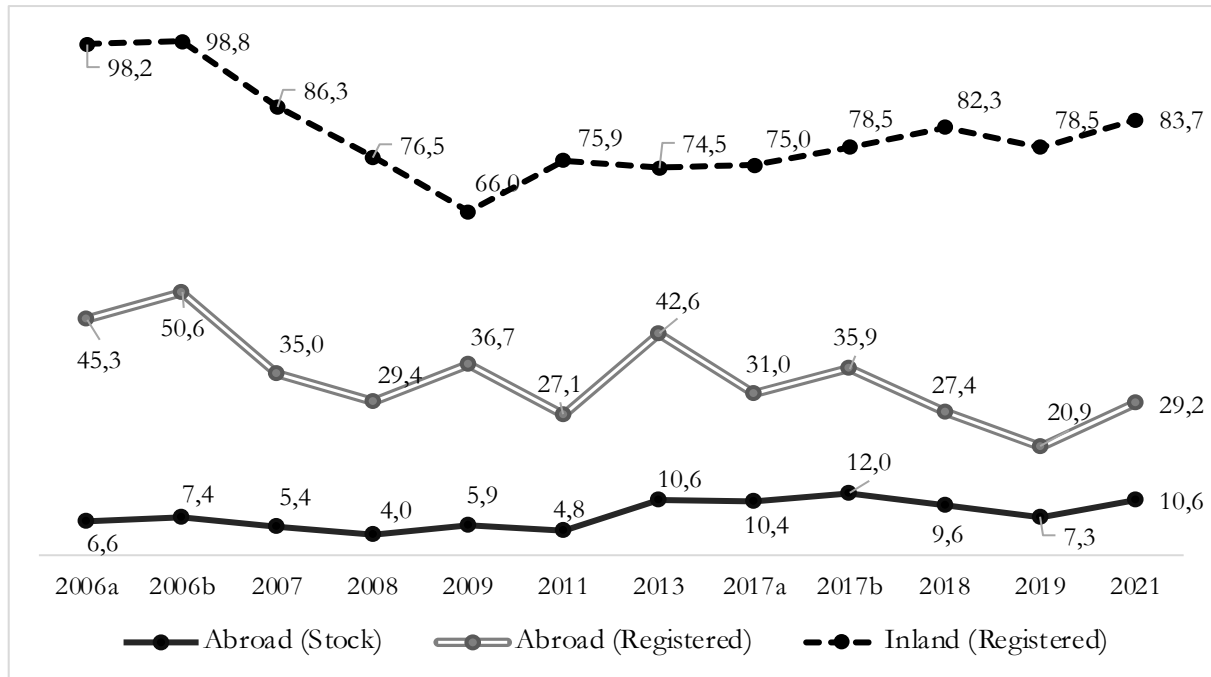
Source: SERVEL (2020).

Note: 2017a = primary presidential elections; 2017b = first-round presidential elections; 2017c= ballotage; 2020 = constitutional plebiscite; 2021a = primary presidential elections; 2021b = first-round presidential elections; 2021c= ballotage.

⁵ Since decreasing levels of formal participation pinpoint a disconnection with the political institutions (Mair, 2013).

Over the last 15 years in Ecuador, in turn, the dynamics of compulsory voting only within the country mark a distance of 45% on average between the rates of domestic voter turnout and the rates of nonresident citizens' voter turnout (see Figure 4.3). Although electoral volatility is slightly higher abroad than in Ecuador's domestic arena, turnout rates in the two political arenas do not have drastic changes that warrant a more in-depth comparative analysis.

Figure 4.3. Comparison of Voter Turnout in Ecuador by Electoral Geographies (% , 2006–2021)



Source: CNE (2019).

Notes: 2006a = general elections (Ecuadorians living abroad could only participate in first-round presidential elections); 2006b = ballotage; 2007 = Constituent Assembly's elections; 2008 = constitutional referendum; 2009 = general elections, including Andean Parliament elections; 2011 = national referenda; 2013 = general elections, including Andean Parliament elections; 2017a = general elections, including Andean Parliament elections; 2017b = ballotage; 2018 = national referenda; 2019 = CPCCS Elections; 2021 = general elections, not including Andean Parliament.

In the Ecuadorian experience, compulsory voting at the domestic level continues to be an individual-level motivation to partake in elections. As in other countries where voting is mandatory at the domestic level, but voluntary at the extraterritorial level, obtaining a certificate of voting may be a sufficient reason to vote from abroad (Umpierrez de Reguero *et al.*, 2020). Many Ecuadorian voters continue to go to the electoral precincts rented abroad by the CNE to avoid inconveniences during bureaucratic procedures, including banking, when visiting their origin country. Within Ecuador, most, if not all, public institutions require a copy of the voting certificate to carry out

