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

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Chapter 6
Pathways and Mechanisms of Swing, Interregnum, and Incumbency Effects

Previously in this dissertation, I identified four institutional-political effects of nonresident citizens' voter turnout related to the distribution of voting preferences between domestic and overseas arenas, electoral outcomes and party fragmentation, as well as parties' strategic entry abroad. Even though around 30% of the dataset observations of my sample show different distribution of voting preferences, which as underscored in the integral model of nonresident citizens' voter turnout (see Figure 2.2) conditions the existence of the institutional-political effects in analysis, Chapter 5 outlines some results that merit in-depth examination. Enriching the abundant large-N empirical evidence reported earlier in this dissertation, in this Chapter I delve into different pathways and mechanisms of nonresident citizens' political behavior with qualitative information. To do so, the methodological approach is a comparative historical analysis in four country cases (Chile, Ecuador, Spain and Venezuela), where I cannot only provide empirical evidence to create or refine policy making, but also calibrate the weights I assigned earlier to correlations in Chapter 5.

In the next sections, I thus use different types and sources of data with emphasis on official documents, 35 semi-structured interviews with key actors of external voting policies,[1] and electoral results of Chile, Ecuador, Spain and Venezuela, to unpack pathways and mechanisms of swing, interregnum and incumbency effects. While the three first country cases follow the guidelines proposed in the small-N methodological approach of this dissertation (see Introduction and Chapter 4), I add Venezuela to replace Chile when it comes to the incumbency effects given the nature and evolution of Venezuelan external voting and the lack of within-country variation or large expertise of Chile in *de facto* emigrant enfranchisement.

In what follows, I introduce a theoretical model of four pathways that countries may pursue while holding external voting rights. This theoretical model comprises state-level motivations, even when the evidence considered does not always correspond to that level. Applying these theorized pathways, I explore swing and interregnum effects. Thereafter, I describe two mechanisms on the nexus between nonresident citizens' voter turnout and the incumbency: when the incumbent is (perceivably) favored or rejected by overseas votes.

[1] To obtain more details of the interviews (e.g., the criteria to select the participants, ethical concerns, participants' profile), please see the Section 'Interviews' in the Appendix.

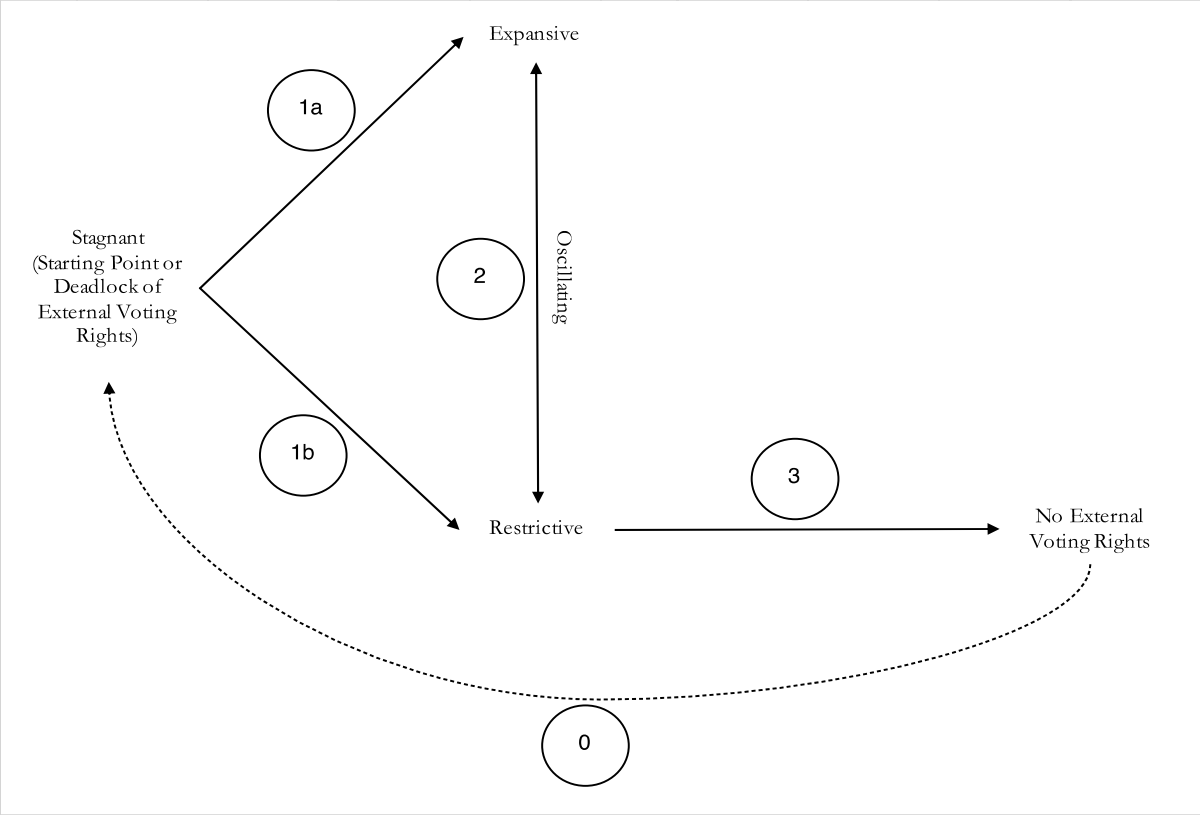
6.1. Introducing Pathways of Emigrant Enfranchisement Trajectories

As examined in Chapters 3 and 4, each provision of external voting rights comprises strategic and mechanical effects that affect either significantly or trivially the electoral outcomes and political elites' calculations in the homeland arena. Concurring with the seminal assumption of political economy that an electoral reform is not as easy as remaining in the *status quo* (e.g., Boix, 1999; Tsebelis, 2003/2011; Teele, 2018), it seems feasible to assume that once external voting rights are enacted, regulated, and implemented it is difficult for policymakers to give in extant rules. Yet, there are several country examples experiencing policy innovations or that even disfranchise their citizens residing abroad after one or various electoral contests such as in Afghanistan, Benin and South Africa (Wellman, 2021; Wellman *et al.*, 2022).

Considering this possible variation over time, I created a theoretical model for studying different routes of external voting rights, in particular trajectories of nonresident citizens' voter turnout. Figure 6.1 sketches several pathways to unpack the routes of *de facto* emigrant enfranchisement per country case. As this dissertation considers solely the processes of enactment and regulation of external voting rights as a prerequisite for nonresident citizens' voter turnout (see Chapter 1), Figure 6.1 points out *de jure* emigrant enfranchisement as the starting point. Immediately after, there are two mutually exclusive pathways that countries can take if they modify their already enacted policy, either (*1a*) toward expansive external voting rights or (*1b*) toward restrictive *de facto* emigrant enfranchisement. Countries can remain in pathways '*1a*' or '*1b*' for decades. In these scenarios, they cannot be "stagnant" cases (extrapolating Umpierrez de Reguero, forthcoming) since they already experienced an apt change while holding external voting rights. However, if policymakers are unsatisfied with the current or existing outcomes they can maneuver the policy, imposing constraints to make it more restrictive or liberalizing it to make the previous policy more expansive. In this theoretical model, this pathway is called the (*2*) oscillating route. Alternatively, there is an exit route, that is pathway '*3*'. This means a reverse action, a process of disenfranchisement, forcing the theoretical model to start again from '*0*'. Since my interest in this chapter is to relate nonresident citizens' voter turnout with the different pathways and discover potential mechanisms that help to comprehensively understand the significant correlations identified in Chapter 5, I discard pathways '0' and '3' from the following sections.

