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The Domestic Politics of Policy Diffusion

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The Domestic Politics of Policy Diffusion

by

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Abstract

The Domestic Politics of Policy Diffusion

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2024

Supervisor: Kurt Weyland

Why do some policies diffuse faster and to more countries than others? My dissertation provides a novel theory of policy diffusion. My research design, comparing the different diffusion patterns of three policies in Latin America, overcomes a long-lasting deficiency in the policy diffusion literature. Studies have focused almost exclusively on cases that diffused fast to many countries. This collective selection bias generated a theoretical oversight. Studies mistakenly consider the spread of information about a policy as a sufficient explanation for fast and widespread diffusion. My work focuses on the necessary domestic step, in which policymakers decide whether to enact and implement the idea. The speed and breadth of policies' diffusion patterns depend on those decisions in multiple countries.

With a focus on Latin America, I argue that presidents are the most influential policymakers. They apply institutional powers to fast-track the adoption of some models and to block the adoption of others. The expectation about the policy's political effects on

their popularity and electoral prospects determines presidents' behavior. In short, policies that generate immediate political gains for the executive will be fast-tracked in multiple countries, resulting in a fast and wide diffusion. Policy models that reduce presidents' electoral chances will be repeatedly blocked or delayed, failing to diffuse. In between, policies without a clear electoral effect will be adopted through normal policymaking and are likely to diffuse slowly to multiple countries.

I apply a comparative process-tracing analysis of three policies: conditional cash transfers (CCTs) diffused quickly to most countries in the region; public-private partnerships (PPPs) diffused widely but slowly; and electronic voting machines (EVMs) diffused to only a couple of countries. Official documents and secondary data from eighteen countries reveal that presidents used their powers to accelerate the adoption of CCTs because the policy could increase their popular support among beneficiaries. In turn, they withheld investments in EVMs, which could alter voters' behavior and jeopardize presidents' expected electoral support. And these same chief executives initiated PPPs' adoption but refrained from interfering in Congressional debates and implementation because the policy has limited effects on popularity. In-depth interviews from Colombia and Argentina confirm the political rationale that motivated presidents' behavior.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

On October 29, 2009, Argentinian president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner surprised the country with a new policy. In a large room within the presidential palace, she announced a new social program that would cost the equivalent of US\$2,574,000,000. Speaking to members of the cabinet, provincial governors, congresspeople, leaders of social organizations, bureaucrats, journalists, and TV cameras, the president explained the new project. The government was going to pay an allowance to every child in the country whose parents earned less than the minimum wage. Those payments, the president promised, would start in November. The announcement was unexpected even for the bureaucrats who had to implement the new policy.

I almost dropped dead. We had 2 million children [registered in governmental programs] without any records about their parents, and I would have to find out their income in a matter of days. (...) And we knew that there were more children that we did not even have registered.¹

The program, called Universal Allocation per Child [Asignación Universal por Hijo], resulted from closed meetings between the president and a handful of ministers. It remained a secret within the cabinet until the official announcement that followed its creation by presidential decree.² Kirchner presented the policy as an anti-cyclical response to the global economic crisis that started in 2008, but she had her own political problems in mind as well. The president's approval ratings had plummeted from 50% in

¹Interview with former bureaucrat at ANSES involved in the implementation of AUH (February 2020).

²Speech available at <https://www.casarosada.gob.ar/informacion/archivo/21538-blank-13587957>

early-2008 to 30% in mid-2009, and her party had suffered a defeat in the mid-term elections. She expected the allowances to quickly boost her popularity, putting an end to that political downturn. This expectation explains the unilateral and hasty adoption of the program.

The Universal Allocation per Child is Argentina's version of the widely spread Conditional Cash Transfer (CCTs) model. Devised as a national policy by Mexico in 1997, CCTs diffused to almost all Latin American countries in a "tidal wave" (Sugiyama, 2011: 255). Across the region, presidents adopted the model unilaterally and rushed its implementation in ways similar to Cristina Kirchner's adoption. In total, sixteen countries enacted and implemented the model following the Mexican example in twelve years – a rate of 1.3 adoptions per year.

Not all policies diffuse that quickly. Consider the case of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), which establish legal frameworks for construction and management of public infrastructure by private investors. These partnerships allow governments to build a road, for example, without any immediate cost. The private partners are responsible for raising credit to fund the project, and they get paid in the long term either by the government or by users. Developed first in the United Kingdom, this model arrived in Latin America in the 1990s and was first adopted by Chile. Rather than rushing the model's adoption as in the case of CCTs, presidents interested in the policy introduced it in Congress and waited for the normal policymaking procedures. Implementation was also not a priority. It took twenty-four years for fifteen other countries to enact the model

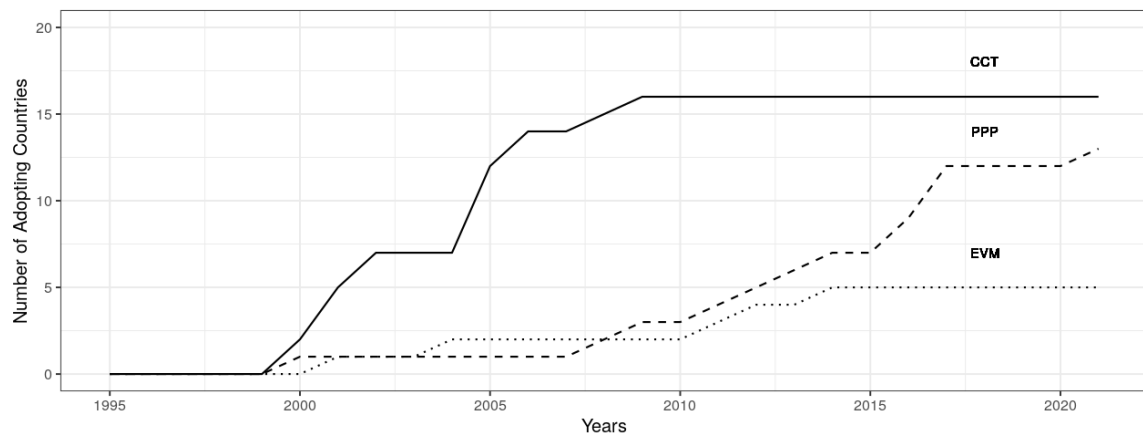
and only thirteen used the policy in at least one project presented to investors (see Figure 1.1). Considering implementation, PPPs' diffusion rate reached 0.6 adoptions per year.

Indeed, some policies fail to diffuse to more than a handful of countries, like Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). This model debuted in Latin America in Brazil's 1996 elections. The immediate success of these machines in guaranteeing a speedy and clean vote count sparked great interest among specialists and bureaucrats abroad, who promoted the Brazilian innovation as an example to be imitated. Many countries did pilot tests that yielded positive results and elicited enthusiasm from voters, but presidents did not share the same enthusiasm. More than simply not presenting the policy in Congress, they actively attempted to stall or veto its adoption. EVMs, therefore, diffused in a trickle flow. Nine countries in the region enacted the innovation, but only five implemented the machines in national elections following the Brazilian model (see Figure 1.1). EVM's diffusion rate remains at 0.2 adoptions per year. Even more striking, out of these five, only Venezuela and Paraguay implemented voting machines in a large scale. The other three countries never had machines for more than 11% of the electorate.

These three processes present a puzzle for the understanding of policy diffusion. All three policies were easily-available models with reported success from the start. Policymakers could use these well-defined innovative ideas from abroad as a blueprint that already worked elsewhere. Moreover, international organizations and powerful countries organized events and publications to disseminate information about these policies, provided technical support for domestic bureaucracies, and even offered financial help to countries willing to adopt them. That international promotion came on

top of the normative attractiveness of the models. The three policies were attuned to global norms and values that were at their height in Latin America during the 1990s and 2000s: poverty alleviation and creation of human capital for CCTs, public management and private efficiency for PPPs, democratic transparency and technological development for EVMs. If everything favored the transmission of these policies from one country to the other, why did they diffuse so differently?

Figure 1.1: Implementations of CCT, PPP, and EVM in Latin America³



That specific question concerning the three cases embodies this dissertation's general purpose: to understand why some policies diffuse much faster and to more countries than others. My research suggests that the decisive factor is what presidents expect from each policy idea they learn from abroad. That expectation is the key causal variable to explain why some policies are adopted quickly by most countries, others slowly by many countries, and yet others haphazardly by just a few countries. In the aggregate, a fast sequence of adoptions in most countries forms a surge of diffusion like

³This graph does not include the innovators: Mexico (CCT), Chile (PPP), and Brazil (EVM).

the one of CCTs. By contrast, a small number of adoptions scattered across time generates the trickling pattern of diffusion of EVMs. In between the two, a slower pace of adoptions that eventually reaches many countries forms the diffusion wave observed with PPPs.

What presidents want from a policy, above anything else, is that it helps them remain in power and win future elections. Maintaining their and their parties' control over the country's politics is the central concern of any ruler. That control is the best way for them to attain any other political or even personal objective. For that reason, the first aspect a president considers when evaluating a policy model from abroad is: what effect will it have in the next elections?

I argue that presidents' interest in the electoral impact of a policy explains why it may diffuse fast to many countries or slowly to a few countries. The diffusion of a policy is the process through which an innovative model devised by one country gets adopted in other countries. This requires the international spreading of information about the policy, and then the political decision of governments to adopt it following the original model (Weyland, 2004: 14). In this two-step process, chief executives act as gatekeepers for their countries, using policymaking powers to rush the adoption of some policies while vetoing others. Their choices depend, primarily, on the electoral prospect generated by the policy in question. As a result, policies that enhance presidents' chances in future elections are likely to find many presidents willing to quickly enact and implement them, which adds up to a fast diffusion wave. On the other hand, policies that may risk presidents' political futures will be vetoed or ignored by most presidents, resulting in only

a few adoptions here and there in a slow and haphazard diffusion pattern. In turn, policies that are not expected to generate large immediate effects on presidents' electoral prospects will spread more slowly, but eventually reach many countries.

1.1: THE ARGUMENT IN BRIEF

This dissertation explains why some policies diffuse faster and to more countries than others. My unit of analysis is the public policy, and my outcome of interest is the pattern in which a policy diffuses internationally. The argument starts from a conceptualization of diffusion as a two-step process. In the first step, information about an innovation created in one country is communicated to other countries by many different actors like activists, bureaucrats, international organizations, parties, and specialists. After the transmission of information, the second step of diffusion occurs in the domestic settings, when countries adopt that policy, enacting and implementing it. Both steps are necessary for diffusion (Rogers, 1995: 161; Weyland, 2004: 14). Even if information about two policies spreads widely and quickly, they diffuse very differently if most units adopt one and reject the other.

The first step of diffusion is the easy one. There is a multitude of actors promoting policy ideas: epistemic communities (Haas, 1992), elites (Smith, 2018), parties (Böhmelt et al., 2016), non-governmental actors (True and Mintrom, 2001), transnational networks (Keck and Sikkink, 1998), international organizations (Hanson, 2003), social movements (Garay, 2016), and bureaucrats (Weyland, 2006). They spread the news about some policies' successful results elsewhere, put pressure on governments to adopt these

policies, and create normative expectations around them. The second step is the real challenge. Yet, it has been neglected by most of the literature on diffusion. To diffuse successfully, a policy must traverse the domestic policymaking process in multiple countries. This constitutionally defined process grants institutional powers to politicians, who may easily block the adoption of a policy idea irrespective of how many actors promote it from abroad.

Not all politicians have the same powers, though. The executive branch is usually the most powerful policymaker (Kingdon, 2011), especially in presidential systems that abound in Latin America (Figueiredo and Limongi, 2000; Scartascini, 2008; Morgenstern et al., 2013). Presidents are the protagonists of my theory. They act as rational gatekeepers of policy diffusion. Out of all the innovative ideas that spread into a country, the executive picks some to push through policymaking and others to block. It uses institutional powers to set the agenda (Figueiredo and Limongi, 2000; Scartascini, 2008), command the bureaucracy (Inácio and Llanos, 2016) and execute the budget (Bonvecchi and Scartascini, 2011: 35-36; Hallerberg et al., 2009: 301-307) favoring some policy models and hampering others. The fate of a policy idea that reaches a country depends mainly on the executive's decision to adopt it or not. Even if congresspeople and other domestic actors may play a relevant role in the adoption or rejection of a policy in some countries, they are not the main drivers everywhere. A policy's aggregate diffusion pattern depends mainly on whether presidents in most countries decide to adopt or reject it, and how quickly they follow through with that decision.

What are the fundamental interests of presidents? The common assumption is that they want to remain in power (Ames, 1987; Stokes, 2001: 7). Still, all democratic rulers eventually reach the end of their terms. Most presidents in Latin America maintain a political career after leaving the palace, either as candidates for other political offices or as prominent leaders in their political parties. In addition, many presidents have relatives or allies building political careers as heirs of their political legacy. In all cases, presidents' concerns extend to electoral prospects in the future, be it for themselves or their political allies. In order to remain in power and to win future elections, presidents need two things. The first is popular approval, which protects them from impeachment (Pérez-Liñán, 2007; Hochstetler, 2006) and empowers them in political negotiations (Lovett et al., 2015; Calvo, 2007; Cohen, 2013; Altman, 2000). Second, presidents must transform that support into votes through an electoral system and a set of electoral rules that favor their campaigns.

This means that a policy idea that promotes those interests stands out before the eyes of chief executives in most countries. They will enact and implement such a novel policy as soon as possible, using institutional powers like decrees and their control over the bureaucracy to fast-track its adoption. On the other hand, policy ideas that challenge those interests generate concerns among presidents in most countries. They will use their powers to veto the policy's enactment and block its implementation. Finally, policies that do not directly affect those crucial interests may be attractive to some presidents, but they do not generate a nearly universal reaction among rulers. Most presidents will not have a strong preference for or against these policies, and even those interested will typically let

the enactment and implementation processes follow normal procedures. In the aggregate curve of adoptions, the first type of policy will diffuse quickly to most countries. The second one will diffuse haphazardly only to a few countries (if at all). And the third one will diffuse at a slower pace but may reach many countries over time.

Applying the Argument

In short, my argument rests on the fact that domestic governments' decisions to adopt or reject a policy model from abroad determine the model's diffusion pattern. The core question to test that theory is: Why do governments react differently to policy ideas that the existing theories expect to be seamlessly adopted? Or more concretely, considering that the ideas of CCTs, PPPs, and EVMs were promoted in similar ways across countries: Why did most governments quickly enact and implement CCTs? Why did it take much longer for them to do the same with PPPs? And why did most of them reject EVMs?

Presidents expected the cash transfers from CCTs to quickly boost their popularity, with immediate effects on their ability to remain in power and win future elections. This perception finds an echo in academic discussions about the policy (De La O, 2013; Diaz-Cayeros et al., 2016; Hunter and Power, 2007; Layton and Smith, 2011; Zucco, 2008). For that reason, presidents fast-tracked CCTs. In all but one country, they quickly enacted the policy using decrees to circumvent Congress. After that, they also pushed for a hasty implementation. In most countries, a large portion of the poor population started receiving the money within one year. Interviews with cabinet members

and bureaucrats confirm that the expected popularity boost was the main motivation behind these rushed adoptions (see Appendix A for a list of interviews). This trend typical to most countries in Latin America is what generated the policy's surge of adoptions in twelve years.

PPPs may be desirable for several reasons, but they do not directly affect interests common to all presidents, like CCTs. The benefit of starting infrastructure projects without immediate costs to the public budget does not generate an immediate impact on approval ratings and electoral prospects. Bureaucrats interviewed for this research described that the policy's adoption followed the arrival of new presidents who had campaigned promising the development of infrastructure. This was the case for Juan Manuel Santos in Colombia and Mauricio Macri in Argentina. But even those leaders did not rush the adoption because the policy would not quickly affect their most fundamental interests. Rather, they took a careful approach to ensure the model would have strong foundations. Almost all countries enacted the PPP framework through Congress, and implementation was generally done in a slow process that took many years. As a result, the policy diffused slowly across Latin America and it never reached as many countries as CCTs.

In the case of EVMs, the features that made the innovation desirable among specialists, bureaucrats, NGOs, and international organizations, also rendered it undesirable for presidents. First, the transition from paper ballots to a screen may alter voters' behavior, and it is not easy to predict in which direction they might change.⁴

⁴Even academic studies on the topic have found different results (see Calvo et al., 2009; Katz et al., 2011; Leiras and Calvo, 2011; Desai and Lee, 2021).

Second, EVMs' centralization of electoral management reduces the advantage of large parties, usually the ones in control of the executive. It prevents most types of fraud at the polling station from which these established incumbent parties could benefit disproportionately. It also reduces the need for party observers at every polling station, something that large parties in control of the government would have the ability to do much better than small parties. Presidents in most countries realized that EVMs could jeopardize or harm their own and their parties' electoral chances. For that reason, they did not initiate enactments of the model. The few enactments that did occur happened mostly during political crises when large traditional parties lost their preponderance. Even after enactments, most countries failed to fully adopt the model because presidents prevented the implementation after the crises ended. These crises are rare. In the aggregate, we observe a haphazard pattern of enactments and only two implementations on a large scale.

1.2 – BROADER RELEVANCE

Diffusion studies suffer from a collective selection bias towards cases of fast and wide diffusion (Rogers, 1995: 100). In the policy diffusion literature, almost all research revolves around models adopted by many countries. The wide range of policies analyzed includes social security (Collier and Messick, 1975), privatizations (Meseguer, 2004), gender quotas (Piscopo, 2015), and value-added taxes (Kato, 2003). The studies describe these policies' diffusion as fast and wide patterns: "one of the most striking cases of convergent policy change" (Kollman, 2013: 1), an innovation that "spread to almost all

corners of the world" (Erkkilä, 2020: 3), a process that "has indeed exploded" (Jordana et al., 2011: 1344), or a "rapid global diffusion (...) unprecedented in the postwar era" (True and Mintrom, 2001: 30). These descriptions showcase a lack of parameters: diffusion patterns are described in vague terms, and there is no way to compare the diffusion of different policies. They also make it clear that the selection bias is purposeful: authors justify the cases they study with the fact that they diffused quickly to many countries.⁵

The problems selection bias generates for estimation are well-established (King et al., 1994: 129; Geddes, 2003: 129). In the study of policy diffusion, Karch et al. (2016) identified systematic estimation errors caused by selection bias. Qualitative scholars have argued that process-tracing analyses on single cases do not have to worry about that type of problem (Collier et al., 2004). However, despite the individual value of each case, this type of bias is a problem if an area of study, like policy diffusion, relies mainly on cases selected because of their value on the outcome – irrespective of being treated quantitatively or qualitatively. In a situation like this, selection bias creates issues of theorization because it limits the potential explanations considered for a phenomenon, causing the neglect of other causes. If variation in the outcome is truncated, a necessary cause may be mistakenly identified as a sufficient one, swaying the attention of future research away from other necessary causes. By selecting only cases with a high value on the outcome, researchers inadvertently study cases in which all the necessary causes are present. If they are only focused on one of these causes, they may ignore that the others also play a role.

⁵Exceptions here include Moehlecke (2020) and Weyland (2006).

This is the situation in the policy diffusion literature. Several causal variables have been identified as sufficient for fast and wide diffusion. These variables can be divided into three theoretical frameworks (Weyland, 2005). First, theories of rationality (Meseguer, 2004; Makse and Volden, 2011) and bounded rationality (Weyland, 2006) argue that governments quickly adopt policy innovations if the models are simple and have a record of positive results. Second, theories of imposition (Eichengreen and Rühl, 2001; Hanson, 2003) state that great powers and international organizations can force or persuade countries to adopt a novel policy. Third, theories centered on values and ideas (Meyer et al., 1977; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998) posit that governments' quest for legitimacy lead them to adopt policies attuned to global norms. The three theories are often presented as mechanisms of diffusion (Mooney, 2020). The learning mechanism reflects theories of rationality, the coercion mechanism matches imposition theories, and the emulation mechanism fits theories centered on values and norms. In all three frameworks, adoption is determined by a causal variable located in the first step of diffusion, in which a policy idea is transmitted across countries.

In actuality, the presence of at least one of these theories' causal factors may be necessary for diffusion, but even together they remain insufficient. Theories of policy diffusion have successfully explained one aspect necessary for policy diffusion: the dynamics through which information about models is transmitted. However, they mistakenly assume that governments' decisions depend exclusively on that external promotion of the model. That neglect of theorization about the second step has been possible because of the selection bias. Almost all studies are centered on cases with high

values of the outcome, in which the second step is necessarily present and can be assumed to be an epiphenomenon of the first. It is only by analyzing variation in the outcome, in other words, policies' different diffusion patterns, that one can identify that a policy may be successful, promoted by international organizations, and attuned to legitimizing norms, and still be rejected by multiple countries.

After the idea of an innovative policy reaches other countries, diffusion only happens if their governments act politically to enact and implement it. Political action in the second step is also necessary for policy diffusion. Some studies get closer to that analysis of domestic adoption. Jordana et al. (2011, 1347), for example, discuss adoption processes as integral to the dynamics of diffusion. Approaches centered on domestic characteristics, like the executive's ideology (Gilardi 2010), the size of the state and the economy (Francesco 2012, 1287), or even the level of repression (Meseguer 2004), are useful to explain why some countries are early or late adopters. Usually included in statistical models, these variables cannot explain why two policies diffuse differently across the same set of countries. My main contribution lies in my focus on the policymaking process, and on presidents' central role in it, which determines policies' diffusion pattern across multiple countries.

Comparing Policies' Diffusion Patterns

Even recent articles in the international policy diffusion literature maintain the same patterns of the previous decades, in which a single policy is selected as a case of fast and comprehensive diffusion (e.g.: Son and Böger, 2021; Chalmers et al., 2023;

Hearson and Tucker, 2023). Unfortunately, that type of research yields limited added value to the general study of diffusion beyond the information about that particular case. The focus on a single policy model selected for its fast and wide diffusion precludes a proper classification of the diffusion pattern in relation to other models. Was its diffusion faster than the average diffusion pattern among other policies? How many countries must adopt a policy for it to be considered a successful case of diffusion?

This dissertation advances in solving that problem by comparing three policy models, mainly because they have different diffusion patterns. In particular, it responds to Etel Solingen's (2012) request for studies about cases of slow diffusion. The model of electronic voting machines diffused slowly and only to a few countries, despite a successful first step in which information about it spread to most countries with support from international organizations and following norms of democratic expansion. The two other policies selected also allow for a better understanding of the range of diffusion patterns beyond the single-case studies in the literature. The comparison of diffusion patterns, including conditional cash transfers and public-private partnerships, together with EVMs, covers three very different patterns in the outcome. It provides a more realistic and valuable understanding of diffusion patterns, allowing future research to make more informed decisions about which cases to study.

The Domestic Resistance to External Forces

My first theoretical contribution lies in refocusing the debate around policy diffusion on the political interests that dominate domestic politics in most countries.

Gilardi and Wasserfallen recently recognized the neglect of politics “as a significant weakness” (2019: 1246) in diffusion studies. In different work, Gilardi (2010) shows that governments’ ideological positions determine who they learn from, and what information they prioritize, but that is not the same as understanding policymakers’ motivation to adopt or reject the policy. In order to take domestic politics seriously as part of the explanation of why some policies diffuse more and faster than others, I follow Rogers’ suggestion to look at “an innovation through the eyes of their respondents, including a better understanding of why the innovation was adopted or rejected” (Rogers, 1995: 111).

From the perspective of presidents, the multiple factors in the first step of diffusion cannot directly determine their decision to adopt a policy. My findings show that the promotion by an epistemic community, with evidence of success in other countries, cannot convince politicians of adopting a policy that may endanger their electoral prospects. Presidents rejected EVMs despite a strong wave of support for the model in Latin America, and even countries that used these machines in some elections rarely implemented them on a large scale. PPPs did not diffuse as fast as they could, even with clear success abroad, because some governments were not interested in the model – including right-wing ones like Colombia’s Álvaro Uribe. And even when presidents interested in infrastructure gained elections, they did not use their powers to accelerate the policy’s implementation, which often took many years. By contrast, the story of CCTs is not one of a well-designed idea that takes over Latin America thanks exclusively to its effectiveness. The reality, confirmed in interviews, is that presidents pushed bureaucrats to enact and implement the policy faster than was advisable, aiming for a

popularity boost. The expected political effects of a model are more important for its diffusion than the effects it may have in solving problems in society.

The same is true for the role of international organizations. Despite IOs' efforts to promote their favorite policies, national rulers ultimately maintain their autonomy to accept their suggestions or not. Governments rejected EVMs even when the Organization of American States offered financial support for their adoption. Interviewees are clear in explaining that presidents openly ignored that promotion. Similarly, they were not swayed by the World Bank's excitement about PPPs. In the case of CCTs, Chapter 4 provides a surprising finding: international organizations in fact delayed the policy's adoption. Countries that received support from these organizations were forced to break down implementation into multiple pilot tests and evaluations – making the process slower than in their neighbors. The idea of coercion as a strong mechanism that imposes the adoption of policies in countries may be true for specific cases, but it cannot be considered a general explanation of diffusion patterns.

Finally, the emulation of policies in a quest for legitimacy is also not a sufficient cause of diffusion. The establishment of global norms through networks of activists and transnational organizations may very well facilitate the dissemination of a new policy idea, but it is not what drives governments to adopt that idea. This normative imitation may be important for autocratic governments that need to look more democratic (Hyde, 2011) but it cannot be considered a general argument that explains diffusion across multiple policies, especially in more democratic settings. Rulers will not risk their

political future, or the future of their allies, in exchange for legitimacy in the international community.

An Institutional Approach to Diffusion

Some approaches in the literature get closer to the political decision-making process regarding policy adoption, but they still underplay the agency of policymakers. A focus on public pressure may identify voters who know about policies from abroad and request them from the government (Linos, 2013). Or social movements may mobilize to push politicians into acting in favor of some policies (Garay, 2016; Diaz-Cayeros et al., 2016). Alternatively, the power of businesses may influence policymaking in favor of policies that protect their interests (Fairfield, 2015). These arguments depict policymakers as weak and merely reactive. But tracing the adoption processes for my three cases showed a proactive executive branch, which examines policy ideas from its viewpoint and fast-tracks the adoption of some models while blocking others. These governments anticipate their moves to adopt or reject models depending on the reaction they expect in society - rather than waiting for society to request the models. Presidents are gatekeepers of policies from abroad, with clear political objectives.

My argument approaches the problem following institutional perspectives to policymaking (Skocpol, 1992; Spiller et al., 2008). Most importantly, presidents in Latin American countries have institutional powers that magnify their abilities to determine the fate of policy models from abroad, such as the control over the political agenda in Congress, the unilateral powers to enact a policy, and the control over bureaucrats to rush

its implementation. They are not reactive actors simply responding to public pressure or international influence. Instead, they take proactive action to ensure the safety of their government and their future in politics.

My attention to the institutional aspects of policymaking also highlights the difference between devising a new policy and adopting a readily available model from abroad. Creating a new policy involves a pre-institutional stage of debates to define the policy problem and create a solution, which necessarily involves multiple sectors of the government and civil society actors. The situation is different when there is a developed policy model from abroad. That policy has survived lengthy debates in other countries and has already arrived at a clear definition of the problem and its solution. In this situation, presidents have an even more significant impact on policymaking. They can circumvent the lengthy debates with specialists and present the foreign blueprint, accelerating its enactment and implementation with their institutional powers. The same type of adoption may be harder for policies domestically designed from the start, given the larger involvement of multiple social actors and organizations.

The institutional perspective applied to diffusion places the sequential stages of policymaking as a guideline for my process tracing analysis. While some previous research about diffusion highlights different aspects of policymaking (Karch, 2007; Gilardi et al., 2021), a comprehensive study of the process is necessary to understand the preponderance of presidents. My study traces the three institutional stages of policy adoption: the initiation of policies, their legal enactment, and their subsequent implementation. The first stage shows that presidents' initiative is critical for the

successful diffusion of policies to many countries. Nearly all adoptions of CCTs and PPPs resulted from the executive's decision to introduce the bill in the policymaking process. The second stage also highlights presidents' power: all but one country first adopted CCTs through unilateral enactment by the chief executive, accelerating its sequence of adoptions. PPPs' slower diffusion reflects presidents' lack of rush to adopt that model. And EVMs faced the resistance of the executive branch in multiple countries.

Finally, the analysis of the third stage is a significant contribution of my research to the literature. Studies of policy diffusion largely ignore the implementation of policies. Most authors use the year of enactment to mark the moment of adoption, which provides a precise official date that is easy to check. However, a policy that only exists on paper cannot count as a full adoption. Adopting a policy requires implementation. Coding patterns of diffusion considering only enactments may overestimate the speed and breadth of diffusion. This dissertation shows that implementation may take several years, as happened in many adoptions of PPPs. Or it may never occur even after enactment, as was the case for EVMs in several countries. Beyond the time it takes, the form of implementation may reveal the motivations behind adopting a policy. Presidents can hasten or stall a policy in this stage, thanks to their control over the budget and the bureaucracy. The rushed implementations of CCTs generated problems only in features of the policy that do not affect the payment of benefits, so as not to harm the programs' ability to boost presidents' support. Ignoring implementation in policy diffusion means misidentifying diffusion patterns and missing important information as to why governments adopt some policies and not others.

1.3 – RESEARCH DESIGN

This dissertation combines a comparison across policies with process-tracing analyses within each policy. The empirical strategy is tailored to solve the selection bias in the literature and to test the theoretical arguments described above. The comparison uses Mill’s method of difference to confirm the effect of domestic politics in diffusion patterns among three policies that cover a large range of the outcome. The process-tracing analysis builds the causal argument by showing empirically that presidents fast-tracked CCTs, let PPPs follow normal adoption procedures, and acted to prevent the adoption of EVMs. To trace presidents' expectations that motivated those decisions, evidence from in-depth interviews allows for the reconstruction of decisions about these policies in Colombia and Argentina (see Appendix A for a list of interviews). The findings confirm the centrality of popularity and electoral prospects in presidents’ motivations.

Case Selection

A crucial element of this project's empirical strategy is to analyze policies that present very different diffusion patterns, including a case of slow diffusion to only a few countries. I purposefully selected my cases based on the values of the outcome, to overcome the literature's selection bias toward cases with fast and widespread diffusion.⁶ Figure 1.1 shows the variation in diffusion patterns of the three policies selected as cases for this study: fast to many countries in CCTs, slower to many countries in PPPs, slow to a few countries in EVMs. In itself, this comparison contributes to the field by providing

⁶See King, Keohane, and Verba (1994: 148) for the appropriateness of selection on the outcome in this situation.

data and detailed information about two policy cases not previously discussed in the literature, and adding to the debates about CCTs. More generally, these policies reflect the wide range of diffusion patterns.

Beyond the variation on the outcome variable, the choice of these three policies also follows Mill's method of difference (Gerring, 2017: 114-116) with the goal of isolating the second step of the diffusion process. In other words, the three models fulfill the conditions theorized in the literature as key causes of diffusion, which are variables that propel the spreading of policy ideas in the first step of diffusion. The most similar design also controls for other factors that could affect their diffusion patterns. The three policies are from the 1990s, to eliminate confounders related to technology and regional political shifts. They all established new paradigms in their issue areas (Hall, 1993). They are clear self-contained models (Weyland, 2004: 7-8). And they were discussed by a large range of transnational actors, like epistemic communities, networks of bureaucrats, non-governmental organizations, and activists.

Conditional Cash Transfers are a targeted income distributive policy that provides direct cash installments to families in extreme poverty, so long as their children maintain regular attendance in school and healthcare appointments. Mexico first adopted the model as a national program in 1997. The policy was incredibly successful and was quickly recognized as an effective tool against poverty (Skoufias et al., 2001; Rawlings and Rubio, 2003; Rawlings, 2005) – fulfilling the expectation of theories of rationality for diffusion. The World Bank championed conditional cash transfer programs, together with UNICEF and other entities (Milazzo and Grosh, 2008; Garcia and Moore, 2012; von

Gliszczynski, 2015) – which should generate diffusion according to theories of imposition. Finally, CCTs were also attuned to new values related to social development and the creation of human capital in what was called a "Development Revolution" (Hanlon et al., 2010). As theories of normative imitation would expect in that case, CCTs diffused very quickly to almost all countries in the region.

Public-Private Partnerships are an innovation that transfers the financial risks of large infrastructure projects from the state to private companies – allowing for faster and more rational development in sectors like transportation. The model generates new rules for the relationship between governments and contractors (OECD, 2008: 17), which relieves the State of initial costs and financial responsibilities. PPPs' early success was so impactful that they became an element of the New Public Management paradigm (Schedler and Proeller, 2001: 164-165; Yescombe and Farquharson, 2018: 451-453). The policy idea spread internationally through different channels, including epistemic communities, bureaucrats, and businesses. Theories of rationality would predict fast diffusion thanks to the availability of information and early success. PPPs were also widely promoted by international organizations. The World Bank even hosts the Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility (PPIAF), a joint initiative Japan and the United Kingdom established in 1999 to catalyze the model. Theories of imposition would see that promotion as a cause of fast diffusion. Finally, PPPs association with New Public Management also shows its connection with emerging values and norms, such as administrative efficiency and transparency. Theories of normative imitation, therefore, should also expect this model to diffuse quickly to many countries. PPPs' diffusion was

far from the striking surge of adoptions experienced by CCTs, but the policy ended up reaching most Latin American countries, even if in a slower wave.

Electronic voting machines are computers specially designed for elections. They allow voters to select candidates. Then, at the end of the election day, the machines count the votes. The model generated high expectations among specialists and bureaucrats. Debates in the 1990s presented the technology as a positive innovation to improve democracy (Agboh, 1994: 22; Weinberg, 1990: 113; Nichols and Strizek, 1995; Hanmer et al., 2010: 130). In Latin America, the Brazilian machines employed in 1996 quickly gained attention as a successful experience (Matos, 1998; Chang Mota, 1998: 45). With Brazil's positive example, EVMs fulfilled the conditions for fast diffusion theorized in the literature. First, specialists and bureaucrats disseminated information about the model's great results. Following theories of rationality, this knowledge of success should have led other governments to adopt the model. Second, international organizations like the United Nations (UNGA, 2003: 8-9; UNGA, 2005: 15) and the Organization of American States (Tuesta, 2007: 78) provided resources and support for the adoption of EVMs, while Brazil offered to lend its machines. This promotion should have convinced governments to adopt EVMs, according to external pressure theories of diffusion. Third, democratic norms prevalent in Latin America in the 1990s (Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán, 2005) legitimized the innovation's promise of efficient and fraud-free elections. Following normative imitation theories, the policy should have diffused quickly. But only a few governments enacted EVMs in Latin America, and wide implementation only happened in two countries beyond Brazil. This policy, therefore, bursts the bubble of

selection bias in the literature. This is the most useful type of case in a study that revises extant theoretical arguments (Beach and Pedersen, 2019: 97).

The choice of three policies from different issue areas is purposeful. While a comparison within the same area would be important in any evaluation of policy impact, the objective here is to analyze why a policy diffuses or not. Comparing policies from the same area would violate the assumed independence across cases.⁷ If I compared CCTs with another social policy, for example, the second one could have failed to diffuse because all governments focused their attention on CCTs as a solution to poverty.

Table 1.1 summarizes the core of my case selection strategy.

Table 1.1: Case Selection Following Mill's Method of Difference

Cases	Outcome	Extant Theories' Variables (First Step of Diffusion)				My Focus (Second Step)
		Information Accessible	Early Success	Promoted by IOs	Attuned to Norms	
CCT	Surge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Quick Adoption
PPP	Wave	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Gradual Adoption
EVM	Trickle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Rare Adoption

The application of Mill's method of difference is centered on theoretical arguments. All variables from extant theories of policy diffusion, which center attention on how a policy spreads internationally, are the same for the three cases. These theories, therefore, are unable to explain the variation in outcome among the three cases. They cannot explain why CCTs diffused faster than PPPs, nor can they explain EVMs' almost

⁷This could be understood as a violation of SUTVA, adapting the terminology of quantitative causal inference for case studies (Gerring, 2017: 43; Barnes and Weller, 2017).

complete failure to diffuse. The key to solving that puzzle resides in the domestic setting. It is the governments' action in a majority of countries that determines whether the policy diffuses and how quickly.

Process-Tracing

The comparison above reveals the importance of the second step of diffusion, but it cannot prove that multiple presidents decided to adopt a policy quickly because they wanted to boost their popularity and increase their electoral prospects. The empirical basis for causality in this study is a process-tracing analysis of domestic adoptions of the three policies. My research traces the causal chain that starts with presidents' fundamental interests determining whether and how quickly they want to enact and implement a policy from abroad, which generates the aggregate diffusion pattern in the region as the same behavior is repeated in multiple countries. The evidence comes from documents and interviews about the adoptions of my three policies. Through a series of tests and the in-depth studies of these models' policymaking process in Colombia and Argentina, this analysis provides a qualitative understanding of each causal link in the argument.

One difficulty in tracing the domestic politics of policy diffusion is the need to follow what happened in all countries in the region. Diffusion is nothing but the aggregate of all individual domestic adoptions. For each policy, the domestic process in each country is one additional piece of evidence that adds to the understanding of the diffusion curve. Each country's adoption or rejection adds one "within-case observation" to the analysis, to use Brady and Collier's term (2004: 12). Luckily, policymaking is a

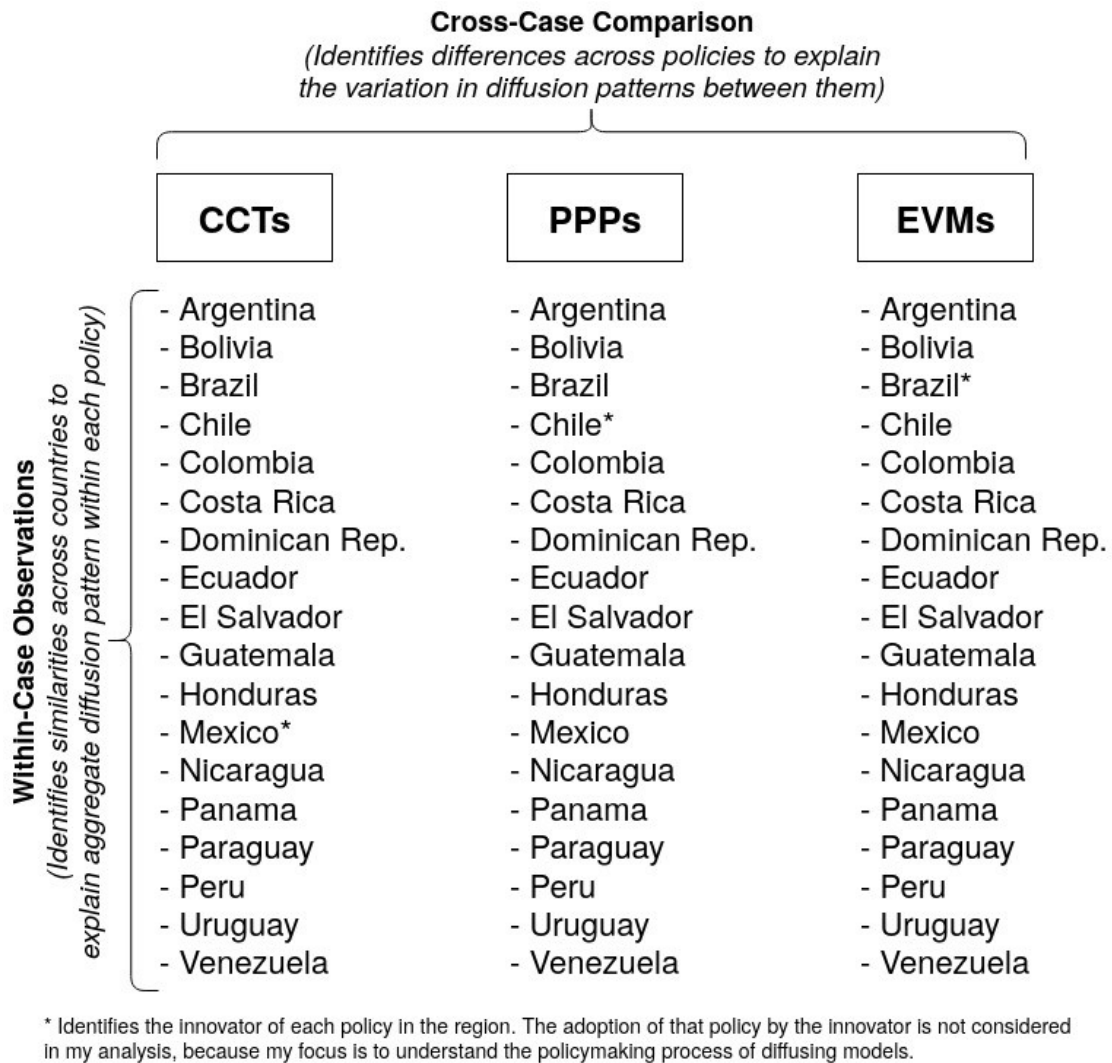
highly institutionalized and well-documented process, which makes it easier to trace each stage of it. I collected archival data from eighteen Latin American countries⁸ regarding the initiation, enactment, and implementation of each of my three policy cases. This data shows whether presidents initiated the policy, if they used unilateral powers to enact it, and how long it took for implementation. Additional contextual evidence helps understand the political situation at the time when the policies were considered.

Naturally, one should not expect all governments in the region to act in unison. But the second step of diffusion is important to explain diffusion patterns because presidents share the same fundamental interests, and therefore different governments across multiple countries tend to react similarly to each policy. My process tracing analysis identifies those similar decisions about each policy and connects them as a sequence that shapes the overall outcome of diffusion – even if not all governments follow the trend perfectly. In that vein, the argument works just like explanations of other aggregate outcomes. Elections, for example, are the result of multiple voters' decisions. Campello and Zucco's (2021) theory about voting under economic shocks explains why incumbents win or lose by describing a process common to most citizens: their evaluation of presidents is affectively charged by the economic situation and shapes their vote. It is not expected that every single voter will fit that behavior, but a majority of them should follow that logic if the theory explains electoral outcomes. Similarly, not all presidents must fast-track a policy for it to diffuse in a surge of adoptions, so long as a majority of them do so.

⁸All Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the exception of Cuba.

The within-case study of multiple countries is applied to all three policies, and together they allow for a comparative process-tracing analysis. This combination of different methods has been praised as a positive development in comparative politics (Bengtsson and Ruonavaara, 2017; Bennett and Checkel, 2015: 29; Koß, 2015), and specifically as the best way to study diffusion (Starke, 2013). My comparative analysis shows the causal argument in action through policymaking for each of the models. For example, CCTs' enactments happened mostly by presidents' unilateral action, while PPPs went through normal Congressional decisions. Similarly, the implementation of CCTs was rushed by presidents willing to boost their popularity, but in the case of EVMs presidents blocked the budget to prevent the use of machines. The way presidents act in the face of each policy model generates effects in the policymaking processes of most countries. And the differences observed in these key moments of policymaking explain the different outcomes: the surge of CCTs, the slower wave of PPPs, and the trickle-flow of EVMs. Figure 1.2 below presents a schematic view of the cross-case comparisons and the within-case observations.

Figure 1.2: Strategy of within-case and cross-case analysis



In-Depth Analysis: Colombia and Argentina

Beyond the policymaking process, my theory requires an assessment of presidents' expectations about the policies. It is impossible to know exactly what was on the minds of chief executives, but the rationale behind presidents' decisions was often shared with close contacts. I conducted approximately eight months of fieldwork in

Colombia and Argentina, and seventy-four interviews with people close to the decision-making process for the three policies, including cabinet members, bureaucrats responsible for implementation, politicians involved in the debates around those models, and local specialists (see Appendix A). These interviews revealed the motivations behind governments' choices, confirming that presidents' fundamental interests regarding popular support and electoral prospects explain their behavior towards policy models from abroad.

I selected Colombia and Argentina for fieldwork because they provide two very different settings to test the theory. While the selection of the policies followed a most-similar design to isolate the causal variable, the selection of these two countries shows that the theory works irrespective of political and social factors that could be thought of as confounders. Colombia and Argentina differ in geographical position, racial demographics, political ideology, foreign alignment, engagement with international organizations, and executive strength (Kestler et al., 2016). Moreover, they are positioned at different points of the adoption curves for both CCTs and PPPs, and had different processes to prevent the adoption of EVMs.

1.4 – OUTLINE

This dissertation proceeds to develop my argument and present the evidence from the comparative process-tracing analysis. The next chapter explains the theory in depth. It starts defining key concepts: patterns of diffusion, the diffusion process in two steps, the policymaking process, and presidents' interests. These concepts form the building blocks

of my theory. The theoretical argument is then presented in its full form, centered on the policymaking processes of each country. Finally, a set of hypotheses formalizes the theory into testable empirical expectations.

The third chapter tests some of these hypotheses in cross-case comparisons at a higher level of generalization. It is a shorter chapter using aggregate data from documentation collected on all countries to address the comparison between CCTs, PPPs, and EVMs at the regional level. It follows the policymaking processes to reveal differences in how most countries enacted the policy into law and implemented it. That chapter provides systematic evidence aggregating all countries for each policy to show that presidents acted differently depending on the policy.

Each of the following three chapters delves into one of the policies. They are case studies describing the models, showing how their ideas spread as expected by extant theories of diffusion, explaining the political expectations they generate for presidents, and analyzing their processes of adoption or rejection. These chapters develop the cross-country comparison to explain how similar policymaking dynamics are repeated in different national contexts. It also presents additional evidence from policymaking that helps infer presidents' motivations behind their actions regarding the policies. These chapters then move into the special analyses of Colombia and Argentina for a more detailed understanding of the process in domestic settings. Centered on interviews, these analyses reveal the connection between presidents' expectations about the political effects of the policy and their action toward its adoption or rejection.

The conclusion ties the theoretical arguments and the empirical findings together to build an overview of the research with a broader perspective. This final chapter discusses the generalizability of my argument regarding other policies and also other regions of the world. It provides ideas for future research about the role of domestic factors in policy diffusion, and the importance of additional inquiry from the perspective of receivers of policy models. Lastly, it opens up a debate about the relevance of my argument in the diffusion of other phenomena.

Chapter 2: Presidents, Policymaking, and Diffusion Patterns

Why do some policies diffuse faster and to more countries than others? My response to that question looks at policies from the perspective of adopters. Research on policy diffusion has neglected the impact of domestic politics on whether countries adopt a model from abroad and how fast they do it. Information about a new policy model can spread through many channels, promoted by international and transnational actors, but that is just the first step of diffusion. The necessary second step is the domestic adoption of the policy, which depends on an institutionally defined policymaking process. Policy adoption is only complete after the model's enactment into law and its implementation as a governmental program. The outcomes of interest in this project, policies' diffusion patterns, are nothing more than sequences of policy adoptions. The variation in these patterns reflects the number of adoptions and the speed with which they occur.

My theory, therefore, explains the pattern of diffusion of policies through an analysis of the domestic policymaking processes of adoptions. A policy's fate within a country's policymaking process determines if and when that country adds one more adoption to the model's diffusion pattern. However, the result is not only a rejection or adoption of the model. Adoptions may be delayed or fast-tracked by policymakers, which impacts the speed of the diffusion pattern. My data show that each model is adopted in similar policymaking processes across multiple countries. Typically, a policy is enacted and implemented in similar circumstances by most countries. When most governments

fast-track a policy to ensure a quick enactment and implementation, the result is a diffusion surge. When they let a policy move through the ordinary enactment and implementation processes, the result is a slower diffusion wave. Finally, when policymakers in most countries reject, block, or delay the adoption of a policy, the result is a trickle-flow of diffusion with only a couple of adoptions.

Having identified the mechanism, the question now is: what causes a policy to be fast-tracked, delayed, or rejected in policymaking? Or, even better, *who* causes that? My research shows the executive branch as the crucial policymaker, able to fast-track or block the adoption of models from abroad. This power results from institutions that privilege the executive, such as decree powers and control over the bureaucracy. Models attractive to most presidents are likely to be fast-tracked in most countries, which results in rapid diffusion. Conversely, policies that go against most presidents' interests tend to face rejection or delays, resulting in slow diffusion patterns with few adoptions. While Solingen (2012) urged diffusion scholars to look for "firewalls" that may prevent the diffusion of policies, my theory identifies presidents as rational gatekeepers who decide if a policy will "enter" through the fast-track of policymaking, move through the slower normal policymaking process, or be barred from adoption.

Presidents want to remain in power and elect their allies. Despite their ideological or programmatic differences, virtually all presidents share these interests. Therefore, these goals uniformly direct most presidents' decisions about policies from abroad. When they receive information about an innovative model, rulers' main concern is whether the policy impacts their chances of remaining in office and helping elect a successor.