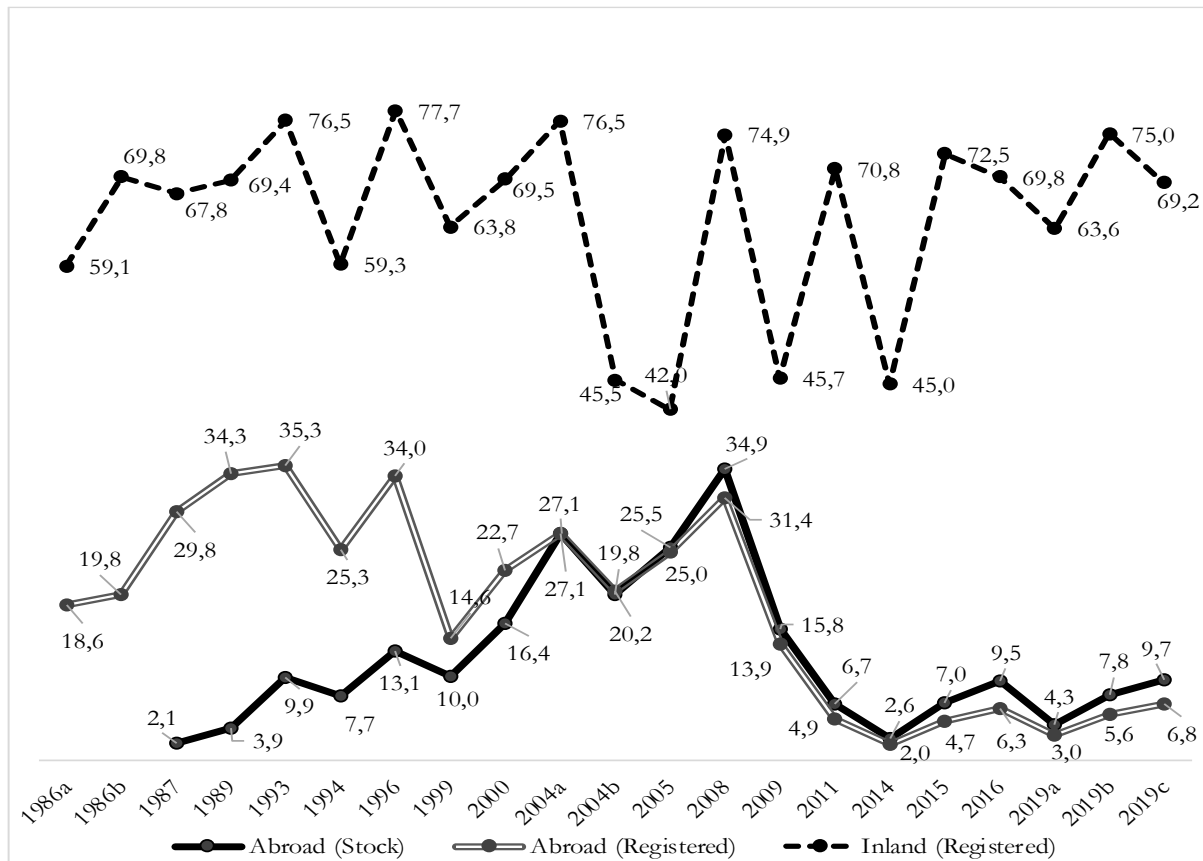
bureaucratic procedures, for instance, renewing a passport, requesting a historical social security report, and enlisting a candidature. Since voting for Ecuadorians living abroad is voluntary, this requirement can be quickly waived just by referring to the current residence of the individual (i.e., outside of Ecuador) or by showing the entry/exit passport stamps. Yet, this is still a drawback for those who must visit the CNE in Quito or any provincial delegation to process the exemption from voting prior to any bureaucratic or banking procedure. For this reason, alongside political socialization related to the habit of pre-migration compulsory voting, lies in the sense that voting is both a right and a duty for Ecuadorians residing abroad. Here, according to Boccagni and Ramírez Gallegos (2013), the relation with nationality or national identity, instead of citizenship as a legal construct, plays an important role in the unconscious of nonresident Ecuadorians.

Like Ecuador, Spain registered a remarkable distance between domestic turnout and nonresident citizens' voter turnout, from 1986 to 2019 (see Figure 4.4). This distance seems to widen shortly before the begged vote enters into force—nonresident citizens' voter turnout falls almost 20% in relation to the previous election. Furthermore, the 2009 elections meant less electoral participation abroad and domestically, assuming that the begged vote is not solely responsible for the turnout decrease. Indeed, European elections such as those of 2009, registered the lowest voter turnout rates in the entire period in analysis, in contrast to the vote share observed in national-level elections, both within and outside of Spain.

Since the 2011 reform, nonresident citizens' voter turnout of Spaniards decreased to less than 5% between 2011 and 2019; whereas the domestic voter turnout returned to register similar levels as compared to the rates of the mid-1980s and early 1990s. Despite this drop in the turnout rate of nonresident Spaniards, the number of those registered in the CERA continue to rise in the period 2011–2019, which is surprising since the 2011 electoral reform is perceived as a clear-cut disincentive to registration (e.g., ESP1, May 13, 2020; ESP4, May 20, 2020; ESP5; May 19, 2020; ESP8, May 12, 2020). Correspondingly, the change in the descriptive component of the Spanish external voting is worth highlighting.