Importantly, all these pathways are contingent upon state-led motivations. Although the empirical evidence of this chapter comes partially from asking the perceptions and experiences of relevant actors involved in external voting, the following analysis is mostly a supply side, leaving individual-level explanations for future research agenda.

Figure 6.1. Pathways of External Voting Rights by Countries



Source: author's own elaboration

6.2. Understanding the Nexus between the Swing Effect and External Voting Designs

As anticipated, here I link the above-posited pathways with the swing effect, unfolding other variables that can explain 'how' and 'why' overseas votes can significantly impact the homeland arena. As only in the case of Spain there has been a relevant variation in the domestic seat share (at the local level) owing to nonresident citizens' voter turnout, a wide part of the following text is based on counterfactuals. By discussing the 'what if' while giving voice to the perceptions of key actors involved in external voting policies, I aim to expand previous large-N insights reported in Chapter 5.

6.2.1. Restrictive External Voting Rights and the Swing Effect: Evidence from Chile

In Chile, external voting is "symbolic" rather than "consequential"; yet, when there is a salient election, electoral expectations may convert it in an emotional vote (CHL1, March 10, 2020), a vote that is worth or "weighs for the decisions-making process within the country" (CHL2, March

30, 2020). In practice, this scenario was estimated by several interviewees expecting that the 2020 plebiscite would bolster a high voter turnout, but this assumption did not hold true.

Similar to political debates, interviewees' perceptions were slightly skewed by ideology. On one side, left-wing party members and voters tended to explain emigrant enfranchisement as a process of late adoption due to right-wing parties' fear that the electorate abroad would swing seat allocation in Chile (CHL6, June 16, 2020; CHL8, June 19, 2020; CHL13, July 20, 2020). According to some interviewees, this predicted the timing of policy enactment since the electoral demography has changed over time.

> "Now, voting from abroad does not have such a strong weight as before. […sic] the demography is not homogenized and has no political bias. Not all migrants are from the left". (CHL7, June 18, 2020)

Although interviewees recognize that external voting has an inconsequential impact in most cases (CHL1, March 10, 2020; CHL7, June 18, 2020), they expected that elections such as the 2020 constitutional plebiscite could favor voter turnout, particularly of exiles and descendants who were able to vote (CHL6, June 16, 2020). This relation between the exile and the expectations of high electoral participation in the constitutional plebiscite arose as a result of the salient interest in modifying the 1980 constitution from scratch, which was adopted during the civil-military regime (see Chapter 4 for more details).[2]

Interviewees reinforced the idea of regulating external voting rights "as restricted as possible", to avoid electoral surprises in the vote counting. "There was a positive intention of a political sector for this voting to be as restricted as possible because it could affect their electoral interests" (CHL8, June 19, 2020). Beyond electoral system design, interviewees point to the possibility of amending the existing rule to stimulate voter turnout in the future.

> "It is likely that, over time, and if legislative amendments are made to facilitate overseas votes, that universe [electorate] could grow". (CHL8, June 19, 2020)

On the other hand, for the right-leaning party members and voters sampled, perceptions were rather neutral or tended to be indifferent about this pull of voters. Regarding voting influences, responses such as "I believe that none" from Chileans living abroad who ideologically self-

[2] Analyzing nonresident citizens' voter turnout, only in a few countries of residence (e.g., Guatemala, Peru, and Lebanon), the most-voted preference of Chileans residing abroad was to reject the Plebiscite.

identified as right-leaning (CHL4, April 14, 2020), were quite common. From party-led emigrant outreach, the uninterested, even pessimistic, perception was self-evident for conservative right-wing parties such as the UDI. The emerging right-wing parties (e.g., Evopoli), in turn, appear to be more moderate concerning overseas votes; still, they were not deeply alarmed about its impact in relation to domestic outcomes (CHL14, October 12, 2020; CHL15, October 21, 2020; CHL16, October 23, 2020).

This rapid analysis of the swing effect in a restrictive pathway of external voting right reveals the endogenous nature of restrictiveness to evade consequential electoral actions. Yet, it opens the door to examine the connection between election saliency and potential swing effect. In parallel, these narratives provide internal validity to support that institutions matter to incentivize or constrain unsolicited consequences, complementing that external voting provisions can be gauged over time to decrease the odds for significant mechanical effects. This line of thinking prompts to explore the swing effect of nonresident citizens' voter turnout in expansive and oscillating pathways in the following sub-sections.

6.2.2. Ecuador: A Potential Swing Effect at the National Level

Like in Chile, to date the Ecuadorian external voting has not produced swing effects. Although the impact has seemed to be "qualitative", instead of "numeric" (ECU6, April 9, 2020), estimating for instance the difference between the presidential candidates in the 2017 ballotage (228,629 votes), the total number of registered voters abroad represents about 150% of that difference. However, nonresident Ecuadorians' voter turnout has not changed seat allocation neither in presidential, nor in legislative elections (at the national, district-based, or Andean levels). The impact has been related to voting or being able to vote while participating in the national-level "civic party"[3] (ECU13, July 3, 2020)—to give voice to emigrants and descendants on the decision-making within Ecuador (ECU5, April 27, 2020). In the words of an interviewee: "the social impact has been very wide, but the numerical impact has been minimal" (ECU2, April 1, 2020).

Whereas some of my interviewees looked carefully at the number of registered voters, noting a possible prospective consequence (e.g., ECU11, April 9, 2020; ECU13, July 3, 2020), others expressed a pessimistic perspective based on the reasons why Ecuadorians living abroad decide not to vote (e.g., the distance for in-person voting, anonymity related to the undocumented status in the residence country, language barriers in the case of indigenous peoples and nationalities) (e.g.,

[3] This is a literal translation referring to a patriotic or civil event or celebration.

ECU4, April 11, 2020; ECU10, April 29, 2020). This may imply that the influence of *de facto* emigrant enfranchisement has been somehow underestimated.

Even though Ecuador has gradually removed some hurdles imposed by its electoral design, in particular restrictive conditions of access to vote from abroad (see Chapter 4), the increase in registered voters does not necessarily mirror an increase in voter turnout.[4] As some interviewees estimated, if one assumes that there are between 2 and 3 million Ecuadorians living abroad, only 15% or 20% are registered. Of those registered, around 30% vote, depending on the type of election (e.g., ECU1, April 9, 2020; ECU4, April 11, 2020). Since external voting is voluntary while within Ecuador is compulsory (see Chapter 4), the probabilities of having a swing effect are rather low, even if there are many votes cast abroad. Despite this descriptive analysis, in the Ecuadorian case a potential swing effect is more evident than in a restrictive pathway of external voting rights (e.g., Chile). Precisely because Ecuador follows the route toward expansive *de facto* emigrant enfranchisement, this country case facilitates registration and voting. Therefore, it fuels one of the most significant explanatory factors highlighted in Chapter 5: a sizable pull of potential voters.

Although electoral salience does not appear as important in Ecuador as it seems to be in Chile, 'post-voting expectations' are probably a related variable in both cases.