Presidents accelerate the adoption of a policy if they believe it may help them stay in power and win future elections – generating a surge of diffusion. On the contrary, they block a policy if they think it might hinder their political standing and electoral prospects – which results in a trickle-flow of diffusion, at best. In between, policies that do not affect presidents’ fundamental interests move through the normal policymaking process – and diffuse in a slower wave.

My research combines the internal dynamics of policymaking with policy diffusion. By looking at presidents’ domestic political expectations as the cause for policies’ diffusion patterns, it uncovers the policymaking process as a mechanism these leaders can manipulate to accelerate or block the adoption of foreign models. However, it is important to note that this project explains policies’ diffusion patterns across a region, which requires a focus on the common aspects of policymaking that affect adoptions across multiple countries and governments. Country-specific or president-specific characteristics may affect policymaking differently within each country, but these differences are not within my scope because my focus is on the aggregate of policy adoptions or rejections as part of the diffusion pattern. The reasons why a specific country may be an early or late adopter of a policy, for example, are only tangentially discussed. What matters to test my theory is whether and why most countries accelerated or delayed the adoption of a model.

The following sections discuss the conceptualization and empirical assessment of my theory’s core elements before putting them together in a comprehensive argument and presenting the project’s central hypotheses. I start with my outcome of interest, diffusion

patterns, before discussing diffusion as a process. This distinction avoids the confusion between diffusion-as-outcome and diffusion-as-process highlighted by Elkins and Simmons (2005: 36-38).

2.1 – POLICIES’ DIFFUSION PATTERNS

The sequence of adoptions of a policy model in multiple countries creates the policy’s diffusion patterns, which is the object of my research. The prolific literature about policy diffusion still lacks a useful classification of these patterns. Different terminology is applied loosely to describe them, emphasizing how fast a diffusion was or how many countries adopted the model. Some authors apply the term “spread” (Sharman, 2008: 635; Gilardi et al., 2009: 553; Erkkilä, 2020: 3), even adding adjectives like “rapid” (Appel and Orenstein, 2013: 123; Weyland, 2006: 21; King and Sifaki, 2019: 44). Others use “proliferation” (True and Mintrom, 2001, 51; Cardenas, 2014: 33) or “contagion” (Boushey, 2010), but the most common term is “wave” (Elkins and Simmons, 2005; Brooks, 2005: 275; Kollman, 2013: 1; Appel and Orenstein, 2013: 137; Chwieroth, 2014: 759; Cederman et al., 2018: 1281).

Authors’ lack of clarity in describing diffusion patterns is evident once we compare multiple diffusion patterns discussed in the literature. Table 2.1 compiles data from selected studies. These policies diffused at very different rates and were adopted by very different numbers of countries – but they are all described with similar terms, like “waves”. In a single paper, Appel and Orenstein (2013) present two policies as examples of “rapid spread.” However, one was adopted by 84% of analyzed countries and the other

by only 60%, though at a much faster pace. Across multiple studies, comparisons are even more difficult given the different number of countries included as potential adopters and the different period analyzed.

Table 2.1: Diffusion Patterns in Examples of the Literature

Source	Policy	Countries Analyzed	Number of Adoptions	Years Analyzed	Adoptions per Year
True and Mintrom, 2001	Gender Mainstreaming	157	110 (70%)	23	4.78
Sharman, 2008	Anti-Money Laundering	193	171 (88.6%)	22	7.72
Gilardi et al., 2009	Hospital Finance	19	18 (94.7%)	23	0.78
Appel and Orenstein, 2013	Flat Tax	25	21 (84%)	17	1.24
Appel and Orenstein, 2013	Pension Privatization	25	15 (60%)	6	2.50
Kollman, 2013	Same-Sex Union	26	23 (88.5%)	22	1.05
Cardenas, 2014	Human Rights Institution	193	115 (59.6%)	42	2.74
King and Sifaki, 2019	Anti-Domestic Violence	193	157 (81.3%)	25	6.28

Throughout this literature, researchers have typically addressed a single policy – selected for its rapid and wide diffusion. Even the few studies directly comparing diffusion patterns (e.g., Moehlecke, 2020; Makse and Volden, 2011) have neglected a conceptual discussion of their dependent variables. At best, authors present diffusion patterns’ S-shaped curves as enough of a qualifier (e.g., Weyland, 2006: 25), without discussing how different these curves might be.

The outcome of interest in this study, policies’ diffusion pattern, refers precisely to the variation in those S-shaped curves, in a way that allows for fruitful comparisons.

The main features of these distributions are the slope and the upper asymptote (Mahajan and Peterson, 1985). The slope indicates the temporal dimension, or the policy's adoption rate. In turn, the asymptote represents the spatial dimension as the number or share⁹ of countries that adopted the policy. The graph below (Figure 2.1) illustrates S-shaped curves that vary on these parameters. The stereotypical S-shaped distribution, with a high asymptote and a steep slope, "describes only cases of successful innovation, in which an innovation spreads to almost all of the potential adopters in a social system" (Rogers, 1995: 275). Selection bias towards successfully diffused policies has led to a focus on models with a steep slope and a high asymptote, and a neglect neglect of models with a more horizontal curve. At the same time, imprecise descriptions of diffusion patterns based on vague terms have hindered comparability across diffusion curves with varying slopes and asymptotes.¹⁰

To ensure the comparability of cases, my research analyzes the diffusion of three policies within the same region, limiting the spatial dimension to eighteen Latin American countries. I also restrict the temporal dimension to a period relevant for all cases: the three policies debuted in Latin America almost simultaneously (in 1996 and 1997), and the analysis follows them until 2021.¹¹ More importantly, my cases varied on both dimensions within these spatial and temporal boundaries. Conditional cash transfers

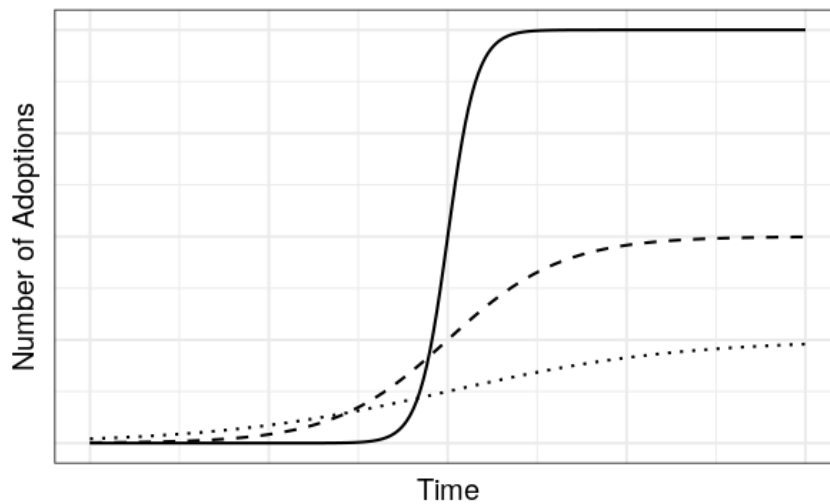
⁹Authors in the literature vary in using graphical representations to show the absolute number of adoptions or the share of adoptions as a percentage of all countries included in a study.

¹⁰Even studies that use event history models, which imply the diffusion curve in the calculation of hazard functions, rarely present the distribution of that function or the curve of adoptions in a way comparable to other policies' diffusion patterns.

¹¹The diffusion of CCTs ended in twelve years. That short period was not artificially defined for the research. It was how long it took for the policy to reach the asymptote: Sixteen countries adopted the model, and Venezuela still shows no interest in it. PPPs and EVMs' diffusion curves are ongoing. Some countries still debate enacting and/or implementing these models.

(CCTs) were adopted quickly by almost all countries – a pattern with a steep slope and high asymptote, which I call “surge”. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) took longer to diffuse to many countries – in an intermediate pattern that I named “wave”. Finally, electronic voting machines (EVMs) diffused to only a few countries in the same period – a “trickle” pattern with a very gradual slope and a low asymptote (see the diffusion graph for the three policies in Figure 1.1 on Chapter 1). The comparability of these cases allows for an investigation of what caused the variation in these policies’ diffusion patterns.

Figure 2.1: Curves with Varying Slope and Asymptote



2.2 – DIFFUSION AS A TWO-STEP PROCESS

Diffusion patterns are the outcome of diffusion processes, in which “prior adoption of a trait or practice in a population alters the probability of adoption for remaining non-adopters” (Strang, 1991: 325). Strang’s definition explains the S-shaped curve of diffusion patterns, with few early adoptions in the initial part of the curve that incentivize more adoptions, increasing the slope in the middle of the curve until the

diffusion process has reached all potential adopters, when it flattens again. However, a comparison of varied diffusion curves shows that the probability of adoption does not change in the same way for all policies. Why do early adoptions motivate fast diffusion in some cases, like CCTs, but not in others, like EVMs?

Looking for answers to that question, theories of policy diffusion focused on how the idea of a model created in one country travels to policymakers in other countries. Theories of rationality (Meseguer, 2004; Makse and Volden, 2011) and bounded rationality (Weyland, 2006) argue that models diffuse if they are simple and have a record of success from early adopters. Theories of imposition (Eichengreen and Rühl, 2001; Hanson, 2003) state that diffusion happens when powerful countries and international organizations apply their carrots and sticks to promote a policy idea to other countries. Finally, theories of norms and values say that policy ideas diffuse when they are attuned to global norms and legitimized by transnational activists (Meyer et al. 1977: 255; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Hyde, 2011). All these theories look at how the policy idea is framed and transmitted internationally, assuming that domestic adoptions of the policy follow from that transmission. This focus reflects a different definition of diffusion, proposed by Everett Rogers, centered on the transmission of the innovative idea. He understands diffusion as a “process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system” (Rogers, 1995: 5).

More recently, authors applied these theories to the study of diffusion mechanisms, maintaining the focus on information spreading and the assumption that this

spreading determines adoptions. Therefore, they present these mechanisms as sufficient factors to explain diffusion. The main mechanisms discussed in the literature are learning, competition, coercion, and emulation (Elkins and Simmons, 2005; Shipan and Volden, 2008; Maggetti and Gilardi, 2016; Mooney, 2020). The learning mechanism (Meseguer, 2004; Gilardi, 2010; Maggetti and Gilardi, 2016: 90) reflects theories of rationality. It occurs when information about a successful model created in one country makes other countries adopt the same model. For example, if a policy created in one country successfully reduces electoral fraud and accelerates ballot counting, other countries should learn about that performance and adopt the same policy. Implied in this argument is an expectation that positive information determines the results of domestic policymaking processes. Policymakers are swayed by the newly acquired knowledge of successful implementation elsewhere, irrespective of factors related to domestic politics.

The competition mechanism (Simmons and Elkins, 2004; Mooney, 2020: 21-25) applies the same argument of rational choice theories to rivalry situations. Information about a new policy that gives an advantage to a country makes its competitors adopt the same model. If a country creates a program that facilitates foreign investments and attracts investors, rival nations should learn about that success and adopt similar programs. Once again, the domestic political process of adoption is taken for granted in the argument. In this case, policymakers are swayed by the fear of falling behind because the policy was successful when adopted by a rival country.

The coercion mechanism (Levi-Faur, 2005; Shipan and Volden, 2008: 843) mirrors theories of imposition. In coercive diffusion, powerful countries and international

organizations apply sanctions or incentives to push governments into adopting a policy. The typical scenario is when an organization like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) promotes austerity policies by establishing their adoption as a condition for countries to receive loans (Brune et al., 2004; Henisz et al., 2005). As with the other mechanisms, domestic politics play no role in diffusion as theorized through this mechanism: policymakers have no choice but to accept the imposed model.¹²

Finally, the mechanism of emulation (Maggetti and Gilardi, 2016: 91; Fernández and Lutter, 2013; Greenhill, 2010) reflects theories of norms and values. It describes adoptions following a normative perception about the model, when the policy is attuned to current global norms and values and its adoption grants international legitimacy to adopters. For example, countries invite electoral observers in an effort to follow emerging democratic norms that may grant their rule more legitimacy in international relations (Hyde, 2011). Policymakers' decision to adopt the policy follow directly from the model idea being connected to legitimizing global norms, once again neglecting the effect of domestic politics in the process.

All these mechanisms have the same theoretical flaw: they depict a part of the diffusion process as sufficient to explain the whole process.¹³ They portray the domestic decision to adopt a policy as an epiphenomenon of the transnational spread of the policy

¹²The less discussed mechanism of cooperation depends on the same assumption that domestic politics of adoption follow international dynamics, though centered on agreements rather than coercion. Elkins and Simmons (2005: 35) place coercion and cooperation under the same concept of “coordination” mechanisms.

¹³These concepts of diffusion mechanisms have another problem: they are empirically indistinguishable. A policy can be simultaneously successful, normatively desirable, and promoted by international organizations – and empirical analyses cannot isolate the effect of each of these mechanisms (see Chapter 7 for a discussion about this topic).

idea. By doing so, they ignore policymakers and represent countries as unified entities able to learn, evaluate values, or suffer political pressure. In reality, policymakers are the subjects of those actions, and those mechanisms do not determine their domestic decisions. Of course, decision-makers consider whether a policy is successful, promoted by international organizations, attuned to global norms, or adopted by competing neighbors. However, these are not the main factors that shape policymakers' political decisions inside a country. Rather, the adoption of a policy model depends on whether it serves policymakers in domestic disputes. And diffusion depends on domestic political decisions to adopt the policy in multiple countries.

To explain policy diffusion patterns, I define diffusion in a way that extends Rogers's (1995: 5) initial definition to include adoption as a necessary second step (see also Weyland 2004, 14): Diffusion is a process that happens to a policy model created by one country when information about that model is spread to other countries (first step), and then these countries adopt that model (second step).¹⁴

Both steps are necessary for diffusion. As regards the first one, policies only diffuse if information about them is broadly available (van der Heiden and Streibel, 2012). Yet, that communication does not ensure that multiple governments adopt the model in the second step. Domestic policymaking is relatively autonomous from the transnational spreading of information about the policy. Even if two new policy ideas are framed as successful, promoted by international organizations, and attuned to current global norms, their policies might still diffuse differently if most countries adopt one

¹⁴This conceptualization recovers a part of Rogers' book neglected in diffusion studies, the "innovation-decision process" (1995, 161).

faster. There is a necessary lag between gaining awareness about models and adopting them. The longer that lag, the slower a diffusion pattern will be, and the flatter its curve's slope will be. Furthermore, if many countries reject the new model after receiving information about it, its diffusion will remain circumscribed to a few adoptions, and its pattern will have a low asymptote.

Moreover, diffusion patterns depend more on the second step than the first one because it is easier to publicize a model than to get it adopted by many countries. The first step of diffusion is a relatively easy hurdle for policies. The existence of multiple mechanisms associated with this step is a sign that policy ideas can travel through many different channels, and in most cases, a model does not need all those mechanisms operating at once to reach domestic policymaking. The second hurdle is much more challenging because it is institutionalized within each country. Laws establish few policymaking pathways for adoption, and only a handful of actors participate in that process.

Whereas the mechanisms already covered in the literature refer only to the first step of diffusion (and mistakenly assume from it the results of the second step), we need to conceptualize the mechanism in operation at the second step. That mechanism is the policymaking process.

2.3 - THE SECOND STEP OF DIFFUSION: POLICYMAKING

The study of policy diffusion refers to policies as specific models of governmental programs that can be easily replicated (Weyland, 2004: 7; Weyland, 2006: 17-18). These

models may embody new paradigms in their issue areas but are more than general principles. They have well-established objectives and clear institutional designs that serve as blueprints. Conditional cash transfers, for example, incorporate principles of human capital development as a way out of poverty in a well-defined policy model to reduce extreme poverty and generate intergenerational social mobility. Their design is clear and concise: the provision of cash installments to families below a poverty line, under the condition that these families' children attend school and healthcare appointments.¹⁵

What my theory tries to explain is why some of these specific policy models diffuse faster and to more countries than others. The response lies in the policymaking process leading to the adoption of these models in different countries. So far, diffusion studies have treated policymaking as a black box. My theory opens up that black box to show that different choices made by presidents in policymaking result in different outcomes within each country – fast adoption, slow adoption, or rejection – which, in the aggregate of multiple countries, determine diffusion patterns. By doing so, my work connects diffusion studies with the academic literature on policymaking in domestic settings.

Outside the diffusion literature, policymaking is theorized as a process with a series of sequential stages for the creation of new policies within a country. The stages are: problem identification, agenda setting, policy formulation, policy enactment, and policy implementation.¹⁶ There is a distinction between the first three stages – problem

¹⁵A straightforward design does not imply, necessarily, that implementation is easy. As discussed in Chapter 4, implementing CCTs presents significant challenges.

¹⁶There is some variation in terminology and minor differences across authors. See, for example, Anderson (1984: 19-20) and Weible (2018: 3). Dye (2001: 14) also presents a similar process to criticize others.

identification, agenda setting, and policy formulation – and the last two – enactment and implementation. This differentiation is relevant here because the last two stages are the crucial ones to determine policy diffusion patterns.

The first stages are pre-institutional. They describe the part of the process that happens outside governmental institutions when organized groups engage in politics to influence policy outputs. These stages involve long debates with interest groups, social organizations, and specialists. Some of the ideas from these debates may find politicians to sponsor their introduction in the institutional part of the process, moving it towards enactment and implementation. Studies focused on pre-institutional stages argue that societal forces shape policymaking. Elitist theories expect business organizations and other economic elites to apply their resources in influencing policymakers to protect their interests (Vogel, 1989; Dye, 2001; Fairfield, 2015). Other theories place ordinary citizens and social organizations as protagonists. Garay (2016), for example, argues that the mobilization of social movements and the political relevance of informal workers drove the expansion of social policies in Latin America. That framing risks representing governments as merely reactive to the political emergence of informal workers. However, she rightfully identifies the importance of domestic politics and electoral expectations in the widespread adoption of redistributive programs, especially in the context of competitive presidential elections.

These approaches centered on pre-institutional policymaking may explain the creation of new policies in a country, or the influence of foreign ideas in the domestic political agenda (Gilardi et al., 2021). However, their focus is inadequate to explain the

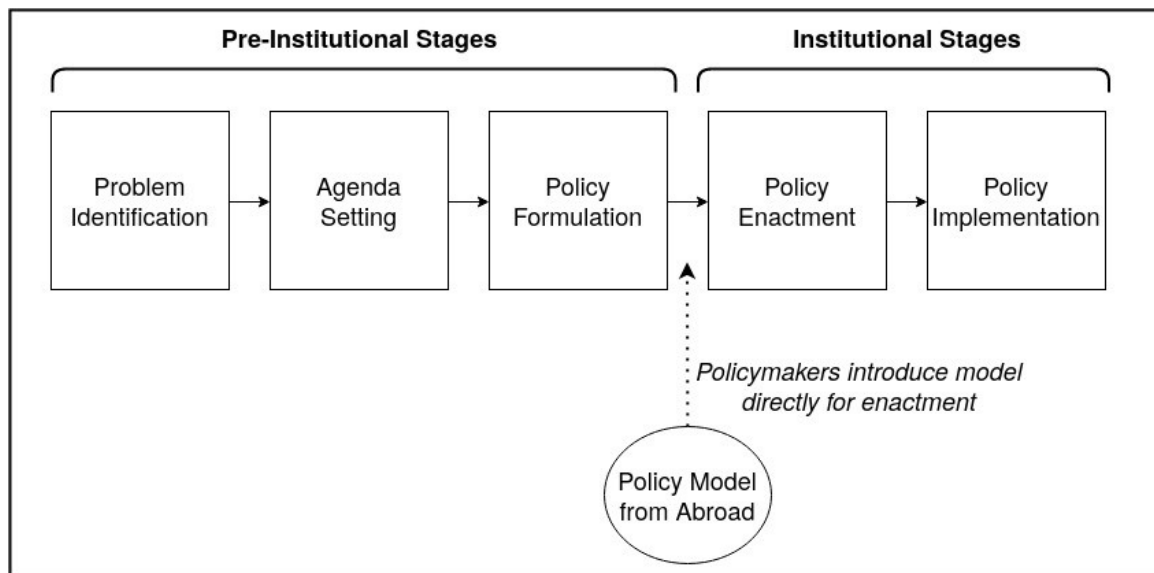
diffusion pattern of a policy model that comes readily available from abroad, like CCTs, PPPs, and EVMs. Models like those were already implemented in other countries, and they can be immediately introduced for enactment. While the domestic creation of new policies suffers from prolonged debates involving specialists, bureaucrats, elites, and social organizations, a model from abroad has already survived similar pressures elsewhere. A policymaker can use that foreign model as a blueprint, inserting it directly in the institutional policymaking process.¹⁷ The diagram below (Figure 2.2) provides a visual representation of the insertion of policy models from abroad directly in the institutional stages of the policymaking process.

Katerina Linos' book (2013) exemplifies the difference between a policy developed domestically through pre-institutional debates (that were inspired by a principle promoted internationally), and a policy model from abroad introduced directly for enactment and implementation as a blueprint. Her argument identifies that politicians' concerns with electoral prospects matter for policy diffusion. However, her focus remains on pre-institutional stages in which voters exercise bottom-up pressure asking for social policies that exist in other countries. The argument holds for her case of national health systems. However, that case does not describe the diffusion of a well-defined policy model. What diffused was the vague principle of universal healthcare (Linos, 2013: 75, see also Weyland, 2006). As a new paradigm of social policy, this principle influenced

¹⁷This idea can be formulated using the terminology of Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (Baumgartner et al., 2017). According to that theory, the domestic creation of new policies suffers from friction in specialized subsystems. Long debates block most significant policy changes and rarely allow an idea to emerge from these subsystems into macropolitics. However, policy models coming ready from abroad may skip those specialized debates and be placed immediately in macropolitics. A similar logic is present in Kingdon's theory of Multiple Streams (Herweg et al., 2017) with the concept of policy windows.

societal debates in the pre-institutional stages of policymaking and led to the lengthy creation of universal healthcare policies in each country (Linos, 2013: 106-109 and 116-121). My dissertation does not explain this type of diffusion that is not formed by multiple adoptions of one policy blueprint.

Figure 2.2: Policymaking Process and the Insertion of a Model from Abroad



Linos's other case, paid maternal leave, matches my theory. This specific model was a blueprint promoted by the International Labour Organisation. Her analysis of Spain and Greece shows that voters did not exert significant pressure for the adoption of paid maternal leave. In fact, as she describes it, the fast adoption of the model in both countries resulted from policymakers who advanced the policy directly through enactment and implementation (Linos, 2013: 155). In Greece, in particular, the executive branch led this adoption process.

Given that models from abroad can be introduced directly at the institutional stages of policymaking, the actors with power over these stages are the most important to determine a policy's diffusion pattern. To diffuse fast and widely, a policy must be introduced as a blueprint for policymaking by politicians, and it must then move quickly through the enactment and implementation process. More importantly, this must happen to the policy in multiple countries.

2.4 – PRESIDENTS' POWER AND INTERESTS

If institutionalized policymaking is crucial for diffusion, the variation in diffusion patterns must result from the behavior of actors in this process. I argue in this section that presidents play the most prominent role in determining a policy's pattern of diffusion. A model's fate depends mainly on the decision of chief executives to enact and implement it or not. My theory, therefore, is centered on what presidents expect from policy ideas coming from abroad and how those expectations affect their decisions towards the ideas they receive.

What Presidents Do

Three main actors have institutional roles in policymaking in presidential democracies: presidents, congresspeople, and bureaucrats.¹⁸ Though bureaucrats are relevant in pre-institutional debates and valuable informants of presidents about policy models from abroad, they do not play a direct role in enactment. These public servants may have more autonomy in implementation but they remain subordinate to the president

¹⁸While the judiciary may have a role in the adoption and the design of some policies, its role is mostly reactive to adjudicate disputes between the executive and the legislature.

and must respond to executive pressure to quickly implement or block a policy model. The decision to adopt a policy, therefore, depends mainly on the executive and the legislature. Irrespective of all the influence from business organizations, labor unions, social organizations, bureaucrats, or voters directly, policymaking ultimately comes down to the institutional actions taken by elected officials in these two branches. They have the legal powers to formally initiate a policy's adoption process, enact it into a law or decree, and determine its implementation.

The executive has more institutional power than the legislature to adopt a policy and to determine how quick that adoption is. These powers can be classified as proactive and reactive (Shugart and Mainwaring, 1997; Carey and Shugart, 1998). Proactive powers alter the status quo by enacting and implementing new policies. These powers allow presidents to fast-track a policy's adoption with unilateral actions, disrupting the normal process against the will of Congress, or to push the legislature towards adopting that policy through the normal policymaking process. Conversely, presidents' reactive powers maintain the status quo even if a majority in Congress wants to adopt a new policy. These two types of institutional powers make presidents the primary cause of a policy's diffusion pattern. My data reveals that the executive branches in different countries tend to apply similar powers in the adoptions of one same policy, depending on how that policy affects presidents' interests.

The most notable proactive powers are decrees that presidents can issue to enact a policy immediately. These unilateral decisions alter the *status quo* and create a *fait accompli* (Lowande and Rogowski, 2021: 24; Shugart and Mainwaring, 1997: 47).

Presidents use decrees to enact a model that Congress would reject, making it more costly for Congress to reverse the policy because it is already enacted (Carey and Shugart, 1998: 12; Shugart and Mainwaring, 1997: 46; Power, 1998: 224). In most countries, the use of decree powers is limited to some policy issues or emergencies – but presidents often expand decrees’ applicability through paraconstitutional or even unconstitutional means (Cox and Morgenstern, 2001: 182-183; Carey and Shugart, 1998: 14; Negretto, 2004: 535; Palanza, 2019: 21). This includes issuing decrees that challenge the limits imposed by the Constitution, but also the use of administrative rulings and other lesser rulings to, in practice, enact a new policy unilaterally. Beyond the well-known decree powers, presidents also have administrative powers that they can use to advance policies unilaterally (Inácio et al., 2023). Even in a country like the United States, where presidents are not considered particularly strong vis-à-vis the legislature, they can still adopt policies unilaterally using administrative decisions and executive decrees. The creation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) by President Barack Obama in 2012 is a notable example.

This form of unilateral decision is the fastest way to enact an idea arriving from abroad. If presidents identify a readily available model that may benefit them, they can immediately enact it. A decree circumvents lengthy debates in Congress and moves the policy directly towards implementation. Moreover, it presents presidents as solely responsible for the new program, granting them full recognition among voters – while simultaneously increasing the costs for Congress to reverse the policy. If many presidents across the region use a decree to accelerate the adoption of a policy model, several

countries will quickly enact that model – kickstarting a surge pattern of diffusion. This is what happened to CCTs in Latin America.

Beyond unilateral powers, presidents also have proactive powers to influence the parliament's agenda and constrain congresspeople to follow their interests (Carey and Shugart, 1998: 6; Shugart and Mainwaring, 1997: 46-47; Scartascini, 2008). Presidents direct the legislative process (Cox and Morgenstern, 2001) using prerogatives to initiate projects in Congress. The executive can also influence the agenda and the speed of congresspeople's decisions with powers like urgency provisions (Cox and Morgenstern, 2001: 175-176; Figueiredo and Limongi, 2000: 163; Morgenstern et al., 2013: 44). Moreover, the executive controls resources and governmental positions it can offer in negotiations with parties or individual policymakers to make specific bills advance in the chambers. All these powers grant presidents an upper hand in adopting models. They can introduce a readily-available blueprint from abroad directly in the congressional agenda and spend resources to accelerate its enactment. If rulers from most countries do the same, the policy will diffuse widely in the region within a reasonable time – though not as quickly as in the case of enactments by decrees. This was the story of PPPs' diffusion in Latin America.

Finally, presidents also have reactive powers. They can use their control over the lawmaking agenda and their negotiation power with policymakers to prevent some bills from passing. More notably, veto powers allow the executive to block approved laws (Carey and Shugart, 1998: 5). This ability to determine what the government will not enact also has an important effect on diffusion patterns. A model most presidents disfavor

is unlikely to be adopted by most governments. As a result, this type of policy should, at best, diffuse in a trickle-flow pattern to only a few countries.

After enactment, chief executives have even more extensive control over implementation. Through administrative decisions (Carey and Shugart, 1998: 12; Inácio et al., 2023) and their hierarchical position over the bureaucracy (Inácio and Llanos, 2016), presidents can rush a policy's implementation. Conversely, they may stall a new program, delaying decisions to regulate a new law and preventing bureaucrats from moving ahead with it. The executive branch is also responsible for executing the budget. This prerogative gives Latin American presidents considerable leeway to alter the allocation of resources even after a budget law was approved by Congress (Bonvecchi and Scartascini, 2011: 35-36; Hallerberg et al., 2009: 301-307). They may ensure the application of funds for a program they want to see quickly implemented, or they may hold back that part of the budget through a series of administrative decisions, ultimately preventing the implementation of an enacted policy – as happened to EVMs' in some countries of the region.

The executive branch's protagonism in policymaking is particularly strong in Latin America, as “most Latin American presidents have greater powers of unilateral action, greater ability to ‘penetrate’ the internal legislative process of the assembly, and more variable political support than their American counterpart” (Cox and Morgenstern, 2001: 179). According to Cheibub et al. (2011), 94.5% of constitutions in post-1979 Latin America include decree powers for unilateral enactment. Moreover, restrictions on decrees tend to be imprecise and weakly enforced, which allows presidents across the

region to stretch the limits of their powers and single-handedly legislate on issues they should not be allowed to decide unilaterally. Even in countries like Bolivia, Guatemala, or Panama – which some authors see as having weaker presidencies (see Samuels and Shugarts, 2003) – chief executives make use of unilateral directives to enact policies (Morgenstern et al., 2013: 51-52 and 59; see also Shair-Rosenfield and Stoyan, 2017).¹⁹ When pushing a model's enactment through Congress, Latin American presidents also have an advantage in setting the agenda. Almost 90% of constitutions in the region grant them powers to propose constitutional amendments – compared to 43% worldwide. Latin American presidents also have prerogatives over initiating budget bills (Cheibub et al., 2011: 20), and nine countries constitutionally restrict legislatures' influence over the budget (Cox and Morgenstern, 2001: 182), enhancing the powers of the executive.

Naturally, all these powers are not uniformly distributed in the region. Some countries in Latin America have stronger presidents than others. That variation, however, is not relevant to my theory. My argument that presidents are the protagonists of policy adoptions holds across the region because all presidents are powerful enough to influence policymaking directly. More importantly, I am not trying to explain why one country may adopt a policy earlier or later - something that would be affected by the variation in presidential powers. My objective is to explain policies' diffusion patterns across the whole region. Therefore, all policies have the same pool of countries as potential adopters and face the same institutional environments in each country. Their different diffusion

¹⁹My research reveals the use of internal regulations and international agreements to enact conditional cash transfers unilaterally in Chile, Nicaragua, and Paraguay (see Chapter 4).

patterns cannot be attributable to variations between countries. Instead, what explains policies' diffusion patterns are the aggregate results of multiple countries.

Latin American legislatures typically lack strong proactive powers and play a secondary role in advancing policymaking models on their own (Morgenstern, 2002: 8; Weyland 2006: 13). For that reason, their ability to speed up the adoption of a policy is limited. Moreover, their collegial nature tends to slow down policymaking. Even congressional powers to force a policy's enactment, like the ability to override a president's veto, depend on forming a large majority – which is hard against the negotiating power of the executive branch. A country's Congress may take a prominent position against a particular president, but at the regional level, the legislatures do not determine diffusion patterns across multiple countries.

Bureaucracies in Latin American countries are similarly unable to impose their preferences over presidents' interests. Despite evident variation across countries (Zuñanic and Iacoviello, 2010; Afonso et al., 2013) and across agencies within each country (Gingerich, 2013), the regions' bureaucracies lack the powers to determine policymaking dynamics. They remain plagued by organizational deficits, low responsiveness, and low execution capacity (Polga-Hecimovich and Trelles, 2016: 64). Bureaucracies' typical role in policymaking affects implementation when they alter and adapt governments' programs, but those changes remain limited by the statutes approved in enactment (see Huber et al., 2001).

Besides implementation, strong bureaucratic agencies certainly play a role in pre-institutional debates about the creation of new policies. Their expertise is relevant in

problem identification, agenda setting, and policy formulation. In diffusion processes, due to their participation in transnational networks of specialists and international organizations, bureaucrats may inform the executive about successful policy blueprints available from abroad, influencing the government to adopt a model. Still, presidents remain the main actors deciding whether to initiate a model's enactment and how quickly to push for its adoption. In addition, Latin American multiparty presidential systems incentivize presidents to offer the top positions in state agencies as part of negotiations to build a coalition (Polga-Hecimovich, 2019). These patronage appointments also weaken civil servants' ability to impose a technical view over policymaking, favoring presidents and their allies' political preferences.

The speed of diffusion and the number of countries that adopt a policy depend much more on presidents, because they have the strongest powers to accelerate or block a policy's enactment and implementation. Even if Congress or bureaucrats may affect the speed of adoption of a policy in one country, presidents remain the determinant actor in most other countries. That is particularly true if presidents are using their stronger powers in the adoption of that policy. In other words, a surge pattern depends on presidents' decisions to get a policy blueprint directly into the institutional stages of policymaking and rush its enactment and implementation. Alternatively, a policy fails to diffuse widely if most presidents decide to block its enactment in Congress and stall its implementation. Ultimately, the most relevant aspect of a policy to determine its diffusion pattern is whether it helps or hinders most presidents' interests.

What Presidents Want

What do presidents want? Presidents' most fundamental interest is to remain in power (Stokes, 2001: 7) but all democratic presidents eventually reach the end of their terms. What are their motivations beyond occupying the presidential seat? Most of them want to maintain a political career, even beyond possible reelections. Consider Argentinian Cristina Kirchner, who became a senator and vice-president after her two presidential terms; Brazilian Itamar Franco, elected as governor of a state four years after the end of his presidency; or Chileans Michelle Bachelet and Sebastián Piñera, who returned to the presidency four years after leaving the position. In fact, out of all Latin American presidents after 1994, 65% either ran for a political position or held a prominent position in a party after the end of their first presidential mandates (see Appendix B). Even those who did not participate in future elections had an interest in the victory of allies: out of 63 presidential elections in Latin America, De Ferrari (2015) identifies 51 in which the incumbent party fielded a candidate.

The desire to maintain power and political relevance generates two fundamental interests for all presidents. The first is popularity. Presidents need support to gain access to office in the first place, and that same support also offers protection for remaining in power. Low approval ratings (Pérez-Liñán, 2007) and street protests (Hochstetler, 2006) triggered the removal of presidents in Latin America. While legislators would not dare to impeach a popular president, they have to calculate the costs of inaction if street protests demand the ousting of an unpopular ruler. Presidents also need public support to implement their political projects. Popular presidents have an easier time setting the

congressional agenda (Lovett et al., 2015), getting their bills approved (Calvo, 2007; Cohen, 2013), and attracting parties to their coalitions (Altman, 2000). Richard Neustadt's (1990) insight that presidents' persuasive power in policymaking depends on their prestige with the public remains true, not only in the US but also abroad.

Popularity also helps presidents win future elections (Corrales, 2016) for themselves and their allies. This concern with electoral prospects, even when a president cannot be reelected, is crystallized in the diaries of Brazil's former president Fernando Henrique Cardoso. During his second term, when reelection was not possible, he wrote at least 27 passages referring to the government's approval ratings (Cardoso, 2017; Cardoso, 2019).²⁰ In most of them, the text shows concern about the decrease in support and its potential impact on his government and his party's candidates. For those reasons, presidents worry about their popularity and are typically eager to find ways to increase support for their government among voters.

Being popular, however, does not ensure electoral victories. Presidents must transform that support into votes. Therefore, their second fundamental interest is ensuring that electoral rules and organization favor themselves and their allies. Changes in any aspect of an election may alter their results. The forms of counting, the formation of coalitions, the boundaries of districts, and even the way citizens cast their votes, all affect who gets elected. Unsurprisingly, political groups, parties, and organizations try to influence these factors to favor themselves (Benoit, 2004; Freidenberg, 2022: 7-10).

²⁰The number includes all references in the books to his government's approval ratings from polls conducted by the three main poll companies in Brazil at the time (DataFolha, Ibope, and Vox Populi). References to other polls, such as electoral ones, were not included.

In these disputes to determine the rules of the democratic game, incumbents have the upper hand and tend to maintain the system unchanged (Boix, 1999). The reason is simple: incumbents are usually favored by the current system, given that they won the last election. While the impact of some changes to elections may be obvious, it is often impossible to predict their effects with any level of certainty. Ruling policymakers, therefore, prefer to avoid the risks and maintain the system as it is. This expectation changes only during moments of political crises in which traditional parties lose power to newcomer forces. These new groups try to push traditional parties out by implementing electoral reforms that favor their electoral victories in the future (Lehoucq, 2000; Sakamoto, 1999). These situations, however, are rare in the history of most countries.

Boosting popularity and enhancing electoral prospects are the two fundamental interests of presidents. These are presidents' primary concerns in all countries because everything else they may want to do as politicians depends on their ability to remain in power and get allies elected once they have to leave. All other interests they may have - ideological, programmatic, personal, or related to their ties to business and social organizations - depend on their control of politics and policymaking (Ames, 1987).

Thus, policies that affect presidents' popularity and electoral prospects stand out before their eyes. The adoption (or rejection) of these models is not driven primarily by ideology, personal belief, social pressure, or donors. Rather, most presidents want to adopt policies that increase their chances in future elections. On the other hand, most presidents oppose policies that alter the organization of elections for fear of reducing their electoral prospects. When foreign ideas that impact those interests arrive in different

countries, presidents quickly turn their attention to these models. They apply extraordinary powers to either rush or block the adoption of these policies. It is presidents' action that generates the impressive surge waves of diffusion for some policies, and the weak trickle flow of diffusion for others – even if they are successful, promoted by international organizations, and attuned to global norms.

2.5 – PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

My theory combines an institutional focus on policymaking with a rational perspective applied to presidents. The expectation presidents have about a policy determines whether they will rush its enactment and implementation, introduce it through normal policymaking, or try to block its adoption. If a policy model affects presidents' fundamental interests, these leaders will react similarly in most countries. The series of similar responses then generates the diffusion pattern that my research analyzes.

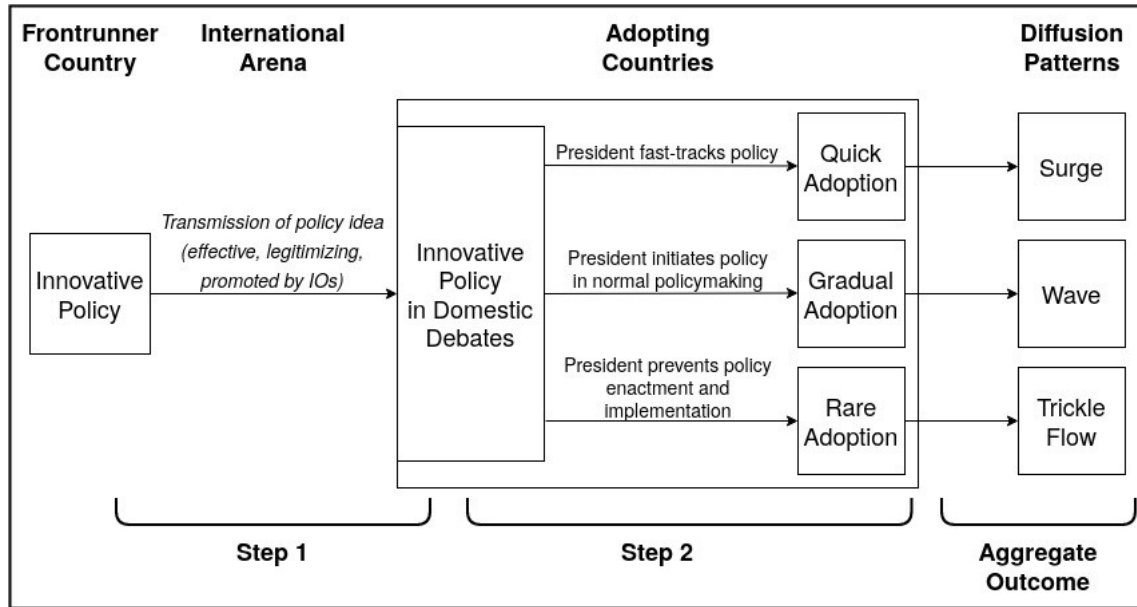
Diffusion starts with an innovative government that creates and implements a new policy. If that novel program is successful and simple, information about it is likely to travel to other countries thanks to specialists, bureaucrats, international organizations, and even the media. If the policy is also in line with values and norms promoted by transnational activist networks, the innovative idea is even more likely to spread. If international organizations and powerful countries promote and push the innovation into developing countries, the model will get even more well-known. In short, through multiple channels and mechanisms, the idea of this new policy will spread across borders and become known in many countries. This is the first step necessary for diffusion.

However, the second step is the crucial one. In the first step, there are multiple transnational actors that can spread information about a policy model through different channels, and several mechanisms at play in how domestic actors receive that information. The main hurdle for a policy to diffuse is getting adopted by politicians in the countries that received information about it. Policymaking inside each country has institutionally defined processes with only a few ways in which a policy can be enacted and implemented, compared to a multitude of channels and actors that promote the model in the first step of diffusion. And in domestic debates, the national political game matters more for policymakers than external influences and global norms (Hunter and Brown, 2000). So the factors that made a policy model well-known internationally are not the same that lead to its adoption in each country. By looking at domestic policymaking, my research explains why models that have similar information transmission in the first step nevertheless diffuse in different patterns. Figure 2.3 shows the process of policy diffusion, and the possible paths a model may take inside adopting countries. The diffusion pattern of a policy in the region depends on the path a policy follows in most countries.

The second step of diffusion is formed by the multiple stages of the policymaking process. Domestic debates among specialists, bureaucrats, and civil society organizations constitute the pre-institutional stages of policymaking in each country. These debates typically take a long time and generate only incremental policy changes (Baumgartner et al., 2017). An innovative idea from abroad is a readily-available blueprint that has survived similar debates before. A powerful policymaker can circumvent those slow

discussions and push a readily available model directly toward enactment and implementation, or they can act to prevent its adoption. And presidents are the best suited to do so.

Figure 2.3: Paths of Policy Diffusion



Presidents, like everyone, have limited attention (Jones and Baumgartner, 2005). They make rapid assessments of policy ideas based on the information received from specialized debates and decide whether to act or not. Ideas that further their fundamental interests go to the priority list. Presidents from most countries will quickly identify foreign models that might boost their popularity or increase their electoral chances. Differently, ideas that address secondary interests will only catch some presidents' attention, depending on their ideology, programmatic preferences, or alliances. Finally,

all presidents tend to identify ideas that jeopardize their fundamental interests and act accordingly to prevent them from happening.

Presidents receive information about policy ideas through multiple channels, like cabinet members, party members, or bureaucratic briefings, sometimes directly from the international promotion of the model. Once these chief executives receive information about a new policy model, they may act in three main ways depending on how they expect the model to affect their interests. They can use institutional powers to unilaterally fast-track the enactment of a policy, typically by decree. Alternatively, they may introduce a policy in Congress and negotiate to have it approved through the normal policymaking process. Finally, they may impose a different agenda on the legislature and negotiate to prevent that policy from being initiated in congress.

The same three processes continue in implementation. Presidents control over the bureaucracy and the execution of the budget allows them to rush the implementation of a favorable policy, leave it to follow the ordinary bureaucratic course, or stall the program. These three strategies are always at the disposal of the executive branch for any policy. However, they are even more relevant for models that arrive as readily-available blueprints because they might suffer less societal pressure than a policy developed with intense participation of interest groups and social organizations..

Most presidents will fast-track a policy expected to boost their popularity and electoral prospects. In the aggregate, the result is a quick sequence of adoptions in almost all countries, which generates a diffusion surge. Using decrees or other unilateral powers, presidents move the models directly into enactment, circumventing Congress and public

pressure. Enactment by decree also makes the policy attributable exclusively to the presidency, which is desirable for programs that enhance popularity. When it comes to implementation, presidents can create new bureaucratic agencies, select specific agents for a policy, create direct mechanisms of control, and pressure them to act fast. Their control of the budget also allows chief executives to redirect funds to the new program. These resources may not be enough to fund the program permanently, but they can start it, creating a *fait accompli* that is difficult for the opposition to undo.

However, the overuse of these unilateral powers incurs some problems. First, it evokes concerns about accountability (Mainwaring and Shugart, 1997: 465; Negretto, 2004), opening the way for complaints from Congress (O'Donnell, 1994). Second, it can generate negative reactions from the public (Reeves and Rogowski, 2018; Reeves and Rogowski, 2021; Pereira et al., 2005: 194; Amorim Neto, 2006: 420). Therefore, a policy enacted unilaterally must be expected to outweigh the popularity costs of that type of enactment (Kang, 2020). Third, this type of policy adoption can diminish the quality of the program's design and implementation. A rushed adoption may not allow policymakers the necessary time to adapt the model to a country's reality. For those three reasons, only extraordinary policies that promise a fast popularity boost will motivate an presidents to unilaterally adopt them in most countries.

The second way a president may act regarding a new policy idea is to not give it special attention, and eventually introduce it in Congress. This is presidents' typical behavior toward a model that does not address their universal interests of remaining in power and increasing their electoral prospects. A policy like that might entice some rulers

based on their ideological position, programmatic preference, or alliance with some group in society. These interests rarely motivate the use of unilateral powers. While one government may want to rush such a policy, this is not enough for a surge of adoptions. Presidents interested in the model will typically introduce it in the regular policymaking process. They may even spend some resources to negotiate and further the adoption process. But only a few will use their extraordinary powers to fast-track the model. Over time, given enough alternation in power, multiple countries will have presidents whose ideological or programmatic preferences may be associated with the policy model. The aggregate outcome is a series of gradual adoptions through the normal policymaking process over a longer time, which results in a diffusion wave that eventually reaches most countries.

By contrast, when a policy challenges presidents' fundamental interests, they will not promote the model. Instead, they may block the idea's advancement if others try to get it adopted. Opposition parties, for example, may introduce the model as a bill in Congress. In that case, the executive will typically use its powers to control the agenda and weaken support for the bill. If, however, it does get enacted, this policy tends to get stuck without implementation. Lack of money in the budget, a shift in bureaucratic attention toward other programs, and a series of diversions to delay the process are all strategies presidents can use to prevent the adoption of a policy in that last stage of policymaking. If presidents across the region place barriers to the enactment and implementation of a policy, it cannot diffuse successfully. At best, it is adopted in a few countries, following the trickle flow pattern.

Naturally, as any theory, mine simplifies the overall causal process. Presidents do not all immediately adopt the same policy, even if it is the most advantageous for their universal primary goals. This was true for the theories centered on the first step of diffusion: even policy ideas that are globally seen as successful, widely promoted by international organizations across continents, and attuned to norms accepted worldwide were not expected to spread equally across borders. Idiosyncratic factors play a role in determining which countries receive those ideas first and with more impetus. An example are the individual connections in transnational networks that may be stronger in some countries than others, like the case of neoliberal ideas arriving in Chile thanks to a small group of doctoral students from Chicago.

Therefore, for my argument, the domestic level is also subject to idiosyncrasies and random factors that make some presidents push for the adoption of a model faster than others. For that reason, I do not expect presidents to fast-track an attractive policy in unison. Instead, I argue that rulers' expectations about a policy make them more likely to apply their powers to adopt it through one of the paths described above. What explains the outcome is the aggregate result across multiple countries. The theory retains its explanatory power because it captures the behavior of most presidents, which determines the diffusion pattern.

Some delays in adopting popularity-boosting policies are to be expected. If it is true that presidents are always willing to adopt policy models that may increase their popular support, they will be particularly eager to do so in moments of dire need. De La O (2015: 10), for example, argues that crises were an additional reason for governments

to push for adopting CCTs. In Argentina, for example, Cristina Kirchner was reluctant to adopt CCTs for some years because her party saw the policy as a neoliberal imposition that could weaken their clientelist networks. But that reluctance ended when she had to overcome a political defeat in 2009. Even with those temporary idiosyncrasies, the overall trend is that presidents in most countries used unilateral powers to adopt the model fast.

The same logic applies to policies that negatively affect presidents' electoral prospects. A few countries may eventually adopt these models. Once again, this reflects domestic idiosyncrasies and particular historical moments. The theory's expectation is not that nobody will ever adopt these policies. Instead, it predicts that most presidents will act to block their adoptions, causing the trickle-flow pattern of diffusion. In the case of EVMs, political crises that weaken traditional parties' control over the executive are usually behind the few instances of the model's enactments. Even in those cases, implementation is sporadic after the crisis is over. In Colombia, for example, the model was enacted during the emergence of Álvaro Uribe as an alternative to traditional parties. But the voting machines were never employed in elections.

