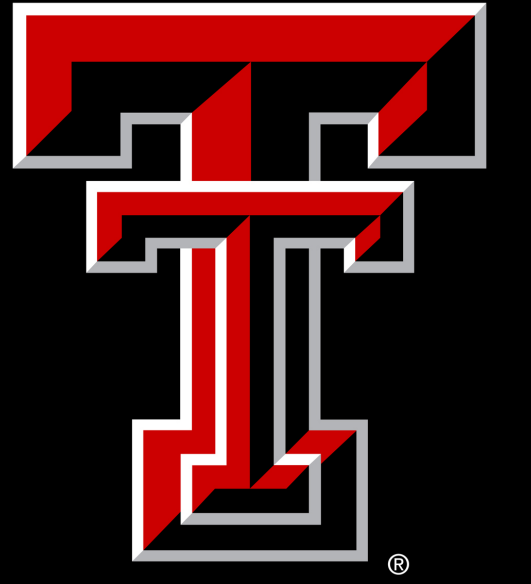




Enfranchisement of the Diaspora: A case-study of International Districts for National Assembly Elections in Ecuador

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1. Introduction

How the implementation of international districts for legislatures' elections affect the quality of democracy on a given country? At the individual level, how it will change the behavior of its citizens living abroad? The premise here is to provide empirical foundation to the claim established within democratization theories that the implementation of these institutions is the result of the increase in the quality of democracy.

This study has both normative and theoretical implications:

- Normatively: international districts at the legislative level will imply that the state is giving more rights to citizens living abroad and will signal a better quality of democracy.
- Theoretically: previous research on enfranchisement rights for expatriates has been done on the sub-field of democratization (Table 1) and proposed theories on why and how empirically this came to be.

Table 1. Theoretical Expectations of Enfranchisement of Citizens living abroad.

Theory	Assumption	Motivation
Quality of Democracy Caramani and Grotz (2015)	Enfranchisement of citizens living abroad and non-resident citizens improves democracy	Liberal expectation of improving individuals rights
Democratic Citizenship Bauböck (2015)	Democracy must provide voting rights for residents and expatriates alike	Citizens are subject to participate in the polity
Migration and Democratization Laffeur (2015)	The interaction between migration and democratization provide new rights	Governments need participation of expatriates for economic reasons
Extra-territorial constituencies Collyer (2014)	International districts defy the classical notion of state	States acting rational will try to maintain linkages with expatriates

2. International Districts in the World

This is a rare institution in the world that signals a better quality of democracy (Collyer, 2014):

- It has been implemented in 13 countries (Collyer, 2014): Algeria, Cape Verde, Colombia, Croatia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Italy, North Macedonia, Mozambique, Portugal Romania, and Tunisia.
- Only four of them are considered full democracies. Colombia, Dominican Republic and Ecuador are *party-free* (Freedom House, 2019).

This study focuses on how the implementation of international districts for legislative elections will the quality of democracy (political dimension) and how will change the behavior of citizens living abroad (economical dimension). Effectively testing the competing claims of *quality of democracy*, *democratic citizenship* and *economic citizenship*.

3. Data

The case-study of Ecuador from 1986 to 2017 is used in this research. Also a pool of countries similar to Ecuador following these criteria was selected:

1. Underwent mass migration and receives 2/3 of the remittances below or over Ecuador's remittances inflow.
2. Have a similar petroleum/mineral activity.
3. Did not implement International Districts for legislative elections.

Table 2. Variables employed to study the implementation of International Districts in Ecuador from 1986 to 2017.

Variable	Type	Source
Liberal Democracy Index	Dependent	Teorell et al. (2018)
Personal Remittances	Dependent	World Bank (2019)
GDP <i>per capita</i>	Indicator	World Bank (2019)
Population (<i>logged</i>)	Indicator	United Nations (2019)
Trade Openness	Indicator	World Bank (2019)

4. Methods and Results

For this study, the Synthetic Control Method (SCM) is employed following Abadie, Dimand and Hainmueller (2010) in order to see changes across time of our dependent variables. After applying the similarity to find countries similar to Ecuador 24 countries remained in the pool of donors. The *pre-treatment* period is from 1986 to 2008 and the *post-treatment* period is from 2009 to 2017 after the constitutional reform that implemented international districts for National Assembly elections which is the treatment of this study.