> "First the elections are held in China and in [South] Korea; then, the votes of the electoral boards of Madrid and Barcelona. This does create an impact on how we perceive an electoral process, on the [same] election day. […]. It can have an impact on how we are going to vote because other people also want to vote in different time zones. [...]. Not everyone is interested in the proposals of a specific candidate, but psychologically people want to vote for the one who will win, and I believe that external voting also reflects what migrant families are voting". (ECU1, March 27, 2020)

In other words, voting from abroad might also represent a psychological effect to vote choice. As depicted in the theory of the calculus of voting (Riker & Ordeshook, 1968), knowing how the voting is going and who is ahead in the competition may produce that undecided voters lean towards one candidate or another. Overall, voters seek to align towards the winner, hence a clear-cut motive to launch pre-electoral polls.[5] In that respect, voting from abroad might affect voters'

[4] See Ramírez Gallegos (2018) as well as Ramírez Gallegos and Umpierrez de Reguero (2019) to dive deeper into this difference in the Ecuadorian case over time.

[5] See Blais (2000), Downs (1957), Sigelman (1982) as well as Riker and Ordeshook (1968) to understand this assumption in a more comprehensive way.

decisions within the country in cases such as in Ecuador where a considerable quantity of votes is cast and counted in different time zones, generating an indirect shift in voter turnout.

6.2.3. Examining the Swing Effect in Multi-Level Elections: The Spanish Case

> "It is very rare that elections change with overseas voting, right? But in Spain, there is always a seat that is *dancing*, because of this vote". (ESP1, May 13, 2020)

Unlike Chile and Ecuador, nonresident Spaniards' voter turnout has effectively shifted some electoral results in more than one level of election. The most emblematic examples derive from both regional and local Galician elections, yet there are cases at the national level worth mentioning in this sub-section.

Overall, my interviewees' perceptions on the impact of external voting tended to underline the constraints of the begged vote (e.g., ESP1, May 13, 2020; ESP6, May 14, 2020). They pointed out that since 2011, electoral rights for nonresident citizens have backlashed, affecting voter turnout. As observed in Chapter 4, this 'complaint' has been present in almost, if not all, the narratives of voters and members of emerging and regional parties. Podemos, in this regard, has recently led the fight against the begged vote, together with the civil association *María Granate* (see e.g., Dain, 2020; Vintila *et al.*, forthcoming). Some interviewees have also reported the role of electoral integrity after and before the begged vote as a normative concern (e.g., ESP4, May 20, 2020; ESP7, June 17, 2020). Complementing this position, a few interviewees discussed the role of voting methods pre- and post-2011, perceiving it as a relative improvement that Spaniards living abroad can currently vote at diplomatic offices and by post (ESP5, May 19, 2020). For this reason, the Spanish case fits in the third pathway of *de facto* emigrant enfranchisement, which is the oscillating route.

All these antecedents serve to indicate that the odds of swing effect have decreased with the begged vote despite an apparent improvement in terms of voting methods. Taking the Galician example, I can pinpoint two central ideas: (1) the swing effect by the influence of overseas votes is not a one-time experience, it rather repeats over time; and (2) the institutional argument, associated with a more restrictive design, reduces the likelihood of the swing effect's occurrence. Beyond this, the pivotal influence the weight of overseas votes has represented over the total votes have been remarkable, even as compared to other autonomous communities in Spain (Figure A1).

> "We are talking about an electoral census of absent residents (CERA) of more than 462,000 people, which represents 17.1% of the total census of voters in Galicia. In the province of Ourense, it

> accounts for 28.2% of the census. With these figures, the impact of the external voting could be more than decisive in an election. If we observe the elections to the Galician Parliament, we verify that voting from abroad has been the protagonist on three occasions: 1989, 1997 and 2009. In the first two it was the Galician Nationalist Bloc (GNB) that lost a deputy. All this occurred in a context in which surpluses and dubious democratic practices were denounced, which led, as indicated above, to the implementation of the begged vote. […]. It is an initiative promoted to put an end to fraud cases that had been reported on a recurring basis. Objectively, with this system, voter turnout has clearly decreased, from around 30% in the Galician elections of 2005 to less than 3% in the regional elections of 2016. Thus, external voting has lost influence in the total amount of votes". (ESP11, June 17, 2020)

Although there is an evident decrease in the number of registered voters and overseas votes, experiences of swing effect owing to *de facto* emigrant enfranchisement can be found in post-2011 elections. For instance, a PP member in the fieldwork highlighted the case of the current deputy, Beatriz Álvarez Fanjul. Prior to counting the overseas votes, "88 deputies of the PP were elected, and thanks to the CERA vote, the party got the 89th seat, which was a seat in the province of Vizcaya" (ESP4, May 20, 2020).

This particular example shows a probably substantial difference in relation to the electoral climate: overseas votes in Spain are counted later. The usual practice is to wait three days for overseas votes to arrive in Spain and be counted in the biographical districts within Spain of the CERA voters (ESP1, May 13, 2020; ESP4, May 20, 2020; ESP5, May 19, 2020; see also Rodríguez, 2013). Contrary to Chile and Ecuador, the Spanish case does not create a setting where voters within the country can know who is on the lead by looking at the vote counting abroad. Instead, candidates and politicians in Spain perceive overseas votes as a last resort to gain or retain a seat, particularly when the difference between the most-voted preferences is closed, as in the example between Álvarez Fanjul and her competition in the Basque Nationalist Party (Espartero, November 14, 2019).

As in Ecuador, external voting in Spain also demonstrates that the electoral design matters for having a swing effect on homeland politics, particularly with flexible registration procedures and a more expansive *de facto* emigrant enfranchisement—variables that have proven to be significant in Chapters 3 and 5. In addition, the Spanish case shows that countries can calibrate the electoral uncertainty produced by non-citizen residents' voter turnout by counting their votes earlier or later.

6.3. With or Without Special Representation: From Swing to Interregnum Effect

As conceptualized by Gamlen (2015), interregnum effects are likely to occur in parliamentary systems, since the necessity to form government in presidentialism does not depend exclusively on the legislature, except in emergency situations where the head of government is vacant. Additionally, overseas votes need to be counted days after the election day to activate this effect (e.g., Spain). Then, "the bargaining power of political parties in coalition negotiations [can be] distorted during the post-election wait for the overseas vote count" (Gamlen, 2015, p. 3). As posited in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, I adapt the previous conceptualization of interregnum effect, emphasizing the role of intra-party variation in the legislature. This strategy allows me to easily compare country cases, either in parliamentary or in presidential systems. I can also verify if overseas votes make a difference when the country cases hold special representation of emigrants. In this section, I combine electoral results, a brief legislative revision, and different perceptions on the potential impact of external voting for the descriptive legislative composition in three scenarios: (1) when electoral design does not allow this effect at all; (2) when the country case holds emigrants' special representation; and (3) in a subnational level. These settings parallel the theoretical model of pathways to a certain degree.