2.6 – EMPIRICAL EXPECTATIONS

This chapter presented a causal argument relating presidents' expectations about a policy idea arriving from abroad, their interests towards adopting or rejecting that policy in each country, and the policy's pattern of diffusion as an aggregate result of what happened in multiple countries. The argument states that policies expected to increase

presidents' popularity tend to be adopted quickly by most countries in a diffusion surge. These are typically policies that grant or extend social benefits, like Conditional Cash Transfers. On the other hand, policies that may reduce presidents' and their allies' electoral prospects are likely to be rejected by the executive in most countries, generating at best a trickle flow of diffusion. This is the case of electoral changes, like the use of Electronic Voting Machines, that may alter voter behavior even if the changes' effects are unclear. As an intermediate pattern, policies that address presidents' secondary interests are attractive to some chief executives, and are adopted gradually by multiple countries, generating an extended wave of diffusion.

Analytical and empirical reasons justify dividing my empirical analysis into two parts. First, presidents' prominent position in policymaking allows them to fast-track or block the adoption of policy models from abroad. The following hypotheses capture this idea.

H1(A): Most presidents use their ability to fast-track the adoption of policy models from abroad that can boost their popular support and electoral prospects.

H1(B): Some presidents initiate policy models from abroad that address secondary interests, allowing these policies' adoptions to proceed through normal policymaking processes.

H1(C): Most presidents will act to block the enactment and implementation of policies that may jeopardize their popular support and electoral prospects.

These hypotheses are easily testable, given that the use of presidents' policymaking powers is observable in official documents. In my process tracing analysis (Collier, 2011), a series of tests checks how presidents acted regarding the adoption or rejection of CCTs, PPPs, and EVMs across Latin America. The next chapter presents data about the policymaking process in all Latin American countries for the three cases: CCTs, PPPs, and EVMs. This comparison encompassing the whole region confirms the three versions of the first hypothesis for all stages of the policymaking process.

Testing the second part of the argument is not as straightforward. It refers to presidents' motivations to fast-track, initiate, or block a policy, which cannot be observed directly. Even knowing how they acted in adopting or rejecting a policy, it is crucial to track the causal connection between those decisions and chief executives' expectations about the policy. My theory claims that presidents use their policymaking powers motivated by how a policy impacts their fundamental interests: popularity and electoral prospects. The hypothesis below formalizes that part of the theoretical argument.

H2: Presidents decide whether to fast-track or block a policy model from abroad based on their expectation that the policy may increase or decrease their popular support and electoral prospects.

My second hypothesis refers to unobservable variables related to presidents' perceptions and motivations. Some tests encompassing all countries in the region provide indirect inferential leverage in support of the argument. It is possible to observe, for example, if the implementation of a rushed policy emphasized the aspects related to the expected popularity boost – while other features of the policy were left aside in the rushed implementation. Similarly, as described above, adopting a popularity-boosting policy in moments of political weakness indicates that the president expected to use the policy as a lifeboat to keep the government afloat. Conversely, in policies blocked by presidents, the positive evaluation of the model by specialists inside the government indicates that the decision to reject it was motivated by political expectations.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 will provide data from adoptions and rejections for each policy case across multiple countries, to corroborate the second hypothesis. More importantly, they also include a deep dive into the policymaking decisions about each of the three policies for the countries of Colombia and Argentina. A series of interviews with people close to those decisions confirms that presidents' decisions regarding CCTs, PPPs, and EVMs derived from their expectations about how these policies would affect their popularity and political prospects.

Chapter 3: Comparing Policymaking Processes

Conditional cash transfers (CCTs), public-private partnerships (PPPs), and electronic voting machines (EVMs) were three promising models in Latin America at the turn of the century. The secretary-general of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the director-general of the International Labor Organization recommended CCTs: “The sooner such an initiative can be launched, the better. It is something practical, feasible and desperately needed.” (Ricupero and Somavia, 2001). The World Bank’s president wrote about PPPs that “recent experience in many countries with public-private partnerships is highlighting new ways to increase efficiency and expand services” (Preston, 1994). And two directors of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights claimed that EVMs are “useful for the exercise of more transparent and secure elections, [that are] also more [easily] verifiable by all political and social actors” (Méndez and Cordero, 1998: 12).

If all three policies generated similar expectations in the international realm, why did they diffuse in such different patterns? (see Figure 1.1). Why did only CCTs live up to the initial hype around the model? Why did countries take longer to adopt PPPs? And why did most of them reject EVMs?

The answer lies in domestic policymaking processes. Presidents are the most powerful policymakers, and they all have fundamental interests in increasing their popularity and winning future elections. According to my theory, presidents should fast-

track the adoption of policies expected to boost their popularity and increase their electoral prospects. Conversely, presidents should delay or block models that might reduce their electoral chances in the future. In between, policies may attract the interest of some presidents if they do not affect their popularity or electoral prospects. Yet, these models would not justify the use of fast-tracking powers. This chapter tests the first part of the argument: that presidents determine policies' fate in their countries depending on the effects they expect from the policy on popularity and electoral prospects. In other words, it presents evidence from eighteen countries in Latin America to corroborate hypotheses H1(A), H1(B), and H1(C), described in Chapter 2.

My argument depends on most presidents having similar expectations about a policy, which affects whether and how fast countries adopt the model. Therefore, a critical test for my theory is that each policy must undergo similar policymaking processes across the region. The analysis below presents evidence that my argument holds. Almost all countries adopted CCTs very quickly, thanks to presidents' decrees and pressure for implementation, generating a surge diffusion pattern. In the case of PPPs, presidents initiated the policy without using extraordinary powers to ensure their fast adoption, leading to a wave-like diffusion pattern. Conversely, presidents stalled or blocked EVMs in most countries to prevent adoption, generating a trickle diffusion pattern.

The data in this chapter comes from countries' official policymaking sources to compare the three models' sequences of adoptions. Besides a few clarifying examples, the data is treated here at an aggregate level to show the overall patterns for each policy.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 dive deeper into each policy's diffusion to discuss these policymaking processes and provide evidence about the motivation behind presidents' actions.

3.1 – POLICIES' EFFECTS ON PRESIDENTS' INTERESTS

My theory starts with presidents' expectations about the policy models. As the idea of CCTs spread out, politicians across Latin America quickly noticed that paying cash benefits to millions of families could improve presidents' popularity, increasing their chances in future elections. All types of presidents were interested in CCTs because every ruler needs popular support, irrespective of their ideology or political party. In political discourse, they would never say that the model was intended to boost their support and win elections. But the opposition noted that presidents' interest in CCTs was not only to help the poor. Members of Congress in Uruguay called the CCT bill proposed by the executive a "*piquetero*" program²¹, in reference to the potential use of the policy to mobilize government supporters. In Brazil, the leftist mayor of São Paulo complained about the electoral use of CCTs by the centrist ruling party in 2001 (Leite, 2001). One of the country's leading newspapers echoed her concerns: "There will be an electoral effect, and it will tend to benefit the government and its candidate" (O Estado de S. Paulo, 2001).

Scholars also identified CCTs' pro-incumbents effect. Multiple studies in Brazil show that Lula da Silva gained electoral support thanks to the policy's expansion

²¹ 16th Sesión Ordinaria del Senado de 03 de Mayo de 2005. Interventions of Senators Isaac Alfie and Martín Aguirrezabala.

(Marques and Mendes, 2006; Hunter and Power, 2007; Zucco, 2008; Zucco, 2013). Other researchers found similar results in Colombia (Nupia, 2011), Mexico (Rocha-Menocal 2001; De La O, 2013; Díaz-Cayeros et al., 2016), and Uruguay (Manacorda et al., 2011). Analyzing nine Latin American countries, Layton and Smith concluded that “the region’s new social assistance programs have become (...) potentially important electoral tools” (2011: 7). Some articles argue that CCTs’ electoral effects may not be as straightforward as first perceived (Bohn, 2011; Correa and Cheibub, 2016). However, the motivation for these studies was precisely the policy’s fame for boosting incumbents’ popularity that motivated presidents.

Electronic voting machines affected presidents’ fundamental interests in the opposite way. By changing the electoral process, they have the potential of reducing presidents’ prospects in future elections. For politicians who just won the most important elections in the country, changes in how people vote are an undesirable gamble. Why would they risk adopting an innovation that may change voters’ behavior? The effects of EVMs worry presidents and their parties for a good reason. Roseman and Stephenson (2005) point to decreased turnout from the elderly. Desai and Lee (2021) identified increased votes for minor candidates. And Katz et al. (2011) found that different configurations of the information presented on the screen may affect the results of elections. In addition, EVMs weaken coattail effects because they separate the act of voting for each position in a different step on the screen, facilitating ballot splitting and reducing presidents’ ability to help their allies gain more votes down the ballot (Calvo et al., 2009; Barnes et al., 2017). The ultimate result of these changes in voting behavior is

hard to predict, and they may very well reduce the turnout of presidents' voters or shift them to the opposition.

In addition, EVMs centralize all the power in electoral management, reducing the advantage of large parties usually in control of the executive. With paper ballots, parties send observers to ensure that officials will not favor their adversaries during voting and counting. Large parties can have observers in all polling stations to minimize mistakes and fraud against them, something the weaker opposition parties lack the organizational resources to do. For that reason, mistakes and fraud tend to harm smaller parties more than large ones. EVMs reduce that inequality. Automatic voting and counting are not subject to mistakes or fraud by electoral officials in the polling stations.

Finally, large established parties are more likely to use that same advantage in organizational resources to commit fraud at polling stations (Nichter, 2018: 33). Traditionally occupying positions in the executive branch, they can also use public resources for clientelism. EVMs make those electoral strategies less certain, as they take power away from poll workers and make it harder for brokers to control clients' votes. In short, EVMs jeopardize the electoral chances of most presidents. Most of them, therefore, were not interested in adopting the model.

Given their opposite effects on presidents' fundamental interests, my theory's expectations for the diffusion of CCTs and EVMs are clear-cut and opposite to one another. Presidents noticing CCTs' potential to boost incumbents' popularity and electoral prospects should use all their powers to fast-track the model and control its implementation. This is hypothesis 1(A), as framed in the previous chapter. The

consequence is a surge of diffusion with fast adoptions in nearly all countries. Conversely, presidents should see EVMs with skepticism and concern, ignoring the policy and blocking other policymakers' attempts to adopt it. This is hypothesis 1(C), associated with the trickle pattern of diffusion in which only a few countries adopt the model.

Public-private partnerships fall in between the two extremes, with a wave diffusion pattern. The policy does not directly affect the fundamental interest of presidents to remain in power. Certainly, many politicians were genuinely interested in developing their country's infrastructure through PPPs, generating more jobs from the construction and operation of large projects, or reducing the state's role in the operation of some public goods. But these are all secondary interests of presidents, not directly related to their ability to remain in power. The expectation for this case is that presidents behave according to their secondary interests, which means some of them will work to adopt the model. Still, because the policy does not affect their chances to remain in power, they will not have an impetus to fast-track PPPs' adoption. This type of behavior generates the slow and steady sequence of adoptions that forms a wave pattern of diffusion. The analysis below shows that data about the policymaking process of the three policies largely confirms the three hypotheses.

3.2 – OVERVIEW OF POLICYMAKING PROCESSES

The models of CCTs, PPPs, and EVMs spread internationally thanks to their early success, their promotion by international organizations, and their attunement to global

norms. This initial transmission, which I call the first step of diffusion, made bureaucrats and specialists across the region aware of the models. Therefore, the blueprints of these policies were available in domestic debates during the second half of the 1990s. In short, all eighteen Latin American countries were potential adopters of the three policies. As explained in the Introduction, the three cases were selected for that reason, to isolate the domestic explanatory factor highlighted by my theory from confounding factors related to the international spreading of the policy idea.

Decisions on whether to adopt the policies in each country depended on policymakers. This section presents data on each model's policymaking process in Latin America. It is helpful to understand that process as a series of sieves that block some policies while allowing others to pass. These sieves represent the stages of institutional policymaking. An adopted policy has passed through all the sieves in the country, reaching implementation. The tables below (Tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3) represent those sieves to show how the three policies went through the policymaking process in each country up to 2021.

A clarification is necessary regarding these tables. I included a second stage of implementation to provide more nuance to the analysis. The term *First implementation* refers to the first instance in which bureaucrats turn the model into actual governmental action: the first payment of a benefit in the case of CCTs, the first project presented for potential investors in the case of PPPs, and the first voting machine used in binding elections organized at the national level in the case of EVMs. But some of these initial implementations remained very limited in the cases of PPPs and EVMs, sometimes

even called *pilots* by local bureaucrats and specialists. To account for the difference between that preliminary type of adoption and full-fledged programs, the tables also include *implementation on a large scale* as an additional stage in policymaking to indicate that the policy became an extensive program at the national level. I define the first implementation as the moment of adoption because it has an unambiguous date, which is necessary to build and compare diffusion patterns. However, it is important to acknowledge that in some countries, this first implementation never became an extensive program.

In the case of CCTs, all but one country in the region fully adopted the policy (see Table 3.1). After Mexico created the first national CCT program in 1997, sixteen other countries enacted and implemented the model on a large scale. These are the national programs recognized in the literature as adoptions of CCTs, like Argentina's *Asignación Universal por Hijo*, Bolivia's *Bono Juancito Pinto*, and Paraguay's *Tekoporã*.²² As discussed below, the adoption process was very fast in almost all countries, thanks to presidents' use of unilateral powers. The only exception in the region is Venezuela, where policymakers never enacted the model.

²²Some countries' subnational units adopted CCTs before the national government. Most notably, some Brazilian municipalities simultaneously created the same model of conditional cash transfers in the 1990s. For my research, however, Brazil is considered an adopter based on the enactment and implementation of the policy at the national level in 2001.

Table 3.1: Adoption Processes of CCTs in Latin America (until 2021)

Policymaking Process	Number of Countries	Countries
Received policy idea from abroad	17	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela
Enacted policy idea into law	16	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay
First Implementation	16	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay
Implementation on a large scale	16	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay

PPPs faced more difficulties in policymaking (see Table 3.2). All countries enacted the model, except Bolivia and Venezuela.²³ But enactment did not ensure implementation, as two countries never presented a project using that new law. To maintain comparability with the other policies, this count includes the most basic implementation level, which is the moment when the government presents the first PPP project in a public offer to attract private partners. Under this definition, implementation depends completely on governmental action. For projects to advance beyond that public

²³There might be an ideological explanation for these two particular non-adopters, but ideology does not explain the difference between PPPs and CCTs' overall diffusion patterns. More than half the enactments of PPPs were led by leftist presidents, including Rafael Correa in Ecuador. Therefore, ideological preferences were not a relevant motivation to delay or reject adoption across the region. The final section of this chapter develops the discussion to dismiss ideology as a rival explanation to the three policies' diffusion patterns.

offer, a private partner must accept the offer, sign a contract, and work on the project: all actions that go beyond policymakers' control. Coding the public offer as implementation maintains the comparability of PPPs with CCTs and EVMs because implementing these two models also depends exclusively on policymakers and bureaucrats. Even with that inclusive definition, Nicaragua and Panama failed to implement PPPs.

Table 3.2: Adoption Processes of PPPs in Latin America (up to 2021)

Policymaking Process	Number of Countries	Countries
Received policy idea from abroad	17	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela
Enacted policy idea into law	15	Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay
First Implementation	13	Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay
Implementation on a large scale	8	Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay

After the first public offer of a PPP project, eight countries made recurrent use of the model in other projects, which I identify as implementation on a large scale, even though there is some variation in that. Some countries, like Brazil and Mexico, applied the policy extensively to infrastructure projects, while others, like Costa Rica and Ecuador, presented only a handful of projects.

Overall, PPPs did not pass the *sieves* of policymaking as easily as CCTs. The key reason for that difference is that presidents did not use their powers to fast-track and expand PPPs as they did for CCTs.

Finally, EVMs got stuck in the policymaking sieves almost everywhere (see Table 3.3). It was not enough to have the interest of bureaucrats and specialists in adopting voting machines (e.g., Matos, 1998; Chang Mota, 1998), the promise of funding by international organizations (Tuesta, 2007: 78), and even Brazil's offers to lend its machines. Eight countries in the region did not enact EVMs. Moreover, as discussed below, all but one of the enactments that did occur were vague authorizations for using machines in the future. Unsurprisingly, these weak laws were not conducive to implementation. Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, and Honduras never implemented the model after enactment. In Ecuador, EVMs were used once in 2010, when machines were made available to 10% of voters. In Peru, ten elections used the model since 2011, but the largest proportion of voters using the machines was 10.7%. Panama had two elections in which 0.2% of the electorate voted by using EVMs. Paraguay and Venezuela were the only countries to implement the model on a large scale. These two countries went through an exceptional political transformation, and their new presidents benefited from the machines in their dispute with traditional established political forces.

In short: CCTs diffused to almost all countries; PPPs were adopted in most countries, but only about half of them used the model in a large scale; and EVMs reached implementation in five countries, but only two implemented the model in a large scale.

This descriptive overview highlights the importance of domestic policymaking to diffusion. Spreading a policy idea is not enough, as its diffusion pattern depends on what happens to the policy inside countries. CCTs survived all stages in the policymaking process nearly everywhere. PPPs faced difficulties in the broader implementation stage. And EVMs were barred before enactment in about half the countries, and in the implementation stage in most of the others. This data also shows the problem of using enactment data alone to analyze diffusion, equating that stage with the full adoption of the policy. This methodological choice risks inflating diffusion curves.²⁴

Table 3.3: Adoption Processes of EVMs in Latin America (up to 2021)

Policymaking Process	Number of Countries	Countries
Received policy idea from abroad	17	Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela
Enacted policy idea into law	9	Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela
First Implementation	5	Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela
Implementation on a large scale	2	Paraguay, Venezuela

As enlightening as it is, the data presented in this section refers solely to the spatial dimension of diffusion (the asymptote of the S-shaped curve). Tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 show the countries that enacted and implemented each policy, but not how fast they

²⁴The Conclusion develops the discussion about the importance of measuring diffusion based on implementation, as part of a methodological debate comparing my process tracing analysis with quantitative analyses common in the literature.

did it. The temporal dimension of diffusion (the slope of the S-shaped curve) directly reflects the decisions made at each stage of policymaking. In particular, it reflects presidents' interest, or lack thereof, in applying their powers to advance the adoption of each model. The sections below analyze the stages of policymaking for the three policies, and provide evidence that presidents acted to accelerate the adoption of CCTs and block EVMs.

3.3 – COMPARATIVE PROCESS TRACING ANALYSIS

A comparative process-tracing analysis (Bengtsson and Ruonavaara, 2017; Bennett and Checkel, 2015: 29; Koß, 2015; Starke, 2013) of three policies across eighteen countries is only possible with a structured comparison targeting the process's essential aspects. My theory's focus on the institutionalized part of policymaking allows for using the stages of that process (introduction, enactment, and implementation) to facilitate the comparison. I present three separate tests for the argument. First, I test whether presidents acted according to my expectations in these policies' introduction for enactment. Second, I check whether presidents advanced or blocked the enactment of these policies following my theory. And third, I analyze if presidents also behaved according to my argument in accelerating or stalling implementation. Individually, each of these tests is necessary to confirm the hypotheses. Combined, they cover all critical stages in policymaking and thus add up to a sufficient empirical test of the argument that presidents' actions determined the models' diffusion patterns.

Policy Introduction

In contrast with the policies developed domestically through lengthy debates among social and political forces, other countries' policies spread internationally as blueprints of governmental programs. These readily available models can be immediately pushed to the institutional stages of policymaking. All they need is a policymaker willing to do so.

However, not all policymakers have the same powers. If presidents are crucial actors in that process and can play a gatekeeping role in the adoption of models from abroad, they should be the ones introducing the bills for policies that diffuse faster to many countries. Conversely, policies that fail to diffuse should be the ones that presidents were unwilling to initiate. Without presidents' sponsorship, these models remain in pre-institutional debates without ever advancing toward adoption, or they may sometimes be introduced by other policymakers who typically lack the powers to ensure swift enactment and implementation.

CCTs' diffusion surge directly reflects presidents' interests. In all adoptions, the initiative to introduce the model came from the executive branch. This does not mean that only presidents introduced bills for CCTs. In Argentina, for example, opposition parties presented a bill of the model already in 1997²⁵ and multiple times after that. The idea's enactment, however, only happened when President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner wanted the policy. Even if some countries took longer to jump on the bandwagon, it is

²⁵Bill 0014-D-97.

notable that presidents in sixteen countries introduced the model within just twelve years and successfully got it fully adopted.

PPPs also eventually attracted the interest of presidents in most countries. The adoptions of this model still largely reflect executive initiatives. Of fifteen enactments, thirteen resulted from the executive's decision to introduce the policy, and even the two exceptions came from presidents' allies. In the Dominican Republic, a senator from the president's party PLD [*Partido de la Liberación Dominicana*] proposed the bill for PPPs in 2019²⁶. In Paraguay, the bill²⁷ was presented by members of the *Colorado* party and the PLRA [*Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico*] under the interim presidency of Federico Franco, who assumed power after an impeachment led by these two parties (Marsteintredet et al., 2013: 114). The difference between PPPs and CCTs lies in the time it took for presidents to introduce the model. Because not all presidents were interested in public-private partnerships, it took more cycles of alternation in power until most countries elected a president willing to introduce the model.

In contrast, electronic voting machines' trickle diffusion pattern reflects presidents' lack of interest in the model. No enactment of EVMs resulted from the executive's initiative. Presidents saw the promotion of EVMs from abroad, but decided to ignore this innovation. The model only found a way into the institutional stages of policymaking thanks to other, less powerful actors.²⁸ Members of Congress introduced the

²⁶Bill 07115-2016-2020-CD.

²⁷Bill D-1325952 from 2013.

²⁸This data refers only to instances in which the bill reached enactment, as multiple bills about electronic voting machines died in Congress. In 2004 alone, for example, Argentina's Congress received three bills to enact EVMs that did not advance (Bills 2832-S-2004, 2980-S-2004, 4184-S-2004).

model in Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela. The electoral management body did it in Honduras and Panama.²⁹ Moreover, the model was a small part of extensive electoral reforms in all countries except Paraguay.

The takeaway from the models' introduction is that the executive branch is the protagonist of diffusion. To be adopted in most countries, as it happened with CCTs and PPPs, policies depend on attracting presidents' interests. Without that initial push from the executive, a model's chances of diffusing are slim. Policies introduced only by other policymakers, like EVMs, tend to diffuse slowly to just a few countries.

Enactment

After introduction, a model advances in the policymaking process toward enactment. The most common path is through Congress. Multiple committees debate and evaluate a bill until it finally reaches the floor. In countries with bicameral systems, the second chamber repeats this process. Finally, the president can sign the bill into law. Party leaders and heads of parliament can control the agenda, which allows them to accelerate the approval of a particular bill. But their power to do so pales compared to what presidents can do. In some countries, chief executives can use urgency provisions to impose a timeline for Congress to vote on bills. They also have more resources to negotiate support for a policy. And most importantly, presidents across Latin America can unilaterally enact a policy, establishing a *fait accompli* and even starting implementation before Congress evaluates the decree.

²⁹I could not determine the author of the bill in the Dominican Republic.

This type of fast-track for enactment marks the difference between CCTs' and PPPs' diffusion patterns. All presidents except one used unilateral powers to enact conditional cash transfers immediately. Most of them employed decrees to ensure the quick creation of legal norms determining the adoption of the policy. In a few cases, such as Nicaragua and Paraguay, enactment followed from agreements signed with international organizations. It is true that the policy would later be turned into laws through Congress, but the implementation of presidents' initial versions had already started at that time. This situation increased the cost for congresspeople to reject the policy designed by the executive. In Chile, for example, a bureaucrat involved in the CCT program stated that they were not concerned with the transformation of the policy into law by Congress because implementation had already started: "If the law is approved, that would be great, but if it is not, we are already doing it [the program] and we can continue to act with the tools we have" (interview cited in Ruz and Palma, 2005: 37).

Uruguay is the odd case in which the executive proposed CCTs as a bill in Congress, but even this exception is not far from the rule. President Tabaré Vázquez sent the bill to Congress in April 2005 with an urgency clause. This constitutional measure forces each chamber to vote on the executive's proposal within 45 days. If the legislature fails to abide by that timeline, the bill becomes law automatically.³⁰ Congress approved the bill in two months thanks to the president's majoritarian coalition in both chambers. However, resistance from congresspeople could kill the policy if the president lacked that

³⁰See Constitución de la República de Uruguay, Art. 168, Num 7.

support. The opposition tried to stall and block the program, accusing CCTs of “paying people for avoiding work.”³¹ This explains why presidents in most countries used decrees to adopt CCTs. Their interest in the model was so intense they did not take chances in Congress.

PPPs did not generate the same interest among presidents, so they followed normal policymaking through Congress in almost all cases.³² Congressional debates and procedures made enactment take an average of 275 days to pass, representing a delay of more than nine months compared to immediate enactment by decree. Colombia’s Congress was the fastest to pass the bill, doing it in just 69 days over Christmas and New Year’s Eve between November 2012 and January 2013. The slowest was Costa Rica’s legislature, which took two years and three months to approve a policy with significant alterations. From the executive’s perspective, introducing a bill in Congress can result in significant delays and alterations to the policy. This risk was acceptable for presidents in the case of PPPs because the policy did not address their fundamental interests.

The enactments of EVMs followed a different trajectory from the previous policies. The executive did not introduce them, and presidents did not apply their powers to accelerate the model’s enactment. Eight of these enactments happened during uncommon moments of political transformation that weakened traditional parties typically in control of the executive.³³ Some of these transformations allowed outsider

³¹Intervention from Senator Aguirrezabala in the 16th Ordinary Session of the Senado, May 3rd 2005.

³²The exceptions were Argentina, where President Néstor Kirchner enacted PPPs using a decree (Decreto 967 from 2005) that was never implemented and ended up substituted by a new law in 2016; and Peru, where President Alan García enacted PPPs by decree (Decreto Legislativo 1012 from 2008) and rushed to implement the model.

³³The only exception was Costa Rica, where established political elites promoted the reform, including electronic voting machines (Picado León, 2008: 15).

leaders to dislodge previously well-established parties or forced presidents to accommodate smaller parties' suggestions in electoral reforms. In Colombia, for example, EVMs' enactment in 2003 resulted from a reform promoted by traditional parties in reaction to Álvaro Uribe's victory against them in the presidential elections. Venezuela enacted EVMs in 1997³⁴ during the political crisis that marked the end of the country's bipartisan system (Dietz and Myers, 2007). Honduras' enactment of the model in 2021 was part of the response to popular uprisings (Jerez Moreno, 2021: 289) after an outsider candidate accused the government of fraud in tight elections (Salomón, 2018). These transformations are rare events in each country's history. In ordinary times, strong presidents veto changes in electoral procedures that may risk their prospects. The diffusion of a policy that depends on political ruptures is naturally limited.

The context of political transformation that allowed for the enactment of EVMs also impacted the content of these laws. In all countries but Paraguay, the model comprised just a few articles in extensive reforms reshaping electoral rules. Furthermore, among the nine enactments, seven did not *require* EVMs in elections. Instead, their laws *allowed* for the use of machines without specifying when or how that should occur. In Ecuador, for example, the electoral law of 2009 describes elections using paper ballots in detail, before one article that says: "The National Electoral Council may decide to use electronic methods of voting and/or counting in total or partially, for the different elections defined in this law. In that case, it will introduce modifications to these norms,

³⁴Venezuela's previous electoral law, from 1970, initially required mechanical voting machines. Those machines were never used, and the law was later reformed in the early 1990s to allow "computerized forms" to cast votes. This change, however, was also largely ignored, and the country only considered EVMs seriously after the enactment in 1997.

in whatever way necessary, according to the technological development.”³⁵ Similarly, Peru’s electoral law of 2005 has a supplementary provision that “authorizes,” instead of mandating, the electoral management body to proceed with a “progressive and gradual implementation of electronic voting.”³⁶ This type of wording in the enactment of EVMs made it easier for presidents to block the model’s implementation.

The comparison between the three policies’ enactments shows that presidents’ interest in a model determines the speed of enactments. CCTs’ rapid diffusion resulted from nearly all presidents using unilateral powers to advance the model’s adoptions. This uniform reaction to the policy reveals that fundamental interests common to all presidents were at play. PPPs’ enactments took longer because they depended on the election of a president willing to introduce the model and then on Congress to pass the bill. While over time many chief executives were interested in expanding their countries’ infrastructure, the policy did not affect their fundamental interests. For that reason, PPPs did not appeal to all of them and did not warrant using unilateral powers. Finally, EVMs’ enactments occurred during political transformations that weakened traditional presidents. The dependence on these unusual moments shows that the policy had to “swim against the current” because presidents were unwilling to advance a model that can jeopardize their chances in future elections.

³⁵Ecuador. Ley Orgánica Electoral y de Organizaciones Políticas de la República del Ecuador (Código de la Democracia) from 2009, art 113.

³⁶Peru. Ley 28581 from 2005, Disposicion Complementaria Primera.

Implementation

The final stage in policymaking is implementation. Policies' diffusion patterns depend on how many countries implemented the model and how quickly they did it. Presidents' ascendancy over bureaucratic agencies and the public budget allows them to accelerate or stall the work necessary to implement a policy. Fast-tracking a model in this stage typically involves dedicating resources to it and putting pressure on the bureaucracy to accelerate its execution. If presidents expect bureaucrats in one agency to resist the policy, they may shift the responsibility to a different institution more receptive to the program, or at least one more responsive to political pressure.

Latin American conditional cash transfers went through fast-tracked implementation. Presidents incurred the political costs of unilateral enactment so they could start paying the benefits as soon as possible. Therefore, most countries had a rushed implementation of CCTs. Argentina, Bolivia, and the Dominican Republic started transferring the benefits less than one month after enactment! And these were not small pilot programs: Argentina started with 3.3 million beneficiaries, Bolivia had a bit more than one million from the beginning, and the Dominican Republic had 800.000 beneficiaries.³⁷ Not all countries were that quick, but 75% of them implemented the policy within one year of enactment. There were four exceptions: Colombia, Honduras, and Panama took between one and two years,³⁸ and Paraguay took two and a half years. The delay in these four countries can be explained by the involvement of international

³⁷These numbers are available at CEPAL's *Non-contributory Social Protection Programmes Database*, available at: dds.cepal.org/bpsnc/

³⁸Colombia and Panama had temporary pilot programs before implementing the official CCT policy, but they were intended as tests rather than as the initial instance of the policy.

organizations that required more careful implementation with small pilots, evaluations, and studies in exchange for funding (see Chapter 4).

Moreover, in all countries, the implementation of CCTs was a top-down process. Many governments kept the program within an agency directly controlled by the presidency (Osorio Gonnet, 2020: 100), which ensured bureaucrats' responsiveness. Costa Rica's first CCT, in 2000, was led by the Joint Social Welfare Institute [Instituto Mixto de Ayuda Social], which responds directly to the president. Similarly, Guatemala's program started in 2008 under the control of the Presidency's Secretary for Executive Coordination [Secretaría de Coordinación Ejecutiva de la Presidencia].³⁹ In countries where presidents did not keep the policy under their direct control, they could still select the agency responsible for the policy. Argentina's president placed the policy at ANSES [*Administración Nacional de la Seguridad Social*] in the Ministry of Labor. That choice circumvented the Ministry of Social Development, which had resisted the adoption of CCTs for years (Perelmiter, 2016: 102).

The implementation of Public-Private Partnerships was much slower compared to CCTs. Only three countries presented the first project in a public offer within one year: Ecuador, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Conversely, four countries took over three years to present the first PPP project after enacting the model: Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico. And four other countries never implemented the policy, despite having approved it in law.

³⁹A judicial decision forced Guatemala's government to transfer the policy to the Ministry of Education the following year (Estrada Tobar, 2009).

As publicized as they were by international organizations and specialists, PPPs did not attract chief executives' attention like CCTs. No country in Latin America had a dedicated bureaucratic agency for PPPs controlled directly by presidents. Five countries created agencies to develop those projects within the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of Planning: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia,⁴⁰ Mexico, and Uruguay. In five other countries, multiple ministries were jointly responsible for these projects: Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Paraguay. Finally, one country took implementation power away from the cabinet: Honduras created an agency to implement PPPs led by three individuals selected by Congress from a list of nine presented by the executive branch.⁴¹ Overall, presidents not only refrained from rushing PPPs' implementation,⁴² but also did not control the process as closely as they did with CCTs. They were not invested in the policy because it did not affect their fundamental interests.

If presidents can rush a model's implementation, they also have the means to stall or block it. One way to do that is to select bureaucratic agencies under presidential control and shift their priorities to other policies. In the case of electronic voting machines, this route was unavailable. Because of the autonomy of electoral management bodies in running electoral policies, presidents have limited power over these specialized bureaucrats. Moreover, these bodies were generally interested in EVMs. They organized international events about the machines, published studies analyzing their results, and

⁴⁰In Colombia, the policy fell within the DNP [*Departamento Nacional de Planeación*], a governmental agency with the status of a ministry.

⁴¹Decreto 143-2010, Ley de Promoción de la Alianza Público-Privada, Art. 11.

⁴²Once again, Peru was the exception in the case of PPPs. After enacting the policy by decree, President García used three decrees to reduce the legal requirements of the model and rush its implementation (Benavente and Segura 2017, 32–33).

tried to advance their adoption in countries like Colombia, Panama, and Peru. For this reason, EVMs are a hard test for my theory. Despite the autonomy of electoral management bodies, presidents successfully prevented EVMs' implementation on a large scale in almost all countries. That demonstrates the intensity of their resistance to the model and the lengths to which they were willing to use their extraordinary powers.

Unable to control electoral bureaucracies, presidents withheld resources from the budget to prevent the machines' adoption. Despite being cost-effective in the long run, the model requires significant initial investments. Most governments did not provide implementation funds and ignored international funding offers to support the model's adoption. Paraguay was the only one that accepted the widely available international aid for implementation on a large scale (Fuentes and Sánchez, 2022: 9-10). If the executive did not make money available for voting machines in other countries, it was because presidents did not want the policy and rejected those offers. In Colombia, an auditing report pointed out that EVMs were not used after enactment due to a "lack of budget allocation from the government" (CGR-CDGPIF, 2016: 215). Similarly, the president of Costa Rica's Supreme Electoral Tribunal wrote that efforts to test the technology were blocked by "issues of a budgetary nature" (Sobrado, 2008: 46). And in Honduras, an independent report pointed out that EVMs' enactment in 2021 was not followed by a budget to implement the policy (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2021).

The same problem affected countries where the model's initial implementation never expanded to a significant proportion of the electorate. If unable to completely obstruct implementation, presidents prevented the widespread use of voting machines by

controlling the budget. Ecuador's National Electoral Council blamed "austerity policies" for discontinuing the policy after one successful election in which 10% of voters used the machines in 2014 (Estrella, 2015). In Panama, where only 0.2% of voters ever used EVMs, the Electoral Court's president explained the small number of machines by saying that the country's president was against the model (La Prensa, 2012a), something a minister had also expressed (La Prensa, 2012b). Finally, limited funds also forced a gradual implementation of EVMs in Peru (Diario Correo, 2012), where the machines only reached 10.7% of the national electorate despite being used in ten elections.

Presidents had a prominent role in determining the speed of implementation of all three policies analyzed. Interested in CCTs' political payoffs, they created special agencies for the policy or selected agencies that would respond to their pressure. These decisions succeeded in fast-tracking the payment of benefits. PPPs followed a normal implementation process in most countries, with bureaucrats within appropriate ministries carefully developing projects. The variation in the speed of implementation across countries implies that presidents' interest in this policy was not homogeneous. Finally, presidents stalled the implementation of EVMs. Despite their lack of control over the electoral bureaucracy, chief executives successfully withheld the budget funds and prevented widespread adoption of the model.

Takeaway from the Policymaking Processes

The evidence presented above shows that presidents are the protagonists of diffusion. By using their powers to shape the policymaking process, they can largely

determine whether a policy is adopted or rejected and the speed of its adoption. Considered in the aggregate of all Latin American countries, presidents determined CCTs' surge pattern of diffusion because they wanted the policy enacted and implemented as quickly as possible. EVMs' trickle pattern resulted from presidents' rejection of the model. The diffusion pattern of PPPs falls between these extremes because the policy did not mobilize presidents to act decisively regarding its adoption. Table 3.4 summarizes the data discussed in the analysis above, providing evidence for each stage of policymaking.

Table 3.4: Policymaking Processes for CCTs, PPPs, and EVMs

	CCT	PPP	EVMs
Introduction by the Executive	100% (16 of 16 enactments)	86.7% (13 of 15 enactments)	0.0% (0 of 8 enactments) ⁴³
Unilateral Enactment	93.75% (15 of 16 enactments)	13% (2 of 15 enactments)	0.0% (0 of 9 enactments)
Implementation within one year	75% (12 of 16 enactments)	20% (3 of 15 enactments)	11.1% (1 of 9 enactments)

The numbers above show that CCTs generated the same response from presidents in nearly all countries. It is not a coincidence that all adoptions of CCTs resulted from executive' initiative and that nearly all of these initiatives were unilateral enactments. As expected by my theory, presidents fast-tracked the policy that would boost their popular support. EVMs also motivated presidents to act in a similar way across the region. No adoption of the innovation resulted from presidents' actions because this model

⁴³I could not determine the author of the bill in the Dominican Republic.

jeopardizes their political power by reducing their prospects of victory in future elections. The case of PPPs is less straightforward. It shows that presidents initiated the policy without pushing for its fast adoption, as stated in hypothesis 1(B). Their interest in the model was not motivated by an expectation that the model could help them remain in power, so they did not apply extraordinary powers to advance its adoption.

3.4 – REFUTATION OF ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

Even though the comparative process tracing analysis above corroborates my theory, a few confounding variables could be raised as potential causes for the different diffusion patterns of CCTs, PPPs, and EVMs. This section assesses three rival explanations that pertain to domestic policymaking factors.

Complexity

The complexity of a model's implementation is the first alternative variable that could be invoked as an explanation of diffusion patterns. A simple policy that a small group of bureaucrats can implement easily is likely to diffuse faster than a complicated one. CCTs and PPPs are simple ideas, but both models are challenging to implement appropriately. PPPs need specialized bureaucratic and legal teams to design and analyze large construction projects, promote their offers to potential private partners, select contractors using efficiency and value-for-money criteria, and then follow the projects to ensure private partners fulfill their contracts. Regulations on PPP laws must detail these contracts, and projects must include many specifications.

CCTs are similarly complicated due to the need to identify, reach, and pay hundreds of thousands, or even millions, of beneficiaries across the territory (Paes-Sousa et al. 2013, 82). These tasks make the policy complex to implement. The process starts with establishing criteria to select families for the program. Identifying beneficiaries depends on extensive data from poor regions in the country. Then, an army of social workers must reach these families, enroll them in the program and provide them with the means to receive the money, like a bank account with a debit card (Cecchinni and Madariaga 2011, 14-42). To continue paying benefits, the government has to control the fulfillment of conditionalities, integrating information from all public schools and healthcare centers. Bureaucracies from multiple areas must collaborate for a CCT program to run smoothly, and information from different sources about millions of families must be compiled monthly. The simple idea of CCTs requires a complex implementation design, with intense vertical and horizontal coordination and broad bureaucratic reach in all corners of the country.

Many presidents ignored this complexity when they rushed the program's implementation, with observable consequences. The next chapter discusses the ubiquitous shortcomings of CCT programs caused by faulty implementation (see, for example, Cetrángolo and Curcio, 2017; Osorio Gonnet, 2020: 189; Britto, 2008; Gaia, 2010: 208; López Rivera, 2011: 27; Moore, 2010: 108; Rivarola, 2006: 381; Schady et al., 2008: 69). Notably, these problems rarely affected the transfer of payments, which could limit the model's effect on popularity.

Implementing electronic voting machines is also complex if the bureaucracy intends to devise the equipment independently. In Brazil, the country that first adopted EVMs in Latin America, the electoral court [Tribunal Superior Eleitoral] created a group of specialists from multiple branches of the bureaucracy, which devised the main elements of the machines (Camarão, 1997). The government then hired a private company to mass-produce them (Coimbra, 2022: 134). Other countries did not have to follow the same path of self-reliance, instead finding a much simpler way to adopt the innovation. Around the world, most uses of EVMs rely on private companies to provide machines and technical support that resolve that complexity, as exemplified by the exceptional adoption of the model in Venezuela. Once President Hugo Chávez decided to implement EVMs, the electoral management body hired a company that provided and distributed machines. 87% of the electorate voted electronically in the next opportunity (the recall referendum in 2004). Similarly, as described above, Brazil made its machines available to other countries. Ultimately, governments could avoid the most complex aspects of implementing this model by outsourcing the creation and distribution of machines.

In short, if complexity could explain diffusion patterns, CCTs should diffuse at a much slower rate than they did. The truth is that presidents' rushed that model without concerns about the quality of those programs. Conversely, given the easy access to EVMs through private providers and Brazil's offers, the model's diffusion pattern should be much faster and reach more countries. Consequently, this alternative explanation fails is not convincing.

Costs

The second rival explanation invokes the cost of implementation. The logical expectation is that cheaper policies should diffuse faster than more expensive ones. For this argument to explain my three cases, EVMs should be the most expensive to implement, while CCTs should be the least. That is not true. PPPs are the cheapest of the three models. First, the policy is a legal framework with negligible initial costs. Second, its implementation in construction projects transfers immediate expenses to private partners, pushing budgetary concerns to the future (Yescombe and Farquharson 2018, 453). A president willing to develop infrastructure could use PPPs without upfront investments. Therefore, if costs determined diffusion patterns, PPPs should have diffused in a surge.

In the comparison between CCTs and EVMs, both policies are cost-effective but require significant upfront costs. CCTs are considered inexpensive in the long run (Teichman, 2008: 448; Saad-Filho, 2015: 1237), but the initial implementation described above is costly. Apart from the payment of benefits, there are necessary investments in the bureaucratic structure and the initial effort to contact potential beneficiaries in the most inaccessible regions of the country. In addition, proper implementation of conditional cash transfers should include investments in education and healthcare to allow all families to fulfill the conditionalities. These costs did not preclude presidents from rushing the model's adoption. In at least nine countries, governments found support from international organizations to help fund the program (Barrientos, 2018). The other

countries paid for the model's implementation via the public budget, at least in the first years.

Electronic voting machines save public resources in the long run. The technology makes elections cheaper by lifting the need to print, distribute, and manually count paper ballots (TRE-RS, 2006: 81-87; Yrivarren, 2008: 58; ONPE, 2012: 32). The problem in the implementation costs of EVMs is similar to that of CCTs: they require significant upfront investments in the acquisition of software and hardware. However, countries had funding from international organizations widely available to adopt the model, and Brazil's offer to lend its machines at the mere cost of transportation would make adoption much cheaper. Nevertheless, only Paraguay made full use of these opportunities. The implementation of EVMs in the country had Brazilian machines, technical support from the OAS, and American financial aid (Fuentes and Sánchez, 2022: 9-10). The country's electoral justice stated at the time that the implementation of EVMs "has been carried out with minimal cost" thanks to all those sources of external support (Tribunal Superior de Justicia Electoral, 2002: 8). If costs were the main cause of diffusion patterns, the possibility of adopting EVMs nearly for free should have resulted in a much faster wave.

Ideology

A third rival explanation is ideology. Individually, characteristics of a single country cannot determine a diffusion pattern. At best, these factors may determine where that particular country is positioned in the curve. A government may reject a particular policy for ideological reasons, delaying that particular country's adoption for multiple

years. The situation could be different if multiple countries had ideological governments at the same time. Latin America's pink tide of leftist presidents in the 2000s, some may argue, could have caused the surge of an anti-poverty social model like CCTs. It could also explain why it diffused faster than PPPs, a policy that favors a retrenchment of the state in favor of private companies' role in infrastructure. The truth, however, is that governments from different ideological positions adopted both models. In the case of PPPs, leftist presidents were in power during nine of the fifteen enactments.⁴⁴ An analysis of 72 countries also showed that the implementation of PPPs did not follow ideological lines (Alcaraz et al., 2022).

CCTs were not different in that regard: seven leftist presidents enacted and implemented⁴⁵ the model out of a total of 16.⁴⁶ Most authors who analyzed the diffusion of CCTs agree that ideology cannot explain its fast adoption across Latin America (e.g., Sugiyama 2011; Osorio Gonnet 2020, 111-112). Borges (2018) even argues that the left initially rejected CCTs. The policy "carried the stench of neoliberalism" (Borges, 2018: 149) due to its focus on human capital development and its association with institutions like the World Bank. Only after Lula da Silva turned Brazil's CCTs into a mark of his government did other leftist presidents adopt the model. Therefore, the ideological pink tide in Latin America worked against the diffusion of CCTs, not in its favor. The model's surge pattern of diffusion is even more impressive considering the initial resistance from

⁴⁴Ideology is coded using IDB's classification (Cruz et al. 2021). The dataset does not provide a code for two presidents: Colombia's Juan Manuel Santos, which I considered right-wing; and Panama's Laurentino Cortizo, which I coded as leftist.

⁴⁵For CCTs, the enactment and implementation of the model occurred within a single presidency in all countries.

⁴⁶The dataset (Cruz et al. 2021) does not provide a code for Panama's Martín Torrijos, which I coded as centrist.

one side of the ideological spectrum. From my theory's perspective, the policy's expected popularity boost had such a strong appeal that leftist presidents overcame their ideological resistance and rushed the model's adoption. In other words, the effect of ideology in delaying CCTs' diffusion to countries governed by the left was very small in comparison to the effect of presidents' interest in the model's expected popularity boost.

In the case of EVMs' trickle diffusion, there is no reason to talk about the effect of ideology. No ideological position has a clear preference or rejection for the model. The policy is a technical solution to problems of electoral administration. It does not alter the state's role in the economy, nor is it intended to affect inequality. Even if ideology is understood in cultural and social terms, EVMs do not influence policies regarding minorities' rights or conservative values. The implication is that neither the left nor the right should reject this model on ideological grounds. Therefore, if ideology were a key driver of diffusion, EVMs should have diffused faster than the CCT model, which was initially rejected by the left. The reality of these models' diffusion patterns denies that argument. It is because all presidents are interested in popularity and electoral prospects that CCTs diffused much more and much faster than EVMs. These presidents' ideological preferences are secondary and did not play a significant role even in the diffusion of PPPs.

3.5 – FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter provided evidence that presidents determined the policymaking process of policies from abroad, and the aggregate of their decisions generates the

policies' diffusion patterns. This observation challenges previous theories of diffusion that focus on causes from the first step of diffusion, like a policy's success in early adopting countries, its promotion by international organizations, or its attunement to global norms. My analysis controls for these factors and shifts attention to the second step of diffusion: the policymaking process inside adopting countries. My findings confirm hypotheses 1(A), 1(B), and 1(C). They show that presidents' behavior toward a policy model is driven by the model's impact on their fundamental interest in increasing popularity and electoral prospects.

My analysis traced policymaking processes for three models in eighteen countries. This comparison allowed for an understanding of the relationship between the interests affected by each policy, presidents' behavior at each stage of policymaking, and the policies' adoptions across the region that form their diffusion patterns. Unfortunately, this medium-N analysis had a limitation. It was unable to unveil the causal connections in the process. By looking only at official data from the institutional stages of policymaking, this part of my research could not confirm that presidents' actions were motivated by the expected impact of these models on their popularity and electoral prospects. So far, the argument that chief executives fast-tracked CCTs because they expected a popularity boost from the model remains a suggestive correlation.

That issue of causality is formulated as my Hypothesis 2 in the previous chapter. Testing this hypothesis requires a deeper dive into each of the policies. Evidence about the implications of presidents' action in each case indicate their priorities and motivations. In the case of CCTs, for example, the rush to implement the policy

generated multiple implementation problems across the region that affected the model's long term objectives. But presidents' goal was to quickly boost their popularity, therefore they were willing to accept those problems in the CCT programs. More importantly, that deeper dive must include direct evidence from people who observed presidents' motivations at the time. The following three chapters provide these two types of evidence. As case studies, they cover each model's diffusion in detail. In addition, they include in-depth interviews with people involved in adopting the policies that resulted from months of fieldwork in Colombia and Argentina.

Chapter 4: Conditional Cash Transfers

“An anti-poverty scheme invented in Latin America is winning converts worldwide” (The Economist, 2008). This description of conditional cash transfers was published eleven years after the first national CCT program in Mexico. Ten years later, the World Bank counted 63 countries across the world with the same policy (World Bank, 2018: 102-117). In Latin America, sixteen countries implemented the model between 1996 and 2012. What made so many governments adopt CCTs so quickly?

Focused on Latin America, my research argues that CCTs diffused fast and widely because presidents expected the policy to boost their popularity and therefore used their powers to enact and implement the model quickly. The previous chapter showed that CCTs’ early success, international promotion, and attunement with global values were necessary for diffusion but insufficient to explain such a fast sequence of adoptions. The following pages go deeper into the evidence about CCTs’ diffusion surge, looking at the domestic policymaking processes that turned ideas from abroad into actual cash transfers. The first two sections describe the policy’s characteristics and its diffusion across the region, with special attention to its political appeal that called presidents’ attention.