Several of the narratives from party members, scholars, and leaders of migrants' civil associations assert that there is a generational change regarding the CERA vote. It coincides with the last decade in the analysis. As mentioned in Section 4.2, the Great Recession (2008) significantly affected Spain, prompting young highly-skilled Spaniards to search for jobs in Latin America or other EU countries. Whereas a new wave of emigration can potentially account for more registered voters, it seems – although there is insufficient evidence – that this wave of emigration has helped to increase registration in each election, but not the number of votes.

Figure 4.4. Comparison of Voter Turnout in Spain by Electoral Geographies (% , 1986–2019)



Source: Spanish Ministry of Interior (2020).

Notes: This figure only registers voter turnout at national and supra-national level. It excludes the vote shares at local and regional elections. 1986a = NATO's referendum; 1986b = Legislative Elections; 1987 = European Parliament Elections; 1989 = Legislative Elections; 1993 = Legislative Elections; 1994 = European Parliament Elections; 1996 = Legislative Elections; 1999 = European Parliament Elections; 2000 = Legislative Elections; 2004a = ; 2004b = European Parliament Elections; 2005 = National Referendum; 2008 = Legislative Elections; 2009 = European Parliament Elections; 2011 = Legislative Elections; 2014 = European Parliament Elections; 2015 = Legislative Elections; 2016 = Legislative Elections; 2019a = European Parliament Elections; 2019b = Legislative Elections; 2019c = Legislative Elections.

Summary of this Chapter

This chapter explored how and why some electoral rules in Chile, Ecuador, and Spain have produced diverse structures of incentives, opportunities, and constraints in terms of nonresident citizens' voter turnout. It also considered the role of homeland authorities and their *de facto* practices to promote and/or organize external voting, *vis-à-vis* party mobilization to reach out to emigrants.

In Section 4.1, I identified different pathways taken by these country cases. This qualitative assessment was elaborated following three analytic categories: (1) electoral inclusiveness, (2) ease to vote from abroad, as well as (3) territorial coverage and political representation. While Chile displays low grades between 2017 and 2021, implying the most difficult country case for registration and voting from abroad among the three; Ecuador (2006–2021) and Spain (1986–2019) show two different trajectories. First, Ecuador illustrates what in Chapter 6 I will coin as the ‘expansive pathway’ – even when the ideological leaning of the government has shifted in recent years – presenting an evaluation of medium-high electoral inclusiveness, ease to vote, medium-high territorial coverage, and quasi-proportional political representation. Second, Spain is divided into two subcases to reflect the changes of the 2011 electoral reform regarding voting access for nonresident citizens, as the rest of the analytic categories have kept constant, as highly evaluated.

In Section 4.2, the mobilization of parties and candidates complemented the previous institutional-driven approach to nonresident citizens’ voter turnout. This chapter applied Burgess’ typology on state-led versus party-led emigrant outreach, with minor adaptations. I provided within-country variation to this typology, since electoral behavior abroad tends to be very volatile, changing decade by decade in several countries of my sample (as suggested in Chapter 3). Applying Burgess’ typology where the degrees of nonresident citizens’ voter turnout and emigrant outreach are combined, I fitted Chile, Ecuador, Spain (pre-2011), and Spain (post-2011) in the four quadrants at disposal.

With regard to Chile (i.e., party-led emigrant outreach with relatively low nonresident citizens’ voter turnout), Chilean parties –especially both emergent and mainstream left-wing parties– have contacted nonresident citizens in different ways, from online campaigning to networking through party members and activists in order to disseminate information about the elections and to capture votes. By contrast, Ecuador (i.e., state-led emigrant outreach with fluctuating rates of nonresident citizens’ voter turnout over time) is a case of state-led outreach toward its nonresident citizens, despite counting on party branches abroad. Over the two last decades, the Ecuadorian state has generated a series of policies and programs to foster the electoral and non-electoral participation of nonresident citizens. Similar to Chile, Spanish parties have often shown leadership in relation to emigrant outreach, as opposed to the state. Their emigrant outreach strategies have been numerous, from campaigning abroad and institutionalizing party branches to recruiting militants and activists in the main destinations of Spaniards. These strategies have been contingent upon the party position, the audience to whom the electoral message is addressed, as well as the ideology and parties’ internal democracy. The Spanish case (i.e., party-led emigrant outreach with oscillating levels of nonresident citizens’ voter turnout over time) fills the last quadrant of the typology.

Finally, in Section 4.3, I provided further insights on the nature of voting modality, particularly between compulsory versus voluntary voting. Here, the dilemma between vote enforcement – voting as a right and/or as a duty – took the lead. In this section, I also compared nonresident citizens' voter turnout with domestic voter turnout in Chile, Ecuador, and Spain across elections. Alongside providing a stronger weight to the within-country variation of nonresident citizens' voter turnout, with these comparisons, I adjusted the institutional and political approaches, largely discussed in Chapter 3 as well as the previous sections of this chapter.