6.3.1. Overseas Votes and the Impossibility of Changing Coalition Formation: Chile

As indicated in the previous section, but also in Chapter 4, the influence of overseas votes in Chile is very limited. My interviewees often link the possibility of taking part in legislative elections with the potential impact of overseas votes to influence coalition formation or the descriptive composition of the legislature. Some of these narratives directly associate the restriction to vote solely in certain types of elections with possible mechanical impacts such as interregnum effect. It is clear that "Chileans abroad can [only] vote in presidential and primary elections as well as national plebiscites. Thus, Congress is elected by Chileans residing in the country" (CHL11, July 3, 2020). In other words, nonresident Chileans must rely on the choices of resident citizens for their indirect legislative representation.

Although the reason why Chileans living abroad have not been able to participate in legislative elections is most probably due to an imposition of the electoral design related to a utilitarian calculation of the political parties (CHL1, March 10, 2020; see Chapter 4), for some interviewees it is also justified by the difficulty of getting informed. Beyond the presidential elections or a given

referendum, in which the options to vote are more relevant, the difficulty of knowing each of the candidates for deputies and senators may be greater abroad than in Chile. There is not the same media coverage abroad as in the country. In general, this condition would probably affect the motivations to vote from abroad (CHL3, April 13, 2020).

Despite these justifications, migrants' civil associations[6] and center/left-wing parties have acted on the matter by proposing emigrants' special representation, and their suffrage for the 2021 elections to elect the members of the constitutional convention. First, the bill project No. 13813–07, led by the deputy Pablo Vidal, sought to create three constituencies,[7] but it was rejected due to lack of support from the ruling party (RN)—in the floor voting, it obtained 74 out of 93 required votes. Second, the bill project Nº 14028–07, initiated by the deputy Leonardo Soto Ferrada, aimed to allow the suffrage of Chileans residing abroad for the elections of members of the Constitutional Convention. This law proposal remains in process as of October 2021, even though these elections have already been held in April 2021.

Before this, there was no in-depth discussion on these issues. In the words of a participant:

> "Despite having passed emigrant enfranchisement in 2014, there was no debate within the Chilean parties about what else we can do concerning the Chileans residing abroad [until the second semester of 2020…]. This means that many parties, even parties that have militants abroad, do not consider that much further [than the existing electoral law] should be done. As a communist party, which historically has had militants abroad, we do believe that there is a necessity to make room for these Chilean emigrants through the creation of an international district and participation in the country's legislative branch". (CHL9, June 18, 2020)

In a nutshell, the above-mentioned law projects show the willingness of the center/left-wing parties alongside migrants' civil association to involve nonresident citizens directly in the legislative decision making. The latest developments also illustrate how Chile wants to take the expansive

[6] In particular, the Berlin-Germany European Network, *Chile Despertó Internacional* Network, *Chile Decide Extranjero*, and *Chile Somos Todos*.

[7] The first international district comprised the Americas, which in the case of choosing the Constitutional Convention could elect 4 representatives and, in the case of choosing the Mixed Constitutional Convention, could elect 2 representatives. The second international district was composed of Europe and Africa, which in the case of choosing the Constitutional Convention could elect 2 representatives and, in the case of choosing the Mixed Constitutional Convention, could elect only 1 representative. The third international district, consider the nonresident Chileans residing in Asia and Oceania, which in the case of choosing the Constitutional Convention could elect 2 representatives and, in the case of choosing the Mixed Constitutional Convention, could elect 1 representative.

route, thus being exposed to a potential impact on the descriptive composition of its national legislature owing to overseas votes.

6.3.2. Emigrants' Special Representation versus Interregnum Effects: Ecuador

Contrary to Chile, the Ecuadorian authorities might be concerned about an effect that distorts the coalition formation or parliamentary majority in the National Assembly. In this country case, nonresident Ecuadorians may participate in legislative elections at the national level and elect six representatives – two per each overseas district – every four years (see Chapter 4). Since Rafael Correa's first speech in government (May 2007), emigrants' special representation and the discursive association of the Ecuadorians living abroad as a significant asset to the country's economy for their personal remittances holds true (Boccagni & Ramírez, 2013; Jakobson *et al.*, 2022; Margheritis, 2011).

Although this representation has favored APAIS from 2007 to 2017, and subsequently, UNES (*Unidos por la Esperanza*) in 2021 (see Table 6.1), the perceptions of my interviewees differ. On one side, they claimed that effectively the election of six assembly members has been a great development and has had a potential impact on domestic politics, not only in terms of electoral outcomes, but also for emigrants' substantive representation (e.g., ECU1, March 27, 2020; ECU7, April 9, 2020). Those in the middle suggested that this electoral provision should be more proportional than it currently is (e.g., ECU4, April 11, 2020; ECU6, April 9, 2020). This claim is twofold. First, it addresses the apparent malapportionment of the two-seats overseas districts design, since for instance the district of Europe, Asia and Oceania has more than twice registered voters than the Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa's district. Second, the comparison is also made by the estimated population in a given overseas district and an electoral district within Ecuador (see more compelling examples in Navia & Umpierrez de Reguero, 2021; Ramírez Gallegos, 2018). On the other side, perceptions rely on the mere symbolism of emigrant enfranchisement, without a meaningful impact or substantive representation at least from belonging to the parliamentary majority (e.g., ECU2, April 1, 2020; ECU5, April 27, 2020).

Empirically, the last cluster of perceptions seems to be wrong. Electorally speaking, emigrants' special representation can indeed be considered as a significant factor that has ensured an absolute majority in the APAIS National Assembly (2007–2017), except in 2013 (see Table 6.2). Even so, all the percentages of APAIS / UNES seats with the special representation of nonresident Ecuadorians tend to improve (on average, + 1.56%). In 2021, although the pre-electoral coalition UNES did not even get 40% seat share; overseas votes assured them a better share of formal-

descriptive representation in the national legislature. Proportionally, APAIS has repeatedly obtained 100% of the seats in more than one overseas district, while within Ecuador not so.

Table 6.1. Emigrant Representatives in Ecuador (2007–2021)

Legislative election	Overseas district	Name of emigrant representative	Political filiation
2007	Canada and United States	Guido Rivas	APAIS
		Linda Machuca	APAIS
	Europe, Asia, and Oceania	Edison Narváez	APAIS
		Mercedes Panta	APAIS
	Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa	Eduardo Zambrano	APAIS
		Gabriela Quezada	APAIS
2009	Canada and United States	Linda Machuca	APAIS
		Francisco Waiking	APAIS
	Europe, Asia, and Oceania	Dora Aguirre	APAIS
		Washington Cruz	APAIS
	Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa	Eduardo Zambrano	APAIS
		Fernando Flores	PRIAN
2013	Canada and United States	Ximena Peña	APAIS
		Alex Guamán	APAIS
	Europe, Asia, and Oceania	Dora Aguirre	APAIS
		Esteban Melo	APAIS
	Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa	Eduardo Zambrano	APAIS
		Diana Peña	APAIS
2017	Canada and United States	Ximena Peña	APAIS
		Byron Suquilanda	CREO
	Europe, Asia, and Oceania	Esther Cuesta	APAIS
		Esteban Melo	APAIS
	Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa	Mauricio Zambrano	APAIS
		Juan Fernando Flores	CREO
2021	Canada and United States	Mónica Palacios	UNES (CD–FCS)
		Ángel Maita	PACHAKUTIK
	Europe, Asia, and Oceania	Gustavo Mateus	UNES (CD–FCS)
		Esther Cuesta	UNES (CD–FCS)
	Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa	Eduardo Zambrano	UNES (CD–FCS)
		Juan Fernando Flores	CREO

Source: Fliess (2021); Umpierrez de Reguero & Dandoy (2020).