The rest of the chapter provides evidence of the causal argument in my second hypothesis (see Chapter 2): that presidents decide whether to fast-track or block a policy model from abroad based on their expectation that the policy may increase or decrease

their popular support and electoral prospects. In the case of CCTs, I provide two sets of analyses to confirm that presidents purposefully hastened the model's adoption to increase their popularity. One analysis is a series of three process tracing tests that cover specific aspects of the model's adoptions in all Latin American countries. The first test looks at the context in which presidents adopted the policy. In most countries, it was in moments of political weakness that magnified governments' need for a popularity boost. The second test checks presidents' involvement in implementation. They often established bureaucratic teams under their direct control to pressure them into rushing the work and start paying benefits quickly. This strategy also allowed presidents to take full credit for the programs. Finally, the third test uses policy evaluations in all countries to compile data about implementation problems. The findings show that most CCT programs suffered from issues caused by the rush imposed by presidents. Symptomatically, these problems affected aspects of the policy unrelated to its expected popularity boost, like the control of conditionalities.

The tests covering the whole region corroborate my argument. But they do not provide a doubly decisive test, which requires information about the rationale behind decisions made by the executive branch when adopting the policy. Therefore, the second analysis in this chapter unveils the rationale for the adoptions in Colombia and Argentina. Using data from in-depth interviews with cabinet members, bureaucrats, lawmakers, and specialists collected during fieldwork, I trace the policymaking process of CCT adoption in these two countries. Responses from interviewees are clear: Presidents expected a

boost to their popularity from CCTs and used their powers to accelerate the model's adoption because they wanted that boost.

4.1 – THE POLICY AND ITS APPEAL

Conditional cash transfers provided a crucial addition to Latin America's social policy. Throughout the twentieth century, countries in the region developed large social programs linked to employment in the formal sector of the economy (Huber and Stephens, 2012: Chapter 4). The increase of informality in the 1990s, following the debt crisis and subsequent end of import substitution strategies, made existing policies insufficient (Huber and Stephens, 2012: 152; Stampini and Tornarolli, 2012: 1). CCTs arrived as a way to support poor families outside the formal sector, thanks to a targeting strategy with comprehensive territorial coverage. They also promised to reduce intergenerational poverty, thanks to the connection with education and healthcare.

Mexico invented the policy simultaneously with Brazilian local governments. The Mexican economist Santiago Levy devised the model as Vice-Minister of Finance. His design substituted in-kind transfers by cash payments and established the conditionalities in a multidisciplinary approach to social welfare (Yaschine and Orozco, 2010; see also Levy and Rodríguez, 2005). Called *Progresa*, the policy became a potent symbol of Ernesto Zedillo's presidency. In Brazil, the first conditional cash transfer programs were created in the Federal District. The local governor, Cristóvam Buarque, implemented it in 1995 (Abramovay et al., 1998: 33-40; Aguiar and Araújo, 2002: 37-38). The main objective was to allow poor families to spare their children from working so they could

attend school.⁴⁷ Other local governments soon jumped on the bandwagon (Sugiyama, 2008; Coêlho, 2012), until 2001. That year, President Fernando Henrique Cardoso created a national version of the policy, named Bolsa Escola.

CCT programs pay regular cash benefits to families below a poverty threshold, typically based on family income *per capita*.⁴⁸ Despite some variation in how to calculate that poverty thresholds for inclusion (see Ribas et al., 2008; Azevedo and Robles, 2013), all CCT programs have explicit targeting rules based on families' economic vulnerability. The objective is to reach groups ignored by previous social programs, focusing the money on families that need it the most (Levy and Rodríguez, 2005: 63-66).⁴⁹ Beneficiary families must fulfill certain conditionalities to remain in the program, which generally includes their children attending classes in school, going to healthcare appointments, and taking vaccines. These are the essential elements of the model.

The policy is superior to previous poverty relief programs in Latin America. Immediate studies showed positive results. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) evaluated Mexico's Progresá in 1998, one and a half years after implementation. The study concluded that children in the program had a 12% lower incidence of diseases, a reduced probability of stunting, a balanced diet with more calories and the inclusion of vegetables and meat, as well as a projection of finishing

47 Three cities in the state of São Paulo also implemented smaller local versions of CCTs in 1995. Campinas' policy, inspired by Senator Eduardo Suplicy's idea of a universal basic income, was less focused on the imposition of conditionalities (Aguar and Araújo, 2002: 41-42; see also Silva et al., 2004: 48-66). The other cities were Ribeirão Preto and Santos (Silva et al., 2004: 77-85).

48 Some countries implemented alternative forms of targeting. Currently, in Argentina, all parents who are unemployed, informal workers, or domestic workers are eligible until their children turn eighteen. In Bolivia, all children attending public schools are eligible for the benefits.

49 In practice, however, most programs started with severe targeting problems. See the discussion about problems caused by rushed implementation below.

school with 0.7 more years of education on average (IFPRI, 2000). As CCTs spread, other studies echoed the positive results from Mexico. Evaluations in other countries found increased food consumption by families, improvements in nutrition and intake of calories, more frequent healthcare visits, decreased incidence of diseases like diarrhea, increased school attendance, reduced school dropouts, and reduced child labor.⁵⁰

In short, the model's evident success attracted international attention. A network of bureaucrats and specialists organized conferences and workshops dedicated to discussing and promoting the model (Martínez Franzoni and Voorend, 2011; Osorio Gonnet, 2014: 266-270; Hunter, 2021: 110-112). Those specialized debates included representatives of international organizations, which learned from them and joined in the enthusiasm around the model (Milazzo and Grosh, 2008; Garcia and Moore, 2012; von Gliszczynski, 2015).

However, the model's success was not the only factor to enthrall entities like the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. The policy was also attractive for ideological reasons. It combined neoliberal perspectives' focus on human capital with the undeniable need for a safety net in countries plagued by extreme poverty. The transfers in cash gave the families economic freedom to choose how to spend the benefits, as opposed to traditional food aid distributed in kind. They increased beneficiaries' consumption without restricting their choices. The targeting strategy also

⁵⁰ Evaluations conducted in Latin America during the model's diffusion across the region include: Aguiar and Araújo (2002: 90-106); Rawlings and Rubio (2003), Duryea and Morrison (2004), Maluccio and Flores (2004), Attanasio et al. (2005), Schady and Araújo (2006), Veras Soares et al. (2008), Fiszbein et al. (2009), Perova and Vakis (2009). A few studies also yielded negative evaluations of the model (e.g.: Valencia Lomelí, 2008; Papadopoulos and Velázquez Leyer 2016, 440).

ensured that the government would spend the minimum necessary by attending only to those in dire need. Paying the benefits via bank accounts included the poorest sector of the population in the banking system, allowing them to access other financial services (Winkler, 2014; Luzzi and Wilkis, 2018; DuBois, 2021: 111-112). More importantly, the coordination of poverty alleviation with education and healthcare builds on ideas of human capital accumulation, allowing children to “work their way out of poverty” (Levy, 1991: 85). It is true that some countries would emphasize the basic income aspects of the policy over the neoliberal elements built into the Mexican model (see Borges, 2022: Chapter 4). However, the initial association of CCTs with those values facilitated the spread of the policy idea and protected it from criticism about social policies seen as mere handouts.

This successful spread is the first step of diffusion, in which the policy idea travels to potential adopters. In this step, CCTs “checked all the boxes” from extant theories of diffusion. The model was a simple blueprint, and its early success made the idea appeal to a whole epistemic network. Theories of rationality (Meseguer, 2004; Makse and Volden, 2011) would expect governments to adopt this model following learning mechanisms (Gilardi, 2010; Maggetti and Gilardi, 2016: 90) – even if heuristic shortcuts and misperceptions bounded their learning (Weyland, 2005; Weyland 2006). International organizations championed CCTs, encouraged governments to adopt them, and funded implementation in some countries. Theories of imposition (Eichengreen and Rühl, 2001; Hanson, 2003) see these organizations as able to force governments into adopting the model through coercive mechanisms (Levi-Faur, 2005; Shipan and Volden,

2008: 843). Finally, the model was attuned to values cherished internationally, like investment in human capital as a goal for children. Theories centered on norms (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Hyde, 2011) would expect governments to adopt the model in a quest for legitimacy based on the emulation mechanism (Maggetti and Gilardi, 2016: 91; Fernández and Lutter, 2013; Greenhill, 2010).

Any one of these theories may seem sufficient to explain CCTs' surge of diffusion. However, as described in previous chapters, public-private partnerships and electronic voting machines failed to diffuse as quickly and widely despite sharing the same characteristics. The problem is that these theories' focus on the first step leads them to assume that international factors determine the domestic outcome of policymaking. Though necessary for spreading a policy idea, these factors are not sufficient because they do not dictate whether countries adopt a model. A thorough explanation of CCTs' impressive diffusion pattern must include the model's appeal to policymakers in their domestic political concerns.

The Strong Appeal of CCTs in Domestic Politics

After the idea of conditional cash transfers spread through the network of specialists, with the support of the World Bank and other organizations, governments in almost all Latin American countries quickly enacted and implemented the policy. What motivated these decisions, I argue, was presidents' expectation that CCTs would boost their popularity. The political potential of the model was easy to see. Everywhere the idea

arrived, politicians quickly realized that this new program would make millions of beneficiaries more likely to support the government.

It is true that unconditional transfers or clientelist handouts could generate even better results for incumbents. CCTs include controls and regulations that limit the politicization of the policy for electoral purposes (Osorio Gonnet, 2020: 47-50). However, those characteristics do not eliminate its political impact. Unconditional transfers and clientelist handouts would raise very loud complaints among the opposition, generate resistance from middle classes, and attract criticism from abroad. In contrast, CCTs had legitimizing credentials from abroad. The early success of CCTs, the support from specialists, the World Bank's seal of approval, and its ideological connection with human capital development made it easy for governments to justify their decisions to fast-track its adoption. These factors from the first step of diffusion were necessary for fast sequence of adoptions in Latin America, but without a strong interest in the policy's political effects, the first step remains insufficient for explaining CCTs' surge diffusion pattern.

The expectation around CCTs' pro-incumbent effects were clear in domestic debates. Despite substituting an earlier clientelist program, President Zedillo was accused of using Mexico's Progresa politically. A journalist said he was giving "monetary breadcrumbs to 3 million Mexicans" (Cepeda Neri, 1997: 3-5). Public health specialist Asa Cristina Laurell argued that the program allowed for "political control and electoral clientelism" (Laurell, 1999: 156). And these accusations were not wrong. The candidate from Zedillo's party in the 2000 elections, Francisco Labastida, instructed his campaign

to “electorally capitalize” social programs like Progresa (Losada, 2000).⁵¹ While the policy did not ensure Labastida’s victory, the new president, Vicente Fox, rebranded it under a new name to erase his predecessor’s stamp on the program and shift political payoffs to himself.

Examples of similar concerns about the political use of CCTs abound in the region. In Brazil, the mayor of São Paulo, Marta Suplicy, accused President Cardoso of using the debit cards delivered to beneficiaries in an electioneering manner (Leite 2001). Her concerns were justified, as “cash transfers establish a direct and regular link between the government and beneficiaries and Bolsa Escola could make this very visible, through a magnetic card which reached five million households one year before presidential elections” (Britto, 2004: 43). In Peru, the adoption of CCTs a few months before the 2006 presidential elections “raised criticisms regarding patrons’ intentions” (Nagels, 2014: 8). In Uruguay, opposition members of Congress implied that the policy would help mobilize supporters for the government.⁵² In Panama, the vice-president of an opposition party claimed there was a “direct relation” between joining the president’s party and receiving CCTs’ benefits (Quintero de León, 2007). In Guatemala, the first lady who coordinated the policy was investigated for using the program’s database to build a “clientelist network” (Haering 2011) and for including the benefits in her electoral campaign for the presidency in 2011 (Galván 2011).⁵³

51 For an academic analysis of the politicization of Progresa, see Rocha Menocal (2001).

52 16th Sesión Ordinaria del Senado de 03 de Mayo de 2005. Interventions of Senators Isaac Alfie and Martín Aguirrezabala.

53 Sandra Torres’s candidacy was later disqualified because Guatemala’s constitution prohibits relatives of the president from running for office. She divorced her husband to circumvent the law, but the courts still decided against her campaign.

In sum the political effects of conditional cash transfers were obvious, and presidents were well aware of them. The scientific evidence would later show that politicians' intuition was correct. Most academic research on the topic identified a clear relationship between CCTs and electoral support (Marques and Mendes, 2006; Hunter and Power, 2007; Zucco, 2008; Layton and Smith, 2011; Manacorda et al., 2011; Nupia, 2011; Zucco, 2013; De La O, 2013; Layton and Smith, 2015; Díaz-Cayeros et al., 2016).

4.2 – CCTs' DIFFUSION SURGE

Conditional Cash Transfers' "tidal wave" of diffusion (Sugiyama 2011, 255) was unprecedented in speed and range. Sixteen countries adopted them in twelve years following the example of Mexico. Authors writing about CCTs usually emphasize how quickly countries jumped on the bandwagon (e.g., Valencia Lomelí, 2008: 476-477; Fiszbein et al., 2009: 3-4; Cecchini and Madariaga: 2011, 10-11; Layton and Smith, 2015: 855).

Nevertheless, explanations for the model's surge of adoptions remained limited to the first step of diffusion, following the general theories of policy diffusion. Multiple studies argue that successful CCT programs encouraged new adoptions (Sugiyama, 2011; Brooks, 2015; Papadopoulos and Velázquez Leyer, 2016, 440; Osorio Gonnet, 2020, 109). The formation of an epistemic community around CCTs is also a prominent factor in those publications (Teichman, 2007; Martínez Franzoni and Voorend, 2011; Osorio Gonnet, 2019). Yet the role of international organizations is the most common explanation for the model's diffusion surge (Sugiyama, 2011; Martínez Franzoni and

Voorend, 2011; Ancelovici and Jenson, 2013; Papadopoulos and Velázquez Leyer 2016, 440; Jenson and Nagels, 2018; Simpson, 2018; Heimo and Syväterä, 2022). All these factors refer to how the policy idea travels and is received across borders. They are relevant to understanding that part of the story, but fail to explain why governments adopted that model much faster than others that share the same characteristics (like public-private partnerships and electronic voting machines).

Some of these studies consider a few domestic factors. Typically, statistical models include variables measuring basic characteristics of countries, such as income and inequality (Osorio Gonnet 2020), socioeconomic conditions (Sugiyama 2011), and state capacity (Osorio Gonnet 2019; Sugiyama 2011). Estimates of these variables' effects yielded mixed results, and authors did not devote much attention to them. These analyses neglect the political aspect of policymaking. The exception is Brooks' work (2015), which points to the role of democratic regimes and divided governments in the policy's adoption.

Besides the research about CCTs' diffusion, some authors ignored the international spread of the model to analyze the creation of these programs inside some countries as independent phenomena. They concur with Brooks in identifying democratic pressures as drivers for the model's adoption. Electoral competition was a crucial factor that motivated governments to enact and implement CCTs (Britto, 2008; Coêlho 2012; Diaz-Cayeros et al., 2016), either when they had to curb social mobilization and defeat electoral challengers (Garay, 2016) or when they faced economic crises (De La O, 2015).

Garay (2016) and De La O (2015) also highlight the importance of incumbent presidents in the process.

My work bridges the knowledge about international spread of the model with insights about its domestic policymaking process. Tracing CCTs' adoption in Latin America, I show that presidents follow electoral motivations typical of democratic systems to fast-track the model. Expecting a popularity boost from the policy, these incumbent rulers used their policymaking powers to enact the policy unilaterally. Once the model became law, these chief executives pressured bureaucrats to ensure its fast implementation. Table 4.1 presents the key stages of the institutional policymaking process of CCTs in all countries analyzed.

In most cases, presidents used decrees to enact conditional cash transfers, often stretching the legal limits imposed on their unilateral powers. In Brazil, President Cardoso used a *Medida Provisória*. These measures should only apply to situations of “relevance and urgency”⁵⁴, which was not the case. Peru's President, Alejandro Toledo, enacted CCTs by *Decreto Supremo*, a lawmaking tool that should regulate ministries' activities, not enact new policies.⁵⁵ In Costa Rica, the government agency responsible for delivering social policies created a CCT program directly through administrative decisions (Barrientos, 2018). Even more surprising, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Panama established the policy based on agreements with international organizations without a formal enactment into law.

⁵⁴ Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil, Art 62.

⁵⁵ Decreto Legislativo N° 560, Art 3. (This legislation was substituted by *Ley N° 29158 in 2007*, after the enactment of CCTs. The definition of *Decretos Supremos* in the new law suffered a small expansion).

Table 4.1: Enactments and Implementations of CCTs in Latin America

Countries	Program Name	Executive Initiative	Unilateral Enactment	Enactment Document	Enactment Date	Implementation Date
Argentina	Asignación Universal por Hijo	Yes	Yes	Decreto 1602-2009	2009 Oct 29	2009 Nov
Bolivia	Bono Juancito Pinto	Yes	Yes	Decreto Supremo 28899	2006 Oct 26	2006 Nov
Brazil	Bolsa Escola	Yes	Yes	Medida Provisória 2140-01	2001 Feb 13	2001 Aug
Chile	Chile Solidario	Yes	Yes	Decreto 144 del Min de Planificación y Cooperación	2002 Jul 01	2002 Jun ⁵⁶
Colombia	Familias en Acción	Yes	Yes	CONPES 3075	2000 Mar 15	2001 Jun
Costa Rica	Superémonos	Yes	Yes	IMAS Internal Regulation	2000 Jul	2000
Dom. Rep.	Solidaridad	Yes	Yes	Decreto 536	2005 Sep 26	2005
Ecuador	Beca Escolar	Yes	Yes	Decreto Ejecutivo 2750-A	2002 Jun 13	2002
El Salvador	Programa Red Solidaria	Yes	Yes	Decreto Ejecutivo 11-2005	2005 Mar 04	2005 Oct
Guatemala	Mi Familia Progresa	Yes	Yes	Acuerdo Gubernativo 117-2008	2008 Apr 17	2008
Honduras	PRAF-II	Yes	Yes	Decreto 304-98	1998 Dec 12	2000
Mexico	<i>(Innovator)</i>					
Nicaragua	Red de Protección Social	Yes	Yes	IABD Contract 1055/SF-NI	2000 Mar 29	2001 January
Panama	Red de Oportunidades	Yes	Yes	NA ⁵⁷	2005	2006 April
Paraguay	Tekoporã	Yes	Yes	IADB ATN/SF-8167-PR ⁵⁸	2003 Mar 06	2005 Sep 08
Peru	Juntos	Yes	Yes	Decreto Supremo 032-2005-PCM	2005 Apr 06	2005 Sep
Uruguay	PANES	Yes	No	Ley 17.869-2005	2005 May 20	2005
Venezuela	<i>(No Adoption)</i>					

⁵⁶The program started on that date as part of the pre-existing *Programa Puente* (Ruz and Palma, 2005: 16).

⁵⁷The policy's official enactment came in 2007 as a decree (Decreto 222-2007), after its implementation in 2006. The World Bank's Report 32887PA from August 30, 2005, describes how the organization had been working with Panama's government to design and implement the policy. A pilot was created in 2005.

⁵⁸The policy was not introduced by any form of legislation or decree. It appeared solely as part of the country's budget for 2005 (Veras Soares and Britto 2007: 6). An agreement with the IADB in 2003 established funding for the program (see *Decreto 1928*, April 28 2009).

Irrespective of which tools and powers they used, governments in all countries except Uruguay purposefully circumvented the legislature when adopting conditional cash transfers. These decisions ensured a fast enactment and portrayed the program as a direct act from the president. All credit, therefore, would accrue to the presidency, preventing congresspeople from claiming any responsibility for these programs.

Rulers magnified that effect by personally announcing the creation of CCTs in public events. In Argentina, Cristina Kirchner first informed the country about the program in a televised speech that took politicians and bureaucrats by surprise. Ricardo Lagos launched *Chile Solidario* on May 21, a national holiday when Chilean presidents traditionally speak to the legislature.⁵⁹ In Bolivia, president Evo Morales personified the policy even more by signing its creation on his own birthday, October 26.

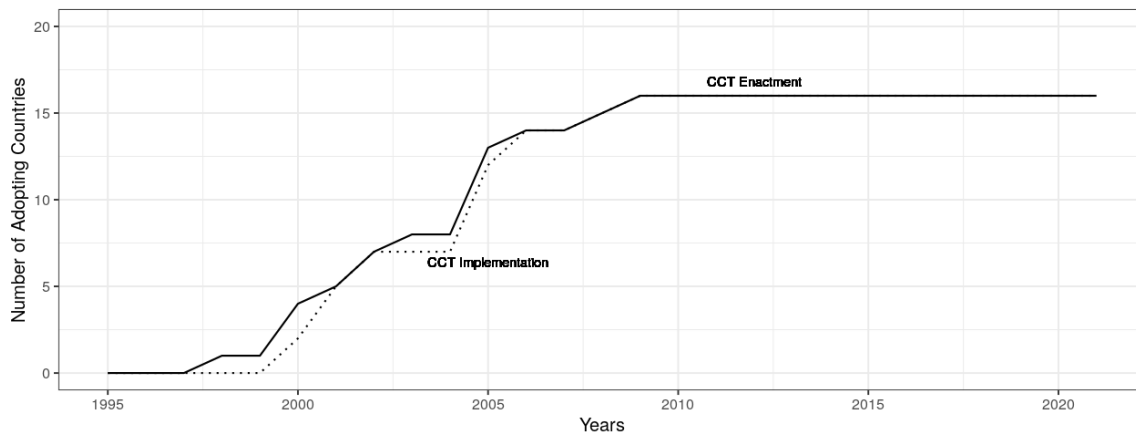
The data (Table 4.1 above) also includes implementation dates, when the countries paid the first benefits of conditional cash transfers. As described in the previous chapter, 75% of adopting countries implemented the policy within one year of enactment. The graph below (Figure 4.1) highlights that speedy adoption process in which enactments and implementations nearly overlap. This is particular to CCTs. The cases of PPPs and EVMs, examined in the following chapters, show that implementation takes much longer when the policy does not help presidents remain in power and get reelected.

Only four countries had slower processes of implementation. Colombia, Honduras, and Panama took between one and two years to start paying the benefits, while Paraguay took two and a half years. These four countries' careful approach to CCTs

⁵⁹ This yearly event is comparable to the American tradition of the State of the Union Address.

resulted from external influence from the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. These organizations funded a large part of the model's first implementation in these four countries.⁶⁰ This financial support came with requirements for careful implementation. The funds were earmarked for different components of the program that most countries neglected, like the provision of healthcare and education, enforcement of the conditionalities, and evaluation systems (Azuara et al., 2015: 20). Countries receiving those funds also had to perform pilot tests before creating the complete program. These demands delayed the implementation of CCTs.

Figure 4.1: Enactments and Implementations of CCTs⁶¹



These countries showcase the importance of studying implementation as a part of diffusion, and they challenge the standard theoretical expectations around the role of

⁶⁰ Other countries that received funding at the start of the policy are El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. In Guatemala, the funding provided was less comprehensive and more focused on the financial aspects of implementation (Azuara et al., 2015: 21). In Nicaragua, the shorter period between enactment and implementation reflects a delay in designing and enacting the policy (Barrientos and Santibañez, 2009: 416; Moore, 2009: 7-8).

⁶¹ This graph does not include adoption data by the innovator (Mexico).

international organizations. While the World Bank or the Inter-American Development Bank spread information and promote a model in the first step of diffusion, their role in the implementation stage creates a series of hoops for bureaucrats working on the program. Instead of accounting for rapid diffusion patterns, in the second step their coercive mechanisms actually limit the speed of adoption in each country, ultimately slowing down the diffusion process. Scholars following imposition theories must recognize the dual effect of these entities in policy diffusion.

4.3 – TRACING PRESIDENTS’ MOTIVATION

The previous pages have established that CCTs had great appeal for presidents, given their promise of a popularity boost for incumbents. They also showed that presidents fast-tracked the model, unilaterally enacting it and rushing bureaucrats to implement it quickly. It remains to be confirmed that presidents fast-tracked the policy *because* they wanted to gain popular support from it. That is a fundamental part of my theory, as presented in Hypothesis 2 (see Chapter 2). The causal chain I formulate for CCTs starts with the model’s political effects, which motivate presidents to accelerate the policy’s adoption. As this process happens in multiple countries, the fast sequence of adoptions generates the surge pattern of diffusion. This section presents three tests with evidence that presidents’ expectations about popularity motivated their decisions to fast-track CCTs.

Unfortunately, no research method can observe presidents’ expectations and motivations directly. One strategy to uncover their role in CCTs’ adoptions is to analyze

characteristics of the policymaking processes that allow for an inference about the motivation behind those adoptions. Three process-tracing tests check the political context of enactments and qualitative aspects of implementation. The results of each test could be categorized as “straw in the wind” tests (Collier, 2011). Combined, however, they present a robust picture of the impact of political motivations on the CCTs’ diffusion pattern.

Test 1: Context of Adoption

If presidents fast-tracked CCTs to reap immediate popularity gains, they were likely to prioritize this policy even more when they needed popular support the most. Moments of political weakness magnify their determination to increase their popularity and electoral prospects. These moments include protests, social unrest, competitive upcoming elections, and also economic crises (as pointed out by De La O, 2015). At least ten Latin American governments enacted and implemented the model in such moments of weakness. In all these cases, the president had suffered from a decrease in popularity since coming to power, in a clear indication that the timing of adoption is associated with their attempt to regain support among the public. Below is a brief description of the context leading to the adoption of CCTs in each of these countries (see Appendix C for a more detailed analysis of each country).

- *Argentina*: President Cristina Kirchner clashed with farmers in 2008 due to a proposed rise in export taxes. This dispute sparked nationwide protests (Pucciarelli, 2017), and her party lost ground in the 2009 midterm elections

- (Gené, 2017, pp. 392-393). She announced the adoption of CCTs four months later (see case study below).
- *Bolivia*: President Evo Morales faced political challenges after calling for a new Constitutional Assembly in 2006. His support declined notably as a response (Marirrodriga, 2006; Semana, 2006), leading the government to adopt the CCT model despite his initial criticisms of the model. The program was “hastily constructed (...) to respond to the population’s more and more pressing demands” (Nagels, 2014: 10-11).
 - *Brazil*: President Fernando Henrique Cardoso faced an economic downturn, a crisis in the supply of electricity, and corruption scandals that affected his popularity during his second term (Toledo, 1999). His personal diaries reveal a continuous concern about his popularity and electoral polls.⁶² In that same period, his government consolidated local CCT programs into a national initiative called Bolsa Escola.
 - *Colombia*: President Andrés Pastrana failed to reach a peace process with guerrilla groups at the turn of the century, while the country entered an economic crisis. The government implemented austerity policies, further decreasing his support. Adopting conditional cash transfers was meant to prevent political unrest and increase the president’s popularity (see case study below).

⁶²President Cardoso wrote very often about polls conducted by the three main poll companies in Brazil at the time (DataFolha, Ibope, and Vox Populi) in his personal diaries. These diaries were published as books many years after he left the presidency. In Cardoso (2017), he discusses those polls on pages 37, 84, 95, 125, 188, 216, 279, 317, 326, 373, 418, 451, 571, 645, 664, 698. In Cardoso (2019), he cites the polls on pages 120, 121, 364, 482, 490, 540, 541, 565, 583, 602, 613, 626, 639, 716, 723, 736, 749, 766, 767, 772, 779, 785, 811, 819, 833, 842, 849, 857, 871, 877.

- *Costa Rica*: President Miguel Ángel Rodríguez experienced declining approval ratings below 25% (Carlin et al., 2019), with a public backlash against perceived privatization efforts. The resulting riots in 2000 forced the government to reconsider its policies (Frajman, 2009). In response, Rodríguez announced the first conditional cash transfer program in July 2020, likely as a strategy to regain public support.
- *Dominican Republic*: Leonel Fernández implemented preliminary cash transfers to alleviate inflation's impact on the poorest upon returning to the presidency in 2004 (Alonso and Dotel, 2007: 49). Facing declining popularity, social unrest, and impending strikes (Diario Libre, 2005), Fernández unilaterally launched the full-scale CCT program "Solidaridad" in September 2005 (Fearon & Laitin, 2006: 11).
- *Ecuador*: President Jamil Mahuad initiated negotiations for CCTs in 1999 amid an economic crisis and a popularity of only 6% (Barracca, 2007: 143-144). However, he lost power before securing international funds for the program. His successor, Gustavo Noboa, launched a pilot in 2001 and implemented a complete CCT program in 2002 with support from UNICEF (see Lana & Evans, 2004).
- *Guatemala*: Álvaro Colom had no honeymoon for his presidency in 2008. His popularity declined nearly 20 percentage points in three months (Carlin et al., 2019). His government also suffered pressure from social movements, episodes of violence, and an internal crisis in the cabinet (Solis, 2008). In response, Colom fast-tracked CCTs' adoption in a top-down process (Gaia, 2010: 216).

- *Panama*: President Martín Torrijos faced public backlash in 2005, after implementing neoliberal measures, including a change in the pension systems (BBC, 2005). The reforms sparked widespread protests (Gandásegui, 2005: 202-205), and Torrijos's popularity declined (Delgado, 2005; Carlin et al., 2019). He collaborated with the World Bank⁶³ to establish a CCT program to counter the social unrest.
- *Peru*: President Alejandro Toledo, elected in 2001, saw his popularity plummet to 11% (El Universo, 2003) due to unfulfilled promises and rising unemployment (Relea, 2001). In addition, a military uprising (Puertas, 2005a) and a cabinet crisis challenged his government in 2005 (Puertas, 2005b). Trying to remain in power, he adopted CCTs unilaterally in only five months.

While the ten countries above adopted CCTs when their chief executives were politically weak, presidents' quest for popularity is so strong that they fast-tracked the model even without urgency in other countries. Chile's President Ricardo Lagos rushed the adoption of the policy in the first half of 2002, as the country struggled to recover from an economic crisis (Ruz and Palma, 2005: 26). The situation reduced his popularity to some extent, but not enough to put his government under stress. In El Salvador, President Elías Antonio Saca promised to create a CCT program during the electoral campaign (Veras Soares and Britto, 2007: 6) and fast-tracked the model right at the beginning of his mandate. In Paraguay, President Nicanor Duarte also started working on

⁶³ World Bank's Report 32887PA.

CCTs early in his mandate, following a governmental plan for social policies against poverty and social exclusion (Presidencia de la República de Paraguay, 2004). Uruguay adopted the model at the beginning of Tabaré Vázquez's presidential term in 2005 to solve years of increasing poverty rates caused by the spillover effects of Argentina's 2001 crisis (Castiglioni, 2010).

Honduras and Nicaragua are two exceptions in the diffusion process. Their adoption of conditional cash transfers resulted primarily from international organizations' offer to help families affected by Hurricane Mitch, the "deadliest Atlantic hurricane since 1780" (National Climatic Data Center, 2004). The Inter-American Development Bank supported the implementation of CCTs in the aftermath of the storm (Inter-American Development Bank, 2015: 15; Moore, 2010: 117-118). Despite the dire situation, there were significant delays caused by the IDB's involvement in the design and implementation of the policy. Honduras enacted the model in 1998 and started paying benefits only in 2000, while Nicaragua only got the policy approved for loans in 2000.

In sum, the context in which countries adopted conditional cash transfers provides insights into presidents' objectives in fast-tracking the model. Most presidents created CCT programs in moments of political weakness, in which CCTs acted as a lifeboat that could keep their governments afloat. Notably, these were not necessarily exceptional circumstances that transformed the political systems.⁶⁴ Instead, they reflected the shifting nature of democratic politics, in which presidents lose popularity and face challenges throughout their mandates. Still, the connection between these moments and CCT

⁶⁴For comparison, fundamental crises of the political system in which new forces dislodge traditional parties were necessary for the rare adoptions of EVMs (see Chapter 6).

adoptions was not coincidental. Most presidents actively pursued a popularity boost from the policy to rescue themselves from political distress. This test also reveals the importance presidents attributed to the model. Besides using extraordinary powers to accelerate CCTs' enactment and implementation, they often did so during economic crises when resources were scarce.

Test 2: Form of implementation

Presidents fast-tracking the adoption of conditional cash transfers engaged directly in the process. Through their personal involvement, these leaders put pressure on bureaucrats to move as fast as humanely possible in implementation, starting the payment of benefits in less than one year in most countries. Moreover, their engagement in these programs sent a clear message to beneficiaries that the policy resulted from the president's initiative. The association of their image with the program was instrumental in ensuring the president would reap all the political gains generated by the policy. This form of implementation of CCTs falls in line with the expectations of my theory. It matches my focus on the executive leader and fits the political motivation I argue generated the surge of adoptions of this model.

Most studies about the creation of CCT programs portray a top-down approach within the executive structure (Barrientos and Santibañez, 2009). Contrary to Garay's (2016) argument centered on social movements, conditional cash transfers were spearheaded by presidents and implemented by bureaucrats without significant input from civil society (Martínez Franzoni and Voorend, 2011: 290). Presidents established

their control over the process by selecting the bureaucratic agency responsible for the policy. Osorio Gonnet (2020: 100) shows that Honduras started a trend in 1998 by linking its CCT program directly to the office of the president rather than to a cabinet ministry.

Many countries followed the Honduran idea. In El Salvador, the secretary responsible for *Red Solidaria* not only responded directly to the president, her office was also located next to the president's (Martínez Franzoni and Voorend, 2011: 289). The program became an essential part of President Elías Antonio Saca's publicity efforts. Peru's program, *Juntos*, remained under the Presidential Council of Ministers, while other social policies are the responsibility of the much weaker Ministry of Women and Social Development (Jones et al., 2008: 262). In Paraguay, President Duarte directly led the *Gabinete Social* responsible for implementing the program *Tekoporã* (Rivarola, 2006: 374).

The same was true in Costa Rica. President Miguel Ángel Rodríguez determined the adoption of CCTs in 2000 and placed the policy in the Joint Social Welfare Institute [*Instituto Mixto de Ayuda Social (IMAS)*], which responded directly to him. The *Superémonos* program was not formally enacted as a law or decree. Its legal basis was formulated only in the institute's internal regulations. The policy was a decision "from above"⁶⁵. Bureaucrats involved in the program said in interviews that the speed of implementation resulted from the president's political backing: "We went to the offices and said: This was a political decision, and we must do it."⁶⁶

65 Interview with bureaucrat involved in the implementation of Superémonos in Costa Rica #1 (May 2020).

66 Interview with bureaucrat involved in the implementation of Superémonos in Costa Rica #1 (May 2020).

Even the first lady participated in the process to accelerate the model's adoption.

Miguel Ángel Rodríguez was a great ally and gave great support to IMAS. Especially his wife, Lorena. If you had a problem, you would call her, and in five minutes, it was resolved.⁶⁷

The effort to keep the policy under the direct control of the presidency paid off. Either because these programs were implemented faster or because they had the personal mark of the president, CCTs had a larger electoral effect when the president controlled the relevant agency (Layton and Smith 2015: 857).

However, this strategy was not available for all presidents. In Guatemala, the Presidency's Secretariat for Executive Coordination was responsible for the program Mi Familia Progresá (MIFAPRO) for only one year. A decision from the Constitutional Court forced the government to relocate the policy to the Ministry of Education (Estrada Tobar, 2009). Nevertheless, the president maintained strict control over the program because his wife, Sandra Torres, presided over the Social Cohesion Council, which oversaw the transfers. This duality in MIFAPRO's institutional coordination placed challenges for transparency in the benefits administration while allowing the first lady to build a political career as the leader of Guatemala's social welfare system (Gaia, 2009: 214). It also led to accusations of political use of beneficiaries' data and clientelist expansion of the CCTs policy (as described in section 4.1).

In countries where a ministry was officially in charge of conditional cash transfers, presidents strategically picked the agency responsible for the policy. President

⁶⁷ Interview with bureaucrat involved in the implementation of Superémonos in Costa Rica #2 (May 2020).

Lagos's decision to fast-track CCTs in Chile forced bureaucrats in the Ministry of Finance to accelerate and change their plans. A group within the ministry had been working with the World Bank to reform social policies by 2003. However, the president's eagerness to adopt CCTs changed those plans and forced the creation of a new program at the beginning of 2002. Days before announcing *Chile Solidario*, Lagos decided to place the program in the Ministry of Planning under Minister Cecilia Pérez Díaz. She was famous for her focus on poverty alleviation, and her appointment in January indicated the president's interest in changing the administration of the country's social policies (for the history of Chile Solidario's creation, see Ruz and Palma, 2005). In Argentina, President Cristina Kirchner adopted a similar tactic to fast-track the implementation of the program Asignación Universal por Hijo (AUH). As described below in the in-depth study, the country's Ministry of Social Development, led by her sister-in-law, had rejected the CCT model for years (Perelmiter, 2016: 102). The president circumvented this resistance by placing the policy in the agency responsible for pensions, which belongs to the Ministry of Labor.

Even where presidents did not handpick the agency responsible for the policy to accelerate implementation, bureaucrats working on the program suffered political pressure. President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, in Brazil, placed *Bolsa Escola* in the Ministry of Education to emphasize the focus on the investment in human capital. Still, the president watched implementation very closely.

FHC [Fernando Henrique Cardoso] fully participated. (...) He came up with the idea of boosting education and got very involved. We made monthly reports on

the number of municipalities and families enrolled in the program for the president.⁶⁸

Overall, in most countries, presidents oversaw program creation very closely. The quick transition from enactment to implementation was not a coincidental factor or a result of bureaucrats' interest. Instead, it resulted from presidents' top-down pressure to fast-track the policy and to attach their image to CCT programs.

Test 3: Implementation problems

Fast-tracking a policy has consequences for its implementation. When presidents rushed bureaucrats to start the payment of conditional cash transfers as quickly as possible, these bureaucrats prioritized monetary transfers over other aspects of the model. In practice, these governments purposefully simplified the complex CCT model, ensuring a fast distribution of payments to boost presidents' popularity. The result was a series of problems in features that do not reduce the policy's effect on popularity. In fact, the most common problems allowed more people to stay in the program, which increased its political effect in benefit of the executive.

Despite being a simple idea, implementing conditional cash transfers is a complex undertaking with high initial investment (Adato and Hodinnott, 2010: 6). Identifying beneficiaries requires extensive data collection and analysis. Once the families have been identified, social workers must reach out to them and enroll them in the program. Many workers are necessary for this challenging task, and they must travel to remote areas with limited access in order to provide these families with the means to receive cash transfers.

⁶⁸ Interview with politician involved in the implementation of National *Bolsa Escola* in Brazil (May 2020).

Typically, this involves opening bank accounts and delivering debit cards. However, many families may lack basic identity documents (Hunter, 2019), which increases the number of bureaucratic hoops necessary to include them in the program. Once beneficiaries are enrolled, the government must monitor their compliance with the conditionalities, which typically involve school attendance and health clinic visits. Teachers and healthcare providers must be integrated into a system so they can report the beneficiaries' attendance back to the program's central administration. Given the large dimension of CCT programs, those reports must be included in the dataset of beneficiaries to determine their payments automatically. In sum, the policy requires extensive human resources with broad reach over the territory, intense vertical and horizontal coordination across multiple agencies, and continuous attention to the situation of these families (Cecchinni and Madariaga 2011, 14-42; Paes-Sousa et al. 2013, 82).

Presidents' urge to start cash payments as soon as possible caused many problems in this complex process. Policy evaluation studies provide evidence that most CCT programs suffered from severe deficits. Unfortunately, there is no single systematic study of implementation in all countries following the same criteria. I collected over 50 studies about CCTs in Latin American countries and coded their information according to the issues they described (see Appendix D for the list of studies). These publications cover all countries that adopted CCTs in the region after Mexico, except for Costa Rica.⁶⁹ I categorized the observed problems into the seven types described below. Then I coded each country's program in a binary classification based on whether a study cited that type

⁶⁹ Costa Rica's CCT program *Superémonos* was short-lived. Very few publications discuss its implementation, and they do not evaluate the program (see, for example, Castañeda et al., 2005).

of problem as a significant concern. Table 4.2 presents the data from that analysis. Cells marked with an “X” indicate that at least one study identified that problem in the country.

- *Targeting Errors:* Problems in the selection of beneficiaries, excluding families that should receive the benefits according to the program’s rules or including families that should not receive the benefits.
- *Control of Conditions:* Inadequacy or absence of systems to check if beneficiaries comply with the conditions imposed by CCT programs in healthcare and education.
- *Supply of Conditions:* Inadequacy or absence of healthcare and education services necessary for beneficiaries to comply with the conditions imposed by CCT programs.
- *Institutional Coordination:* Problems in the coordination between different levels of government (national, regional, and municipal) and between different ministries and agencies within the national government.
- *Human Resources:* Lack of public servants necessary to carry out the implementation of a CCT program, or lack of training for these servants to fulfill their roles in the program as needed.
- *Incomplete Database:* Problems in the computational system necessary to select, register, and monitor beneficiaries in the program with information about payment of benefits compliance of benefits.

- *Payment Systems*: Problems in the payment of benefits to the families enrolled in the program, including payments not received, received late, or when the value received is below what these families should get according to the program's rules.

Table 4.2: Problems in the Implementation of CCTs by Type and Country.

Countries	Types of Implementation Problems						
	Targeting Errors	Control of Conditions	Supply of Conditions	Institutional Coordination	Human Resources	Incomplete Database	Payment Systems
Argentina	X	X	X	X			
Bolivia	X	X	X		X	X	
Brazil	X	X		X		X	
Chile	X		X	X		X	
Colombia	X	X				X	
Costa Rica	<i>(NA)</i>						
Dom. Rep.	X		X	X			
Ecuador	X	X			X		
El Salvador	X	X	X		X	X	X
Guatemala	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Honduras	X	X		X			X
Mexico	<i>(Innovator)</i>						
Nicaragua				X			
Panama	X	X	X	X		X	
Paraguay	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Peru	X	X	X			X	
Uruguay	X	X	X	X			
Venezuela	<i>(No Adoption)</i>						

CCT programs had important failures in design and implementation across Latin America. In line with my theoretical expectation, the two most common problems are the most easily exploited to benefit presidents with a popularity boost. The most frequent issue concerned selecting families as beneficiaries. At least 14 countries had errors of

inclusion or exclusion that affected the targeting strategy of the policy. Although it could mean the exclusion of potential families, this type of problem also allowed some discretion in the selection of beneficiaries. Governments could enroll people that should not receive the cash payments to ensure their loyalty and political support.

The second most frequent problem was a limited or faulty control of families' fulfillment of conditionalities, identified in at least 12 adoptions of the model. Many governments purposefully ignored this issue initially, creating CCT programs in which the conditions were announced as recommendations without serious penalties for non-compliant families. This problem was prevalent even in countries with strong state capacity. In Uruguay the conditionalities remained "a symbolic feature" of the policy for several years (Rossel et al., 2019: 7). This feature of the model's implementation in Latin America generated a theoretical discussion about the difference between programs with hard and soft conditionalities (see, for example, Cecchini and Martínez, 2011: 102-116). While these implementation problems diminished CCTs' effectiveness in fighting intergenerational poverty, they helped boost presidents' popularity by maintaining in the program many families that should have been excluded.

The data confirms that governments concentrated efforts on making the money flow to beneficiaries as quickly as possible. Evaluations identified only four countries with problems affecting the actual transfers, like payments not received or received late, which could negatively affect presidents' support. These countries, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Paraguay, are among the poorest in the region and lack institutional capacity, which could explain their inability to maintain this core feature of

CCTs despite presidents' interest in gaining popularity with its adoption. Everywhere else, presidents pressure to accelerate implementation was focused on ensuring the delivery of cash payments worked smoothly.

Many problems listed in Table 4.2 resulted from the politically motivated rush. In Guatemala, the CCT program lacked adequate preparation time (López Rivera, 2011, p. 27). The “high political pressure for implementing an unfinished project” resulted in the payment of transfers “without an increase in education and health benefits” and therefore without control of conditionalities (Cecchini et al., 2009, p. 44; see also Gaia, 2010: 208). In Brazil's first years of *Bolsa Escola*, the speed of implementation allowed for the inclusion of families who should not be in the program (Britto, 2008: 188). The *Chile Solidario* program had about 50% of beneficiaries who were not in extreme poverty and should not have received the transfers (Larrañaga and Contreras, 2010, p. 14). My in-depth studies of Colombia and Argentina below describe the political pressure placed by presidents to start delivering the money quickly. An Argentinian bureaucrat described how they had to alter the program's rules to maintain beneficiaries wrongly enrolled in the policy because excluding them could have had political consequences.⁷⁰

The case of Peru and its CCT program *Juntos* is particularly interesting. The government recognized multiple problems resulting from the policy's quick implementation and fast expansion. A document written in 2008, three years after the model's adoption, identified problems of design and coverage, as well “serious deficiencies when it comes to verifying compliance with conditionalities” (Dirección

⁷⁰ Interview with former bureaucrat at ANSES involved in the implementation of AUH (February 2020).

Nacional de Presupuesto Público de Perú, 2008: 4). The program overestimated children's visits to healthcare appointments by five times, and 33% of the families were not subject to any control of compliance with the conditionalities (Dirección Nacional de Presupuesto Público de Perú, 2008: 6). These errors resulted from a lack of human resources and from a mismatch between the periodicity of transfers and the calendar for the report of conditionalities. Juntos's initial implementation was not careful enough to integrate those elements of the policy, which also precluded an appropriate evaluation of the program's results. Ultimately, the problems were so severe that the document recommended "not expanding the program until structural changes are made in its design and management" (Dirección Nacional de Presupuesto Público de Perú, 2008: 7).

Notably, the country with the fewest implementation problems, Nicaragua, is where policy adoption took the longest. International organizations requested studies and pilots that delayed the model's design, enactment, and implementation (Barrientos and Santibañez, 2009: 416; Moore, 2009: 7-8). As a result, the program ran smoothly from the start. Targeting worked well and avoided excluding families who should receive the benefit without including too many non-poor families (Maluccio and Flores, 2004: 4; Moore, 2009: 18; Moore, 2010: 118). Education and healthcare services received more funds to attend to the increased demand (Regalia and Castro, 2007: 27; Grosh et al., 2008: 129; Cecchini and Madariaga, 2009: 86; Cecchini et al., 2009: 69; Moore, 2009, pp. 9-11). The government controlled the fulfillment of conditions by beneficiaries (Maluccio and Flores, 2004: 11; Cecchini et al., 2009: 74; Moore, 2009: 13), thanks to the strong database created for the program (Quirós Viquez et al., 2003: 41). The policy's

success received international recognition, to the point of being called “exemplary” (Moore, 2009).

Takeaway of the Tests

The three tests conducted so far provide evidence that corroborates my theory. If presidents fast-tracked CCTs expecting a popularity boost, it makes sense that they adopted the policy when they needed popularity the most. In that context, they centralized control over the programs to ensure a swift implementation that highlights their participation. Motivated by political gains, the rushed adoption focused on the payment of benefits to generate a popularity boost, neglecting other features like the control of conditionalities.

Indeed, the policymaking process also reveals characteristics of CCTs’ diffusion that do not match other theories. If diffusion were driven mainly by rational learning, we should expect a careful implementation that corrects problems already identified elsewhere. If theories of imposition could explain CCTs’ surge in Latin America, international organizations should have pushed more governments into following their guidelines. In that case, implementation would be slower, resulting in carefully designed programs similar to Nicaragua’s Red de Protección Social. Finally, normative theories of emulation centered on global values cannot explain the neglect of important aspects of the policy associated with human capital. If those values were the main drivers of CCTs’ diffusion, the control of conditionalities should be emphasized in the programs.

Combined, the tests above support my theory in contrast to alternative explanations, but they are not a definitive answer. A doubly decisive test would require evidence about the rationale behind the executive branch's decisions. The next two sections analyze the policymaking process in Colombia and Argentina. Interviews with policymakers reveal that presidents did indeed expect a popularity boost from CCTs and that they used their powers to accelerate adoption for that reason.

4.4 – CCTs IN COLOMBIA

Colombia created its first conditional cash transfer in the year 2000. *Familias en Acción* was part of the government's response to the country's most significant economic crisis and the president's political weakness. In his book, President Andrés Pastrana describes the situation he inherited from his predecessor in 1998 as “a country on the edge of the abyss” in which:

The worsening of the internal conflict had led to a climate of despair, (...) the political situation (...) had generated a crisis of credibility in the institutions. Likewise, economic conditions were advancing by giant steps towards the worst scenario in many years. (Pastrana, 2005: 39)

Turning the country around to avoid the abyss was a challenging task. Pastrana's efforts to negotiate peace with guerrilla groups failed despite his repeated efforts. The president's weakness before the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia [Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)] was crystalized in the picture of “the empty chair” from January 1999. This famous image shows a frustrated Pastrana sitting alone by an improvised negotiation table, close to an empty plastic chair. That chair was

reserved for FARC's leader Manuel Marulanda, who refused to participate in the meeting arranged in the jungle despite having a series of requests accepted by the government.