Two experiments were carried out in order to test the change in the quality of democracy (political dimension) and the inflow of personal remittances (economical dimension) in Ecuador.



Figure 1. Results for the first SCM experiment: (a) Liberal Democracy of Ecuador vs. synthetic Ecuador, (b) Placebo effects on the 24 donors as a robustness check.

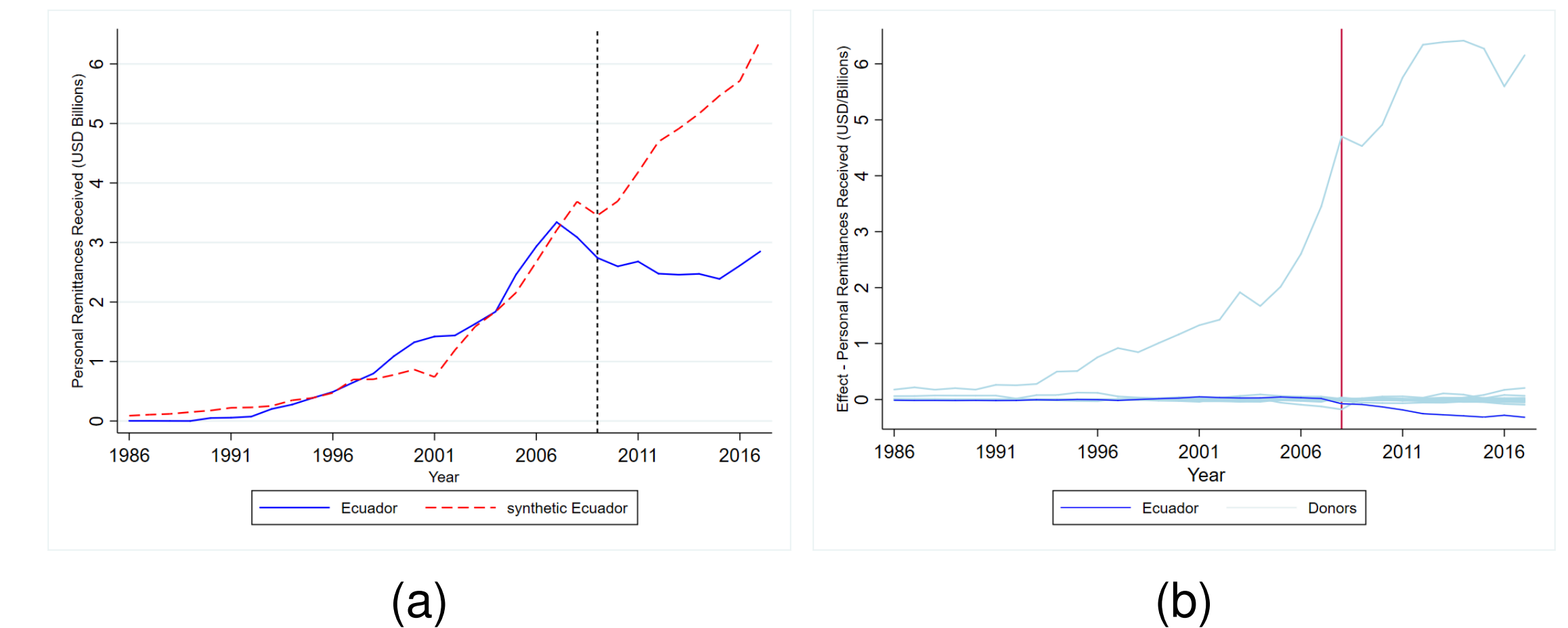


Figure 2. Results for the second SCM experiment: (a) Personal Remittances Received in Ecuador vs. synthetic Ecuador, (b) Placebo effects on the 24 donors as a robustness check.

5. Conclusions

- The implementation of international districts in Ecuador (a semi-democracy) does not necessary leads to a more democratic nor economic developed country.
- Extending political participation to expatriates does not imply that they will contribute economically to their country of origin.
- In future iterations of this research, the behavior of political parties and their interest of implementing these institutions in order to increase their relative power must be addressed.

This research is expected to stand out on the formation of institutions, especially on novel democratic ones like International Districts. Also, it is expected to provide policy recommendations for other countries with a similar institutional setting like Ecuador (mainly Latin American countries) on electoral and constitutional reform to enfranchise their citizens living abroad after a mass migration process.

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