Beyond the electoral impact, which is the main focus of this dissertation, albeit not the only one, the substantive representation has allegedly improved by reserving legislative seats for nonresident citizens, according to some of my interviewees. Although pertaining to the ruling party in the period 2007–2017 ensured better chances of passing a bill (Llanos Escobar & García Vinueza, 2018; Huertas-Hernández, 2020); assembly members from the overseas districts appear to be quite proactive[8] (ECU1, March 27, 2020; ECU4; April 11, 2020). Their representation is not only limited to pork-barreling, but some of them have also held leadership positions within the legislative commissions (e.g., Dora Aguirre) and even sought the presidential office of Ecuador (e.g., Ximena

[8] See Palop-García (2018) for a more detailed analysis of the substantive representation of nonresident Ecuadorians.

Peña in 2021), which might be a proxy of their interest of national issues. Despite usually proposing projects in relation to their scope of action, namely: human mobility and migrant governance; these representatives tend to have high rates of party discipline when issues of national interest are both debated and voted on (Paredes, 2018). In short, this case –which took the expansive route of *de facto* emigrant enfranchisement as compared to Chile and Spain– illustrates how emigrants' special representation can favor or harm the descriptive composition of the national legislature.

Table 6.2. Seat Share Obtained by APAIS / UNES with(out) Emigrants' Seats (2007–2021)

Legislative Election	# Seats within Ecuador	# Seats in overseas districts	% Seats obtained by APAIS / UNES (without emigrant seats)	% Seats obtained by APAIS / UNES (with emigrant seats)
2007	73	6	58.87%	60.77%
2009	53	5	44.92%	47.58%
2013	94	6	71.76%	72.99%
2017	70	4	53.44%	54.01%
2021	45	4	34.35%	35.77%

Notes: The total seats in the national legislature have varied over time. In 2007, the Constituent Assembly had 130 seats (including 6 emigrant seats). In 2009, the National Assembly embodied 124 seats (with 6 emigrant seats). In 2013–2021, the legislature was composed of 137 seats (also including 6 emigrant seats). *Source*: National Electoral Council (2021).

6.3.3. Interregnum Effect, but not Direct Representation, in Multi-Level Elections: Spain

Despite being able to vote in legislative elections like Ecuador, Spain has several communalities with Chile. The Spanish electoral system does not stipulate emigrants' special representation. Notwithstanding it is a debated issue, especially among left-wing parties. While swing effects are rather common (see Section 6.2), participants' narratives powerfully suggest that the impact is marginal, if there is one, at the national level (e.g., ESP6, May 14, 2020; ESP8, May 12, 2020). At the regional level, this depends on each autonomous regional parliament. Although as suggested by the quotation in Section 6.2.3 (from ESP11, June 17, 2020), the begged vote has reduced the risks for any meaningful impact on the electoral outcomes within Spain.

As anticipated, the issue of emigrants' special representation and the creation of one or more districts abroad is a contested issue. A debate on the creation of an overseas district with special representation has already been raised in the Spanish parliament (e.g., La Región Internacional, May 9, 2017) and so far, rejected (España Exterior, May 19, 2022). Over the last years, Podemos has been the party that has led this proposal. Yet, the materialization of overseas districts coupled with a provision to hold special representation depict a constitutional challenge (ESP5, May 19, 2020; ESP6, May 14, 2020; ESP7, June 3, 2020).

> "In Spain, there is a complex obstacle, namely, we do not have the system of Ecuador or France [sic], which have several districts depending on where their emigrants live […]. In Spain, the problem is that article 68 of the Constitution says that the district is the province. There are 52 provinces. Therefore, [to apply special representation and/or overseas districts] the constitution must be changed, and changing the constitution is not easy". (ESP5, May 19, 2020)

Beyond the fear of creating an overseas district, mainly from the mainstream parties, and granting direct representation to nonresident citizens, it is a possible incentive for more fraudulent and patronage practices—interviewees asserted (ESP4, May 20, 2020; ESP5, May 19, 2020). Mainstream parties hide behind the existence of a consultative council for the representation of emigrants' civil associations (i.e., General Counsel of Citizens abroad).

At the regional level, Galicia is perhaps the one with the most advanced special representation project; in other autonomous communities such as Catalonia this effect is not so widely perceived by the public opinion and authorities (ESP9, July 3, 2020). Even Lugilde Pardo (2010, pp. 237–244), in his doctoral dissertation on Galician external voting, has dedicated an entire sub-section on the creation of an overseas district at the regional tier (similar to some states in Mexico).

Table 6.3. Examples of Seats Changes in the Spanish Regional Elections given Overseas Votes

Autonomous Community	Year of Election	Benefited Party	Debilitated Party
Galicia	1989	PSOE	BNG
Andalusia	1990	PSOE	PP
Galicia	1997	PP	BNG
Canary Islands	1999	PP	CC
Murcia	1999	PSOE	PP
Canary Islands	2003	CC	PSOE
Castille and Leon	2003	PSOE	UPL
Valencia	2007	PSOE	PP
Galicia	2009	PSOE	PP
Basque Country	2009	PSOE	EA

Source: Lugilde Pardo (2010, p. 312).

Notes: CC=*Coalición Canaria*. UPL=*Unión del Pueblo Leonés*. EA=*Eusko Alkartasuna*. See Figure A2.

Lugilde Pardo (2010) analyzed the impact of overseas votes in Spanish elections focusing on the regional and local levels, particularly in Galicia. He shows how the conversion of votes into seats has shifted the descriptive composition of several Spanish regional parliaments, especially from 1995 to 2008—the so-called 'explosion' period in terms of the impact of overseas votes in Spanish elections (see Table 6.3). More interestingly, Lugilde Pardo (2010, 185) pinpointed a clear-cut example of interregnum effect following Gamlen's conceptualization, which was in the 2005 Galician election. In brief, as the pre-electoral coalition *Partido dos Socialistas de Galicia* (PSdeG)–

PSOE profited from nonresident citizens' voter turnout, Manuel Fraga (PP) –the then president of the Galician Parliament for 16 years– did not obtain the absolute majority, allowing the PSdeG–PSOE together with the GNB to form government under the leadership of Emilio Pérez Touriño.

6.4. When Incumbents are Affected by External Voting Rights

Discussing swing and interregnum effects of nonresident citizens' voter turnout, especially the last one of Manuel Fraga in Galicia, is conducive to explore the incumbency effect in a more in-depth way. To do so, in this section, I introduce two mechanisms to connect the incumbency presence with the transnational arena, when the incumbent is favored and when is challenged. Still, here I keep consistency with the three scenarios or pathways theorized in Section 6.1: in Ecuador, external voting rights have clearly favored the incumbent; in Spain, this effect is oscillating and somewhat aligned with the principal-agent theory in which voters can reward or punish the incumbent (e.g., Ferejohn, 1986); and in Venezuela, the incumbency and *de facto* emigrant enfranchisement seem to be rather opposed or inverted, yet not politically divorced.