The economy also did not improve under Pastrana. Unemployment reached rates higher than 20%, and the fiscal deficit peaked. Colombia's technocratic control of economic policy is well known (Dargent, 2014; Villaveces-Niño and Caballero-Argáez, 2020), and Pastrana followed suit in implementing a severe fiscal consolidation policy in an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (Echeverry and Zuluaga, 2014). A technocratic member of Pastrana's cabinet described the situation by saying the government was in "crisis mode" and needed unpopular reforms.

It was a government with very low support in the polls. We were doing a reform, but this makes the people suffer. Nobody congratulates you for cutting public spending.⁷¹

While Pastrana's approval ratings started above 40%, the failed peace process and the austerity measures frustrated popular expectations, and support for his government faced a severe decline shown in Figure 4.2. The vertical line in the graph marks the moment of CCT adoption.

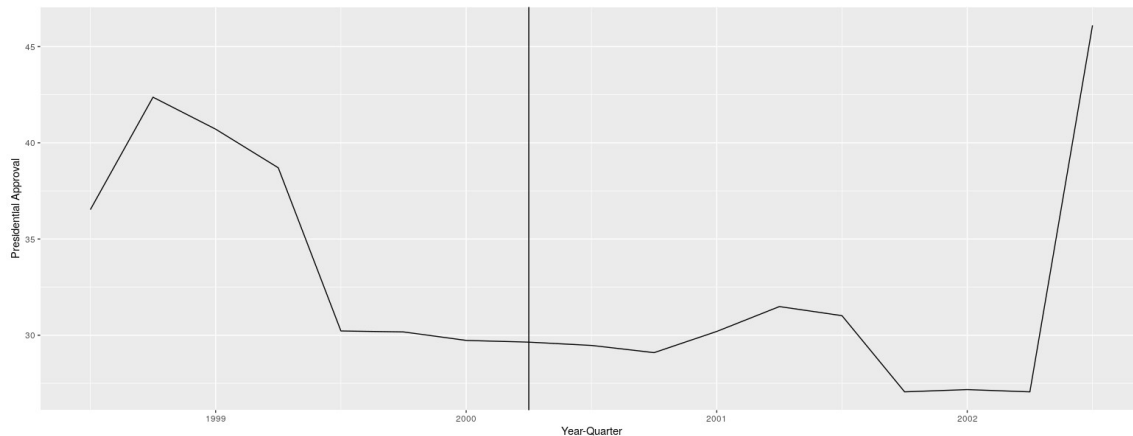
The fear of widespread unrest led the government to look for policy options that could appease the masses.

Their [the IMF's] program was very unpopular, or at least we thought it would be. It was necessary to do something that could lend it a friendlier face. (...) Our concern was that the IMF would hit popularity even more because it had

⁷¹ Interview with politician member of Pastrana's and Santos's cabinets #1 (August 2019).

unpopular elements of austerity. This [the CCT model] was seen as an antidote against that.⁷²

Figure 4.2: Presidential Approval Ratings in Colombia (1998-2002)⁷³



Even the IMF recommended adopting social policies to avoid protests that could lead to violence.⁷⁴ The organization feared a new *Caracazo*, the five-days revolt in Venezuela caused by macroeconomic reforms that resulted in more than 300 deaths in 1989 (see López Maya, 2003). The team of the National Planning Department, a governmental agency similar to a ministry, proposed different ideas for social programs that could mitigate popular dissatisfaction, including a CCT program imitating the Mexican model. They presented the policy to Pastrana, who got immediately on board. Pastrana's book celebrates the IMF's acceptance of using international loans for social programs in Colombia (Pastrana, 2005: 208).

⁷² Interview with politician member of Pastrana's and Santos's cabinets #2 (October 2019).

⁷³ Graph based on data from Carlin et al. (2019).

⁷⁴ Interviews with politician member of Pastrana's and Santos's cabinets #1 (August 2019); and with politician member of Pastrana's and Santos's cabinets #3 (October 2019).

This was a program that the president loved! He deeply appreciated it when we said he could spend funds on this program. (...) This is a politically wonderful program! So amid all political charges, this was very well received by him.⁷⁵

The expectations of political gains motivated the executive to enact CCTs unilaterally and immediately. The first official document to cite conditional subsidies is CONPES 3075 from March 15th, 2000. The program, *Familias en Acción*, was enacted three and a half months later via CONPES 3081. CONPES documents refer to the National Council of Economic and Social Policy [*Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social*]. The council is an entity within the executive that includes the president and most of his ministers. Its administrative rulings enact policies without any participation from Congress. Unlike most decree powers such as Executive Actions in the US or *Medidas Provisórias* in Brazil, CONPES' decisions do not require congressional votes even after they are already in place. This unilateral enactment of CCTs fits my theory that the president wanted to fast-track the model and avoid sharing its political benefits with Congress.

We argued about making it through CONPES and not in Congress because that would take too long. And each congressperson would ask [for the program to be implemented first] in their town.⁷⁶

That was a matter that we handled with the president, and there were no [public] debates.⁷⁷

75 Interview with politician member of Pastrana's and Santos's cabinets #1 (August 2019).

76 Interview with politician member Pastrana's and Santos's cabinets #3 (October 2019).

77 Interview with politician member Pastrana's and Santos's cabinets #2 (October 2019).

Familias en Acción was placed in the Presidential Agency for Social Action [*Agencia Presidencial para la Acción Social*] (Bastagli, 2009: 11). The proximity to the chief executive allowed the president to rush the program's implementation, putting pressure on technocrats and bureaucrats to accelerate the delivery of benefits.

There was some difficulty setting up the targeting mechanisms to identify beneficiaries. But Pastrana was in a hurry, and he demanded [a quick implementation from] us. He used to say: 'You are the only ones who can't find poor people in Colombia!'.⁷⁸

Pastrana became very involved with this program when he saw what it brought him politically. (...) Pastrana participated a lot and made it happen.⁷⁹

However, the president's participation was not limited to rushing technocrats and bureaucrats. He also joined the teams working on the ground to enroll families in the program, associating his image with it. Pastrana participated in multiple events with up to 50 thousand people in different towns across the territory, where he met beneficiaries and spoke to the crowds.

There definitely are political issues [in the adoption of CCTs]. We got used to working politically. Even before the first year, we already had 150 thousand families [enrolled in the program] because Pastrana realized it [the program's political benefit].⁸⁰

Despite all of the difficulties involved in the creation of a conditional cash transfers program (Cárdenas, 2014: 189; Combariza, 2010: 250), the president's pressure ensured implementation in record time. Delays resulted mainly from the Inter-American

⁷⁸ Interview with politician member Pastrana's and Santos's cabinets #1 (August 2019).

⁷⁹ Interview with politician member Pastrana's and Santos's cabinets #3 (October 2019).

⁸⁰ Interview with bureaucrat involved in the implementation of Familias en Acción (October 2019).

Development Bank and the World Bank's requirements. Funding nearly half the policy, these organizations imposed strict conditions,⁸¹ including six months of a pilot program in 22 municipalities and impact evaluations to improve the program's design. Still, the president did not accept such a slow and careful process.

My boss⁸² used to say it [the policy] had to be done immediately because the president of the time believed in it. So, before the results of the pilot even came out, we already had the program running.⁸³

In 2001, the government already paid benefits to 219,560 families (Combariza, 2010: 251), reaching an estimated number of nearly 1.1 million individuals.⁸⁴ Unfortunately, all that rush had consequences for *Familias en Acción*'s quality. The control of conditionalities faced difficulties in many municipalities where the local administration lacked the ability, resources, or interest in enforcing them (Acción Social, 2005: 111). The targeting strategy also suffered from hasty implementation. To start paying benefits as quickly as possible, the selection of municipalities to implement the program followed a logic of convenience. Some localities gained priority because they had bank offices, for example, which led to problems of exclusion that remained unsolved for years (Angulo, 2016: 7).

81 Interviews with politician member of Pastrana's and Santos's cabinets #1 (August 2019); bureaucrat working at Familias en Acción (October 2019); and politician member of Pastrana's and Santos's cabinets #3 (October 2019).

82 The interviewee referred to Rita Combariza, director of *Familias en Acción* at the time of adoption, who led the bureaucracy in the program's implementation.

83 Interview with bureaucrat involved in the implementation of Familias en Acción (October 2019).

84 Data from ECLAC available at the "Base de datos de programas de protección social no contributiva en América Latina y el Caribe" at <https://dds.cepal.org/bpsnc/>

A document from the agency responsible for the program summarizes the need to adjust the policy “on the go” after an imperfect implementation: “*Familias en Acción* is a process that has been continuously and permanently fed back. It is not and has not been a complete and finished system. It is a dynamic task that incorporates realities and lessons learned” (Acción Social, 2005: 111). The main person responsible for the first years of the program was more direct when she wrote that they “adopted the methodology of learning by doing” (Combariza, 2010: 115).

In sum, the policymaking process of CCTs in Colombia fits my theoretical expectations. Adoption occurred during an economic crisis that generated a crisis in popularity. Interviews with members of the administration confirmed that the critical motivation to fast-track the model was the concern about discontent and disapproval. The enactment of CCTs followed unilateral decisions made within the president’s inner circle. He centralized the decisions about the program and rushed its implementation, overlooking international organizations’ requirements for more careful design and testing. The result was a fast adoption that quickly delivered cash to millions of people, despite an imperfect design that caused problems for years.

4.5 – CCTS IN ARGENTINA

Argentina was the least likely case for a fast-tracked adoption of conditional cash transfers. Its two main parties depended on an established clientelist electoral machinery (Auyero, 2000; Oliveros, 2016) and on the collaboration of regional political leaders that maintain a relative level of autonomy (González, 2016; Kikuchi, 2018). These two

political strategies are negatively affected by CCTs. The model weakens clientelist structures by supporting the poorest families directly, reducing their interest in exchanging votes for material benefits. CCTs' targeting rules also preclude political discretion in selecting beneficiaries (Sugiyama and Hunter, 2013). In addition, the policy's centralization at the federal level with a nationwide database of beneficiaries leaves little room for local and regional leaders to claim a relevant role in the program.

Argentina implemented two different cash transfers in the 2000s before following the Mexican model of CCTs. The first one was created during the economic depression and political crisis of 2001-2002 (for an analysis of the crisis, see Schamis, 2002). The policy, called *Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogar Desocupados*, targeted formal workers suffering from unemployment because of the economic downturn. The program, therefore, remained connected to organized labor and unions that excluded informal workers (Kliksberg and Novacovsky, 2015: 30; Perelmiter, 2016: 51; Garriga et al., 2015: 61). The CCT model, already implemented by six countries in Latin America at the time, selects beneficiaries based on measurements of extreme poverty precisely to support those working in the informal market and unaffiliated with labor organizations.

The second policy, *Plan Familias por la Inclusión Social*, was a much smaller program.⁸⁵ President Néstor Kirchner enacted the program unilaterally⁸⁶ and rushed its implementation (Campos et al., 2007: 20). However, it included more criteria for

⁸⁵ The number of households attended by *Plan Familias* in its largest year remained below 40% of the number of families enrolled in *Asignación Universal por Hijo* (data from ECLAC available at the “Base de datos de programas de protección social no contributiva en América Latina y el Caribe” at <https://dds.cepal.org/bpsnc/>).

⁸⁶ Decree 1506/2004 and Resolución MDS 825/05.

eligibility on top of unemployment (Marchionni and Conconi, 2008: 21; Perelmiter, 2017: 271). While some authors consider one of these programs as Argentina's first adoption of CCTs, specialists and politicians interviewed during my fieldwork reject that classification because of their limited size and their discretionary nature.⁸⁷ Bureaucrats participated directly in the decisions to enroll beneficiaries, which maintained those policies associated with clientelist practices (Perelmiter, 2017), in contrast to the CCT model from abroad.

Even the Argentina's governments emphasized the differences between those two programs and CCTs, because they rejected the latter. The Peronists controlling the presidency ignored six initiatives in Congress to adopt the Mexican model (Díaz Langou, 2012: 13). In 2007, the Minister of Social Development Alicia Kirchner, sister of President Néstor Kirchner, stated that CCTs promoted by the World Bank were a neoliberal model that "sees poverty as natural and unsolvable, and therefore pushes national states to take care of what the market could not solve" (cited in Perelmiter, 2016: 102). Interviewees involved in the CCT program created in 2009 stated that Alicia Kirchner remained against the idea.

We had problems with [the ministry of] social development because they worked according to an individual logic in which one learns the history of each child, their relationship with the mother, and all that.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Interviews with economist specialized in cash transfers programs in Argentina (June 2018); former UNESCO representative in Argentina (June 2018); Politician and former senator in the opposition against the Kirchners (February 2020); and Peronist politician involved in the implementation of AUH (March 2020).

⁸⁸ Interview with Peronist politician involved in the implementation of AUH (March 2020).

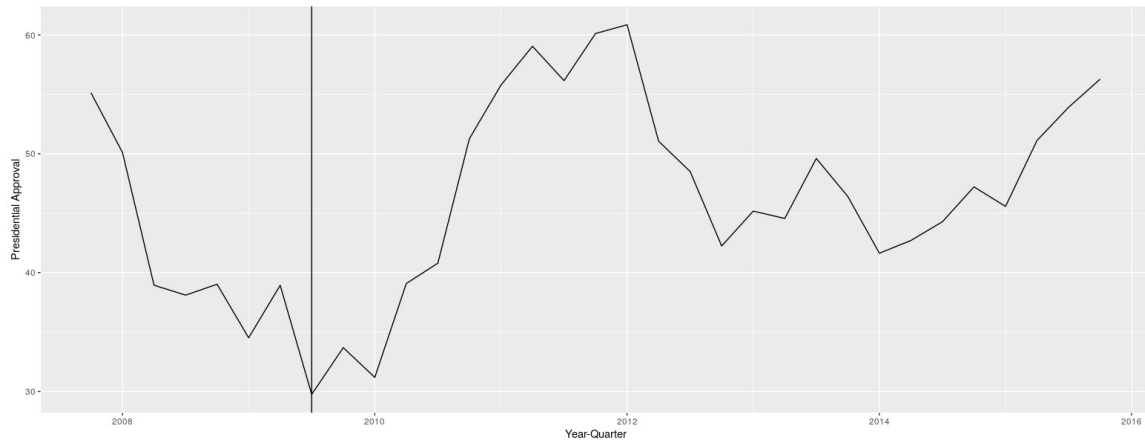
Alicia was against it because she came from a tradition of direct policies, in which one can see the beneficiary.⁸⁹

Still, the promise of popularity gains from CCTs was too strong to remain ignored. A president from the same party that rejected CCTs for years rushed the model's adoption in a moment of need. Argentina's program, called *Asignación Universal por Hijo* (AUH), was created in 2009 in response to low popular support and a political defeat. Peronists had been in power since 2002, first with Eduardo Duhalde, then with Néstor Kirchner, and since 2007 with Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. In early 2008, she found herself in a dispute with the country's powerful agribusiness after increasing taxes and establishing new restrictions on agricultural exports. Rural producers blocked roads and promoted a lockout, soon joined by massive protests from the urban middle classes. Governors who had supported the president moved away from the government and criticized the regulation. The executive's isolation resulted in a defeat, as the Senate rejected the new tax and restrictions (Pucciarelli, 2017).

That political crisis severely affected Cristina Kirchner's popularity. Her approval rate, initially above 50%, decreased quickly to 35% and continued to fall in 2009. Figure 4.3 shows the dire decline in support for her government. The vertical line in the graph marks the adoption of CCTs.

⁸⁹ Interview with member of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's cabinet (March 2020).

Figure 4.3: Presidential Approval Ratings in Argentina (2007-2015)⁹⁰



More critical than approval ratings were the electoral consequences of that crisis. The government suffered a defeat in the midterm elections of 2009. The Kirchners' coalition *Frente Para La Victoria* lost their undisputed control in the lower chamber of Congress and a few seats in the Senate. Their party also came second in the province of Buenos Aires, a stronghold of Peronism, despite former president and first husband Néstor Kirchner's participation in the elections there (Gené, 2017: 392-393). These electoral results put the government on alert.

Even though we had won among the poor sectors [of the population], this time, we won by just a bit. We realized that there was some discomfort, and we were not reaching that group very well anymore.⁹¹

Among a change in the cabinet and the announcement of multiple policies (Gené, 2017: 393), the minister of the economy, Amado Boudou, suggested conditional cash

⁹⁰ Graph based on data from Carlin et al. (2019).

⁹¹ Interview with Member of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's cabinet (March 2020).

transfers. The policy, rejected for over a decade, was now a readily available way to boost the president's popularity. Cristina Kirchner's attention immediately turned to this expedient.

What triggered the *Asignación Universal por Hijo* was the political crisis.⁹²

This happened after the 2009 elections, in which we were defeated. And the year before, we had the conflict with rural producers. The idea was that you move forward from political crises, and there it [the CCT model] came as a response.⁹³

A small group of ministers from the president's inner circle secretly devised the policy. She announced the program only four months after the elections, in a televised speech from the presidential palace. The decree 1602-2009 that created it was already signed. This surprise unilateral enactment avoided delays in implementation, but it also prevented Congresspeople from altering the policy. The opposition had proposed cash transfers for years, and now they were not allowed to discuss the adoption of CCTs or to claim any role in their implementation. Government members were clear in interviews about the reasons for enacting the policy by decree.

We were afraid that it [the CCT policy] would not pass in Congress or that we could be outflanked by the left with something even more progressive. That is why we did it by decree.⁹⁴

The idea that prevailed was to show it [the policy] as a direct decision of Cristina [Fernández de Kirchner].⁹⁵

92 Interview with former UNESCO representative in Argentina (June 2018).

93 Interview with Peronist politician involved in the implementation of AUH (March 2020).

94 Interview with Peronist politician involved in the implementation of AUH (March 2020).

95 Interview with member of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's cabinet (March 2020).

The announcement surprised even those responsible for creating the program's database and programming the transfers. Circumventing Alicia Kirchner's Ministry of Social Development, the president placed the policy under the National Social Security Administration [*Administración Nacional de Seguridad Social* (ANSES)], an agency within the Ministry of Labor that managed the public pension system. A bureaucrat from ANSES said she first heard of the policy in the official announcement on October 29.⁹⁶

The president pushed hard for quick implementation by promising the policy for the next month, although it was not clear that this ambitious timeline was at all possible. Two million children were registered in official databases without any information about their parents or family income, and bureaucrats knew an additional unknown number of children were not even registered. The team started a nationwide effort to find children in remote areas of the country, with the help from a Peronist youth organization led by the Kirchners' son, called *La Cámpora*.⁹⁷ A system of SMS messages and free phone lines created by ANSES allowed parents to check if their children were registered correctly, but it collapsed in a matter of days due to the large number of calls and messages.⁹⁸

Those involved in the program spent that one month living in the office. We went home to take a shower and nothing else.⁹⁹

The next step involved opening bank accounts and distributing cards so all those beneficiaries could access the money, but the stock of cards available in Argentina was

96 Interview with former bureaucrat at ANSES involved in the implementation of AUH (February 2020).

97 Interview with former bureaucrat at ANSES involved in the implementation of AUH (February 2020).

98 Interview with former bureaucrat at ANSES involved in the implementation of AUH (February 2020).

99 Interview with former bureaucrat at ANSES involved in the implementation of AUH (February 2020).

not large enough. The government pushed banks to increase production and import cards from abroad, so they could distribute debit cards to all the families enrolled in the program.¹⁰⁰ These elements involving the distribution of payments were the highest priority, and ANSES started the transfers before the end of November. By the end of 2009, *Asignación Universal por Hijo* paid monthly stipends to 1.8 million families, with special transfers for children with disabilities.¹⁰¹

The rushed implementation, however, generated severe problems in the program. The focalization strategy also suffered from such a quick adoption. Studies point to insufficient coverage, leaving some of the poorest Argentinian families outside the program (Cetrángolo and Curcio, 2017: 31). Yet, an interviewee also highlighted the inclusion of families that should not receive the benefits.

At some point later, we cleaned our database and discovered that around 40% of the people [enrolled in the program] had to be excluded. But it would be a political problem to expel so many people, so we had to change the rules to keep them in.¹⁰²

The control of conditionalities was also highly inefficient. Beneficiaries had to maintain a yearly paper booklet provided by the program, where teachers and doctors would register attendance. The booklet then had to be presented to ANSES's social workers (Díaz Langou, 2012: 27). This precarious system suggests a lack of interest in enforcing conditionalities. Like multiple other countries, Argentina did not control their

100 Interview with Peronist politician involved in the implementation of AUH (March 2020).

101 Data from ECLAC available at the “Base de datos de programas de protección social no contributiva en América Latina y el Caribe” at <https://dds.cepal.org/bpsnc/>

102 Interview with former bureaucrat at ANSES involved in the implementation of AUH (February 2020).

fulfillment in the program's first years (Straschnoy, 2017: 151). The use of paper booklets that had to be carried around by beneficiaries also reflects the lack of coordination between the administration of the program and the providers of public education and healthcare (Cetrángolo and Curcio, 2017: 43; Gluz and Rodríguez Moyano, 2011: 11).

The adoption of CCTs in Argentina shows strong evidence to corroborate my theory. Despite initial ideological resistance to the model, the government of Cristina Kirchner jumped on the bandwagon in a moment of political weakness. As expected by my theory, the president's attention turned to the model not because of its results in curbing poverty but because of its potential to boost her support. She pulled the idea from policy debates into full adoption in a top-down process. Her pressure made implementation rushed, hectic, and prone to problems. The minor concern with problems related to focalization and the control of conditionalities reinforces the understanding that a popularity boost, rather than a fully functional policy, was the government's key objective.

4.6 – FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The diffusion of conditional cash transfers throughout Latin America in the late 1990s and early 2000s was remarkably fast, reaching almost all countries in 12 years. Authors analyzing the phenomenon from the standpoint of diffusion theories focus on international factors like the model's early success, its promotion by international organizations, and the normative appeal of the policy's focus on human capital. However,

evidence from the domestic adoption processes questions the sufficiency of these explanations. I show that presidents fast-tracked CCTs motivated by the popular support that they expected from the model. The evidence in this chapter confirms the causal argument in my Hypothesis 2 regarding the case of conditional cash transfers.

Presidents' behavior determined CCTs' diffusion pattern. They enacted the policy unilaterally, mainly in moments of political weakness when their governments needed popularity the most. Most presidents also centralized these programs under their direct control, pushing bureaucrats to accelerate the work on design and implementation. In other cases, they handpicked bureaucratic agencies that would not resist or delay implementation. These actions ensured fast implementation, with 75% of countries paying the first benefits within one year of enactment. Besides the speed of adoption, these actions also signaled to beneficiaries that their president was responsible for the money they received. Finally, data from policy evaluation studies reveal governments' priorities. Some aspects of the policy, like the control of conditionalities and the targeting strategy, were neglected in most countries because they are obstacles to the policy's ability to increase incumbents' popularity. On the other hand, the payment of cash transfers worked well nearly everywhere, with four exceptions in countries with low state capacity.

The in-depth studies of Colombia and Argentina provide a doubly decisive test for my hypothesis. First, they show the causal chain in action and describe the mechanisms at play. The analysis traces the policymaking process connecting presidents' expectations to the fast-tracked enactments and implementations that resulted in quick and flawed

adoptions. Moreover, data from interviews with politicians, specialists, and bureaucrats unveil the political motivation behind presidents' actions to accelerate CCTs' adoptions.

The following chapters analyze the cases of public-private partnerships (PPPs) and electronic voting machines (EVMs). In contrast with CCTs, these models' slower diffusion patterns resulted from their different effects on presidents' popularity and electoral prospects. While chief executives fast-tracked CCTs everywhere, hoping to reap political benefits from the model, they approached PPPs more slowly and carefully because they did not expect that model to boost their popularity. Conversely, they typically rejected EVMs for fear that changing the voting system could reduce their chances in future elections.

Chapter 5: Public-Private Partnerships

“An infusion of private capital and management can ease fiscal constraints on infrastructure investment and increase efficiency. Reflecting these advantages, PPPs are taking off around the world” (IMF, 2004). This description of public-private partnerships (PPPs) opens a report from the International Monetary Fund published in 2004 in consultation with the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IMF, 2004). The model created in the United Kingdom in 1992 arrived in Latin America in 1996, but only three countries had clear laws for PPPs in the region by 2004: Chile, Brazil, and Costa Rica. The UN’s Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) praised Chile’s policy (Moguillansky, 1997), and the country became a regional example for PPPs (see Rufián Lizana, 2002: 16). However, it would take until 2020 for fifteen countries in the region to enact laws with the same model. Until today, thirteen of these countries have implemented the policy in at least one infrastructure project presented to potential investors. What made many governments adopt PPPs over time, but not at the same spectacular speed as in the case of conditional cash transfers?

This chapter argues that PPPs’ wave of diffusion resulted from presidents’ expectations about the policy. They did not act to accelerate or block the model’s adoption, because they did not think it could significantly impact their popularity and electoral prospects in the short term, either in a positive or negative direction. The public-

private partnership model provides a legal framework for governments to develop infrastructure projects by sharing risks with private partners responsible for funding and operating the projects. PPPs allow the government to provide public services without the immediate disbursement of resources. However, the effects of the policy take years to come to fruition, and presidents do not expect it to quickly sway voters in their favor or against them. For that reason, the adoption of PPPs depended on the government having a substantive interest in developing infrastructure, which is not a priority for all presidents. Therefore, it might take several elections until a president interested in the model comes to power, irrespective of the success and international promotion of PPPs abroad. And even that president does not have the same urgency to fast-track the model as in the case of CCTs.

The following section describes public-private partnerships and their international promotion as a policy model. Devised in the United Kingdom in the 1990s, PPPs found support from international organizations and specialists worldwide. The model was part of a new paradigm in public administration that could help countries develop their economies without falling into large debt. The second section characterizes PPPs' wave of diffusion in Latin America. As a case in my analysis, this is an intermediate diffusion pattern: the model was enacted and implemented by most countries in Latin America, as opposed to electronic voting machines, but not as quickly as conditional cash transfers. Moreover, implementation on a large scale reached nearly half the countries in the region, also in between the two other policies analyzed.

Following the discussion about PPPs' diffusion pattern, the chapter moves on to the evidence related to my second hypothesis (see Chapter 2): that presidents' decisions about policy models from abroad derive from their expectations about the model's effects on their popularity and electoral prospects. The third section provides process-tracing tests covering all adoptions in the region to show that presidents' motivations for adopting PPPs were not directly related to electoral expectations. The tests show that presidents were not motivated by the need to boost their popularity. For that reason, they accepted the input from congresspeople in the enactment process, significantly increasing the length and the amount of details present in the original bills introduced by the executive. Moreover, these presidents relinquished direct control over the implementation of PPPs, establishing agencies that responded to councils formed by representatives of multiple ministries and in some countries even private entities.

Beyond those tests, two other sections feature in-depth analyses of the adoptions of PPPs in Colombia and Argentina. Interviews with politicians, bureaucrats, and specialists allow for a reconstruction of the policymaking process in the two countries, revealing presidents motivations around the model. In both cases, it is clear that presidents adopting PPPs were mobilized by their will to generate an impact on the country's infrastructure and not by immediate expectations that the policy could have immediate effects on their popularity.

5.1 – THE POLICY AND ITS APPEAL

Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan launched a trend of state retrenchment in the 1980s. The British prime minister and the American president advocated for the privatization of state-owned enterprises (Henig, 1989; Marsh, 1991; Cooper, 2012: Chapter 6). The transatlantic duo kindled a diffusion of privatization that reached governments across the world. Latin America went through a “privatization fever” (Cardoso, 1991) in an attempt to overcome the impact of the debt crisis that swept the region. However, by the mid-1990s countries looked for a new solution to infrastructure development.

The new model came from England. In 1992, the British government created private finance initiatives (PFI), which would be soon reframed as public-private partnerships. The policy allows governments to provide infrastructure without incurring immediate construction and operation costs. It consists of a legal framework determining that private partners supply the upfront funding and take most of the risks involved in those projects, particularly the financial risks of construction, in exchange for the right to collect user fees or governmental payments for managing and operating the asset after it is built (Grimsey and Lewis, 2004: 6-7). The construction phase of these projects is typically funded using loans from the financial market (Martin et al., 2013). PFIs emerged in the British Conservative government of John Major, but the subsequent Labour government expanded their use (Forrer et al., 2002; Blair, 2002: 15).¹⁰³ The model

¹⁰³ A complete dataset of PFI projects in the United Kingdom was published online by The Guardian (2012). The projects range from local services like public hospitals and sports centers, to larger infrastructure such as highways and military facilities

combined the benefits of private management without the loss of control typical of privatizations (Seppälä et al., 2001).

The terminology around PPPs took some time to consolidate.¹⁰⁴ Until the late 1990s, the expression public-private partnerships¹⁰⁵ had a more generic understanding encompassing all types of agreements between governments and private companies. In 1985, for example, a publication from the Government Finance Officers Association in the United States said that public/private partnerships at the local level “include the traditional interest subsidy for capital investment and run the gamut to creative capital financings, leasing, and the latest experiments in privatizing sewer systems, jails, and resource recovery projects” (Weiss, 1985: xvi). However, the legal framework for PPPs became a policy model thanks to the example from the United Kingdom (Jooste et al., 2011; Sheppard and Beck, 2018).¹⁰⁶

Despite domestic debates in the United Kingdom questioning the widespread use of PPPs by the Labour government (e.g., Smith, 1999), the policy had an image of success (Li et al., 2005) that established a new paradigm in the construction of public infrastructure. A book in 2004 carried the title “Public Private Partnerships: the Worldwide Revolution in Infrastructure Provision and Project Finance” (Grimsey and Lewis, 2004). Three years before, the Institute for Public Policy Research had already

¹⁰⁴ For a detailed discussion of terminology around PPPs at the time, see Linder (2000).

¹⁰⁵ Sometimes written “Public/Private Partnerships” at the time.

¹⁰⁶ The variation in terminology of a policy model in its first years is not a specificity of public-private partnerships. In the case of conditional cash transfers, for example, multiple names were attributed to programs providing different forms of installments to low-income families in the 1990s until the model from Brazil and Mexico consolidated the model around the term CCTs. Some of those terms include “Minimum Income For School Attendance” (Ricupero and Somavia, 2001) and “Food Assistance Programs” (Gundersen et al., 2000).

published a report praising PPPs as a middle-ground between neoliberal “privatizers” and state “monopolists” (IPPR, 2001: 21-25).

PPPs’ first benefit is to allocate the risks involved in large infrastructure projects between the government and the private sector according to the ability to mitigate them. Most important, the policy transfers the bulk of financial risks to the private sector, and construction companies share them with banks funding the projects. This structure ensures better control of investments than traditional construction using the public budget because the banks keep construction companies in check to ensure their projects minimize the risks of failure (Bing et al., 2005). Therefore, the policy reduces the number of unsustainable projects, limiting the need for renegotiations and the abandonment of projects due to problems unforeseen by designers. The result was visible in the United Kingdom in 2005: “about 75 percent of major infrastructure projects in the U.K. were late and over budget before PPPs came into play. Under PPP/PFI arrangements, 75 percent of projects are on time and to budget” (Grimsey and Lewis, 2005: 376).

Second, PPPs generate efficiency gains related to better management of public works. The private side of the partnership, aiming for profit, is interested in reducing the construction time and the overall operation costs. These companies ensure a rational investment calculated based on the expected revenue, given that they bear financial risks and depend on the project’s profits. Competition among private companies bidding for projects also helps reduce the costs of these projects, limiting the tariffs paid by users, in the case of projects like highways with tolls, or the payments made by the government in the long run, in the case of projects like public schools or public hospitals (Hall, 1998;

Haynes and Roden, 1999). On the other hand, the public sector imposes conditions for the adequate provision of services established in the project. It controls the construction and operation, maintaining “a strong political commitment to the service as well as integrating environmental and other value considerations into the planning and decision-making process” (Seppälä et al., 2001: 53).

Third, PPPs allow for the construction and operation of new infrastructure without immediate costs to the public budget. They relieve the state from initial costs. Revenue for the investment comes after predetermined steps in the construction process are met – typically the completion of a section of a highway, after which the state can start paying the operational fees determined for that section, or the private partner can start collecting tolls from users. That aspect of PPPs allowed governments to start providing large infrastructure projects without incurring upfront payments (NAO, 1999; Grimsey and Lewis, 2002). Naturally, not all infrastructure projects are suitable for PPPs because some might not be profitable or attractive to private companies. By outsourcing the suitable ones to private contractors, PPPs also leave more room for the construction of other necessary projects (Heald and Geaghan, 1997).¹⁰⁷

International organizations soon identified the innovation and started promoting its benefits across borders. Already in 1994, the World Bank stated that “public-private partnerships in financing have promise” and encouraged governments to develop “legal and regulatory frameworks to support private involvement in the provision of infrastructure services” (World Bank, 1994: 2). The organization produced guidelines for

¹⁰⁷See also Ball et al. (2002) and Connolly et al. (2009) for overall discussions of PPPs’ benefits.

the policy in the following years (e.g., World Bank, 1997), and since 1999 it has hosted the Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility (PPIAF). The office is a joint initiative established by Japan and the United Kingdom within the World Bank to provide technical assistance and funding for countries adopting PPPs. Another office of the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation, also provides funding for specific PPP projects. The United Nations called for partnerships between the public and private sectors in the 2000 Millennium Summit.

The British government also promoted the model directly. The Department of Health's international department organized visits of foreign governments' representatives to promote the policy, with a general focus on the Global South. In 2002 and 2003, 24 delegations visited the United Kingdom to receive information about PFIs in the National Health Service. Those visitors came from 13 countries, including Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia. In 2004 and 2005, another 21 visits from 11 countries had a similar purpose. That official promotion of the model also counted on the support of private companies, in particular large consultancy firms (Holden, 2009).

Public-private partnerships also gained momentum thanks to their association with a new governmental administration paradigm, the New Public Management. This approach to public service emerged in the United Kingdom in tandem with the shift to privatization in the 1980s, promoting an approximation of public services to the administrative style of private businesses to ensure a more efficient management of public funds that controls corruption. By the turn of the century, PPPs had become a fundamental part of the New Public Management perspective (Schedler and Proeller,

2002: 164-165; Bovaird, 2004; Yescombe and Farquharson, 2018: 451-453). This normative association facilitated the model's diffusion, together with other policies like governance indicators of performance (Buduru and Pal, 2010).

The Appeal of PPPs in Latin America

Chile was the regional innovator in the diffusion of public-private partnerships, serving as an example for other Latin American countries. It started in the early 1990s by changing the Law of Concessions of Public Works from 1982.¹⁰⁸ Though that law already contained some of the key elements of what would become the PPP model, it was not implemented until the 1990s. The main changes to that law occurred in 1991¹⁰⁹, 1992¹¹⁰, and 1996¹¹¹ (Ibarra-Coronado, 2011). Chile's policy contrasts with experiences of private investment in infrastructure in other Latin American countries. The first difference is the creation of a single overarching law. Other countries had piecemeal legislation referring to particular sectors or specific projects. Colombia, for example, established a legal framework¹¹² for ports in 1991 that specialists considered a precursor of PPPs in the country,¹¹³ but the adoption of the model would take more than two decades.

The second distinctive characteristic of PPPs present in Chile was the construction of new infrastructure without initial privatization or disbursement from the government. The law establishes in Article 11 that private partners will only receive

¹⁰⁸ DFL 591/1982.

¹⁰⁹ Ley 19.068/1991, consolidated in a new text through DFL-MOP 164/1991.

¹¹⁰ Ley 19.252/1992.

¹¹¹ Ley 19.460/1996, consolidated in a new text through Decree 900/1996.

¹¹² Ley 1/1991.

¹¹³ Interviews with former National Planning Department bureaucrat #1 (September 2019); lawyer specialized in PPPs in Colombia (September 2019); and former representative of the *Camara Colombiana de Infraestructura* (October 2019).

payments for the project's operation. In sequence, articles 12-14 state that these partners must provide guarantees of having access to all the capital necessary for construction, while article 22 ensures the public budget is not responsible for risks or debt related to those projects. In short, the law attributes all financial risks to private partners, who must seek capital through private loans in the financial market. This is the central element of PPPs.

In other countries, standard concessions revolved around private partners taking over established public infrastructure. In Argentina, President Carlos Menem's concessions were part of his plan to divest and privatize state-owned enterprises (Font, 2015: 39-40). The concession of railroads started by transferring "movable and immovable assets" to private companies in the process of liquidating *Ferrocarriles Argentinos*.¹¹⁴ Similarly, Mexico's concession of 52 highways in the early 1990s had 25% of new works funded by the public budget, 50% in subsidized loans from a public bank, and only the remainder 25% financed by private markets (Vassallo Magro and Izquierdo de Bartolomé, 2010: 243). On top of that, the government offered multiple guarantees to ensure returns on private investments. The weak institutional framework of these concessions led to unsustainable projects (World Bank, 2003). The government had to retake control of nearly half the concessions by 1997 (Expansión, 2008; Font, 2015: 32).¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴Decreto 1383/1996, Article 2.

¹¹⁵Brazil developed a policy akin to PPPs simultaneously with Chile, similarly to the creation of CCTs at the same time by Mexico and Brazil. However, the 1995 law only allowed for projects that people would pay directly to use, like toll highways (Grotti, 2007). In contrast, the PPP model includes projects in which the government pays for services, like prisons. Brazil's complete adoption happened in 2004 (Peci and Sobral, 2007; Font, 2015: 46-47), with the first law in Latin America that refers to the term "Public-Private Partnerships". After that year, most adoptions of the model in the region also cite the term – many of them

Chile's PPPs received praise as a straightforward and successful model (Font, 2015: 53). There was good reason for recognition: The country's projects worked well over the years, while concessions in other countries had to be renegotiated, rescued, or repossessed by the state. Guasch et al. (2008) analyze a dataset of 307 infrastructure projects led by private companies in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico in the 1990s. The difference between Chile and the rest is stark. In Chile, only one PPP project had to be renegotiated, comprising 4% of the country's total number of projects. All other countries, which used concessions instead of PPPs, had at least 40% of their projects renegotiated. Argentina was the worst case with 76% of renegotiations. That success turned Chile into a trendsetter. Multiple interviewees in Colombia and Argentina still referred to Chile as an example.¹¹⁶

International organizations also promoted Chile's policy across the region (Font, 2015: 53). The same IMF report from 2004 that opens this chapter praises the country's PPPs as a "successful experience" thanks to a "solid institutional framework", "well-developed procedures", and adequate allocation of risks (IMF, 2004: 30).¹¹⁷ Within the region, the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean [CAF, previously known as *Corporación Andina de Fomento*] describes Chile's PPPs as the first and "one of the most successful and best [infrastructure policies] across Latin America" (CAF,

in the laws' titles.

¹¹⁶Interviews with former National Planning Department bureaucrat #1 (September 2019); Former bureaucrat in the Ministry of Transportation #1 (October 2019); Lawyer involved in drafting the PPP bill in Colombia (October 2019); former bureaucrat in the Ministry of Transportation #2 (October 2019) #2 (November 2019); Former bureaucrat at *Agencia Nacional de Infraestructura* (November 2019); Former Bureaucrat at the PPP Office in Argentina (April 2020).

¹¹⁷The same document describes Mexico's case as a modest policy focused only on projects for energy infrastructure.

2015: 29). The model's appeal came not only from its accomplishments but also from its normative values. International organizations and transnational networks of specialists favored New Public Management ideas geared towards reducing public spending and budgetary control. PPPs were the right way to develop infrastructure for economic development without incurring immense levels of public debt, from which most countries in the region had just freed themselves.

Public-private partnerships spread internationally, both at a regional and global level. The policy had all the factors necessary for the widespread transmission of a model in the first step of diffusion. First, it was a simple idea with successful results, both in the United Kingdom and Chile. According to theories of rationality (Meseguer, 2004; Makse and Volden, 2011) and bounded rationality (Weyland, 2005; Weyland, 2006), other governments should adopt the model after learning about its positive record. Second, the promotion by international organizations and the British government, aligned with large consultancy firms, should activate the coercion mechanism (Levi-Faur, 2005; Shipan and Volden, 2008: 843), encouraging governments to jump on the bandwagon as predicted by imposition theories (Meyer et al., 1977; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998). Third, the values associated with budgetary control and the New Public Management paradigm should legitimize countries adopting PPPs. The model helps governments look serious and trustworthy in their management of the budget, which theories centered on global norms (Meyer et al., 1977; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998) would see as a cause for diffusion following the emulation mechanism (Maggetti and Gilardi, 2016: 91; Fernández and Lutter, 2013; Greenhill, 2010).

In short, PPPs successfully spread internationally as a model to be replicated, given its success, its promotion by international organizations, and the policy's association with global norms. However, the same was true for conditional cash transfers and electronic voting machines. Then, why did PPPs diffuse more slowly than CCTs and faster and to more countries than EVMs? The three theories of diffusion point to necessary factors for diffusion, but they neglect the importance of domestic politics.

The Limited Appeal of PPPs in Domestic Politics

The impact of domestic politics on policy diffusion revolves around presidents' expectations about the policy's political consequences. CCTs generate strong expectations of a popularity boost thanks to the quick cash delivery to a large group of low-income families. Therefore, presidents fast-track the model's adoption to benefit from that boost soon, generating a surge of diffusion. EVMs, in contrast, make presidents fearful that altering electoral procedures might alter voters' behavior and reduce their and their allies' electoral prospects. Therefore, they block the adoption of these machines, limiting the model's diffusion to just a couple of exceptional countries. As expected, PPPs' intermediary diffusion pattern results from a lack of clear expectations regarding the model's effects on presidents' political careers.

Public-private partnerships do not generate immediate benefits for presidents overseeing their adoption. Even if the policy were fast-tracked, this only means that the government would quickly present projects in a bid with potential private partners. The construction phase of these projects still takes multiple years, and the result is not easily

attributable to the president who adopted the policy. In some cases, PPPs might generate political benefits after multiple years, but those are too far in the future to justify fast-tracking the model's adoption. In Brazil, for example, Lula da Silva's strategy to elect his successor, Dilma Rousseff, in 2010 was to place her as the minister responsible for a large infrastructure plan. In his typical personalist style, Lula named Rousseff the "mother of PAC" (Freire, 2008), acronym in Portuguese for the "Growth Acceleration Program" [Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento]. However, that happened more than five years after Lula's government introduced PPPs as a bill in Congress in 2003, before his own reelection in 2006.

Even if PPPs do not affect popularity directly, it might seem as if they could help presidents by reactivating the economy during a crisis. By starting large infrastructure projects, the policy could create jobs and generate prosperity, shortening a recession and increasing the popularity of those in power during difficult times. However, public-private partnerships are not countercyclical policies (Alcaraz et al., 2023). Economic crises increase the risk of private investments, particularly for large long-term investments like PPPs. Because the policy transfers all financial risks of the projects to private partners, crises make capital for PPP projects extremely expensive. Financial markets charge high interest rates for those loans during economic downturns, sinking the profitability of the projects. Therefore, the policy is ill-suited to help presidents increase their popular support, whether during economic crises or not.

On the other hand, public-private partnerships do not have potentially harmful effects on presidents' electoral prospects, like electronic voting machines. The adoption

of PPPs has no direct impact on elections, and the policy is not controversial to the point of generating a backlash against the government. While some leftist groups may associate it with large privatization programs, ideological objections to PPPs were not widespread in Latin American countries. In fact, most enactments occurred during the presidency of leftist politicians, and they were ahead of right-wing ones in the diffusion curve. The model also does not affect the public budget in the short term, reducing potential criticism from the right. Government payments for private partners operating infrastructure might generate budgetary restrictions depending on the types of contracts, but that is a problem for future presidents. Governments adopting the policy do not have to worry about these payments while the projects are in construction.

Therefore, PPPs' appeal to governments is not directly related to presidents' fundamental interests of remaining in power and increasing their and their allies' electoral prospects. The policy is attractive mainly for its outcomes in providing infrastructure and services rather than for political outcomes. Many presidents may be interested in developing their country's highways, as was the case for Juan Manuel Santos in Colombia. The model of PPPs would stand out for these leaders, not because of its immediate political effects but as a suitable policy for the construction and operation of new highways. However, that is not a fundamental interest common to all presidents, like remaining in power and increasing electoral prospects. As a result, the number of presidents willing to adopt the policy is much smaller than conditional cash transfers.

Given alternations of power in a democratic system, most countries will eventually have a president willing to use PPPs to develop some policy objective.

However, that will take longer than it did with CCTs, which were interesting for all presidents due to their political effects. Moreover, because the adoption of PPPs is not motivated by an immediate need for popularity and electoral support, it does not justify using decrees and control over the bureaucracy to fast-track the policymaking process. Rather, presidents allowed congress to discuss and alter the bill, and allowed bureaucrats to work on the policy's implementation for a longer time. The result is a diffusion pattern that takes longer but ultimately reaches most countries in the region.

5.2 – PPPS' DIFFUSION WAVE

Public-private partnerships diffused around the world in a few decades. In Latin America, fifteen countries enacted the model in twenty-five years after Chile's initial adoption, and thirteen used the policy in at least one project presented to investors. Eight countries used PPPs multiple times as at the national level. The difference to electronic voting machines' trickle-flow of diffusion is clear: only two countries adopted EVMs on a large scale, imitating Brazil. However, the diffusion of PPPs pales compared to the surge of CCTs that reached almost all countries, with large-scale implementation, in only 12 years.

Public-private partnerships received little attention from political scientists. Scholars in administrative sciences, economics, public management, and even engineering have analyzed the policy's international diffusion (e.g., Sheppard and Beck, 2018), and their general explanations match the main frameworks of the diffusion literature in political science. Like those theories, other disciplines are also focused on the

first step of diffusion, in which the policy idea spreads internationally. Imposition or coercive mechanisms are cited as a relevant factor for PPPs (Petersen, 2010; Jooste et al., 2011: 16; Marsilio et al., 2011: 773-774; Greve and Hodge, 2020: 327). Appuhami et al. (2011), for example, explain Sri Lanka's PPPs as a result of the World Bank, the IMF, and the Asian Development Bank forcing the country to adopt neoliberal policies. Sedjari (2004: 294-295) highlights that the World Bank and the European Union pushed Morocco to establish PPPs. And other authors argue that large multinational businesses played a significant role in convincing governments to adopt PPPs, particularly the *Big Four* accounting firms¹¹⁸ (Hurl et al., 2022). Holden (2009) combines these ideas to show the United Kingdom's strategy to disseminate the PFI model as a way to export British companies' services in the application of PPPs to public healthcare. Theories centered on global norms are also common in articles analyzing the diffusion of PPPs. Connolly et al. (2009), for instance, discuss the Republic of Ireland's adoption of PPPs as a "mimetic diffusion" to gain social legitimacy. Similarly, some authors focus on the learning and imitation mechanisms (Li et al., 2022). These studies give special attention to the networks of specialists, bureaucrats, and organizations that disseminated PPPs as a successful idea (Jooste and Scott, 2011).

Part of those bodies of research pays some attention to domestic causes, but they usually neglect the policymaking process. Studies of subnational diffusion in China include social and economic variables in statistical models, like population size, economic development, or level of industrialization (Zhang, 2015; Li et al., 2022). The

¹¹⁸The companies known as Big Four are Deloitte, Ernst and Young, KPMG, and PricewaterhouseCoopers.

exception is Geddes and Wagner (2013), whose analysis of the creation of PPP laws by American states includes a measure of control of Congress by the executive. Significant results indicate the centrality of domestic politics in the diffusion of PPPs.

Given the lack of attention to PPPs in political science, it is helpful to review the discipline's literature about market reforms and privatizations. These policies diffused across Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s. Even with the pressure from international financial institutions (Vreeland 2003) normatively formulated as the Washington Consensus (Massey et al., 2006), scholars identified the importance of domestic politics in those reforms. Murillo and Martínez Gallardo (2007) show that political competition increased the pressure on governments to privatize public utilities. They also point out that presidents used decree powers to liberalize those markets (Murillo and Martínez Gallardo, 2007: 131). Madrid (2002; 2003) highlights the importance of presidents' control over Congress as a factor facilitating their decisions to adopt pension privatization. Weyland (2002) points to the economic pressures of debt crises as an essential motivator for presidents to push through those reforms despite expecting adverse initial effects on popularity. On the other hand, Armijo and Faucher (2002) argue that presidents only advanced and consolidated those reforms because the policies already had some support among elites and voters. Notwithstanding their differences, those findings point to the centrality of presidents in adopting market reforms in Latin America and their calculations related to domestic politics. Even if the policies related to those reforms were foreign models promoted by international organizations according to

the normative ideas of the Washington Consensus, their adoption depended on the Executive's decision in a calculation that takes internal politics into account.