6.4.1. Expansive External Voting Rights in Ecuador: When the Incumbent Is Favored

Prior to the application of external voting rights in 2006 (see Chapter 4), Ecuadorian traditional parties were in genuine decline, particularly in the 2006 presidential elections (Mainwaring, 2006). As a result of a decade of political instability (from 1996 to 2006, eight different presidents governed Ecuador), this situation favored the victory of Rafael Correa—a maverick candidate in the 2007 presidential elections (Machado Puertas, 2007). One year earlier, Correa founded APAIS as a national political movement with the support of indigenous social movements and labor unions (Collins, 2014). He presented APAIS as a viable alternative to the traditional parties (e.g., ID, PRE, and PSC); in his own words: the "*partidocracia*". In 2006, Correa won the run-off at the national level within the country, but not abroad. Álvaro Noboa (PRIAN) obtained the largest share of the overseas votes. In 2007, Ecuadorians within the country voted again in a larger share to APAIS than nonresident citizens. Table 6.4 shows the average vote share for APAIS for different types of elections (presidential and legislative for the two types of seats) for the 2006–2017 period. By framing a political strategy denominated as "permanent campaign" (Conaghan and De La Torre, 2008), Correa and APAIS swiftly seized most electoral districts in Ecuador. Between 2009 and the first round of the 2017 presidential elections, APAIS even gained a higher vote share in the overseas districts than within the country, particularly in the Europe, Asia, and

Oceania district. This political movement profited from the crisis of representation and generalized public disaffection to position itself as the best political option in Ecuadorian politics (Basabe-Serrano, Pachano & Mejía-Acosta, 2010; Machado-Puertas, 2008). After arranging a constituent assembly that entirely reformed the 1998 constitution, Correa won two consecutive presidential terms in 2009 and 2013 without a ballotage. The referendum for the approval of the 2008 Constitution also provided a good source of nationwide electoral success for APAIS (even in the three overseas districts). In one year, the political behavior of overseas voters shifted from political organizations such as PRIAN and RED to APAIS, probably because of the 2008 Constitution and the presidential speeches that recognized larger social and political rights to emigrants (Ramírez Gallegos, 2018) and the populist appeal of Correa (Jakobson *et al.*, 2022).

Progressively, Correa and his political movement concentrated more power by winning elections and by endorsing constitutional amendments and reforms.[9] In 2011–2012 period, Correa vetoed and proposed variegated electoral rules altering all the state branches and the mass media (Basabe-Serrano and Martínez, 2014; Freidenberg, 2012; Meléndez & Moncagatta, 2017; Navia & Umpierrez de Reguero, 2021). In those reforms, Correa's initiatives successfully passed. During his first terms (2007–2013), Correa's Ecuador experienced an economic bonanza, driven by the rise of oil prices on the international market, which was employed to back up the APAIS' manifesto among the nonresident citizens. Correa made use of this bonanza to strengthen the state-diaspora nexus, by investing in transnational social programs through the former National Secretariat of Migration (SENAMI) (see e.g., Boccagni, 2011a; 2014; Ramírez Gallegos, 2018).

As a result of global oil prices and an increasing foreign debt, in 2012-2013 economic expansion was delayed (Gallagher *et al.*, 2013), reducing public investment (Jara-Alba and Umpierrez de Reguero, 2014; Meléndez and Moncagatta, 2017). The economy sturdily decelerated in 2014–2015 (Vera and Llanos-Escobar, 2016), causing an apparent damage on the electoral support for APAIS. In the 2014 local and regional elections, APAIS lost 10.8% of its seats and several strategic local governments compared to 2009 (Dandoy, 2014). But the decline in popularity seemed slower among the Ecuadorians living abroad and a survey done among Ecuadorian emigrants in Spain showed that more than 70% of them indicated a vote intention for APAIS in 2014 (Iglesias *et al.*, 2015).

In 2017, APAIS nominated Lenin Moreno – the vice-president in the first two-terms of Correa – as a presidential candidate. In that electoral contest, Moreno won the ballotage against candidate Lasso (CREO) with no more than 2.5% points of difference in terms of vote shares at

[9] See Fröhlich (2021) to get more details on the influence of APAIS in the constitutional reasoning in Ecuador.

the national level (0.6% in the overseas districts). This may suggest that it is not only MPAIS and its incumbency that captured votes outside of Ecuador but rather Correa's personalistic appeal, supporting Jakobson and colleagues' (2022) conclusion on the relation between populism and campaigning across borders. In the run-off, Guillermo Lasso retained higher vote shares in 13 out of 24 provinces and 2 out of 3 overseas districts. A large proportion of Ecuadorian voters living in Latin America, the United States and Canada shifted their preferences from APAIS to CREO (Navia & Umpierrez de Reguero, 2021). Emigrants became critical of Correa and APAIS after the corruption scandals during Correa's 2013–2017 term and the way that the government managed the aid that migrant civil associations and nonresident Ecuadorians collected to support the victims of the April 2016 earthquake. The exception is to be found in Ecuadorian voters living in Europe, particularly in Spain, that remained loyal to MPAIS (Umpierrez de Reguero & Dandoy, 2020). Ecuadorians residing in Spain represent a considerable number of voters, and a large share of them are those who emigrated because of the economic crisis at the end of the 1990s (Ramírez Gallegos and Ramírez Gallegos, 2005). Consequently, they are unwilling to vote for candidates as Lasso, because of his perceived implication in the crisis (ECU13, July 3, 2020).

6.4.2. Spain: When the Incumbent is not Always Popular among Nonresident Citizens

Analogous to Ecuador, the Spanish incumbency effect of nonresident citizens' voter turnout is largely present in the public opinion and parliamentary debates from time to time. To a large extent, this is explained by the strategic interest of the mainstream parties to capture overseas votes, especially in countries of residence with a sizable community of Spaniards such as Argentina or France. As underscored in the previous sections and in Chapter 4, the multiple efforts of PSOE and PP not only to campaign abroad and recruit militants, but also to create party branches and migrants' civil organizations abroad have been continuous (Østergaard-Nielsen & Ciornei, 2019b; Vintila *et al.*, forthcoming). Yet, it seems that in both national and subnational the traditional left-wing PSOE have long benefited for the votes of nonresident Spaniards, more than any other national or regional political party (see Tables 6.3 and 6.4).

Table 6.4. Most-voted preferences in Spain, abroad and domestic (%, 1986–2019)

	Most-Voted Preference (Abroad)	%	Most-Voted Preference (Domestically)	%	Incumbent Effect	Amendments to Emigrant Enfranchisement
Legislative 1986	PSOE	46.0	PSOE	44.1	Yes	No*
European 1987	PSOE	45.4	PSOE	39.1	Yes	No
Legislative 1989	PSOE	52.3	PSOE	39.6	Yes	No
European 1989	PSOE	47.2	PSOE	39.6	Yes	No
Legislative1993	PSOE	55.9	PSOE	38.8	Yes	No
European 1994	PSOE	50.0	PP	40.1	Yes	No
Legislative 1996	PSOE	56.5	PP	38.8	No	Yes**
European 1999	PSOE	42.1	PP	39.7	No	No
Legislative 2000	PP	42.1	PP	44.5	Yes	No
Legislative 2004	PP	43.7	PSOE	42.6	Yes	No
European 2004	PSOE	52.5	PSOE	43.5	Yes	No
Legislative 2008	PSOE	57.5	PSOE	43.9	Yes	No
European 2009	PSOE	55.8	PP	42.1	Yes	No
Legislative 2011	PSOE	38.5	PP	44.6	No	Yes***
European 2014	PSOE	29.2	PP	26.1	No	No
Legislative 2015	PP	23.7	PP	28.7	Yes	No
Legislative 2016	PP	28.7	PP	33.0	Yes	No
European 2019	PSOE	25.2	PSOE	32.9	No	No
Legislative 2019	PSOE	26.9	PSOE	28.7	Yes	No
Legislative 2019	PSOE	27.5	PSOE	28.2	Yes	No

Source: INE (2020).
Note: Legislative elections are at the national level. (*) The first election after the implementation of the LOREG. (**) Registration by the consulate archives; (***) the electoral reform to beg the vote (see Chapter 4 for more information).

Taking the illustrative example of Galicia, the role of the party branches and the visits of regional high representatives of the above-mentioned parties to select Latin American and European countries prior to the elections have been pivotal (Lugilde Pardo, 2010). Xerardo Fernández Albor (PP), president of the Galician Parliament in the period of 1982–1987, started the tradition to build electoral bonds between Galicia and those co-nationals residing in Argentina, Brazil, France, Mexico, Switzerland, Uruguay and Venezuela. This practice continued with the election of Fernando González Laxo (PSOE) as the Galician regional government's president in 1987 and the subsequent winners onwards. Indeed, Lugilde Pardo (2010) shows pertinent statistics on official visits of regional presidents of 11 autonomous communities in the country[10] from the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation suggesting this strategic role.

[10] Andalusia, Asturias, Baleares, Basque Country, Castille and Leon, Catalunya, Extremadura, Galicia, La Rioja, Murcia, and Navarra.

As underlined in the case of Manuel Fraga (see Section 6.3.3), nonresident Spaniards can reward or punish the incumbent. While overseas votes indirectly support the first governments of Fraga in the regional presidency by voting PP in the ballot, in 2005 they shifted their electoral preferences to PSOE, allowing them to regain the office with Pérez Touriño.

Beyond the regional governments, it seems that nonresident Spaniards are one step forward as compared to the domestic electoral preferences—at least in national legislative and European Parliament elections (see Table 6.4). Keeping in mind the two uneven vote shares (abroad and domestic), nonresident Spaniards might be eager to reward or punish the incumbent faster and harder than domestically because of their context living abroad, probably comparing the outcomes of their residence country with those of their homeland. Table 6.4 also gives a trace of the gratitude model of emigrant enfranchisement (Turcu & Urbatsch, 2021b). Even if ungenerizable, there is a relation between the incumbent and the amendments to emigrant enfranchisement, except for the supranational election of 2019.

Either at the national, European or subnational levels, the Spanish case is worth mentioning here given its relatively long-term experience of *de facto* emigrant enfranchisement. This feature may be the core reason to understand an oscillating perspective toward the incumbent, not as the case of the Ecuadorians residing in Europe that fervently vote for Correa or for his candidate or political option. Most probably, this dynamic electoral trajectory (between 1986 and 2019) correlates with the influence of different emigration contexts, providing relevant insights for a future research agenda on vote choice by generations of migrants in multi-level settings.

6.4.3. Restricting External Voting in Venezuela: When the Incumbent is Challenged[11]

Unlike Ecuador and Spain, now I outline a pathway toward restriction to be consistent with the theoretical model posited in Figure 6.1. As mentioned in the very first pages of this chapter, below I utilize the Venezuelan case instead of the Chilean, to dive deeper into the mechanism *when the incumbent is challenged* for a practical rationale: electoral trajectory with external voting.

In Venezuela, *de jure* emigrant enfranchisement was adopted in 1993, under the right-wing government led by the then President Rafael Caldera, founder of the National Convergence Party. To a large extent, the enactment occurred as a result of the pressure from nonresident Venezuelans, similar to other Andean cases (Araujo, 2010; Escobar, 2015). Yet, mainstream parties were hesitant to implement external voting rights until the period of 1998–1999. This concurred

[11] This sub-section expands the analysis elaborated in Umpierrez de Reguero et al. (2021).

with the ascension of Hugo Chávez into the presidential office, repeatedly classified as an inclusionary radical populist (see e.g., Hawkins, 2010; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013). In 1999, less than 4,000 nonresident Venezuelans participated in two referenda: one to support or reject the necessity of a new constitution, and another to approve the constitutional draft. In these elections, emigrant enfranchisement for nonresident Venezuelans was both promulgated and applied in the 2000 Constitution (Escobar, 2017; Umpierrez de Reguero *et al.*, 2020).

After this constitutional reform, Chávez was reelected with more than 56%, yet Venezuelans living abroad were not electorally aligned with that trend (see Table 6.5). Chávez obtained about 25% of the overseas votes, as nonresident Venezuelans favored the then opposition candidate, Francisco Arias Cardenas from *Causa Radical* (CR). Before the 2006 presidential election, Chávez and his party, the *Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela* (PSUV), introduced an amendment to the Electoral Law to restrict external voting rights' access and eligibility. This amendment stipulated that nonresident Venezuelans present a valid residence card or visa in their passports issued by their residence country. This immediately excluded some dual citizens from voting in Venezuelans elections (Bello, 2018) and other nonresident citizens who cannot renew their passport on time give the lack of state services in this matter (VEN4, August 3, 2020; VEN5, September 5, 2020).

Table 6.5. Voter Turnout in Venezuela, Abroad and Domestic (%, 2000–2013)

Coalition	Gran Polo Democrático			MUD (2008–2018)		
Political Party	PSUV			(CR, NT, JP)		
	% (Abroad)	% (Domestic)	% (Difference)	% (Abroad)	% (Domestic)	% (Difference)
Presidential 2000	25.91	56.97	-31.07	70.32	35.71	34.61
Presidential 2006	24.47	62.96	-38.49	75.37	36.80	38.58
Presidential 2012	8.45	55.33	-46.87	90.54	44.52	46.02
Presidential 2013	7.43	50.79	-43.36	92.48	48.95	43.53

Source: CNE (2020)

Whereas the dominance of the ruling party gradually increased within Venezuela, the electoral register of overseas voters remained almost the same over time and their votes increasingly favored the opposition, both in presidential elections and referenda—basically in all elections that nonresident Venezuelans have active electoral rights. To unfold this argument, for example, around 92.5% of nonresident Venezuelans voted for Henrique Capriles from the *Partido Justicia* Primero (JP) in 2013. Yet, there is evidence of Venezuelans residing in electoral and closed autocracies such as Cuba showing overwhelming support for the ruling pre-electoral coalition in every election between 1999 and 2018 (CNE, 2020). Interpreting the results of Chapter 3, this may

be justified by the regime similarities shared by the Cuban and Venezuelan political environments, as well as their proactive bilateral relations.

After Chávez's death in March 2013, the then vice-president Nicolás Maduro got into power, first by a constitutional arrangement and then by the popular vote (running against Capriles in the 2013 run-off). Since his 'reelection' in 2018, external voting rights for Venezuelans have suffered various arbitrary barriers—in addition to the eligibility restrictions defined by law—namely a lack of information on voting procedures, tight deadlines for registration, a reduced number of extraterritorial polling stations (e.g., closing the diplomatic office in Miami), and diplomatic authorities' unwillingness to change electoral domicile (Umpierrez de Reguero *et al.*, 2020; VEN1, August 1, 2019; VEN2, September 10, 2019). Indeed, the 2018 Presidential Elections serves as an unambiguous example verifying the restrictiveness of *de facto* emigrant enfranchisement. As of the beginning of 2022, the nonresident citizens number was approximately six million, due to the Venezuelan exodus (R4V, 2021), but only about 110,000 could and/or were registered to vote in the last election (CNE, 2020). It seems that the fear of Venezuelan's authorities toward this niche of voters goes hand-in-hand with the autocratization of Nicolas Maduro's regime.