My argument builds on these insights by centering attention on presidents' role in adopting policies from abroad. Naturally, there are limitations in comparing privatizations and market reforms with the public-private partnership model. PPPs are less drastic measures that promote new projects instead of altering established services like privatizations. Thus, they do not incite political resistance from organized labor and the political left in the same intensity (as discussed before, many leftist governments adopted the model). Moreover, PPPs are not a suitable response to economic crises, as opposed to the intention behind many austerity measures in the 1980s and 1990s. So, presidents' evaluation of PPPs resulted from the policy's expected effect on infrastructure and not from potential positive or negative effects on electoral prospects, as was the case for CCTs and EVMs.

After receiving information about PPPs from abroad, presidents did not immediately react because they did not expect the model to affect their ability to stay in power and win future elections. These are the two fundamental objectives common to all presidents. Given that the policy would not impact those objectives, presidents' interest in PPPs varied based on how much they wanted to develop infrastructure projects. Not all presidents prioritize infrastructure, so it may take multiple transitions of power until a president willing to advance the policy wins office. As expected by my theory, presidents were still the key policymakers in the policy's diffusion. In all but two countries, the executive introduced PPPs in the policymaking process. However, because not all

presidents had a reason to adopt the model, its sequence of introductions across the region took twenty-three years (see Table 5.1). The aggregate of bills introduced in Congress already shows a slower diffusion pattern than CCTs, even before enactment and implementation.

As seen in the previous chapter, presidents had a reason to use unilateral powers when adopting CCTs to accelerate the popularity gains expected from the policy. In the case of PPPs, that rush did not exist. Almost all countries enacted the model through congressional decisions after the executive introduced a bill. That institutional process naturally delayed enactment by involving lengthy debates and multiple votes. In the case of public-private partnerships, the average time for Congress to approve those bills was over nine months (275 days). The process took more than twenty-five months in Mexico and Costa Rica. My evidence in the following sections shows that presidents' cabinets purposefully engaged with those debates and incorporated suggestions from congresspeople, bureaucrats, and interest groups in the policy's text. That type of deliberative policymaking process contrasts with the unilateral, rushed, and sometimes even secret creation of CCTs, intended to accelerate adoption and ensure policy attribution exclusively to the presidency.

Table 5.1: : Enactments and Implementations of PPPs in Latin America

Countries	Executive Initiative	Unilateral Enactment	Enactment Document	Bill Introduction	Enactment Date	Implementation Date
Argentina	Yes	Yes	Decreto 967 ¹¹⁹	NA (Decree)	2005 Aug 16	NA
	Yes	No	Ley 27328	2016 Jun 09	2016 Nov 16	2017 Nov 23
Bolivia	<i>(No Adoption)</i>					
Brazil	Yes	No	Lei 11.079	2003 Nov 10	2004 Dec 30	2009 Dec
Chile	<i>(Innovator)</i>					
Colombia	Yes	No	Ley 1508/2012	2011 Nov 02	2012 Jan 10	2013 Oct
Costa Rica	Yes	No	Ley 7762/1998	1996 Jan 15	1998 Apr 14	2000
Dom. Rep.	No	No	Ley 47/2020	2019 Dec 18	2020 Feb 20	2021 Nov 19
Ecuador	Yes	No	Ley Orgánica de Incentivos para Asociaciones Público-Privadas	2015 Sep 25	2015 Dec 15	2016 Jun
El Salvador	Yes	No	Decreto Legislativo 379	2011 Nov 30	2013 Jun 04	2017
Guatemala	Yes	No	Ley-decreto 16	2009 Jan 29	2010 Apr 13	2017
Honduras	Yes	No	Decreto 143	2010 Feb	2010 Aug 17	2012 May
Mexico	Yes	No	Ley de Asociaciones Público Privadas	2009 Nov 10	2012 Jan 16	2016 Jan
Nicaragua	Yes	No	Ley 935	2016 Sep 22	2016 Oct 05	NA (Not implemented)
Panama	Yes	No	Ley 93	2019 Jul 30	2019 Sep 19	NA (Not implemented)
Paraguay	No	No	Ley 5102	2013 Mar 25	2013 Nov 1	2014 Apr
Peru	Yes	Yes	Decreto Legislativo 1012	NA (Decree)	2008 May 13	2008 ¹²⁰
Uruguay	Yes	No	Ley 18786	2010 Nov 09	2011 Jul 19	2011 Nov
Venezuela	<i>(No Adoption)</i>					

Presidents also abstained from employing their control over the bureaucracy to rush PPPs' implementation. Instead, they typically allowed bureaucrats within the

¹¹⁹The first enactment of PPPs in Argentina, by President Néstor Kirchner, was never implemented (see discussion below).

¹²⁰To rush implementation, the president signed a second decree simplifying requirements (see discussion below).

relevant ministries to work on developing and presenting infrastructure projects. It is important to reiterate here that my definition of implementation is based solely on actions under the complete control of the government. That definition is particularly relevant for PPPs because the construction of infrastructure is conducted and managed by private contractors. Naturally, this reduces governments' control over the construction phase of projects under a PPP agreement. Therefore, I consider PPPs fully implemented when the state presents at least one project in a public offer for investors, irrespective of whether or when partnerships were signed and construction started. This definition ensures comparability across policies by focusing only on what the state bureaucracy does directly, which presidents can influence directly. Presidents cannot dictate the time it takes for private companies to sign contracts and build projects, but they can push bureaucrats to develop and present the projects to investors faster.

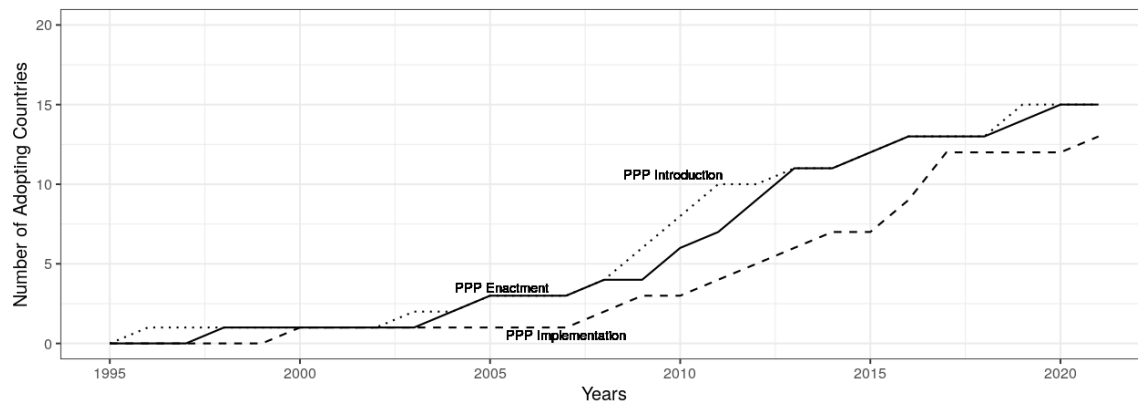
Even with that minimal definition, the implementation of PPPs took much longer than that of CCTs. Only three countries presented at least one project using the new PPP law within one year of enactment (Ecuador, Paraguay, and Uruguay), representing 20% of all fifteen enactments. On the other end of the spectrum, Brazil took five years to implement the first national project after passing the law of PPPs, and Guatemala took seven. Finally, two countries (Nicaragua and Panama) never presented a PPP project to private investors after having approved a law of public-private partnerships. The graph below (Figure 5.1) shows the significant delays between the introduction, enactment, and implementation of PPP laws in Latin America.

There are two important exceptions in how quickly presidents adopted PPPs. Presidents in Peru and Argentina enacted PPPs unilaterally.¹²¹ It is important to highlight these cases not only for their exceptional nature but also because they show that presidents could have fast-tracked the policy if they had wanted to. In 2005, Argentinian President Néstor Kirchner signed a decree¹²² establishing a framework for PPPs (see details in the country case below). Peru is a more interesting and consequential case. In 2008, President Alan García signed a decree establishing the law of PPPs (Decreto Legislativo 1012/2008) as part of a strategy to attract investments. A representative of the International Monetary Fund praised the policy and said that “businesspeople welcomed the measure” (Andina, 2009). García also acted to implement the policy immediately. His government used three other decrees to reduce the legal requirements of the model and rush its implementation months after enactment (Benavente and Segura 2017, 32-33). This case also shows that presidents could have simplified PPPs to rush the presentation of projects with careless implementation that undermines essential characteristics of the policy. That is similar to what happened to CCTs in multiple countries, where a rushed implementation weakened the control of conditionalities and other aspects of the programs (see Chapter 4). Despite the rush, Peru’s PPPs were a success, and interviewees in Colombia and Argentina saw the country as an example of the model’s diffusion.¹²³

¹²¹Bolivia is a partial case of fast-tracked adoption of PPPs. In 2018, President Evo Morales signed a decree (Decreto Supremo 3469) about partnerships between state-owned enterprises and private companies similar to PPPs. The Ministry of Planning and Development published a document regulating the decree, which states that these alliances “can’t be considered a traditional public-private partnership” (MPD, 2018).
¹²²Decreto 967/2005.

¹²³Interviews with former bureaucrat in the Ministry of Finance in Colombia (November 2019); former bureaucrat at the PPP Office in Argentina (April 2020).

Figure 5.1: Introductions, Enactments, and Implementations of PPPs¹²⁴



5.3 – TRACING PRESIDENTS’ MOTIVATION

This chapter has shown thus far that public-private partnerships spread internationally through multiple channels. Mechanisms of learning, coercion, and normative emulation were all active in transmitting the model’s idea in Latin America. In that aspect, PPPs are similar to conditional cash transfers and electronic voting machines. However, the model does not affect presidents’ fundamental interests to remain in power and win future elections. Therefore, it does not generate a uniform reaction from most presidents across multiple countries, either in favor or against adoption. It only attracts the attention of presidents willing to develop infrastructure. In nearly all countries, presidents initiated the policymaking process for PPPs through Congress, but it took longer for these countries to have a president who would do it. Moreover, those presidents did not apply the same exceptional powers used in the case of CCTs to fast-track the policy. The result was a slower diffusion process that eventually reached most of the region.

¹²⁴This graph does not include adoption data by the innovator (Chile).

This section uses primary and secondary data about the policymaking processes to show the connection between PPP's weak appeal and a purposeful lack of rush. The three tests below portray presidents' purposeful political decisions to adopt the policy slowly and carefully, allowing for debates and incorporating stakeholder input. That behavior conforms to my theory's argument, as defined in Hypothesis 2 (see Chapter 2). In the case of PPPs, the lack of political motivation is associated with an interest in the policy's effect on infrastructure and public services. These adoptions are distinct from the fast-tracking process observed in the previous chapter with CCTs. Yet, they still show an intentional interest in advancing the policy instead of rejections, as described in the next chapter about electronic voting machines. The result is PPPs' intermediary wave pattern of diffusion.

The process-tracing tests below allow for inferring presidents' motivations, showing elements common to most adoptions that reflect an interest not motivated by immediate popularity gains or electoral effects. While those tests can only be categorized individually as "straw in the wind" (Collier, 2011), their combination and the wide regional coverage clearly show why countries adopted PPPs in a slower pattern. The next section confirms those findings with in-depth analyses of Argentina and Colombia.

Test 1: Context of Adoption

If presidents did not rush PPPs' enactment and implementation because they did not expect immediate political gains from the policy, these adoptions should not be more likely when presidents are at political risk due to a lack of popular support. As opposed to

CCTs, the introduction of public-private partnerships as bills in Congress did not correlate with critical moments for incumbents. Therefore, the context of adoption for PPPs in many countries was varied but generally unexceptional, in contrast to the turbulence observed in the two other cases in this dissertation (see Chapters 4 and 6).

More importantly, the adoption of PPPs typically involved long deliberative policymaking processes in which many actors influenced the policy's design and implementation. Presidents and their cabinets took a slow and careful approach, incorporating ideas from different stakeholders to ensure the policy's success. As a result, the process took longer than CCTs' adoptions (see Appendix E for a more detailed analysis of each country).

- *Argentina*: President Néstor Kirchner introduced PPPs via decree in 2005 but never implemented them. Eleven years later, in June 2016, President Mauricio Macri presented a bill carefully drafted by lawyers and negotiated with representatives of private interests. It took five more months to approve the law. Despite the president's focus on developing infrastructure, the government only presented the first project to investors in November 2017 (see more details in the case study below).
- *Brazil*: President Lula da Silva introduced the PPP bill in November 2003 after more than one year of consultations and meticulous drafting. It took over a year of negotiations for Congress to pass the bill (Peci and Sobral, 2007: 10). The slow approach continued in project implementation, with the first federal PPP project presented five years after enactment.

- *Colombia*: President Juan Manuel Santos promised infrastructure development in his 2010 electoral campaign, but it took more than one year for his government to introduce a PPP bill in Congress. The government's careful approach was also evident in the implementation. The first PPP projects were only announced almost ten months later (see more details in the case study below).
- *Costa Rica*: President José María Figueres Olsen presented a short bill to reform Costa Rica's concession law in 1996. In two years, Congress negotiations turned the text into a much longer reform incorporating the PPP model. Implementation only started in the subsequent government, with a highway project announced in 2000 (Suárez Alemán et al., 2019).
- *El Salvador*: President Mauricio Funes' Ministry of the Economy started working on a project for public-private partnerships in 2010 (Ministerio de Economía de El Salvador, 2011: 32), but the executive only introduced a bill with the policy in Congress in November 2011 (La Prensa Gráfica, 2013). Negotiations with the legislature lasted eighteen months (Editorial UCA, 2013), and the model was nearly forgotten. Implementation only happened in 2017, when Funes was no longer the president.
- *Guatemala*: President Álvaro Colom fast-tracked CCTs in less than four months, but his adoption of PPPs took much longer. The bill was part of a reform announced in January 2009 (Gobierno de Guatemala, 2009) and approved in April 2010. After enactment, it took one year and a half for the government to regulate

- the law. These delays made implementation impossible during Colom's government, and the first projects were announced in 2017.
- *Honduras*: President Porfirio Lobo came to power in January 2010 with congressional support for infrastructure development via PPPs (República de Honduras, 2010: 21, 112, 122, 138). He introduced the model as a bill in February 2010, and the legislature approved it in seven months. Implementation delays occurred due to Congressional control, with the first project announced in May 2012 (COALINZA, 2012).
 - *Mexico*: President Felipe Calderón introduced a PPP bill to the Senate in November 2009, but senators did not discuss it until April 2010. There was no rush, and enactment occurred in January 2012. The model was not a priority for Calderón, who never implemented it. Enrique Peña Nieto's administration announced the first PPP project in January 2016.¹²⁵
 - *Panama*: President Laurentino Cortizo introduced Panama's public-private partnerships (PPPs) bill to Congress in 2019, aligning with his infrastructure-focused campaign. Congress passed the law in less than two months, but the executive only published the regulation over one year later (Lasso, 2021). No PPP projects have been presented to investors yet.
 - *Uruguay*: President José Mujica introduced a PPP bill in November 2010, and Congress approved the law in nine months. The first PPP project, a prison complex, was announced four months after the law's enactment in July 2011.

¹²⁵The list of PPP projects in Mexico is available at <https://www.proyectosmexico.gob.mx/proyectos/>

Though comparatively faster than PPPs in other countries, the executive did not rush the model. In comparison, CCTs took only two months to pass in Congress.

Beyond the ten countries described above, the Dominican Republic and Paraguay countries adopted PPPs with bills introduced by congresspeople rather than the executive. However, those congresspeople were part of the presidents' coalitions. The adoption in both countries was similar to the ones described above, with a negotiated process that took more than one year.

Three other countries are more relevant exceptions, in which presidents intentionally accelerated the model's adoption. Only in Peru was that rush so extreme as to motivate fast-tracking the policy with unilateral enactment by decree, similar to the adoption of conditional cash transfers. The other two exceptions had rushed adoptions but still enacted PPPs through Congress. Acknowledging these governments' quick adoptions is important, even if they were not fast-tracked like CCTs. In Ecuador, President Rafael Correa sent a bill for PPPs in September 2015, hoping to attract foreign investments to counter the impact of decreasing oil prices (Mayorga Adum, 2016). Congress approved the bill before the end of that year, and the government announced several projects in June 2016 (e.g., *El Telégrafo*, 2016).¹²⁶ That speedy process did not prevent congresspeople from altering the bill, as discussed below. Finally, Nicaragua is an odd case in which Congress approved the executive's bill in only thirteen days between September and October 2016. In that case, Daniel Ortega's authoritarian control over the

¹²⁶See also Resolución CIAPP-R-006-Junio-2016 from the Ministerio Coordinador de Produccion, Empleo, y Competitividad.

country allowed him to pass nearly any bill without difficulty. However, after enactment, the government did not implement the policy (Del Valle Gelinou and Rodriguez Pérez, 2018). Therefore, even if representatives in the legislature responded to the leader's bill with a fast approval, he was not interested in adopting the policy as a whole.

In sum, Presidents were the main actors in PPPs' diffusion, introducing bills to adopt the policy in almost all countries. However, as expected, they did not accelerate the model as they did with CCTs. Most were not in a risky situation and did not expect PPPs to help them remain in power or win future elections. The lack of rush is evident. Presidents used the congressional path for enactment rather than unilateral decrees, and only a few presidents imposed urgency on Congress. More often than not, they engaged in months of debates with congresspeople.

The dynamics of implementation are also revealing. After enactment, many presidents took several months to publish regulations necessary for implementation. That makes it clear that PPPs were not at the top of their priorities list. Moreover, in six countries, the process took so long that the president who implemented the first project was not the one in power when the bill for PPPs was introduced in Congress (Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Paraguay). That reflects the lack of political motivation to adopt the model. Presidents were in no rush to adopt them before elections and left their successors to announce and initiate the infrastructure projects associated with the policy.

Test 2: Alterations in Presidents' Bills

As evident in García and Kirchner's unilateral enactments in Peru and Argentina, presidents could have fast-tracked PPPs. The legal restrictions about which types of policies can be enacted by decree are imprecise, and presidents often expand their unilateral powers' applicability beyond the constitutional limits (Cox and Morgenstern, 2001: 182-183; Carey and Shugart, 1998: 14; Negretto, 2004: 535; Palanza, 2019: 21). Naturally, excessive use of unilateral powers may have political costs for presidents (O'Donnell, 1994; Negretto, 2004; Reeves and Rogowski, 2021).¹²⁷ Therefore, presidents are unlikely to use those prerogatives to adopt a policy they are not in a rush to implement, as in the case of PPPs.

However, there is another reason for presidents to enact PPPs through the slow congressional path: they wanted input from congresspeople. Because public-private partnerships do not improve popularity and electoral prospects, presidents who advance the policy want it for its impact on infrastructure. They accept spending more time in order to ensure the policy works well, incorporating ideas from stakeholders and congresspeople. They also did not mind sharing the credit for PPPs with the legislature and waiting a bit longer if this would improve the policy program. Moreover, given the lack of priority for PPPs, presidents were willing to negotiate and make concessions to gain the goodwill of the opposition for other more pressing matters. By contrast, in the case of CCTs presidents wanted to ensure fast delivery of benefits attributable

¹²⁷A more complete discussion of this topic is developed in Chapter 2.

exclusively to themselves, and they even seemed to encourage a rushed implementation that neglected elements like the control of conditionalities.

Unsurprisingly, presidents accepted a large number of changes included in their PPP bills during debates in Congress. Table 5.2 shows the length of the bills introduced and the laws approved. The difference between these numbers reflects amendments to the text included during the policymaking process. Out of ten countries analyzed here, eight had the bills lengthened by more than 18% by Congress. Costa Rica is an outlier, where Congress multiplied the text's length by more than four. That extreme change was due to a complete transformation in the original bill, from a minor reform to an entirely new law. On the other end of the spectrum, only in Nicaragua and Paraguay did the original text's length increase by less than 10%.

Those amendments included more than just an increase in length; they altered important elements of the policy. In Panama, for example, Congress restricted state-owned banks' loans to a maximum of 25% of the investments for PPP projects.¹²⁸ Similarly, Brazilian congresspeople included an article that allows the government to start paying private partners only after the PPP project starts offering its service.¹²⁹ Even in Ecuador, where Congress approved the bill in less than three months, the original text was significantly transformed with more than twenty new articles. One of the changes limited the use of international arbitration tribunals to those from Latin America, reducing private investors' choices in who may intermediate a dispute with the

¹²⁸Ley 93/2019, Article 21.

¹²⁹Ley 11.079/2009, Article 7.

government.¹³⁰ Another alteration¹³¹ constrained the president's powers by prohibiting the executive from altering regulations concerning environmental licenses.¹³²

The changes included by Congress in PPP bills show that presidents were willing to accept those inputs to improve the policy. This test is particularly significant because the executive could have vetoed those alterations. Almost all Latin American presidents have line-item veto powers,¹³³ which allow them to block specific Congressional changes while keeping the law. Instead, they oriented ministers to negotiate and incorporate changes to the text. This behavior resulted from presidents' expectations about PPPs. Because they did not think the policy would increase their popularity, they were not in a rush to adopt it and did not worry about sharing the credit for it. The contrast is clear with CCTs, which presidents devised in secret and enacted unilaterally to accelerate adoption and ensure the program would be attributed directly to themselves.

The two countries on the lower end of the distribution from Table 5.2 deserve a brief explanation. The length of Paraguay's bill only increased by 8%, while Nicaragua's text remained virtually unchanged, with an increase of 3%. Both cases are exceptional in their ways. In Paraguay, four congressmen introduced PPPs in the legislature, which may explain why Congress maintained the policy essentially unchanged. In Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega had nearly complete control of the country's politics when the country enacted the

¹³⁰Ley Orgánica de Incentivos para Asociaciones Público-Privadas, Article 19.

¹³¹Ley Orgánica de Incentivos para Asociaciones Público-Privadas, Article 21.

¹³²Congress also included eight new articles in the bill to pass a remission of fines and charges for companies who did not pay social security and income taxes (see Ley Orgánica de Incentivos para Asociaciones Público-Privadas, Articles 22-30).

¹³³Palanza and Sin (2014: 770) list the following countries as granting line-item veto powers to their presidents: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

model in 2016. There is little surprise, in that case, that Congress accepted the bill as proposed by the executive.

Table 5.2: Difference in Length Between PPPs Bills and Enacted Laws¹³⁴

Country	Bill's Length (n° of characters)	Law's Length (n° of characters)	Difference (percentage)
Argentina	24899	43435	74%
Brazil	12492	31703	154%
Colombia	28082	33374	19%
Costa Rica	13078	70548	439%
Ecuador	66528	80189	21%
Mexico	98522	118823	21%
Nicaragua	36419	37562	3%
Panama	104765	127965	22%
Paraguay	63547	68791	8%
Uruguay	55080	65458	19%
			Mean: 78%

Test 3: Form of Implementation

After enactment, presidents gave bureaucrats time to work on the policy without much time pressure. They also did not impose robust control over implementation. While CCT bureaucrats remained under the direct control of the presidency, the agencies responsible for PPP projects typically responded to councils involving multiple ministries. This evidence reinforces the argument that PPP adoptions were not politically motivated because presidents did not feel the need to control bureaucrats closely and did not act to attach their political image to the model's implementation.

¹³⁴The table does not include Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, for which it was impossible to obtain the original texts of the bills. Peru is also absent because it enacted PPPs by presidential decree.

No Latin American country had the bureaucracy responsible for PPPs responding directly to the presidency at the time of first implementation. Instead, most countries established a bureaucratic agency controlled by councils with representatives from multiple governmental entities. In some cases, those councils also included members of private entities like business chambers and academic representatives. Table 5.3 portrays the entities represented in those councils.

Latin America's presidents often use ministerial appointments as part of negotiations in the formation of coalitions (Abranches, 2018). Therefore, distributing the control over a policy across multiple ministries represents a potential loss of control for presidents and their parties. However, four countries went beyond by including representatives from outside the presidential cabinet in the councils ruling PPPs. In Costa Rica, for example, the council includes three ministries, a representative of the Central Bank, one member of business associations, one labor union leader, and one representative appointed by the Federation of Professional Colleges. Similarly, in Guatemala, the National Agency for Economic Infrastructure Development Alliances [*Agencia Nacional de Alianzas de Desarrollo de Infraestructura Económica – ANADIE*] is controlled by four ministers, two secretaries, the president of an umbrella organization that represents eight business associations [*Comité Coordinador de Asociaciones Agrícolas Comerciales, Industriales y Financieras -CACIF*] and the president of Guatemala's chamber of construction companies.

Table 5.3: Ministries and Entities Ruling PPPs' Implementation Agency¹³⁵

Country	Number of Entities	Entities
Argentina	1	Ministry of Finance
Brazil	3	Ministry of Planning; Ministry of Finance; Chief of Staff
Costa Rica	7	Ministry of Public Work and Transportation; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy; Central Bank; Business Chamber; Workers' Union; Federation of Professional Colleges
Dominican Republic	5	Ministry of the Presidency; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Economy, Planning, and Development; Legal Consultancy for the Presidency; General Director of Public Procurement
Ecuador	3	Ministry of Production; Ministry of Planning; Ministry of Finance
El Salvador	6	Secretariat of the Presidency; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of the Economy; Ministry of Public Works, Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development; Business Chambers (2); Academic Sector Representative
Guatemala	8	Ministry of Public Finance; Ministry of the Economy; Ministry of Communications, Infrastructure, and Housing; Ministry of Energy and Mines; Secretariat of Planning; National Competitiveness Program; Business Chamber; Construction Chamber
Honduras	2	Executive and Congress ¹³⁶
Peru	5	Ministry of Economy and Finance; Ministry of Housing, Construction and Sanitation; Ministry of Transportation and Communications; Ministry of Energy and Mines; Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation
Uruguay	1	Ministry of Finance

Only two countries had the agency responsible for the implementation of public-private partnerships responding exclusively to one ministry. Argentina (Piazza, 2020) and Uruguay (Fuentes, 2017) established a PPP unit within the Ministry of Finance. Even in those cases in which the work was centralized, presidents did not control implementation directly.

Mexico, Paraguay, and Colombia are the only countries that did not create a specific agency for the policy. Still, all three of them involved multiple governmental

¹³⁵The table does not include Colombia, Mexico, and Paraguay, which do not have a single agency responsible for PPPs (see below).

¹³⁶Honduras's PPP agency is led by a council of three people appointed by Congress from nine names presented by the presidency.

entities in PPPs. In Colombia, for example, while the National Planning Department (DNP)¹³⁷ centralizes most of the implementation, the Ministry of Finance and the National Agency of Infrastructure (ANI) also play important roles in developing, evaluating, selecting, and controlling PPP projects.

The coordination of PPP projects indicates that presidents refrained from managing PPPs directly in a top-down fashion. Contrary to the pressure imposed by presidents on CCT agencies linked directly to their offices, in the case of public-private partnerships they allowed ministers, secretaries, and bureaucrats to work without direct control. The result was a longer time for implementation.

Takeaway of the Tests

The three tests above corroborate my theory. Presidents did not expect public-private partnerships to boost their popularity and electoral prospects immediately, but they also did not believe the policy could harm their chances in future elections. Therefore, some presidents were interested in the model for its expected effects on infrastructure and investment. In that context, they did not need to rush the model or control its design and implementation. Without that political motivation, these chief executives enacted PPPs through congressional statutes, including inputs from the opposition and non-governmental stakeholders. They also shared responsibility for implementation with cabinet members, refraining from enforcing direct control. In short,

¹³⁷The DNP is a governmental entity that forms part of the cabinet in Colombia. It has the status of a ministry.

some presidents were interested in advancing PPPs, but it was not a political interest that justified extraordinary measures to fast-track the policy.

With the prominent exception of Peru, most countries adopted PPPs in regular ways. In this case, the tests above cannot directly disprove alternative theories of policy diffusion. Diffusion through rational learning, or imitation centered on bounded rationality, could have led presidents to be interested in developing infrastructure through PPPs. The coercive power of the World Bank and other organizations might also have incentivized presidents to introduce the model. And the normative values of New Public Management may have motivated presidents seeking legitimation to adopt the policy. However, none of these theories explain why presidents did not fast-track the model as they did with CCTs. Only by including political motivations in the analysis can one understand why conditional cash transfers were adopted much faster in unilateral policymaking processes controlled directly by the presidency. Conversely, only by comparing public-private partnerships with electronic voting machines can one understand the importance of presidents' expectations for diffusion. Even if only presidents interested in developing infrastructure advanced PPPs, eventually almost all countries had a president willing to adopt the model. None of them believed the policy could hinder their electoral prospects. If that had occurred, the diffusion pattern of PPPs would be limited to just a few countries, as happened to EVMs.

Overall, the process tracing analysis above supports my theory in analyzing the initiation, enactment, and implementation of PPPs. However, the tests do not provide a definitive answer about presidents' motivation to adopt the policy and to adopt it in the

way they did. The following sections go deep into presidents' motivations in Colombia and Argentina, matching those interests with the policymaking process for the model in both countries. Data from interviews with politicians, bureaucrats, and specialists show that presidents were interested in the model for its economic effects on infrastructure but refrained from using extraordinary powers to fast-track and control the adoption of PPPs.

5.4 – PPPs IN COLOMBIA

Juan Manuel Santos was the president who adopted public-private partnerships in Colombia. His government introduced the policy in Congress in 2011, got it approved in early 2012, and implemented the first project in 2013 as part of an extensive plan to develop highways. Bureaucrats and specialists in the government rejoiced over Santos's interest in the model. In interviews, they described having promoted the policy before,¹³⁸ but the idea did not resonate with previous presidents like Álvaro Uribe.

We spent two years explaining the model, with a lot of resistance. The minister of transportation used to say that we should make construction without imposing rules on private firms.¹³⁹

In Uribe's government, the minister of transportation was not interested. He used [infra-structure projects] politically, and many companies with concessions became very rich. They were not interested in changing that. In meetings inside the government, I used to say that we had to change the legal framework to imitate Chile and Peru.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸Interviews with politician member of Santos's cabinet (September 2019); former National Planning Department bureaucrat #1 (September 2019); former bureaucrat in the Ministry of Transportation #1 (October 2019); former bureaucrat in the Ministry of Transportation #2 (November 2019); former bureaucrat in the Ministry of Finance (November 2019).

¹³⁹Interview with former bureaucrat in the Ministry of Finance (November 2019).

¹⁴⁰Interview with former National Planning Department bureaucrat #1 (September 2019).

It was clear that PPPs would not generate immediate political gains. Even the pressure of international organizations was not enough to promote the adoption of PPPs under Uribe's government.

Multilateral organizations already discussed the topic here at that time, but due to political preferences, it was impossible to advance it [the PPP model].¹⁴¹

More generally, building infrastructure was not among Uribe's main goals, and his ministers did not want to change the established relationship with construction companies. Therefore, the model, which could not boost his popularity and electoral prospects, did not catch the president's attention. Another topic was much higher on his priority list.

Uribe focused too much on [fighting] the guerrillas. So he could not do it [develop the country's infrastructure]. It was an issue of political choice.¹⁴²

At that time, the conflict [with the guerrillas] was the most important thing, and that was his focus. Uribe's proposal was not economic, but rather to resolve the conflict.¹⁴³

This was a different country. We were at war. While Chile was building highways, we were at war here. Until the end of the Uribe government, that was the focus.¹⁴⁴

It took a new president with a project to develop the country's infrastructure to advance the adoption of public-private partnerships in Colombia. Juan Manuel Santos was a member of Uribe's cabinet who ran for the presidency as his protégé. However, he

¹⁴¹Interview with former bureaucrat in the Ministry of Transportation #1 (October 2019).

¹⁴²Interview with former member of the *Fondo de Desarrollo Nacional* (October 2019).

¹⁴³Interview with former National Planning Department bureaucrat #2 (October 2019).

¹⁴⁴Interview with lawyer and former representative of the *Camara Colombiana de Infraestructura* (November 2019).

had a focus on infrastructure, which became evident even before the elections. In a government plan published by his party during the campaign, Santos lists 110 initiatives to achieve “good governance for democratic prosperity”. The text places infrastructure as an engine of economic growth because reducing transportation costs is the best way to reduce consumer prices. It promises to “relaunch a system of highways” (Santos, 2010: 20) as part of a “leap in logistical integration” (Santos, 2010: 45). The document even refers to the logic of the PPPs by stating that Santos’ government will “improve the allocation of risks in concessions” and “just like the United Kingdom, Brazil, and Costa Rica among others, we will promote private entities that structure projects” (Santos, 2010: 45). In short, Santos promised to develop infrastructure, and he expected to adopt PPPs as a way to achieve that policy goal. The model was also important to help the country enter the OECD.¹⁴⁵

It also helped that the country was stable. The conflict with leftist guerrillas and drug trafficking organizations no longer captured most of the country’s political attention, and the economy was on its way to a recovery after a dip caused by the Great Recession of 2008. An economic crisis, like the one Colombia faced in the early 2000s, could have limited the possibility of adopting PPPs.¹⁴⁶ But the period’s prosperity provided the right environment for the policy. The bill introduced in Congress even refers to the prosperous moment in the country and posits PPPs as a tool to “consolidate the trust of local and

¹⁴⁵Interviews with former National Planning Department bureaucrat #1 (September 2019); former representative of the *Camara Colombiana de Infraestructura* (October 2019).

¹⁴⁶See Chapter 4 for a discussion of that economic crisis, and its role in fostering the adoption of conditional cash transfers.

foreign private investors”.¹⁴⁷ The policy might not have advanced if the economy were not doing well.

If that law had been proposed to me in the 2000s, I would have said that first you take the patient out of the hospital, then you make him run. When your country is bankrupt, you have other priorities.¹⁴⁸

Once Santos was elected in 2010, his cabinet started working on adopting PPPs, but the process would take until 2013. Previous presidents had enacted multiple changes in infrastructure policy using CONPES documents.¹⁴⁹ These administrative decisions made by the *Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social* are the unilateral tool of enactment applied to create CCTs in 2000. But Santos’ government proceeded carefully with public-private partnerships. The *Departamento Nacional de Planeación* drafted the bill’s first version with the help of an attorney’s office and support from international organizations and foreign specialists.

It was an initial decision from the presidency. Santos was the one who put me in charge, because he had the idea.¹⁵⁰

We did not invent the model. In 2010, we visited [the] United Kingdom, Canada, and other countries. What we did was look at the laws that work in the United Kingdom, Chile, Peru... And from there, we made ours.¹⁵¹

I called the Andean Development Corporation [*Corporación Andina de Fomento - CAF*], which recommended a consultant who helped create the project.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷*Proyecto de Ley* 160 from 2011.

¹⁴⁸Interview with politician member of Pastrana’s and Santos’s cabinets #1 (August 2019).

¹⁴⁹The most notable case was CONPES 2597 of 1992, which established the legal framework for Colombia’s first generation of highway concessions. Other CONPES related to infrastructure include: CONPES 2775 of 1995, CONPES 3045 of 1998, and CONPES 3107 of 2001.

¹⁵⁰Interview with Lawyer and Drafter of the PPP law in Colombia (October 2019).

¹⁵¹Interview with Former National Planning Department Bureaucrat #1 (September 2019).

¹⁵²Interview with politician member of Santos’s cabinet (September 2019).

The government then presented the bill's draft to congresspeople, governors, and mayors, establishing an initial dialogue to gather suggestions and develop the text.

Those debates and informal conversations were very important. I described the project and heard what congresspeople had to say, and I included a lot. I believe that if someone provides an idea, even if it is not helpful, it is better to include it as long it is not harmful, . That helps you move forward.¹⁵³

Representatives of business interests also participated in these debates with the government. The Colombian Chamber of Infrastructure [*Cámara Colombiana de la Infraestructura* - CCI] had reservations about the project, for fear that it could affect ongoing contracts or increase the costs of projects too much due to the interest rates from private banks. The government convinced construction companies in individual negotiations, and the CCI ultimately shifted its position in favor of the policy.¹⁵⁴

They [the government] listened to the CCI [*Cámara Colombiana de Infraestructura*] a lot and included many requests from the market. That was evident in the large number of private projects [proposed by private companies after the law passed]. In 2012, there were only 3 or 4 projects proposed [by private companies]. Then, in 2013, we moved to multiple dozens [of these projects].¹⁵⁵

From the beginning of Santos's administration, it took 15 months for the government to conclude those dialogues and present the bill in parliament. Thanks to the agreement constructed throughout that informal process, the institutional enactment in the

¹⁵³Interview with politician member of Santos's cabinet (September 2019).

¹⁵⁴Interviews with former representative of the *Camara Colombiana de Infraestructura* (October 2019); and lawyer and former representative of the *Camara Colombiana de Infraestructura* (November 2019).

¹⁵⁵Interview with former bureaucrat at *Agencia Nacional de Infraestructura* (December 2019).

legislature was uneventful. Congress passed the law in two months. Even leftist politicians and organizations accepted the policy.

I think the left did not fully understand it [the model]. Privatizations bother labor unions, but PPPs do not cost them anything. They are new projects and do not affect what is already in place.¹⁵⁶

With the law approved, new debates started on its regulation and implementation, involving construction companies, investment funds, and banks. As opposed to the rush to implement CCTs, it took 22 months before the government presented the first PPP projects to potential investors.

Even after the law was passed, it still took us about two years to mature the PPPs. We had such a large project. It was a big novelty.¹⁵⁷

Bureaucrats and politicians in the government worked carefully on the largest plan to develop transportation infrastructure in Colombia's history. This enormous project is known as "4G" for being the fourth generation of highways built in the country. It involved almost five thousand miles of roads. Throughout the adoption of PPPs, the government identified, through consultations with private stakeholders and specialists, that the costs of financing the project would be too high. For that reason, the implementation was accompanied by a new public development bank called FDN [Financiera de Desarrollo Nacional], which could help lower the costs for private partners. The bank is a partnership of the Colombian government with international

¹⁵⁶Interview with politician member of Pastrana's and Santos's cabinets #1 (August 2019).

¹⁵⁷Interview with former bureaucrat in the Ministry of Transportation #2 (November 2019).

organizations like the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Andean Development Corporation (CAF).

We needed to build a large financial scheme with international funding and everything. The task was to build this bank. (...) Here, the limit [of public loans for PPPs] was 30% of the projects, which would attract and mobilize other [sources of] resources.¹⁵⁸

The use of loans from a public bank deviates from the central logic of PPPs, in which the private market should bear the projects' financial risks. The scope of the 4G projects required that adaptation. Importantly, this was not a rushed implementation focused on political gains that weakened the policy's goals, as seen in the previous chapter, where governments hastily paid CCT benefits without controlling conditionalities. Instead, in this case, the government carefully adapted its institutional structure during three years to ensure the policy's success.¹⁵⁹

Colombia's adoption of public-private partnerships corroborates three main points of my argument. First, presidents play the central role in advancing policy models from abroad. Interviewees recognized that Juan Manuel Santos determined the enactment and implementation of the model, which did not happen before due to a lack of interest from other presidents. Second, the motivation to adopt PPPs was infrastructure development. As opposed to conditional cash transfers and electronic voting machines, politicians did not expect PPPs to impact popular support and electoral prospects immediately. For that

¹⁵⁸Interview with former member of the *Fondo de Desarrollo Nacional* (October 2019).

¹⁵⁹Other countries in Latin America also use public banks' loans to fund a limited part of PPP projects as a way to catalyze resources. In Brazil, for example, BNDES plays a relevant role supporting PPPs at the national and subnational levels.

reason, despite all international success, promotion, and normative appeal, public-private partnerships only entered the political agenda in Colombia when a president wanted to develop the country's infrastructure. As I argue, this difference explains why CCTs diffused much faster than PPPs: almost all presidents were interested in the popularity boost of the first, while only some wanted to build highways. Third, presidents took a careful approach to the adoption of PPPs. Without the rush to boost their popularity, the enactment and implementation of PPPs could follow the normal policymaking process. Moreover, the government established dialogues to incorporate ideas from politicians and private stakeholders in enactment and implementation.

5.5 – PPPs IN ARGENTINA

As in Colombia, PPPs depended on presidents in Argentina. The model has been well-known since the early 2000s, when President Néstor Kirchner signed a decree for the “National Regime of Public-Private Associations”, attempting to attract private investments. However, the decree was an imperfect version of the model and the country's recent default meant the risk was too high for the policy to advance.

This decree was a poor copy of Brazil's PPP law, because there are some very similar articles. (...) There were no PPP contracts.¹⁶⁰

[Néstor] Kirchner tried, but that was still a period of adversity for the economy.¹⁶¹

It was the time after the default, (...) and with that huge risk, it was not worth it for investors.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰Interview with lawyer involved in drafting the PPP law in Argentina #2 (April 2020).

¹⁶¹Interview with consultant specialized in public infrastructure in Argentina (June 2018).

¹⁶²Interview with lawyer involved in drafting the PPP law in Argentina #1 (April 2020).

Interest groups lobbied for the implementation of PPPs in the following years as the economy stabilized, but President Cristina Kirchner ignored them. Without the interest of the executive, bills proposing a PPP model died in Congress.

All our efforts to advance PPPs [during that period] were useless.¹⁶³

There was a project circulating in Congress, several initiatives. But they never happened.¹⁶⁴

Argentines had to wait until 2015 when Mauricio Macri defeated Peronism in presidential elections, promising a boost in infrastructure. During the campaign, he announced a National Plan for Infrastructure, placing much more emphasis on the topic than his adversary, Daniel Scioli. That plan included a series of projects to revitalize and integrate the economy of northern provinces, with the expansion of highways, rehabilitation of at least five railroads, and improvement of four airports (La Nación, 2015). Once elected, Macri maintained infrastructure as a key axis in the administration (Macri, 2021: 26, 87). He brought PPPs back on the stage.

Macri had investments as his focus to attract dollars for infrastructure. [He] wanted to leave investments in infrastructure as a mark.¹⁶⁵

Macri had a focus on infrastructure since his campaign. His economic model was to encourage investments. That was his development strategy for the country.¹⁶⁶

As expected, adoption followed a slow and careful process. It started one month after Macri came to power when the government invited a group of lawyers from the

¹⁶³Interview with member of Cámara Argentina de Construcción (June 2018).

¹⁶⁴Interview with international consultancy firm representative in Argentina (April 2020).

¹⁶⁵Interview with lawyer involved in drafting the PPP law in Argentina #1 (April 2020).

¹⁶⁶Interview with international consultancy firm representative in Argentina (April 2020)

Buenos Aires' Bar Association [*Colegio de Abogados de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires*] to draft the bill. This group made sure all actors and stakeholders had their interests accommodated in the text in a process of dialogue and negotiation that took six months:

The first draft was a result of this commission, and it worked pretty well. (...) Then it [the draft] was sent to large consultancy firms, like Price and Standard and Poors, to the Construction Chamber, etc. To all actors involved in funding and banking. All these actors made comments that were considered or sent for consideration by the executive. With all these adjustments, we drafted a new version, which the government sent to all ministries in the government, and from there came the bill sent to Congress.¹⁶⁷

The draft came from a group of about 15 lawyers. Then [we discussed it] with the government, IDB, CAF, and later the business chambers. Then with legislators' advisors, with senators, and every part involved. (...) It [the drafting process] was already an experience of collaboration between private and public.¹⁶⁸

The adoption of PPPs was not a simple imitation of the international model. Instead, it was a careful adaptation of the law to Argentina's particular needs. The government had to include additional protections to attract investors scared by the country's historically high risk.

The heart of the law lies in Article 9, which determines the content of contracts and details the functioning of the state's prerogatives. (...) Article 9 limits these prerogatives to give investors more security.¹⁶⁹

Private parties were very afraid of Argentina's judicial system. In that regard, we looked at Chile and Colombia and created a new figure, the technical mediation panel, to resolve future disputes without having to go to court.¹⁷⁰

167Interview with lawyer involved in drafting the PPP law in Argentina #2 (April 2020).

168Interview with lawyer involved in drafting the PPP law in Argentina #1 (April 2020).

169Interview with lawyer involved in drafting the PPP law in Argentina #2 (April 2020).

170Interview with former bureaucrat in the PPP Office in Argentina (April 2020).

Macri's government lacked a majority in the Senate. However, as opposed to electronic voting machines that affect large parties' electoral prospects (see Chapter 6), the PPP model is not expected to directly affect these fundamentally political interests. Therefore, the executive was able to pass the bill in Congress with the votes of some Peronists. Like in Colombia, the lengthy negotiation and incorporation of ideas from the opposition was crucial.

The draft came out with many elements to attract investors, which were later nuanced with the opinion of those who defend the state. (...) A bicameral commission was created in Congress for some type of control [of the contracts]. All that dialogue was reasonable and open to the public.¹⁷¹

Even though it [the bill] was from Macri, the policy had support from many political forces in Congress, including part of the opposition. They complained that we were protecting private investors too much. But there was no pitched battle, as was the case in other laws.¹⁷²

Congress approved the PPP law¹⁷³ in November 2016, prompting three more months of dialogue with stakeholders for the regulatory decree, sanctioned in February 2017.¹⁷⁴ With the legal framework ready, Macri's cabinet did not start implementation right away. The government had its first meeting about projects for PPPs only in May. Then, in June, it established a specialized agency for public-private partnerships within the Ministry of Finance. Bureaucrats from that agency described suffering political pressure, and Argentina was among the fastest countries to implement the model. However, that pressure pales compared to what those who worked on CCTs described.

171Interview with lawyer involved in drafting the PPP law in Argentina #1 (April 2020).

172Interview with former bureaucrat in the PPP Office in Argentina (April 2020).

173Ley 27328 from 2016.

174Interview with lawyer involved in drafting the PPP law in Argentina #1 (April 2020).

While bureaucrats responsible for the social benefits had to figure out a way to pay millions of families across the territory in one month (see Chapter 4), the PPP team had meetings with Macri every two months.¹⁷⁵ The first projects were announced in November 2017, one year after enactment. As in drafting the bill, the contracts written for implementation involved a dialogue with multiple entities and stakeholders.

The project of highways received inputs from everywhere. (...) We discussed each step with all actors, and they nourished it enormously¹⁷⁶

I understand that it was a fairly long process. There were inquiries to some banks and funds to see what problems they saw [in the projects]. They even talked to us [a multinational credit rating agency] after the sanction.¹⁷⁷

The highway project was the first one presented by the government to investors, in November 2017. It was a mishmash of projects adding up to 7500 km of roads originally envisioned in the 1960s.¹⁷⁸ The agency turned plans into six new PPP projects, announced as the Network of Safe Highways and Roads [*Red de Autopistas y Rutas Seguras*]. Bureaucrats and politicians traveled the world to publicize the projects and attract investors.

We received 32 offers [from private investors], seven of them from top-tier international companies. There were companies from China, Portugal, and Spain.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵Interview with former bureaucrat in the PPP Office in Argentina (April 2020).

¹⁷⁶Interview with former bureaucrat in the PPP Office in Argentina (April 2020).

¹⁷⁷Interview with International Consultancy Member in Argentina (April 2020).

¹⁷⁸Interview with former bureaucrat in the PPP Office in Argentina (April 2020).

¹⁷⁹Interview with former bureaucrat in the PPP Office in Argentina (April 2020).

However, the long adoption process ended up defeating the policy in Argentina. If CCTs thrived during crises, when governments pushed the implementation of cash transfers to boost popular support, PPPs suffered when investors' concerns about risks increased. Macri started the policymaking process at the beginning of his mandate with an improving economy. At the end of 2017, the economy started falling apart, and Congress had turned more reactive (Macri, 2021: 191-199). The crisis scared investors away and killed Argentina's PPPs.¹⁸⁰ A fast-tracked adoption could have ensured the policy's survival.

The adoption of public-private partnerships in Argentina is also in line with my theory. First, Néstor Kirchner's initial enactment by decree shows that presidents could have fast-tracked the policy as they did with CCTs.¹⁸¹ However, it took a president with a strong focus on infrastructure to follow through on the model. The interest in making the policy a mark of his presidency led Macri to adopt PPPs slowly and carefully. Like in Colombia, the policymaking process accommodated the interests and concerns of politicians and stakeholders, thanks to a long series of negotiations. Moreover, adoption was not a rushed imitation but included adaptation to the country's unique needs. Finally, Argentina's adoption shows that PPPs are unsuitable for a situation of crisis, reinforcing the difference with the rushed adoptions of CCTs.

¹⁸⁰Interviews with International Consultancy Member in Argentina (April 2020); former bureaucrat in the PPP Office in Argentina (April 2020); Infrastructure specialist in Macri's presidential office (April 2020).

¹⁸¹The case of Peru also provides strong evidence of this point, as discussed above.

5.6 – FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The model of public-private partnerships diffused across most of Latin America. Since 1996, fifteen countries enacted the policy following the Chilean model, and thirteen implemented it in at least one construction project. A case like this is a clear instance of diffusion, and many studies describe it that way (e.g., Appuhami et al., 2011; Greve and Hodge, 2020). For sure, my comparison with electronic voting machines, implemented by only five countries, shows that PPPs diffused widely. However, the surge pattern of conditional cash transfers with sixteen implementations in twelve years reveals that PPPs' diffusion was not nearly as fast or as widespread. Like the other cases in this dissertation, PPPs were a successful policy, promoted by international organizations, and attuned to contemporary global norms. However, the model diffused in an intermediate pattern, reaching many countries only after a long period. The comparison of PPPs with the extreme diffusion of CCTs confirms that mechanisms in the first step of diffusion are not enough to generate a fast and wide diffusion pattern. The difference between the two models can only be explained by factors related to domestic policymaking, such as presidents' political interest in one policy and not the other.

Building on that comparative analysis, my study of PPPs corroborates my theory. First, presidents were the critical actors in the model's adoption in nearly all countries. However, they did not fast-track those adoptions because there was no expected popularity boost justifying the use of exceptional powers like decrees. Therefore, they took time to accommodate the interests of the opposition, investment funds, banks, construction companies, international organizations, and other actors involved in the

matter. The tests in my process tracing analysis confirm that presidents did not rush the policy and allowed congresspeople to alter the law's text. They also did not impose strict control over implementation, as they did for CCTs. In sum, the adoption of PPPs was not a top-down process controlled by the executive.

Case studies also show the importance of presidents' focus on infrastructure to the adoption of the policy. The contrast to the other two cases is clear. Nearly all presidents want to adopt CCTs, quickly expecting the policy to boost popularity. And nearly all presidents reject EVMs, which they fear may have anti-incumbent effects. PPPs do not generate such extreme responses. It took some transitions of power for a president interested in infrastructure to adopt the model in each country, as with Mauricio Macri in Argentina and Juan Manuel Santos in Colombia. Previous administrations had other priorities and did not see the need to advance PPPs. But eventually, most countries will have a president interested in public-private partnerships. Interviewees from both countries described the motivation centered on infrastructure plans as central to the policymaking process. As a result, those governments have a careful approach to enacting and implementing PPPs, focused on ensuring the policy's success.

Chapter 6: Electronic Voting Machines

“Electronic voting is, in fact, the way voting will happen in the future” (Tuesta, 2004: 79). This was the conclusion of Fernando Tuesta Soldevilla, the national chief of Peru’s electoral management body, in an article published in July 2004. Many organizations and specialists shared his optimism about electronic voting machines’ (EVMs) future in Latin America. Brazil implemented the model in 1996 and successfully expanded its use to the whole country in subsequent elections. EVMs diffused to Paraguay in 2001 with the actual voting devices. Thanks to a cooperation agreement involving the Organization of American States (OAS), Brazil lent the machines so Paraguayans could vote electronically that year. Venezuela had also started negotiations to implement a different version of EVMs later that year.

However, Tuesta’s prediction was wrong. No other Latin American country adopted the model on a large scale after 2004, despite its success and widespread international promotion. What made so many governments reject electronic voting machines?

My argument is that most presidents actively prevented the adoption of the model in their country for fear that EVMs could reduce their and their allies’ electoral chances in future elections. The machines have unpredictable effects on voting behavior. They also reduce the ability of large parties, typically in control of the presidency, to observe and influence the voting and counting processes in polling stations. Counting votes

quickly and reliably was not enough to make the model attractive for presidents, who preferred to avoid that gamble. These chief executives largely ignored the promotion of EVMs by international organizations, specialists, and bureaucrats. When needed, strong parties in control of the executive blocked the policy in Congress. Enactments of EVMs happened only in rare moments of political transformation that weakened well-established parties. However, in most cases, that interest in the model faded when the political systems reorganized themselves, and newly consolidated governments prevented its implementation.

The first sections of this chapter describe EVMs' main characteristics and their surprising trickle-flow diffusion pattern, despite evidence of the many paths through which the idea traveled internationally. Specialists, diplomats, bureaucrats, and international organizations promoted the innovation as a successful model. These organizations provided funding and support for governments willing to adopt it and emphasized the normative benefits of using technology to strengthen elections in the consolidating democracies of Latin America. By all theoretical accounts of policy diffusion, EVMs should have diffused widely and quickly thanks to that promotion. However, the model failed to diffuse in a pattern comparable to conditional cash transfers or public-private partnerships. Instead, it had a slow and haphazard diffusion that never took off in a wave.

The subsequent sections corroborate the theory that diffusion patterns depended on presidents' interests in a policy. In the case of EVMs, they blocked the model's adoption due to a concern about its negative impact on their electoral prospects. My first

analysis covers the decision making process concerning electronic voting machines in eighteen countries of Latin America to show that rejections of the policy were the norm because most presidents did not want to change electoral procedures. Enactments and implementations only occurred in rare circumstances that weakened the typical parties in control of the presidency and allowed smaller political forces to challenge their power. Three process tracing tests reveal the mechanisms that prevented EVMs from diffusing widely and quickly.

The second analysis provides doubly decisive evidence of presidents' motivations through in-depth interviews in Colombia and Argentina. I combine detailed documentation with the accounts from policymakers, bureaucrats, and specialists. The data collected during fieldwork in both countries confirm that presidents and their parties looked at EVMs with a central focus on the machines' effects on their electoral prospects. This motivation determined how they reacted to the model and caused its nearly flat diffusion curve.

6.1 – THE POLICY AND ITS APPEAL

The use of voting machines started in the late nineteenth century, with multiple patents of mechanical devices registered in the United States (Saltman, 2006: 105-117). Voters used levers to mark their choices. The mechanisms inside the machine registered the number of votes for each option, which were opened and read at the end of the day. The idea behind these contraptions was to provide a simple, safe, and secret way of voting to counter ubiquitous fraudulent practices. Over time, some counties and states

authorized the use of voting machines, but the implementation of this technology remained limited. In 1928, one producer of these machines estimated that nearly 17% of voters in the country used them (Saltman, 2006: 122). Despite their slow spread in the United States, these machines attracted attention from some Brazilians. In 1930, the new dictatorial regime of Getúlio Vargas dislodged the power-sharing agreement between two traditional parties. Two years later, Brazil had a new electoral law that allowed for the “use of voting machines, regulated in due course by the Superior Court”.¹⁸² The government tested three prototypes of machines in 1937. However, it never implemented them because the dictatorship abolished all parties and suspended elections (TRE-RS, 2006: 17-27).

This brief history of mechanical voting machines parallels that of electronic voting machines. First, they went through a very slow process of diffusion. Second, the enactment of the policy in Brazil followed a significant shift in the political system that weakened traditional parties typically in control of the executive. Third, the model was not implemented in Brazil because the same new political force that enacted it found other ways to consolidate its power. Despite their technological advancement, electronic voting machines suffered a similar fate in their trickle-flow of diffusion.

Mechanical voting machines eventually gave way to punch cards and optical readers in the United States (Herrnson et al., 2007: 9; see also Garner and Spolaore, 2005: 364; Saltman, 2006: 160-166). The first versions of electronic voting machines (EVMs) appeared in the United States in the 1970s. Their use increased slowly to nearly 10% of

¹⁸²Decreto 21076 from 1932, article 57 (see also articles 70 and 82).

the electorate in the late 1990s. The presidential elections between George W. Bush and Al Gore in 2000 marked an inflection in the model's spread. Among many problems in Florida's electoral management, the poorly designed butterfly ballots of Palm Beach County led many voters to mistakenly select a third party candidate rather than the Democrat. Interest in EVMs increased as a response to those elections (see, for example, the *Voting Technology Project* developed by MIT and Caltech)¹⁸³. Some states adopted EVMs on their own right after the elections, but the Federal government wanted more. Congress passed the Help America Vote Act in 2002, which incentivized the automation of voting and provided funding for the adoption of electronic voting machines (Stewart, 2011: 354-355). The use of EVMs surely increased after that, but the model still did not diffuse in a wide surge reaching most counties (Herrnson et al, 2007: 9-12). In 2010, 28% of registered voters lived in counties using the model exclusively (Desilver, 2016).

A few other countries adopted the model. India had pilots in the 1980s and 1990 (Risnanto et al., 2020: 3282), but official widespread adoption started only in 1998 (Desai and Lee, 2021). Belgians have voted with electronic machines since 1991, though a few municipalities still use paper ballots (Dandoy, 2022: 44). Other European countries also adopted the model. Notably, the Netherlands implemented EVMs in its elections after a long history of experimentation with mechanical voting machines (Jacobs and Pieters, 2009; Allers and Kooreman, 2009).¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³Information about the project is available on www.vote.caltech.edu

¹⁸⁴The Netherlands would later start experimenting with voting through the Internet, which generated a backlash and made the country abandon the model in 2008.

Electronic voting machines are lightweight computers developed specifically for elections. They allow voters to select their candidates directly on the machine, which stores those votes in electronic format thanks to installed software. The same software retrieves the total votes for each party or candidate at the election day's end without polling workers' interference. The specialized literature about voting technology often refers to EVMs as *DRE Voting Machines*, which stands for *Direct Recording Electronic Voting Machines* (e.g., Herrnson et al., 2007: 10; International IDEA, 2011; Carter Center, 2012). The first versions of the innovation had a paper or plastic cover listing the candidates, with buttons by the side of each name for voters to indicate their choice. Quickly, the machines incorporated screens to show candidates' names, parties, and pictures. And later came touchscreens so voters could tap their choices directly on the names or pictures of the candidates.

The adoption of EVMs in the 1990s accompanied a general excitement with the innovation's promise to prevent fraud, mistakes, and inefficiency. Computer scientists around the world worked to improve electronic voting protocols, seeking to satisfy the requirements for security, anonymity, and accuracy (e.g., Fujioka et al., 1992; Sako and Kilian, 1994; Baraani-Dastjerdi, 1995; Borrell and Rifà, 1996; Jing-Jang, 1996; Juang and Lei, 1996; Ku and Wang, 1999). Political specialists were impressed with the results. Debates in the 1990s presented EVMs enthusiastically as tools to improve democracy (Weinberg 1990, 113). Specialists at the time expected these machines to increase turnout, reduce voters' mistakes, and ensure they voted for all positions on the ballot

(Nichols and Strizek 1995; Hanmer et al. 2010, 130). EVMs were also faster, more reliable, and cheaper than paper ballots (Agboh 1994, 22).

The Appeal of EVMs in Latin America

Brazil spearheaded the use of electronic voting machines in the region during the 1990s. The country's new democracy still struggled with electoral safety. In 1994, elections in the states of Rio de Janeiro and Alagoas were nullified due to fraud on paper ballots. There was an abnormally low number of blank votes, ballots deposited without any writing to indicate a lack of preference from the voter. In the scheme, poll workers wrote candidates' names on those ballots before counting them (Santos, 1994; Konkell, 2021: 136). This case led the country to accelerate studies about EVMs (Nicolau, 2015). Like most Latin American countries, Brazil organizes elections in a centralized system administered by a national electoral management body – the Superior Electoral Court [*Tribunal Superior Eleitoral*]. That court hired computer scientists and engineers to devise its own system of electronic voting (Camarão, 1997). The project was part of a program for the automation of electoral systems that received nearly 33 million dollars from the United Nations.¹⁸⁵

Those Brazilian voting machines had the same basic features they still have today. They are small, lightweight computers with a small screen and a keypad similar to a telephone's. Candidates and parties are associated with numbers, which they include in all campaign advertisements and speeches.¹⁸⁶ Poll workers selected by the electoral court

¹⁸⁵The funding came from UNDP in the project BRA/93/035: "Institutional Strengthening of Electoral Justice in Brazil".

¹⁸⁶In the polling station, tables affixed to a wall present the names of all candidates and their respective numbers in case voters need to check the numbers of their preferred candidates before casting their votes.

activate the machine for the voter after confirming their identity. The screen presents the positions in dispute, one at a time, and the voter presses the number corresponding to their favorite candidate, followed by a green button to confirm the vote. There is a red button to start over in case the voter made a mistake and a white button to cast a blank vote. Once the voter is done, the machine emits a sound to signal the end of operations. The first large-scale implementation of machines in Brazil's binding elections was in 1996, when 32% of the country's electorate voted by pressing buttons. Brazil repeated the experience in 1998, now with 67% of the electorate. Finally, since 2000, the whole country votes on EVMs for all elections (TSE, 2010).

The success of the model was apparent. The victorious candidates were known at the end of the election day, while counting on paper usually took days or weeks. The quick turnaround of results reduced the costs of elections by eliminating the workforce needed to count and check physical ballots. In addition, the machines made the most common types of fraud impossible in the country. Poll workers could not write on blank votes nor miscount null votes for a candidate. EVMs also made clientelism more difficult by preventing brokers' tactics to control voters, like chain voting. In this type of fraud, also known as carousel voting, the broker waits outside the polling station while the first voter goes inside to collect a valid blank ballot by putting a false paper in the ballot box. The broker receives the official empty ballot outside, fills it in, and gives the paper to a client, who will deposit it inside and bring out their blank ballot to continue the sequence. Because voters must bring back an empty ballot, the brokers know they deposited the ballot given to them outside with the candidates already marked.

The EVM model quickly caught the attention of neighboring countries. On the same day of Brazil's 1996 elections, the Colombian newspaper *El Tiempo* published a story titled "Brazil Enters the Age of Electronic Democracy." The text announced that paper ballots were a "species on the way to extinction" (El Tiempo, 1996) and that EVMs were a solution to fraud. In 1998, Brazilian electoral authorities received an international group of electoral management bodies' representatives for a demonstration of the electronic voting machines.

Specialists in the region echoed the positive opinions about the innovation from the Global North. They believed the model was going to "consolidate the democratic system with efficient and transparent elections" (Chang Mota 1998: 45) because the use of EVMs "largely contributes to the elimination of electoral fraud and guarantees that the voter's will is maintained" (Matos, 1998: 72). Information about EVMs traveled quickly through networks of bureaucrats, with the support of international organizations. At least 22 international conferences covered the topic since 1998, hosted by countries' electoral management bodies, international organizations, transnational NGOs, and even the United Nations Development Programme. In addition, more than 40 publications from similar entities discussed and promoted EVMs in Latin America during the same period (see Appendix F). In 2004, Peru's National Office of Electoral Processes [*Oficina Nacional de Procesos Electorales*], the country's electoral management body, published a special edition of its journal *Elecciones* entirely dedicated to "Elections in the Digital Era."

International organizations did more than conferences, workshops, and publications. They provided financial and technical support for countries willing to implement EVMs. The OAS, in particular, signed agreements with countries' governments and bureaucratic agencies to help them test and implement EVMs (Tuesta 2004, 78). The International Foundation for Electoral Studies (IFES) also supported governments willing to adopt the policy (e.g., IFES, 1999), as did the United Nations (UNGA 2003, 8-9; UNGA 2005, 15). Beyond these organizations, countries also promoted the model. The United States offered aid through USAID. Brazil used its diplomats to publicize the machines and signed twelve cooperation agreements between 2001 and 2010 to help other countries follow in its footsteps (see Appendix F). These arrangements included offers to lend the machines for tests and even binding elections. In addition to international organizations and powerful countries, private companies that implement electronic voting machines promoted and lobbied for the adoption of EVMs. Representatives of these companies joined meetings with bureaucrats and policymakers and participated in pilots and demonstrations of voting systems. Absent in the case of conditional cash transfers, this type of pressure fits arguments about the role of businesses and interest groups in policy diffusion (Hearson and Tucker, 2023; Trachtman, 2023). Multinational business lobby added to the pressure on governments to adopt the model.

The promotion of EVMs in Latin America had perfect timing. Most countries had recently democratized, and international values and norms associated with the consolidation of democracy became prevalent in the region in the 1990s (Mainwaring and

Pérez-Liñán, 2005). Those countries were looking for ways to improve and legitimize their new regimes, which matched with an innovation created to increase the efficiency, security, and accuracy of elections to ensure that voters' voices were properly heard. Unsurprisingly, NGOs that promote democracy, like the Carter Center and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, fostered many of the debates and publications that promoted EVMs as tools for democratic consolidation (see Appendix F). In addition, computational technology marked the 1990s, when personal computers became common in offices, houses, schools, and nearly every human environment. This expansion of the role of computers matched a normative perception that automatization could improve nearly all human activities, including elections.

With all these actors promoting the policy based on its success and its normative desirability, the model of electronic voting machines was widely available for all countries in the region. By successfully spreading the idea, international organizations, specialists, bureaucrats, NGOs, and private companies fulfilled the requirements established by the main theories of policy diffusion. First, following theories of rationality (Meseguer, 2004; Makse and Volden, 2011), the information about the model's success in making elections faster and safer in Brazil should have triggered the learning mechanism (Gilardi, 2010; Maggetti and Gilardi, 2016: 90), or the cognitive shortcuts that lead to imitation (Weyland 2005). Second, the promotion of EVMs by international organizations and powerful countries fits theories of external pressure (Eichengreen and Rühl, 2001; Hanson, 2003), and it should have led to a quick series of adoptions through coercion and coordination (Levi-Faur, 2005; Shipan and Volden, 2008:

843) – but those mechanisms failed. Third, EVMs’ promise of efficient and fraud-free elections is associated with democratic norms. Following normative imitation theories (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Hyde, 2011), the model should have diffused quickly thanks to emulation (Maggetti and Gilardi, 2016: 91; Fernández and Lutter, 2013; Greenhill, 2010) – but most countries rejected it. If all theories had reasons to expect EVMs to spread fast to many countries, why have only a few countries adopted them in 27 years?

The Unappealing Effects of EVMs for Incumbent Presidents

Features that made EVMs desirable among specialists, bureaucrats, NGOs, and international organizations also rendered them undesirable for presidents. The machines alter voters’ behavior in unpredictable ways, reduce the coattail effects that allow presidents to support their allies, and limit the ability of traditional parties in control of the executive to benefit from their large pool of resources. For politicians who recently won the most critical elections in their country, changes in voting procedures are an undesirable gamble.

The procedures to cast a vote influence voters’ behavior in ways that might change electoral results (Mebane, 2004; Buchler et al., 2004). Political scientists identified multiple effects of EVMs on people's votes, but they are highly contingent on minor details of the machines’ design (Lott, 2009). For example, authors point to a reduction in null and blank votes (Hanmer et al., 2010; Fujiwara, 2015). This effect is particularly strong for less important offices because the machines encourage voters to

select a candidate for each office as they appear on the screen rather than ignoring down-ballot offices (Nichols, 1998; Alvarez et al., 2011). However, the effect is reversed for machines presenting the ballot all at once (Kimbal and Kropf, 2008). In addition, the order in which the screen presents the offices may generate more mistakes if voters expect to start voting for president and the first position on the screen is for members of Congress (Nicolau, 2015; Zucco and Nicolau, 2016).

Electronic voting machines also affect turnout, but these outcomes are particular to specific demographic groups. Roseman and Stephenson (2005) identified a decrease in turnout from the elderly when EVMs were implemented in the state of Georgia, while Card and Moretti (2007) point to a reduction in the turnout of Hispanic voters in Florida due to the machines. Even a small change in turnout may be relevant for candidates who rely on those groups' votes.

More directly, the machines may change some voters' choices for a party or candidate. Katz et al. (2011) found that different configurations of the information presented on the screen generate different cues that voters tend to follow. Again, the direction of those effects may differ due to minor details in design. In Brazil, each candidate has a corresponding number that voters need to input into the machines. This detail caused a concentration of votes on viable candidates whose campaigns were more efficient at communicating their numbers (Schneider and Senters, 2018). In India, on the other hand, the effect was an increase in the number of votes for minor parties. The devices implemented there make it difficult to cast a null vote, which leads unsatisfied

voters to protest by favoring candidates with no chance of winning (Desai and Lee, 2021).

EVMs' unpredictable effects on voters already justify presidents' skepticism. The overall result of all these different and conflicting influences is difficult to anticipate. But electronic voting machines also weaken presidents and their parties directly.

First, most electronic voting machines reduce coattail effects. Presidents are often the most prominent politicians in their parties, and their participation in elections usually helps fellow party members running for other positions. A ballot design containing the names, parties, and colors of candidates for all offices in dispute makes it easier for voters to select candidates aligned with prominent figures like the president. This effect exacerbates parties and leaders' role as a cognitive cue for voters. By contrast, electronic voting machines break the visual connection across multiple offices. As the screen shifts from one office to the next, it forces users to vote for each position without visual information about their previous choice. The result is a stronger tendency for ballot splitting, in which voters select candidates from different parties for the offices in dispute in the same election (Calvo et al., 2008; Leiras and Calvo, 2011; Barnes et al., 2017).

Second, EVMs reduce the advantage of large parties typically in control of the presidency. In elections using paper ballots, parties need observers to ensure that officials will not favor their adversaries during voting and counting. Large parties can afford to send members to all polling stations, but weaker opposition parties lack those resources. For that reason, mistakes or fraud tend to harm smaller parties more than the large ones, which are typically in control of the executive. EVMs eliminate that inequality. Poll

workers lose nearly all discretion due to electronic voting machines, and parties do not need to observe every polling station if machines are counting the votes. In elections with EVMs, parties must check the software and its installation in the machines. Minor parties are able to send a few specialists to the headquarters of electoral management bodies for that. During election day, there might be tests with a sample of machines to ensure they operate correctly, but even the most minor parties should have the resources to send a team to accompany them.

Finally, if large parties have more resources to protect themselves against fraud in elections with paper ballots, they are also more likely to use that advantage to commit fraud at polling stations (Nichter 2018, 33). By having observers at all polling stations, they can influence poll workers directly or engage in other types of fraud. They might also use their presence to control voters engaging in vote buying, as in the *chain vote* schemes described above. Moreover, these ubiquitous observers know where the opposition is not present to check the voting process and might direct their efforts and resources to those places.

In short, electronic voting machines create effects that make presidents unwilling to adopt them. First, they alter voters' behavior unpredictably, depending on the devices' design. Therefore, presidents are unsure about the effects of EVMs on their electorate. Second, most types of EVMs reduce coattail effects by separating the act of voting in distinct steps for each office, limiting presidents' ability to help elect their allies. Finally, EVMs reduce the effectiveness of large parties' electoral strategies based on their resource advantage to observe polling stations and potentially commit fraud. For that

reason, most presidents see EVMs with skepticism and act to prevent their adoption. Only a few unusual presidents will benefit from the machines, leading to the rare and haphazard adoptions of the model.

6.2 – EVMs’ DIFFUSION TRICKLE FLOW

Electronic Voting Machines diffused in a trickle-flow. Only two countries adopted the machines on a large scale for binding national elections. Three other countries tried to implement them without ever expanding their use beyond 10% of the electorate (see Appendix G for the data about EVMs’ implementation). The many rejections contrast with the diffusion patterns of conditional cash transfers and even public-private partnerships, which most countries ultimately adopted. For that reason, this case serves as the most crucial counterpoint to the selection bias for fast and vast diffusion waves in the literature.

Despite all the international promotion and multiple articles discussing EVMs’ effects on voters, their diffusion pattern in Latin America has received little attention from scholars. To my knowledge, there is no earlier study about voting machines from the perspective of international policy diffusion. Without a focus on diffusion, research about EVMs tends to use a domestic perspective. The first debate emphasized economic factors, pointing out that affluent counties in the United States were more likely to innovate in elections because they could afford to buy the machines (see Knack and Kropf, 2002: 541). However, analyses in the late 1990s and 2000s challenged those arguments. Even before the federal incentives created in 2002 by the Help America Vote

Act, the adoption of EVMs was driven by counties' population size and the complexity of their ballots (Knack and Kropf, 2002). In addition, counties that did not have mechanical machines, punch cards, and optical readers before were more likely to move directly to EVMs (Garner and Spolaore, 2005). Stewart (2011) also described election officials' resistance against unnecessary technological shifts, following the logic that "if it ain't broken, don't fix it" (Stewart, 2011: 362). These arguments remain limited to a technical view of the way voters cast their ballots, as if political interests had no relevance in decisions about electoral procedures.

Studies about EVMs' in other countries also tend to overlook political interests. Multiple studies approach the issue from the perspective of voters. They generally use surveys showing popular support for the machines as a relevant factor to explain, or even promote, the innovation (De Jong et al., 2008; Lippert and Ojumu, 2008; Chauhan et al., 2018; Omotayo and Adekunle, 2021; Zhu et al., 2021). It certainly is relevant to know whether the general public trusts and supports a voting system, but voters play no direct role in changing voting systems. Other studies get closer to the decision-making process but still do not address domestic politics centrally. Ahmad et al. (2015) see international pressures as the critical factor in the decision to use EVMs in Nigeria, emulating imposition theories of diffusion. Adeshina and Ojo (2020), also discussing the Nigerian case, cite the approved legislation for EVMs as the starting point of their study. However, their analysis remains centered on bureaucrats as innovation champions and does not explain why the country's parties approved the law. Loeber (2020) advances a bit more. He shows that independent electoral management bodies are more likely to implement

voting technology. The argument implies that political influences could stall or block their adoptions, as found in my research.

That neglect of party politics is surprising, given the importance of parties' interests and politicians' expectations in the literature about electoral reforms. It is well established that parties in control of the government create and maintain electoral systems and institutions to benefit themselves. That is why significant electoral changes depend on political shifts and the emergence of new political forces (Boix, 1999; Lehoucq, 2000; Sakamoto, 1999). Teorell et al. (2017) summarize the idea: "It is the strategic calculations of politicians and political parties that determine when political systems establish institutional reforms like the secret ballot." (Teorell et al., 2017: 541; see also Aidt and Jensen, 2017; Kasara and Mares, 2017). In Latin America, Madrid shows that opposition parties were the main drivers of the expansion of suffrage in Chile and Uruguay. However, they only succeeded when one of the ruling parties' factions sided with them (Madrid, 2019). As discussed below, this situation has strong parallels with the adoption of EVMs in Paraguay. Similarly, Lehoucq and Molina (2002) use the interests and expectations of politicians to explain the electoral reforms that created Costa Rica's stable democracy. They focus on presidents' ability to form coalitions around the changes they want.

My argument builds on those studies of domestic political change to bring together the established knowledge about changes in electoral policy with the diffusion literature. My process-tracing analysis reveals that most presidents, typically members of

large traditional parties, rejected the innovation. Table 6.1 presents the key stages of the institutional policymaking process of EVMs in Latin American countries.

Table 6.1: Enactments and Implementations of EVMs in Latin America

Countries	Enactment Document	Enactment	Implementation (any scale)	Implementation (large scale)
Argentina ¹⁸⁷	<i>(No Adoption)</i>			
Brazil	<i>(Innovator)</i>			
Bolivia	<i>(No Adoption)</i>			
Chile	<i>(No Adoption)</i>			
Colombia	Acto Legislativo 01	2003 Jul 03	<i>Not Implemented</i>	<i>Not Implemented</i>
Costa Rica	Ley 7653	1996 Nov 28	<i>Not Implemented</i> ¹⁸⁸	<i>Not Implemented</i>
Dom. Rep.	Ley Orgánica de Régimen Electoral	2019 Feb 18	<i>Not Implemented</i> ¹⁸⁹	<i>Not Implemented</i>
Ecuador	Ley Orgánica Electoral	2009 Apr 09	2014 Feb 23	<i>Not Implemented on a large scale</i>
El Salvador	<i>(No Adoption)</i>			
Guatemala	<i>(No Adoption)</i>			
Honduras	Decreto 35	2021 May 26	<i>Not Implemented</i>	<i>Not Implemented</i>
Mexico ¹⁹⁰	<i>(No Adoption)</i>			
Nicaragua	<i>(No Adoption)</i>			
Panama	Ley 17	1993 Jun 30	2014 May 04	<i>Not Implemented on a large scale</i>
Paraguay	Ley 1825	2001 Nov 08	2001 Nov 18	2003 April 27
Peru	Ley 28581	2005 Jul 19	2011 Jun 05	<i>Not Implemented on a large scale</i>
Uruguay	<i>(No Adoption)</i>			
Venezuela	Ley Orgánica de Sufragio y Participación Política	1997 Dec 13	2004 Aug 15 ¹⁹¹	2004 Aug 15

¹⁸⁷There is subnational adoption of EVMs by some provinces' electoral management bodies.

¹⁸⁸EVMs were made available as an option for 6% of the electorate in 2002, but the machines only served to print ballots that were introduced in the normal ballot box together with traditional paper ballots.

¹⁸⁹An attempt of implementation in the 2020 municipal elections was canceled. The election was interrupted, and a new one called for the next month with paper ballots.

¹⁹⁰There is subnational adoption of EVMs by some states' electoral management bodies.

¹⁹¹Venezuela used optical scanners for paper ballots in 1998, but only switched to EVMs in 2004.

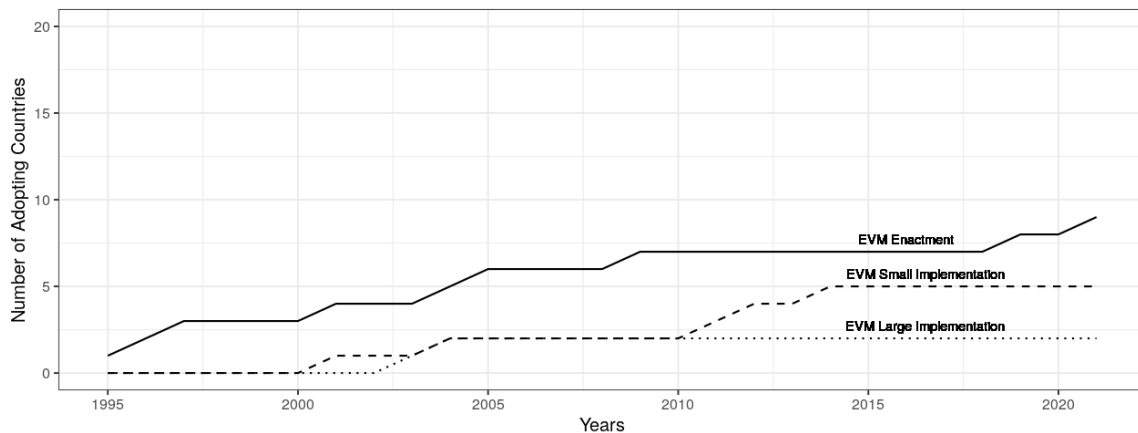
Expecting the machines to reduce their electoral prospects, these politicians acted against the model in Congress. Enactments only occurred in rare circumstances that weakened these rulers and their parties, in line with the literature on electoral reforms. However, eight of those nine enactments are just a few sentences amid an extensive law. They typically authorize EVMs in the future without providing guidelines or establishing a calendar. Those weak enactments were not conducive to a fast and widespread adoption of EVMs. Presidents, whose powers extend beyond enactment, worked to prevent the implementation of the model by withholding budget funds. I coded the year of implementation as the first year in which voters of at least one polling station had to use an electronic voting machine to cast their actual ballot in binding elections organized at the national level, and the machine was used to consolidate and calculate the results for that station. Even with this low bar, only five countries ever implemented the model, and most of them with a significant delay.

More importantly, three of these implementations remained on a small scale. Panama's implementation started in 2014, with 0.2% of the electorate using the machines, and reached a maximum of 0.25% in 2019. Peru started in 2011 with only 1754 voters using EVMs and reached a maximum in 2018 with 10.7% of voters casting their ballots via machines. And only 10% of Ecuadorians used the machines in 2014, the country's only use of the innovation. The only large-scale uses of EVMs were in Paraguay and Venezuela (see Appendix G for the full data about the scale of implementation in each country's election). In both cases, exceptional circumstances suddenly brought new political forces into power without dislodging traditional parties. In these two unique

cases, new presidents used their powers to adopt the machines because they were instrumental in ensuring their electoral success in the future, as expected by my theory. The graph below (Figure 6.1) shows the difference in enactment, small-scale, and large-scale implementation (see Appendix G for the data about the scale of implementation in each country).

As in the previous chapters, the differences between enactment and implementation highlight the importance of studying the whole policymaking process in diffusion analyses. A study centered on enactments could mistakenly argue that half the region adopted electronic voting machines. However, an attentive look reveals that even countries that started the process most often failed to implement the model widely.

Figure 6.1: Enactments and Implementations of EVMs¹⁹²



6.3 – TRACING PRESIDENTS’ MOTIVATION

This chapter has established so far that EVMs scared most presidents because they reduced large parties’ control of polling stations and altered voters’ behavior. In

¹⁹²This graph does not include adoption data by the innovator

addition, it was clear from the data above that EVMs failed to diffuse widely in the region despite the impressive efforts of bureaucrats, specialists, international organizations, and private companies to promote the model. This section analyzes presidents' role in adopting or rejecting the innovation through a series of process-tracing tests. As in the cases of PPPs and CCTs, these tests use data from official documents and secondary sources. The analysis confirms that presidents played a central role in these decisions, motivated by their expectations about EVM's effects on their electoral prospects. This motivation is central to my theory, as condensed in Hypothesis 2 (see Chapter 2). It fits the overall argument of this dissertation: that presidents' expectations about a policy's impact on their political future determine its diffusion pattern.

Test 1: Context of Adoption

The political context helps reveal motivations behind policies' adoption or rejection. Electronic voting machines advanced to enactment and implementation during rare moments of political transformation that weakened traditional parties. Out of the nine enactments of EVMs, eight derived from exceptional situations when these older and bigger parties lost control over the government and new political forces emerged.

I start the analysis with the two large-scale adoptions of EVMs. In both of them, the political transformations empowered a president from emerging political forces, but they did not wholly dislodge the electoral stronghold of traditional parties. Therefore, the new presidents adopted EVMs in these two cases to weaken their adversaries' ability to influence poll workers.

Paraguay

The overthrow of Alfredo Stroessner's dictatorship in 1989, after 35 years of authoritarian rule, left his *Colorado Party* without a unifying leader. Throughout the 1990s, internal conflicts weakened and fractured this conservative party (Molinas et al. 2010). The factions' disputes culminated in the assassination of vice-president Luis María Argaña in 1999. Hailing from a smaller group within the party, Argaña opposed the strongest faction represented by President Raúl Cubas Grau. A series of widespread protests, named *Marzo Paraguayo*, blamed Cubas Grau for the homicide and forced him to flee to Brazil (Abente-Brun, 1999). The unstable situation allowed for the creation of new parties, mainly stemming from the traditional ones (Lachi, 2009). The new president, Luis Ángel González Macchi, was from a smaller faction of the *Colorado Party*. He formed an unstable coalition with minor political parties (Molinas et al. 2010: 361), but his allies' chances in upcoming elections remained slim against mainstream Colorado politicians controlling the party organizational resources.

During González Macchi's exceptional government, a senator from the Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico proposed adopting electronic voting machines. He introduced the bill on September 18, 2001, and the text was approved by Congress and signed by the president on November 8 of the same year. The new law¹⁹³ determined the implementation in a few polling stations already for the local elections of November 18. That was the only enactment of EVMs in the region requiring immediate use of the

¹⁹³Ley 1825/2001.

machines, whereas all other enactments simply *allowed* for their implementation in the future. Thanks to support from the OAS, aid from the United States, and a loan of 152 machines from Brazil, 1.5% of Paraguayan voters cast their ballots electronically that year. This accelerated adoption of the model derives from the political context, in which a weak government acted quickly to dislodge the established political factions from the strongest party. Symptomatically, the Colorado Party opposed the expansion of EVMs in 2003. They wanted to limit their use to 10% of the electorate (IFES, 2003: 7), but the government imposed its will and 46% of Paraguayan voters used the 3,811 machines borrowed from Brazil that year.

Venezuela

The political system that governed Venezuela since 1958 suffered a prolonged crisis in the 1990s. The parties COPEI (*Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente*) and AD (Acción Democrática) took turns in the presidency in what many considered an exemplary democracy in Latin America. But their popular support faded after 30 years (Coppedge, 1994; Roberts, 2003). Elections in the period showed a spike in absenteeism and decreased support for both parties (Vaivads, 2015: 109-115; Dietz and Myers, 2007; Lupu, 2016, 101-134). The Congress elected in 1993 was more fragmented than ever. Rafael Caldera became president after leaving COPEI to form a new party and build a coalition with smaller organizations. Trying to regain legitimacy and popular support, COPEI led a sizeable electoral reform in 1997, under protests from AD

(Castellanos Vásquez, 1999). The new law¹⁹⁴ reduced parties' role in the administration of elections and allowed the implementation of electronic voting machines (Kornblith, 2003: 171).

Notably, the political transformation culminated in 1998 with the election of outsider Hugo Chávez (Dietz and Myers, 2007: 76-77). Despite the prolonged crisis, AD kept part of its political power and remained the largest party in both chambers of Congress. More importantly, it retained most of its organizational resources outside the capital (Cyr, 2017: 153-175), which are crucial to influence and potentially commit fraud in the polling stations. Therefore, Chávez had strong incentives to adopt an innovation that could reduce the impact of those resources. He rushed the adoption of optical scans, implemented in the 2000 elections. But that technology still “left a major degree of discretion to polling station officials” with “the possibility of inconsistencies in the count and the risk of fraudulent actions” (OAS, 2002: 38). So, after Chávez had gained control over the centralized electoral management body (Álvarez, 2009: 69), the president determined a fast implementation of electronic voting machines to make sure AD could not benefit from the widespread party structure it still had in some provinces. The recall referendum called by the opposition in August 2004 had EVMs for 87% of the electorate, and the regional elections in October mandated the use machines for all voters.

González Macchi in Paraguay and Chávez in Venezuela were unusual presidents fighting an opposition with established parties controlling organizational resources. This

¹⁹⁴*Ley Orgánica del Sufragio y de Participación Política* de 1997.

situation reveals the political rationale behind their rushed adoption of EVMs. I now move to the three countries that enacted the model but only implemented it on a small scale. In these circumstances, new political forces changed the electoral rules, but the system soon stabilized around new presidents who did not need to dislodge stronger parties.

- *Ecuador*: The country lacked historically dominant parties. Four main parties rotated in positions of power since the mid-1980s, which was not conducive to consolidating a solid party structure. In 2002, the country elected the populist outsider Lucio Gutiérrez as president, while one of the four main parties lost 30 seats in Congress. The 2006 elections confirmed the trend with the victory of Rafael Correa, another outsider campaigning on anti-system sentiments (Machado Puertas 2007). New political forces also took the majority of Congressional seats in that year. Correa championed a new Constitution that reshaped Ecuadorian politics (Pachano, 2010). In 2009, an impromptu legislature established overarching laws based on the new constitution, including a long electoral reform with one single article authorizing the use of EVMs.¹⁹⁵ Oddly included in the long law, the article allowed bureaucrats to start adopting the innovation. They implemented EVMs for 10% of voters in 2014, but the experience was never repeated. EVMs were not a priority for a president without an opposition with strong organizational resources. Rather, Correa faced a fragmented political

¹⁹⁵Ley Orgánica Electoral, article 113.

system in which parties depended on coattail effects from well-known presidential candidates (Polga-Hecimovich, 2014).

- *Panama*: The deposition of Manuel Noriega in 1989 ended his military dictatorship and prompted the reestablishment of democracy in Panama. In 1993, the country's parties approved an extensive electoral reform, with one article establishing the possibility of future use of voting machines.¹⁹⁶ This law came before Brazil's use of EVMs, and the topic was ignored in the country until a few pilot tests started in 1999. By then, the country's politics had consolidated in a fragmented system, and there was no subsequent transformation that could motivate the adoption of electronic voting machines (Otero, 2006: 78). Bureaucrats continued testing the model every few years and implemented the machines in binding elections for 0.2% of the electorate in 2014 and 2019. However, well-established parties in control of the government never had an interest in expanding their use.
- *Peru*: Fujimori's authoritarian regime undermined Peru's main parties (Levitsky and Cameron, 2003; Crabtree, 2010), and the collapse of his government in 2000 accentuated the country's political volatility (Tanaka, 2005; Carter, 2020: 584-585). These turbulent politics presented an opportunity for electoral bureaucrats, who championed electronic voting machines since the 1990s. They started testing different versions of machines in 1996 and tried to forge a path for the model's adoption in the country (see ONPE, 2011a and ONPE, 2012). In 2005, under the

¹⁹⁶Ley 17/1993, article 39. Note that the law does not specify that these machines should be electronic. The term "voting machines" could refer to lever machines or punch card readers.

first president elected after Fujimori, politicians finally included a few lines in a law authorizing a “gradual implementation of electronic voting”.¹⁹⁷ Implementation has indeed been extremely gradual due to a lack of political interest. The country’s politics revolve around personalist presidential campaigns and coattail effects. Therefore, politicians had no motivation to adopt EVMs, and the bureaucracy was able to implement EVMs for a mere 10.7% of the electorate.

Countries that enacted but did not implement EVMs

Party system transformations with the emergence of new political forces paved the way for all the other enactments of EVMs, except for Costa Rica.¹⁹⁸

- *Colombia*: The enactment of EVMs followed the weakening of the two traditional parties. The demise of *Liberales* and *Conservadores* started in a legitimacy crisis during the 1990s (Vélez et al., 2006: 13; Hoskin et al., 2011: 412-413). Álvaro Uribe’s presidential victory in 2002 epitomized the emergence of new political forces. The two traditional parties reacted against Uribe by approving an electoral reform¹⁹⁹ (Vélez et al., 2006: 17), in which smaller parties included one article allowing the use of EVMs. However, clientelist and coercive electoral tactics remained relevant. Therefore, governments have prevented the implementation of the model since then (see case study below).

¹⁹⁷Ley 28,581/2005, Disposición Complementaria Primera.

¹⁹⁸The two traditional parties of Costa Rica enacted EVMs in 1996, before the emergence of new forces (Picado León, 2008: 15). Suffering from a long decline in support (Seligson, 2002; Rodríguez et al, 2005: 16), the dominant parties reached an agreement in 1995 known as the Figueres-Calderón pact. The negotiation led to an electoral reform that allowed the future use of electronic voting machines.

¹⁹⁹Acto Legislativo 01/2003.

- *Honduras*: In 2013, members of Congress from three new parties proposed the adoption of EVMs. However, the idea did not prosper until 2017, after accusations of electoral fraud (Salomón, 2018) motivated popular uprisings (Jerez, 2021: 289). Debates about an electoral reform started in Congress in 2019, and the country enacted a new electoral law that includes the possibility of using EVMs in 2021. Later that same year, Xiomara Castro's election consolidated the position of her leftist party LIBRE, reducing interest in the model.
- *Dominican Republic*: Electronic voting machines appeared on the agenda since at least 2006 (Álvarez et al., 2012), and the country did some pilot tests. However, the country only enacted them in 2019, at the peak of internal rivalries that fractured the ruling party and opened the way for new contenders (Núñez, 2021). Most important among them was the creation of the Partido Revolucionario Moderno, which became an important opposition force in 2016.

In sum, the enactments of EVMs show a pattern across the region. All but one country in Latin America enacted EVMs in a period of political transformation that allowed for the emergence of new political forces. These are tumultuous moments like the end of an authoritarian regime or a legitimacy crisis of traditional parties. Following the expectations of my theory, this analysis reveals that the simple enactment of the model requires exceptional political circumstances in which political parties are willing to change the way elections work.

The conditions leading to widespread implementation were even rarer, which hindered the full adoption of the model. In most cases, the political turmoil leading to enactment resulted in a new equilibrium that did not motivate presidents to push for the use of EVMs. Only Paraguay and Venezuela had the very unusual situation in which a president sought to dislodge traditional parties still strong enough to benefit from the observation and control of polling stations. In those two countries, the political expectation of electoral benefits led González Macchi and Chávez to fast-track the model's implementation.

Test 2: Gatekeepers of Implementation

The analysis above reveals the political forces at play when governments adopted or rejected electronic voting machines. However, that information alone does not confirm that chief executives acted according to those motivations. This section provides evidence that presidents' behavior matched the motivation identified above during the implementation phase of policymaking.

Most countries stabilized their political systems after the turmoil that allowed for EVMs' enactments. Therefore, presidents and their parties soon found themselves in a typical position of electoral favorability compared to the opposition. Like presidents from established parties before episodes of political turmoil, these leaders repelled changes to a game they had just won, so they blocked the implementation of voting machines. The evidence from the policymaking making process confirms that expectation. In nearly all

countries that failed to implement EVMs on a large scale, presidents' decisions were central to the policy's rejection.

That finding is particularly noteworthy because presidents do not have direct control over the electoral bureaucracy. While most bureaucratic agencies respond to the cabinet through ministries and secretaries, electoral management bodies operate more autonomously. In fact, all countries analyzed here have an independent electoral management body, except for Argentina. In some countries, like Brazil, electoral management bodies are a part of the Judiciary. In others, like Mexico, there is a dedicated autonomous agency. Generally, these bureaucracies showed a strong interest in electronic voting machines. They participated in conferences, published research, and signed agreements to learn more about the innovation (see Appendix F). Many of them also organized pilot tests, which yielded positive results (see Appendix H). The electoral management bodies of Panama and Honduras even drafted the bills that enacted EVMs. However, they were unable to overcome presidents' resistance against EVMs.

But how did presidents prevent the adoption of EVMs if they lack control over the bureaucracy responsible for implementing the model? They withheld the money. The formulation and management of the public budget is a prerogative of the executive branch in Latin American countries (Bonvecchi and Scartascini, 2011: 35-36; Hallerberg et al., 2009: 301-307), and presidents used that power against EVMs. They also control the diplomatic service and, therefore, could block the acceptance of international support for large-scale implementation.

Implementing electronic voting machines requires upfront investments in the hardware and software. These expenses are compensated in the following years when there is no need to print, distribute, collect, and count paper ballots (TRE-RS 2006, 81-87; ONPE 2012, 32). Therefore, the policy is cost-effective in the long run but costly in the short run. As described above, even poor countries could easily surpass that limitation with international aid. The Organization of American States was willing to finance countries' plans to adopt EVMs, and Brazil offered to lend the machines without costs beyond transportation. Paraguay made good use of those offers: it received Brazilian machines, technical support from the OAS, and American financial support (Fuentes and Sánchez 2022, 9-10). However, most presidents did not make funding available for widespread implementation and ignored external offers of funding and support.

In countries that enacted the policy, the leading cause for the lack of implementation was the unfulfilled need for funds from the budget. The president of Costa Rica's Supreme Electoral Tribunal wrote in 2008 that efforts to test the technology were blocked by "issues of a budgetary nature" (Sobrado, 2008: 46). Still, the court seemed determined to adopt the machines. In 2014, an attempt to implement EVMs for emigrants voting in consulates was canceled. In 2016, the same president of the electoral management body stated that "the fiscal situation the country has faced in the last decade makes electronic voting definitively unfeasible. (...) So it remains a medium-term project".²⁰⁰ The money for the project has not arrived until today.

²⁰⁰The quote comes from a video interview posted online as part of a news story (Amelia Rueda, 2016).

The situation was similar in Colombia, where the government did not respond to requests from the electoral management body. The creation of a committee to advance the policy yielded no results, and its continuing meetings now never reach the required quorum. It became clear soon after enactment that there would be no chance to adopt the machines. Presidents obstructed EVMs simply by ignoring them, despite the availability of financial support from international organizations (see case study below). In Honduras, EVMs' enactment in 2021 was not followed by a budget to implement most of the changes included in the new law (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2021).²⁰¹

The countries that implemented the usage of electronic voting machines on a small scale are not different. Even if bureaucrats succeeded in adopting the model in a small scale, presidents prevented EVMs' widespread use by withholding the budget. Ecuador used EVMs for 10% of the electorate in 2014. The country borrowed machines with different specifications from Venezuela, Russia, and the Argentinian province of Salta, with support from the Union of South American Nations (Tapia, 2014: 80-81). The initial implementation was successful, and members of the electoral management body promised an expansion to 40% of the voters in 2017 (Villacís, 2014: 62) and 100% in 2020 (Tapia, 2014: 71). But they never fulfilled those promises. Instead, the country did not use EVMs at all in future elections. The National Electoral Council's president blamed the government's "austerity policies" for discontinuing the policy (Estrella, 2015). The situation was the same in Peru, where despite the great interest of the electoral

²⁰¹In the Dominican Republic, a rushed implementation was canceled in 2020.

bureaucracy, limited funds forced a very gradual implementation of EVMs (Diario Correo, 2012).

The role of the president is even more evident in Panama. The country implemented EVMs in 2014 and 2019, but only for 0.25% of national voters in small rural communities. Bureaucrats refer to that implementation as a pilot test, but the votes were counted as part of the official elections. Before that implementation, the Electoral Court's president explained the lack of voting machines by saying that the country's president was against the model (La Prensa, 2012). In fact, the president, Ricardo Martinelli, had already stated that EVMs "should never be implemented" because people "want to mark [their vote] on paper ballots" (Panamá América, 2012).