As nonresident Venezuelans have tended to vote significantly for opposition actors as compared to the *chavismo*, Venezuela is the clear example of *de facto* emigrant enfranchisement toward a restrictive pathway over time. On paper, Venezuelans living abroad can only cast their vote in-person at any diplomatic office if they are properly registered by the diplomatic officers (Umpierrez de Reguero *et al.*, 2021). As many have fled the country, they failed to update their legal documents[12] to establish a legal status in the residence country (Acosta *et al.*, 2019; Finn, 2021; Freier and Parent, 2018), thus not allowing them to exercise their rights from abroad.

The reform has tended to eliminate the possibility for certain emigrants to qualify as voters if they live abroad only temporarily or are in transit, which has been the case for many undocumented Venezuelans whose access may be completely denied. Restrictions stemming from registration requirements or procedures appear to be just as important as constraints on access and eligibility. When access requirements may be more inclusive to cast a vote, voting is significantly constrained by the preceding registration procedures (see Umpierrez de Reguero *et al.*, 2020; 2021). Overall, it seems that the 'hopes' of changing the political situation of Venezuela from abroad by voting are very limited or null, while the 'fear' of both (potential) voters and homeland authorities is higher over time.

[12] Particularly birth certificates and criminal background checks, which must be issued by the Venezuelan government.

Few Venezuelans have expressed their desire to avoid any interactions with diplomatic personnel, given their connection to Nicolas Maduro's government, particularly from his 'reelection' in 2018 (e.g., VEN1, August 1, 2019; VEN3, July 26, 2019). As Buxton (2018) rightly underscored, the current regime is seriously supported by the armed forces, as to maintain state administration composed by active and retired military. Hence, the emigrants' dislike and mistrust toward offices abroad and their diplomatic personnel are justified.

> "We are even scared to go to the embassy and give our name and sign up and the whole thing, because we feel like all of that is controlled by the government". (VEN3, July 26, 2019)

The second issue is that elections in Venezuela are not always free and fair (particularly the last one of 2018). The field of political competition is rather uneven, tipped in favor of the incumbent's political coalition within the country (Buxton, 2020; Coppedge *et al.*, 2021). Among the reduced number of Venezuelans able to register abroad, even fewer are eager to participate in homeland elections as a result of the fraudulent and undemocratic context of Venezuelan elections.[13]

In the 2018 Presidential Elections, the most relevant pre-electoral coalition of opposition political parties in Venezuela, *Mesa de la Unidad Democrática* (MUD), decided that no opposition candidate would run in those elections and started a campaign against electoral participation in response to the lack of transparency in the process. However, if one takes the results of 2013 Presidential Elections, opposition leader Capriles lost the elections by a minimum difference of 141,385 votes against incumbent Maduro—it is to say that if more Venezuelans living abroad would have been registered to vote, nonresident citizens' voter turnout could have swung the electoral results.

The Venezuelan case shows how many hurdles or obstacles an incumbent can impose to external voting right when (s)he is not favored by overseas voters. If electoral procedures such as registration abroad and the requirement of legal residency were to change, the number of voters abroad would increase and could even play a decisive role in electoral results, most likely favoring the opposition. Nevertheless, in practice, the difficulties for registration at Venezuelan diplomatic offices have led to a reduced number of voters (reaching only about 3% of the population abroad being eligible to vote) and the low number of registered voters means less chance that an opposition party could win an election.

[13] For more details on the ongoing situation of Venezuela see e.g., Polga-Hecimovich (2022b), as well as Rosales and Jiménez (2021).

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter contributed to previous large-N results reported in Chapter 5 with regard to the institutional-political effects of nonresident citizens' voter turnout. To do so, I employed different sources of information (e.g., electoral results, newspapers, interviews, parliamentary speeches) to delve into different pathways and mechanisms of swing, interregnum, and incumbency effects. Analyzing the presence and absence of these effects in Chile, Ecuador, Spain and Venezuela, this chapter provided an original model to unpack electoral changes over time and from a state-led perspective, including analyses of supranational, regional and national election levels. Importantly, I incorporated Venezuela in Section 6.4 to dive straight into the mechanism when the incumbency is challenged, leaving the Chilean case aside given its lack of within-country variation with external voting.

In Section 6.1, I thus outlined a theoretical model based on rational-choice assumptions to account for electoral changes in *de facto* emigrant enfranchisement. Of this effort, I only included three pathways to explore electoral changes affecting nonresident citizens' voter turnout in a comparative historical perspective: either (*a*) toward expansive or (*b*) restrictive *de facto* emigrant enfranchisement, or an (*c*) oscillating pathway, which is a combination of the above-mentioned alternatives. Following this structure, I used one out of the four cases per pathway, interchanging Chile for Venezuela when it comes to the incumbency effect; otherwise, respecting the same methodological approach posited in the Introduction and Chapter 4.

In Section 6.2, the three country cases analyzed (Chile, Ecuador, and Spain) revealed the endogenous nature of restrictiveness to elude consequential electoral actions. Additionally, it complemented previous expectations in this dissertation by connecting potential swing effects with electoral saliency, psychological shortcuts to distribute voting preferences, and time zones affecting the calculus of voting—independent variables that I did not consider in the statistical models presented in Chapter 5.

Keeping the analytic structure to examine *de facto* emigrant enfranchisement intact, I explore the interregnum effect in Chile, Ecuador and Spain in Section 6.3. Here, I dedicated a considerable part of the response to the parliamentary discussion or presence of emigrants' special representation within the country cases. On one side, the expectation that Chile and/or Spain enact, regulate and apply this type of provision to count nonresident citizens' voter turnout and directly choose emigrants representatives in overseas districts is latent. In Chile, the latest developments show how this case might take the expansive pathway in the future—becoming a case where interregnum effect may occur. Although the Spanish electoral system does not stipulate

emigrants' special representation, it has been a debated issue, especially among left-wing parties which are mostly in favor of the creation of an overseas district. This case also suggested the willingness of some sectors at the regional level to incorporate this policy. By studying Ecuador, on the other hand, this chapter also addressed how emigrants' special representation can favor or alter the descriptive composition of the national legislature—more symbolically than substantively though. Furthermore, this section reported several insights on seat changes owing to overseas votes in a multi-level scenario.

Finally, in the Section 6.4 I studied the incumbency effect in Ecuador, Spain, and Venezuela, revealing different mechanisms that associate the incumbent leader, party, or pre-electoral coalition with nonresident citizens' voter turnout. Whereas overseas votes in Ecuador have tended to support the *correismo,* the Venezuelan external voting has been gradually constrained because the *chavismo* has perceived nonresident citizens a threat, showing the opposite side of the coin. In the middle, Spain illustrates a case in which overseas voters can punish or reward the incumbent depending on the elections, particularly if there has been an amendment or electoral reform affecting their rights.