Test 3: Effectiveness of the Policy

It is clear that the main factor preventing the implementation of EVMs was the lack of funding, primarily determined by the executive. Now, it is crucial to disprove an alternative explanation to my theory: that presidents' motivations to reject the model were not their electoral interests but legitimate concerns about the benefits of the machines. In other words, EVMs' rejections could have resulted from the policy having unclear or adverse effects on electoral efficiency and safety – despite the endorsement from international organizations.

Questions about the security of electronic voting machines have emerged in several countries. In the United States, companies providing voting machines received criticism for hiding their software from public scrutiny. In 2003, the leakage of a code

from one of those companies allowed specialists to reveal weaknesses of the program (see Rubin, 2006). Soon, in 2004, a computer scientist created an organization, the Verified Voting Foundation, to pressure governments and private companies to be more transparent about the use of voting technologies. In 2006, a group of Dutch hackers and activists showed that a chip could be extracted from voting machines to alter their code. The group also discovered that the machines emitted radio signals that could identify some votes. These revelations led the government to cancel the use of EVMs in 2009 (Jacobs and Pieters, 2009: 130-134). That same year, an international association of hackers and specialists opened a case in the German Constitutional Court against voting technology, and the judges decided that EVMs were unconstitutional. The decision was not directly about the risk of fraud but about the inability of ordinary citizens to verify the voting system (Seedorf, 2015).

These types of debates found some echo in Latin America. Groups of computer scientists and hackers have raised similar questions about EVMs. The most significant problems were in Venezuela, where the opposition to Hugo Chávez raised accusations of fraud after the first use of EVMs in 2004. However, electoral observers from the European Union and the OAS ratified the results. Specialists from the Carter Center also published a report of statistical analyses that “accurately confirm the electoral results” (Carter Center, 2004), which silenced many criticisms of the model at the time.²⁰² The 2017 elections for a constitutional assembly raised more concerns when the company

²⁰²The same authors of that study published a new analysis in 2011, arguing that the elections were likely fraudulent (Hausmann and Rigobon, 2011). Still, the study did not significantly impact political debates about EVMs.

responsible for EVMs in the country, Smartmatic, accused the electoral management body of tampering with the devices in a dispute that had no external audits (Wallace, 2017). However, at that point there was no question about the authoritarian nature of Venezuela's regime. Therefore, its control over elections did not surprise policymakers in other countries. Nicolás Maduro's government was expected to control the whole electoral process with or without EVMs, as stated by one interviewee in Colombia:

It is not worth it to have Venezuela as a benchmark for anything, not even for bad things.²⁰³

More recently, in Brazil, former President Jair Bolsonaro famously questioned the machines used since 1996. His party challenged the results in court after the second round of the 2022 presidential elections, claiming that the machines were tampered to favor his opponent, Lula da Silva. The court dismissed the case because Bolsonaro's party did not accept extending the complaint to also challenge the results of the first round, in which it became the largest party in the House, elected eight senators, and won the governorship of Rio de Janeiro (Santos, 2022).

Electoral bureaucracies and private companies devising EVMs did not ignore concerns about the security and privacy of electronic votes. Over the years, they included multiple features to ensure reliability and safety in these machines. The standard models lack any wireless accessibility and include seals that reveal if the cover was opened in a potential attempt to access internal components. Moreover, in Brazil, the machines' code is made available to specialists and experts in events that take multiple days, and they are

²⁰³Interview with electoral delegate of the Liberal Party (August 2019).

free to explore weaknesses and reveal problems in the software. During the elections, a random sample of machines is selected and retrieved from polling stations for security tests. They are submitted to a public simulation to show that all votes inserted in the machines are correctly counted. Outside of Brazil, most countries now use EVMs with printers that emit a paper ballot, which voters can see through a transparent visor. They approve the vote before that paper is automatically deposited in a locked box. After the elections, a sample of these boxes is counted to ensure the results match the machines' output.²⁰⁴ In Argentina, a company recently created a new version of EVMs, called Single Electronic Ballot [*Boleta Única Electrónica*]. Voters receive a blank ballot with a chip. When they select their candidates, the machines print on the ballot and register the vote electronically in the chip, allowing for automated counting and verification of each ballot.

The critical factor about EVMs' level of safety for my theory is whether those concerns significantly swayed political decisions about the adoption of the innovation. At first glance, the fact that countries like the Dominican Republic and Honduras enacted the model in 2019 and 2021 shows that political factors were more relevant than recent criticisms of the model. However, that information is not enough for an overall analysis of the region.

This section tests whether issues about the security and privacy of voting via EVMs were a realistic concern in political debates. It analyzes evidence from the use of these machines in countries that had not adopted EVMs at the national level. These instances include pilot tests organized to experiment with voting machines in binding or

²⁰⁴This technology is usually called VVPAT, or Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trail.

simulated elections, binding subnational elections managed by regional or local electoral management bodies,²⁰⁵ as well as non-governmental elections like party primaries. I collected evaluation reports and news information from 51 instances of electronic voting in ten Latin American countries (see Appendix H). The first of them took place in 1992, as a series of pilot tests in elections for mayor in the Colombian cities of Peñol, Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Bucaramanga, Cartagena, and Manizales (Cepeda Zuleta, 2003: 7; Galindo Vacha, 2007: 308). The last one was in 2019, when Dominican parties used EVMs in their primaries (González, 2019).

I coded the information from the reports and news stories about those tests in four binary variables. The first and second ones are based on the perception and behavior of candidates, parties, and bureaucrats about the EVMs used. One identifies if there were accusations of fraud or malfeasance in the elections, checking whether defeated candidates complained that the machines' software fabricated the results. The second variable identifies if there were technological problems that called the results into question or that affected the privacy and security of voting. The third and fourth variables refer to voters' experiences. They apply only to pilots in which voters responded to surveys about their experiences. The third one combines responses about whether voters found electronic machines easy, simple, and fast to use. The fourth refers to whether voters prefer the machines over paper ballots or want to see EVMs implemented. These variables were dichotomized using a 50% cutoff.

²⁰⁵This only occurred in Argentina and Mexico, where provinces and states have their own electoral management and are free to implement EVMs irrespective of the decision for national elections.

The results are astounding (see Table 6.2). EVM pilots were successful on all accounts.

Table 6.2: Results of EVMs Pilots

Absence of Fraud Accusations	98% (50/51)
Absence of Major Problems	94% (48/51)
User Perception of Easiness	100% (29/29)
User Preference for EVMs	100% (24/24)

First, only one instance yielded accusations of fraud. That is particularly impressive because 26 were binding elections with relevant political results, including party primaries and subnational elections. The one accusation of fraud was in the 2019 primaries for the PLD (*Partido de la Liberación Dominicana*) in the Dominican Republic. Despite the complaints of the defeated candidate, the results were recognized and maintained. The primary for the other main party in the country (*Partido Revolucionario Moderno*) had no accusations or problems (González, 2019).

Second, only three of the instances analyzed had problems that put the electoral results into question. Peru's first tests with EVMs were three simulated elections to try the machines in 1996. One of them suffered severe problems with multiple failures in the devices and their printers (ONPE, 2011a: 70-72). The two other problems identified were in binding local elections in Argentina. In 2003, in Ushuaia, poll workers helped voters unfamiliar with computers, breaching the secrecy of their votes (Ministerio de Interior, 2003). Four years later, at the end of the election day in a small town, one of the machines emitted results indicating zero votes. Fortunately, the device had the

technology to print paper ballots, and it was possible to ascertain the results (Busaniche et al., 2008). Besides these three problematic instances, all other experiences were considered successful. Bureaucrats and parties were happy with the fast results. They saw EVMs as reliable and trustworthy.

Voters shared that excitement about the innovation. In all surveys, most respondents said the technology was easy to use and should be applied in future elections. Even though the results are dichotomized at 50%, these surveys had results much more favorable than that. In Mexico's state of Jalisco, for example, the results have been fairly stable in different pilot tests over the years. In 2006, 93% said they wanted EVMs in future elections. In 2009, that number was 87% in one town and 93% in another. And in 2012, 95% responded they would like to vote electronically in the future (Figueroa, 2014). Another example comes from Peru. The internal elections of the PNP (Partido Nacionalista Peruano) used electronic voting machines in 2008, and a survey of voters indicated that 95.2% considered it easier to vote with EVMs than with paper ballots. In addition, 74.5% said the machines were more trustworthy, and 74.4% responded they were safer (ONPE, 2011b: 81). The country also had a national survey that questioned voters about the topic, and 64% said Peru's elections should use electronic voting machines.

It is clear from this analysis that electronic voting machines made a good impression in Latin America. Despite discussions about the risks of EVMs in the United States, Europe, and even some Latin American countries, the overall perception was extremely positive. Politicians and parties gladly accepted the machines' results even in

binding elections. Moreover, voters were optimistic about a possible expansion of EVMs' use after trying them for the first time. Therefore, the reason for EVMs' slow diffusion cannot be that the machines did not work or raised concerns and distrust. The reason was that presidents were concerned with the machines' effects precisely because they did work.

Takeaway of the Tests

The findings from this analysis corroborate the hypothesis about presidents' motivation to block the adoption of EVMs. If most chief executives feared that the machines could reduce their electoral prospects, enactments should only happen in rare circumstances of political transformation. After enactment, the stabilization of politics should discourage incumbent presidents from allowing the implementation of a policy that might result in their electoral defeat soon. As expected, the second test shows these presidents used their power to withhold the budget for widespread implementation. Finally, for my theory to be true, the political effects of EVMs should motivate presidents' actions against the model. The third test corroborates that by debunking the alternative explanation about concerns with the safety of elections using the machines.

It is important to highlight the exceptional circumstances of Paraguay and Venezuela's adoptions of EVMs. These outliers show that political expectations about the model determine presidents' behavior towards it. Newcomer presidents saw the policy as a valuable tool to dislodge well-established rivals in both countries. The rare circumstances of these two cases invert the adverse effects of EVMs on presidents: in

their particular situations, electronic voting machines would increase presidents' electoral prospects. As expected, these two presidents fast-tracked the model to benefit from it quickly. However, the circumstances for that to happen were very exceptional. They only generated two policy adoptions, insufficient to generate more than a trickle-flow diffusion pattern.

Beyond my theory, this analysis of the policymaking process in multiple countries reveals once more the limits of extant theories of policy diffusion. If rational learning were the main driver of diffusion, bureaucrats' push to adopt EVMs should have worked in most countries. These specialists had wide access to information, and their tests with the technology convinced their countries that the innovation was a suitable substitute for the slow and unsafe paper ballots. If theories of imposition had strong explanatory power, governments should have accepted international support to adopt the model. Brazil's diplomatic efforts to promote the policy and lend its machines were ignored across most of the region, even with technical and financial support from the OAS and USAID. External pressure cannot sway presidents against their political interest in winning future elections. Finally, the normative appeal of electronic machines should have motivated multiple governments to jump on the EVM bandwagon. However, as expected by my theory, most presidents blocked the adoption of the innovation because it could take them to an electoral defeat.

Though each test points to one aspect of the policymaking process, the three tests combined provide a comprehensive picture of the determinant role of presidents' expectations in rejecting EVMs. However, they cannot generate double-decisive evidence

about the rationale in presidents' minds. The ultimate test of my hypothesis requires direct evidence of their political motivations. The following sections analyze the policymaking process in Colombia and Argentina. Interviews with policymakers, bureaucrats, and specialists in those countries show that concerns about electoral prospects lie at the core of their decisions about EVMs.

6.4 – EVMs IN COLOMBIA

Colombia enacted EVMs in a moment of political transformation, but the executive has been blocking them for almost two decades by not providing the means for implementation.

The strategy is to let it die. They [the government] will never tell you that it [EVM] is bad, nor will they be against it. But they will starve it to death.²⁰⁶

During the 1990s, a prolonged crisis of political legitimacy weakened the bipartisan system that ruled Colombia for most of the 20th century. Like “Giants with feet of Clay”, as described by Pizarro Leongómez (2006), the Liberal and Conservative parties crumbled into a fragmented system of particularistic representation (Hoskin et al., 2011: 412-413). Reforms attempting to restabilize support for the two parties during that decade backfired. They reduced centralized control over resources necessary for clientelism and weakened the traditional parties' vertical control over local politics. As a result, intra-party disputes intensified, and personalist candidates started building their political bases to challenge party leaders (Dargent and Muñoz, 2011). That political

²⁰⁶Interview with member of NGO of electoral observation #1 (August 2019).

transformation reached its maximum in the landslide victory of independent candidate Álvaro Uribe in the 2002 presidential elections.

A former member of the Liberal Party, Uribe started his career as a politician inside the party, using its structure to become senator and governor of the wealthy department of Antioquia. As was standard then, he built his regional faction within the party to control part of the regional political resources (Dugas, 2003). He left the party in 2002 to run as an independent, relying on that political structure and on massive popular support. As his campaign started to gain traction, factions of other parties joined Uribe until the whole Conservative party sided with him. This political trajectory reveals a politician well versed in the electoral practices common in the country at the time, like clientelism and influence over polling stations.

Moreover, Uribe's unyielding position on public security against guerrillas gained not only the support of a large share of the population, but also of paramilitary organizations across the country. In one accusation, a poll worker stated that a paramilitary leader ordered the insertion of 400 irregular ballots in favor of Uribe in the ballot box, in place of absent voters. In a different place, a bureaucrat accused these leaders of forcing poll workers to cross ballots with a pen to nullify votes for other candidates (Duque Daza, 2017: 217). This strategy would be impossible with electronic voting machines.

For these reasons, despite wanting to dislodge traditional parties, Uribe was not like Hugo Chávez or González Macchi. EVMs would disrupt his electoral tactics. Therefore, the political reform his government proposed after the election did not include

voting machines. It included a referendum to revoke the mandate of recently elected congresspeople and close one of the chambers of Congress. Faced with an existential threat, those historical parties united with smaller ones and passed a counter-reform in July 2003 (Vélez et al., 2006: 13-22). That reform contained a single sentence about electronic voting machines:

Electronic voting may be implemented to achieve agility and transparency in all elections.²⁰⁷

That was the anticlimactic first enactment of EVMs in Colombia, at the peak of the country's most significant political transformation in recent history.

Official records do not describe who included that sentence in the reform bill. Luckily, evidence from another law reveals that small parties were interested in the model, as expected by my theory. The only member of the leftist party ANAPO (*Alianza Nacional Popular*) in Congress, Senator Samuel Moreno Rojas, had introduced a bill proposing EVMs in 2001. He reintroduced the same bill in 2002²⁰⁸, now with the support of Senator Jesús Piñacué, the only representative of the ASI (*Alianza Social Independiente*).²⁰⁹ The model advanced because the political turbulence empowered minor parties. Even the speaker of the Senate, Germán Vargas Lleras, had recently left the Liberal Party to found a small organization called *Colombia Siempre*. This window of

²⁰⁷Acto Legislativo 01/2003, Art. 11, Parágrafo 2.

²⁰⁸Proyecto de Ley 81 del Senado.

²⁰⁹The party changed its name that year from Alianza Social Indígena.

opportunity allowed Rojas' bill to pass. The text required the implementation of electronic voting machines within five years.²¹⁰

Uribe's government had acted against the bill in Congress, unsuccessfully. So, the Ministry of Finance challenged the new law in court, arguing that EVMs were too expensive. The electoral management body (*Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil*)²¹¹ argued in favor of voting machines in the trial, and the Supreme Court decided the law was constitutional and economically viable.²¹² However, as expected, the executive defied that decision by ignoring the law in the incoming years.

It is in the law, it is mandatory, but the government did not give the money. And they [executive officials] do not justify it. They only say 'there is no money'.²¹³

Brazil had been promoting EVMs in Colombia since 2002, and even invited a Colombian delegation to visit Brasília and learn about its voting machines. In 2003 and 2004, contacts with the Colombian government involved the possibility of an agreement to use Brazilian machines with support from the OAS. None of that convinced the government.

There was an idea of a trilateral project. The records suggest that the OAS would provide resources. (...) It seems like there was some resistance from the Colombian government. The records note budgetary difficulties.²¹⁴

²¹⁰Ley 892/2004, Art. 1.

²¹¹Colombia has two institutions dedicated to elections. The *Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil* coordinates and manages the electoral process, which includes the responsibility over voting systems. The second institution is the *Consejo Nacional Electoral* (CNE), which acts like an electoral court and watchdog to ensure elections are fair and political campaigns follow the legislation.

²¹²Corte Constitucional. Sentencia C-307 de 2004.

²¹³Interview with electoral delegate of the Liberal Party (August 2019).

²¹⁴Interview with Brazilian diplomat in Colombia (August 2019).

The executive always argued that there was no money, even when the OAS offered support.²¹⁵

Until the end of Uribe's government, all Colombia did with EVMs were pilot tests. These experiences yielded positive results. In 2007, 94.5% of users said the machines were easier to use than paper ballots, and 85.8% responded that they were more reliable (Álvarez et al. 2009, 83). But the president remained uninterested.

In 2010, Juan Manuel Santos took power. Elected with Uribe's support, Santos inherited (and later hijacked) his political party. Therefore, the new government's electoral tactics and expectations remained unchanged. However, the new cabinet included Germán Vargas Lleras as Minister of Justice. The former speaker of the Senate now controlled the small party CR (*Cambio Radical*), which lost almost half of its seats in the Senate in those elections. Within one month in office, Vargas Lleras introduced a new political reform in Congress. The bill included a committee to advance EVMs and determined their full implementation in 2014. He was the only member of the cabinet signing the bill, and the president did not share his interest.

In the government, this was a non-issue.²¹⁶

I think someone asked me for resources for that once. (...) But it seems like it was not important to anyone. I do not remember [President] Santos ever talking about the topic.²¹⁷

²¹⁵Interview with former member of the Consejo Nacional Electoral (October 2019).

²¹⁶Interview with politician member of Pastrana's and Santos's cabinets #3 (October 2019).

²¹⁷Interview with politician member of Pastrana's and Santos's cabinets #2 (October 2019).

Congress approved this new law²¹⁸ in 2011, and the committee held its first meeting on March 14, 2012. It was presided over by the electoral management body's representative, with members of the government and of political parties.²¹⁹ The group contacted fourteen private companies to evaluate their voting devices.²²⁰ It also received a letter from the OAS proposing technical cooperation and financial support.²²¹ But the work slowed down as members discussed minutiae in the document that regulated a first pilot test in 2013. The test never happened because the Ministry of Finance did not release resources for it.²²² Interest in the topic faded as it became clear that the model's adoption would not happen. In 2016, an auditing report pointed out that EVMs were not implemented due to a "lack of budget allocation from the government" (CGR, 2016: 215).

The committee's calendar, with meetings every two weeks, remains a reminder of the policy never implemented.

When we want to haze someone in the office, we assign them to [observe] that committee. You have to go every two weeks but there has been no quorum for the last two and a half years.²²³

Colombia's incomplete adoption process corroborates the argument that the enactment of an innovation from abroad depends on presidents' electoral expectations.

218Ley 1475/2011, Capítulo IV.

219NGOs involved in electoral process were invited to observe the meetings.

220Acta 06-2012 de la *Comisión Asesora para la Incorporación, Implantación, y/o Diseño de Tecnologías de la Información y las Comunicaciones para el Proceso Electoral* (May 30, 2012).

221Acta 011-2012 de la *Comisión Asesora para la Incorporación, Implantación, y/o Diseño de Tecnologías de la Información y las Comunicaciones para el Proceso Electoral* (October 10, 2012).

222Interviews with electoral delegate of the Liberal Party (August 2019), and member of NGO of electoral observation #1(August 2019).

223Interview with member of NGO of electoral observation #1 (August 2019).

Enactment of EVMs was only possible in moments of political transformation, pushed by minor parties trying to reduce the influence of large political ones. This case also shows, however, that presidents maintain the upper hand by controlling implementation. In Colombia, both Uribe and Santos did not favor the model and withheld the budget necessary for EVMs, effectively vetoing its adoption.

6.5 – EVMs IN ARGENTINA

Electronic Voting Machines entered Argentine policy debates in the late 1990s, with two bills²²⁴ presented in the Chamber of Deputies. Since then, 90 bills on the issue have died in Congress under the rule of Peronist presidents.

The [Peronist] party has many leaders who believe that if electronic voting is implemented, they will never win elections again.²²⁵

Peronists were always against them [EVMs]. (...) During the Kirchners' governments, every time someone proposed them, it [the bill] would not advance.²²⁶

The Peronist party [officially named *Partido Justicialista* - PJ] is by far the most potent political force in the country. Founded in the mid-20th Century, it consolidated Juan Perón's charismatic leadership in institutional control over labor unions. Over time, those bases expanded into a widespread political structure, with patronage and clientelist connections spread throughout the country (Levitsky and Wolfson, 2004; see also Auyero, 2000).

²²⁴Bills 3421-D-1999 and 3458-D-1999.

²²⁵Interview with bureaucrat of electoral management in the Province of Buenos Aires (March 2020).

²²⁶Interview with former bureaucrat at Dirección Nacional Electoral (March 2020).

As expected by my theory, well-established Peronist forces used the executive to keep elections unchanged. In Argentina, the electoral procedures favor large parties even more than elsewhere because the country does not use official ballots designed, printed, and distributed by the electoral management body (known as the Australian ballot). Instead, each party has to print and deliver its ballots to the polling stations. Voters receive an envelope and enter a room where all parties' ballots are on a table. They pick their favorite one, place it in the envelope, and leave the room to deposit the envelope in a box.

This system favors established political forces in three ways. First, large traditional parties have the organizational resources to print and distribute ballots to all polling places in adequate quantities. That logistical effort is daunting for national elections, especially in a large country with vast regions of sparse population. Large parties' political structures are the only ones with resources to accomplish that task, as recognized by an interviewee from the Peronist government.

The system does disadvantage the small [parties] and favors *Radicales*²²⁷ and Peronists.²²⁸

Second, the system is more prone to different types of fraud than elections with paper ballots printed and distributed by the electoral management body. In particular, it allows party brokers to steal ballots from their parties' adversaries. Because voters enter the room alone, hiding ballots in their pockets before leaving is easy, reducing the votes

²²⁷The term *Radicales* refers to the party Unión Cívica Radical (UCR), an old traditional party in Argentinian politics that lost power and most of its relevance since the 1990s.

²²⁸Interview with Member of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's cabinet (June 2018).

the stolen party can receive. Again, this type of fraud disproportionately benefits large parties able to send more brokers to steal ballots. They also protect themselves better against this tactic by replenishing their ballots often during the day.

The PJ does not want [EVMs] because it is convenient for them to keep Cristina [Fernández de Kirchner, popular former president and then vice-president] on the ballot. So, they downplay the problems of party ballots, like ballot stealing.²²⁹

Third, party ballots make it harder to split the vote between different parties for the multiple offices in dispute. Placing one ballot in the envelope is the simple procedure to vote following the party list from top to bottom. However, some voters may want to select the presidential candidate from one party and the senator from another. In that case, they must cut the ballots to place a piece from each ballot in the envelope. This system makes it very costly for voters to split the ticket, strengthening coattail effects. If a party has a strong presidential candidate, many voters will pick the whole ballot with that candidate's face, benefitting all candidates listed together. Strong traditional parties, particularly the Peronists, are best positioned to benefit from this effect (Alles et al., 2023).

[The Peronists] had motivations related to electoral strategies [to reject EVMs]. The governors benefit from the current system when they match national elections with the [elections for] provincial governor, [because] voters would have to cut the ballots to vote against them.²³⁰

²²⁹Interview with lawyer specialized in electoral law (June 2018).

²³⁰Interview with member of PRO who participated in the adoption of EVMs in CABA (February 2020).

However, Peronists' control over the country had a hiccup in 2015, when they lost the presidency to Mauricio Macri. The center-right Macri was an unusual president from an emerging party, trying to open up space for his small party PRO (*Propuesta Republicana*) in the political arena dominated by Peronists. In that regard, his challenge was similar to González Macchi's in Paraguay and Chávez's in Venezuela: to dislodge a strong traditional party able to observe, influence, and commit fraud at the polling stations. And like those two other presidents, Macri hoped EVMs would reduce Peronists' advantage in polling stations (Di Mauro, 2019: 145).

The PRO had the [federal] government and the province [of Buenos Aires], yet they worried a lot about [electoral] observation. (...) They are convinced that Peronists steal the elections from them.²³¹

Nine months after taking office, Macri proposed a political reform with a plan to adopt EVMs in national elections. The bill sent to Congress determined that all national elections should use Argentina's version of voting machines, the Single Electronic Ballots. However, unlike the political transformations that placed González Macchi and Chávez in power, the incoming president in Argentina was not accompanied by a big enough shift. Therefore, he lacked support in Congress (Di Mauro, 2019). Macri himself recognized that: "We arrived at Casa Rosada [the presidential palace] in an unexpected way, thanks to the huge quantity of mistakes committed by the dominant party. And it remained dominant after (...) because of its control over structures of power, like labor unions" (Macri, 2021: 75). His coalition lacked a majority to approve the reform. It

²³¹Interview with lawyer involved in Macri's political reform (March 2020).

passed in the Chamber of Deputies thanks to some moderate Peronists, but governors have a more significant influence in the Senate. And they depend on party ballots for their regional electoral strategies.

Some Peronist senators told me they were going to support it [EVMs], but they said the party imposed heavy pressure on them [against EVMs].²³²

Marshaled by their most traditional governors, Peronists decided to reject the reform altogether. With that, the bill was effectively killed (Pertot, 2017).

It is important to note that a group of technology specialists emerged against Macri's proposal. They raised technical questions about EVMs and argued that party ballots were better.²³³ Computer scientists in the National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), a network of researchers linked to the government, published a document about voting technologies that marked EVMs with a red sign of danger (CONICET, 2017). As their ideas became public, some of these specialists received invitations to speak in Congress. However, one of them recognized that their role in congressional discussions was limited.

Those who went to Congress were allowed to speak only at the end, when all politicians had already left.²³⁴

Peronists, members of the government, bureaucrats, and specialists in electoral management all agree that the model's fate was determined for electoral reasons before

²³²Interview with member of Macri's cabinet (March 2020).

²³³Interviews with computer scientist member of CONICET #1 (February 2020); computer scientist member of CONICET #2 (February 2020); computer scientist in public-private think tank (March 2020); autonomous computer scientist (May 2020).

²³⁴Interview with computer scientist in public-private think tank (March 2020).

these specialists entered the debate. Politicians wanted to maintain their coattail effects and organizational resources intact, and these technical arguments helped legitimize their position.

There were anti-electronic voting militants arguing about technological issues, but these computer specialists do not know anything about voting.²³⁵

The computer specialists had some impact because of the aggressive campaign they made. But in reality, in the mind of those who made the decision [to reject EVMs], I tell you they had no impact. It was not the CONICET that convinced them, they already knew their position.²³⁶

The debates with those groups [of computer specialists] made a lot of noise. I believe that was used by the politicians that already knew they were against [the adoption of EVMs].²³⁷

Peronism resisted [EVMs] in the provinces and localities. So they used those technical criticisms so it did not look like they were stuck in the past.²³⁸

The interviewees converge in their understanding of the political rationale that determined each side's position regarding EVMs. Policymakers calculated the expected effect of the innovation on their electoral prospects to decide what to do about the model. But the country's federal system provides one additional piece of evidence to confirm that electoral prospects motivated Macri's attempt to adopt voting machines. In Argentina, each province has its own electoral rules, and a few of them have been using EVMs since the mid-2000s (Alles et al., 2023: 12-15). Macri himself had implemented them in Buenos Aires during his time as the city's mayor.²³⁹

²³⁵Interview with member of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's cabinet (June 2018).

²³⁶Interview with member of Macri's cabinet (March 2020).

²³⁷Interview with former bureaucrat at Dirección Nacional Electoral (March 2020).

²³⁸Interview with researcher of electoral policy in Argentinian think tank (June 2018).

²³⁹As Argentina's capital, the city of Buenos Aires has the status of a province. It is officially called the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (*Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires – CABA*).

Naturally, as president, Macri championed EVMs at the national level with arguments about the positive impact the innovation would have on electoral management. He promised efficiency, security, transparency, and fraud reduction. Of course, if those were his party's motivations, it should promote the model at all levels. Yet, the party did not do so. The PRO made no move to adopt EVMs in the province of Buenos Aires, governed at the time by María Eugenia Vidal, a close ally of the president.

Two politicians involved in the matter and one bureaucrat from the province explained the political logic behind maintaining party ballots in Argentina's most populous province, which is a stronghold of Peronists. Vidal was very popular, and the party expected her name on the party ballot to generate a coattail effect that could help Macri in his re-election campaign. This strategy required the province's elections to be simultaneous to the presidential ones, with a single paper ballot with all candidates from the PRO together. If they had adopted EVMs, the province's elections would be separate from the national ones, preventing the transfer of votes from Vidal to Macri.

- Why didn't Vidal adopt them [EVMs] in the Province [of Buenos Aires]?
[interviewee stops for a second and giggles] You will not put my name there, right? Macri's idea was always about politics. They believed that the governor of the province of Buenos Aires and the president had to go together [on the ballot]. At the time it was believed they would help each other. Then it became clear that Vidal would help him more than the other way around.²⁴⁰

This was a topic for large debates among us. (...) Some people believed it would be better to leave the system of party ballots because they imagined Vidal would attract votes to mayors.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰Interview with member of Macri's cabinet (March 2020).

²⁴¹Member of PRO who participated in the adoption of EVM in CABA (February 2020).

I can tell you because I was there. (...) It was not done out of loyalty to Macri. The expectation was that she [Vidal] would help Macri, but in the end that did not happen.²⁴²

This case corroborates three elements of my theory. First, well-established traditional parties reject EVMs. Peronists acted against the model whenever possible, especially while occupying the presidency. Second, the motivation to promote or reject EVMs lies in electoral expectations. While Peronists feared losing electoral advantages, Macri, as an unusual president, expected the machines to favor his small party. Third, enacting EVMs depends on significant political shifts. Despite the Peronists' defeat in the 2015 presidential election, that shift did not occur in Argentina with the same intensity as in other countries, causing Macri's attempt to fail.

6.6 – FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Electronic voting machines' trickle-flow diffusion pattern provides a crucial case for my research. While previous studies focus on cases of successful diffusion to many countries, this chapter complements my analyses of conditional cash transfers and public-private partnerships by looking at a case that almost completely fails to diffuse. Only Paraguay and Venezuela followed Brazil's lead to adopt EVMs on a large scale. Three other countries had EVMs in some elections, but they never expanded the use of these devices to more than 10% of their electorate. Four other countries enacted laws authorizing the use of voting machines but never implemented them. The cause for this diffusion pattern was not a lack of international promotion and support for EVMs.

²⁴²Interview with bureaucrat of electoral management in the Province of Buenos Aires (March 2020).

Specialists, bureaucrats, international organizations, and influential countries all championed and offered support for countries willing to adopt the model. Domestic politics were the main barrier that prevented diffusion.

Presidents from strong traditional parties are the leading cause of EVMs' slow and haphazard diffusion pattern. They had concerns about the innovation's impact on their electoral prospects and blocked its adoption most of the time. Voting machines can generate unexpected changes in voters' behavior, which are undesirable for any president who just won a majority of votes and would prefer voters to continue behaving similarly. Moreover, the automation of vote counting reduces large parties' advantage in observing and influencing poll workers, as they can no longer benefit from having their members present in every poll station during voting and counting procedures. The sporadic enactments occurred only in rare political transformations and were almost always included in extensive political reforms. Even after enactment, presidents continued to veto the model's adoption by withholding the budget for implementation. Paraguay and Venezuela were exceptions because their presidents, González Macchi and Hugo Chávez, expected to use EVMs to hinder rivals that still had extensive organizational resources.

The third test in the process tracing analysis also shows that EVMs improved electoral management in pilots, party primaries, and subnational elections. Voters saw the technology positively, and there were rarely any problems or accusations of fraud. Therefore, presidents' motivation to reject the model could not be simply that the machines do not work. The in-depth studies of Colombia and Argentina confirm that the motivation was political. In both countries, documentation about the policymaking

process and interviews reveal the strategic calculations about electoral prospects behind political decisions about voting machines.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Domestic political actors can resist international pressures to adopt policy models from abroad. That is the core finding of my research, which challenges the idea that globalization trends, transnational actors, international organizations, or foreign normative values overwhelm policymakers' decisions about their countries. Those factors have limited influence on policymakers decisions to adopt a policy model from abroad, compared to domestic political incentives. International and transnational forces promote a model, which leads policymakers in multiple countries to consider its adoption. However, adoption itself depends on these countries' political officials believing it is in their political interest to enact the model into law and implement it. More specifically, it depends on presidents' expectation that the policy will boost their electoral prospects. In short, whether a policy diffuses fast to many countries, or slowly to only a few countries, results from presidents' expectations about the impact of the policy on their political futures.

7.1 – KEY FINDINGS

The main findings from this research expand our understanding of diffusion processes beyond the key theories on the topic. Extant theoretical frameworks focus on causal factors and mechanisms that operate in the international realm. They claim that diffusion results from the characteristics of the policy, the international organizations that promote it, or the normative value attached to it. Rational choice scholars argue that a simple and successful model diffuses because countries learn about the model's success and therefore adopt it (Meseguer, 2004; Makse and Volden, 2011). Imposition arguments state that international organizations coerce countries into adopting a policy, and thus guarantee its diffusion (Eichengreen and Rühl, 2001; Hanson, 2003). Values-based theories say that countries in a quest for legitimacy adopt policies associated with current global norms, ensuring their diffusion (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Hyde, 2011). All three types of causes are part of the

international transmission of the policy idea. Thus, from the perspective of these established theories, the domestic policymaking process remains a black box, assumed to follow those international factors by necessity.

My focus on countries' internal politics reveals that policymakers' decisions to adopt a model from abroad are not an epiphenomenon of international factors. Instead, they depend on policymakers' expectations about the policy and their institutional power. Presidents are the most powerful policymakers. They use institutional prerogatives, like decree powers, to fast-track the adoption of models that might help them remain in power and win future elections. The result is a surge diffusion pattern in which multiple countries quickly adopt the model. In contrast, if presidents expect a policy to hinder their electoral prospects, they use powers like the application of the budget to prevent its adoption. In that case, the aggregate pattern is a trickle diffusion in which only a few countries adopted the model in exceptional circumstances. In between the two, policies that do not generate electoral effects receive some presidents' attention but are not fast-tracked. They diffuse in wave patterns that reach most countries in decades.

The theoretical neglect of domestic politics resulted from a collective selection bias in policy diffusion research. The literature consists mainly of case studies of a single policy that diffused quickly to many countries. Individually, each publication justifies its case selection as an exciting case of fast or wide diffusion in which it is possible to observe the cause proposed by the author. As a collective endeavor, however, research on diffusion is plagued by a selection bias. By looking only at the policies that diffused fast to many countries, scholars ignore the factors that may preclude other policies from doing

the same. Solingen (2012) identified that problem and encouraged researchers to look at the firewalls that might prevent policies from spreading. Rather than firewalls, my findings reveal presidents acting as policy gatekeepers.

That collective selection bias has caused the enduring neglect of domestic political factors. By focusing on cases that diffused fast to many countries, scholars devised theories that see the international transmission of an idea, which is necessary, as a sufficient cause of diffusion. They show that a simple and successful model spreads into more countries, that promotion by international organizations can make more countries adopt a model, and that normative appeal also helps a model to diffuse. These factors seem to explain individual cases of diffusion, but they cannot provide a general explanation without policies that failed to diffuse being considered in the literature. Comparing policies with a wide variation in their diffusion patterns is crucial to identify what made some of them fail to diffuse. My research shows that the behavior of policymakers in domestic politics is a determining factor of diffusion patterns.

The core contributions of this research project are twofold.

First, it addresses the diffusion literature's collective selection bias through a comparative analysis of three policies with very different diffusion patterns. Conditional cash transfers (CCTs) is an antipoverty policy that sixteen countries fully adopted in only twelve years. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) reached enactment in fifteen countries and implementation in thirteen after twenty-five years. And electronic voting machines (EVMs) were implemented in five countries, but only two did it on a large scale.²⁴³ The

²⁴³These numbers do not include the innovators (Mexico for CCTs, Chile for PPPs, and Brazil for EVMs).

selection of policies to study followed a theory-driven strategy of most similar cases. I compare three policies that were successful, promoted by international organizations, and attuned to global norms. Therefore, all three policies had the same “promise” to diffuse, according to previous theories. However, the policies differ in the effects they generate for presidents in domestic politics.

Second, this research shows that theories of diffusion must give attention to the domestic policymaking process. By comparing three cases with different outcomes, my evidence reveals that presidents’ varying expectations about the electoral effects of the three policies motivated them to behave differently regarding their adoptions. The diffusion pattern of a model is the aggregate result of presidents’ policymaking decisions about that model. Therefore, if most presidents immediately use their powers to fast-track the adoption of a model, it will diffuse quickly to many countries. Conversely, a policy most presidents block will diffuse very slowly to only a few exceptional countries. In the intermediary situation, a policy that some presidents advance without using extraordinary powers will eventually find its way into most countries in a slower diffusion pattern. In short, the interest of presidents in a policy is a necessary condition for diffusion, and that condition pertains at the domestic level that has been neglected thus far.

My research suggests the need to separate the diffusion process in two steps. The first step is the transmission and promotion of a policy idea between countries. Out of the multiple causes identified by scholars in that step of diffusion, at least one is necessary for a policy to diffuse. A model that remains hidden from potential adopters will never diffuse (van der Heiden and Strebel, 2012). My critique recognizes the importance of

those factors identified by previous research while highlighting their insufficiency. By revealing that there is a second necessary step in the causal process of diffusion, I incorporate domestic policymaking into the diffusion literature. After all, policymakers who receive a policy idea from abroad may adopt or reject it in their countries even against the forces promoting it internationally. This framing recovers a neglected element of Rogers' seminal work on diffusion: the study of potential adopters' decision to adopt or reject an innovation, which he called the innovation-decision process (Rogers, 1995: 161).

Given that the executive branch has the upper hand in policymaking, it is crucial to identify what presidents look for in policies coming from abroad. Their fundamental interest is to remain in power, which involves completing their mandates, being reelected, being elected for other positions after the end of their terms, and getting their allies elected. Other political or policy objectives are secondary because they require the control of positions of power. Therefore, a policy affecting that fundamental interest jumps to the top of presidents' priority list. When they expect a model to boost their popularity and help them get reelected, these chief executives fast-track the model using decrees and rush bureaucrats to accelerate its implementation. Inversely, when they believe the policy model will hinder their electoral prospects, they act to delay its discussion, prevent its enactment, and withhold the budget necessary for its implementation. Finally, in the intermediary case, when the policy was not expected to generate direct electoral effects, only some presidents showed interest in the model, and even those allowed for the long institutional policymaking process to take its course

without rushing either the enactment or the implementation. Chapter 2 details the argument and presents the associated hypotheses, tested and confirmed in my empirical analyses.

The empirical test of my theory about presidents' behavior is a comparative process-tracing analysis of my three cases. This part of the research involved collecting primary and secondary data from eighteen countries to identify the critical stages of policymaking for each model in each country: introduction in the institutional process of adoption, enactment into law, and implementation. My findings from that part of the research (Chapter 3) corroborate the argument that presidents shaped policymaking based on their immediate electoral expectations.

The executive branch initiated the adoption process of CCTs everywhere, and it unilaterally enacted the model in all but one country. A program that delivers money to low-income families can quickly boost presidents' popularity, so they accelerated adoption nearly everywhere. Presidents were so interested in CCTs that they used decree powers and other prerogatives to fast-track their adoption. This action circumvented congressional debates that could delay the policy. It also allowed the executive to claim sole responsibility for the popular program. Finally, the same presidents ensured implementation on a large scale within one year in twelve countries, in top-down processes that ensured bureaucrats acted quickly to deliver the benefits.

Presidents were also the main initiators of PPPs. However, there was no interest in fast-tracking this model and circumventing congresspeople (with only two exceptions). Public-private partnerships can help develop the country's infrastructure, using private

investment to start construction without initial expenditures from the public budget. Yet, the policy cannot quickly boost presidents' popularity, and its effects on electoral prospects are indirect, at best. The results of a PPP take many years to become visible, given the need to build the infrastructure, and future politicians will likely benefit from it more than the president initiating the policy. For that reason, there was also no rush to implement the model. Only three countries presented a PPP project to private investors within one year of enactment.

Finally, EVMs are a model that most presidents have reasons to fear. Electronic voting machines alter voters' behavior by presenting candidates on a screen. They also reduce the coattail effects that presidents need to support their allies and limit the influence of large parties that typically control the presidency. As a result, no country adopted the policy after an introduction by the executive branch. Moreover, presidents used their powers to prevent the use of machines even after exceptional circumstances led to the enactment of EVMs. They typically withheld the budget to ensure that electoral management bodies could not advance the policy's implementation.

In short, for all three policies, primary evidence from official documents reveals that presidents were the most prominent actors in policymaking and that their behavior followed my theoretical expectations. They fast-tracked the policy that could help them remain in power and blocked the policy that could hinder their electoral prospects.

Beyond the institutional decisions observable in official documents and reports, my theory also implies a specific rationale behind presidents' decisions. The motivations hidden in politicians' minds are impossible to observe directly. Still, it is possible to infer

them by their actions and the consequences they are willing to accept. It is also possible to interview members of presidents' inner circles and those who worked directly with them in adopting these policies about their reasoning and expectations. I pursued these two forms of inquiry in my research. First, I used data from official documents and secondary sources specific to each model to identify aspects of the adoption process that unveil presidents' intentions. Second, I conducted in-depth interviews with cabinet members, politicians, bureaucrats, NGO representatives, and local specialists involved in the policymaking processes during fieldwork in Colombia and Argentina.

The case study of conditional cash transfers (Chapter 4) shows that presidents' main concern about the policy was to maximize its political and electoral effects. Adoptions were more likely in periods of political weakness when presidents needed to boost their support. In Colombia, for example, President Andrés Pastrana faced an economic crisis and low approval ratings, and CCTs came as a lifeboat to his popularity. After unilateral enactment, most presidents established bureaucratic agencies connected to their offices to keep the implementation process under their direct control. And everywhere, they rushed the delivery of transfers. In Argentina, bureaucrats had one month to start paying the benefits, which required a task force across the country's remote areas to register beneficiaries and distribute debit cards. Those hasty implementations resulted in problematic programs across the region. Most countries failed to establish effective controls of conditionalities in their CCTs because presidents pressured for the quick inclusion of many families in the programs. They wanted to

increase the number of beneficiaries, and had no interest in cutting the transfers to families that did not fulfill the conditionalities.

Interviews in Colombia and Argentina confirmed that inference about presidents' motivation to fast-track CCTs. Cabinet members in Colombia stated that the president "loved" the policy because he immediately saw its potential to help his government, which suffered from plummeting popularity. Similarly, in Argentina, ruling party members unequivocally said the government adopted CCTs after a defeat in midterm elections, hoping to reestablish a political connection with poor voters. The enactment by decree was justified in both countries as a way to avoid delays and associate the program directly with the president. Bureaucrats described the unusual political pressure in the programs' implementation, highlighting the politicization of the policy.

In the case of public-private partnerships (Chapter 5), presidents' approach was much more cautious. Because the policy does not address chief executives' fundamental interest, only some politicians that reach the presidency are willing to adopt the model. Given transitions of power, a president attentive to the development of infrastructure eventually came to power and advanced PPPs. But even these presidents did not see a need to rush the model. Instead, their focus on policy outcomes in infrastructure led to a careful approach that could generate a robust version of the model adapted to local needs. These presidents were also unwilling to use extraordinary powers to enact a policy that would not have immediate political effects. Thus, presidents allowed Congress to alter their original bills. The resulting PPP laws were, on average, 78% longer than the text introduced by the executive, and presidents refrained from applying vetoes to the new

texts. Moreover, their approach to the model's implementation was not nearly as involved as with CCTs. Presidents handed that responsibility to multiple agencies and ministries.

Again, interviews in Colombia and Argentina confirmed that presidents did not see PPPs as a political tool to enhance their electoral prospects. Before presenting the bill in Congress, cabinet members and specialists did months of work to consult stakeholders from multiple sectors and draft the text carefully. They also put time and effort into negotiations with the opposition to ensure the policy's success. Bureaucrats also described a less rushed implementation. Even in Argentina, where interviewees said President Mauricio Macri pushed for a quick adoption of the model, it took his government one full year to present the first projects for potential investors.

Finally, electronic voting machines (Chapter 6) nearly failed to diffuse. Dozens of conferences and publications publicized the model's remarkable success in Brazil. International organizations promoted the model with promises of funding. And regional and global values associated with the consolidation of democracies granted a normative appeal to the model. Yet, only Venezuela and Paraguay adopted EVMs on a large scale after Brazil. My research shows that enactments almost always resulted from transformations in the political system that weakened the presidency or substituted traditional parties that had controlled it. However, in most cases, those enactments remained only on paper because presidents blocked implementation by withholding the budget and preventing partnerships with international organizations to fund the adoption of EVMs. Moreover, my analysis of pilots, tests, and subnational uses of EVMs shows no

concerns about the machines being faulty or generating fraud. In fact, voters massively approved their use.

The exceptional cases of Venezuela and Paraguay, where political newcomers adopted EVMs to dislodge established parties, corroborate that argument. The same logic appears in Argentina, where President Mauricio Macri attempted to adopt the policy to weaken Peronists' control over the electoral process. That episode provides evidence of the political calculations at the forefront of adoption decisions. Interviews in the country reveal that EVMs were blocked by earlier presidents because they believed they might lose elections if the voting system is changed. In Colombia, cabinet members and bureaucrats said presidents prevented the model's adoption. Despite the enactment of the model in Congress, the Executive sought to "starve it to death."²⁴⁴ Presidents withheld the funds necessary for EVMs' implementation because they had no interest in changing the electoral game they were winning.

Stepping back from the details of my cases, the remainder of this chapter highlights takeaways and implications from my research. The following section discusses the importance of theorizing about causal processes, not only about the effects of independent variables on outcomes. The reflection combines the importance of a theoretical argument focused on the entire sequence of mechanisms with the application of adequate methods to test that theory at each link in the causal process. Section 7.3 discusses the applicability of my theory to other policies and the implication of my findings to pluralist theories of policymaking that emphasize other actors besides

²⁴⁴Interview with member of NGO of electoral observation #1 (August 2019).

presidents. Finally, Section 7.4 expands the discussion beyond Latin America, inviting new studies to investigate the importance of the executive in different political systems.

7.2 – THEORIZING AND TRACING THE PROCESS

The main advantage of my approach is theorizing the complete process of policy diffusion. This framework builds on previous research that explains the transnational spreading of policy ideas, which I call the first step of diffusion. It then opens up the black box of domestic politics that entails the second step of diffusion, to explain what happens within each potential adopting country. My theory covers the institutional stages of policymaking that might lead to adoption. Each stage in each country is part of the causal chain leading to diffusion: the introduction of the policy idea in institutional debates, its enactment into law, and its implementation determine whether and how fast a country adopts the policy. The diffusion pattern is the aggregate of all countries' policymaking processes of a policy idea received from abroad.

My theory does not make assumptions about the mechanisms at play in the first step of diffusion: learning, imitation, coercion, or normative emulation may all play a role in how governments receive information about a policy from abroad. The literature's focus on these mechanisms has generated limited results because they are conceptually and empirically intertwined. No policy adoption is based solely on one of these mechanisms. For example, international organizations typically incentivize countries to adopt policies that are attuned to current normative values, because these organizations respond to social pressures from activists, other organizations, and countries'

governments (Weaver and Peratsakis, 2014; Honig and Weaver, 2019). Studies trying to distinguish between these mechanisms might claim that the diffusion of one policy was driven primarily by one mechanism (e.g., Meseguer, 2004; Hyde, 2011), but that is not conducive to a general understanding of diffusion processes. It is challenging to empirically differentiate between learning, imitation, emulation, and coercion (see Maggetti and Gilardi, 2016). In reality, policy ideas spread through multiple mechanisms simultaneously, so policymakers receive information about a policy through different channels and mechanisms.

The actual bottleneck of diffusion lies inside each country, where decisions to adopt or reject a foreign blueprint are made. My theoretical approach looks primarily at those decisions. Following each policy through the institutional stages of policymaking showcases how presidents act as gatekeepers. They reacted similarly nearly everywhere to each model, based on their expectations about its political effects. The comparative tracing of different cases also reveals the distinct behavior depending on the expectations about policies' political effects. In short, my theory centers on the crucial second step, which determines diffusion patterns. And it does that with an analytical perspective that follows the causal chain without shortcuts.

This methodological approach provides three main counterpoints to the quantitative methods common in policy diffusion research. First, the comparative element of my research addresses the selection bias in diffusion studies, which statistical analyses focused on one case can not overcome. Without an unbiased dataset, a small-N analysis

covering the range of possible outcomes unveils the necessary aspects of domestic politics neglected thus far.

Second, combining the breadth of comprehensive regional coverage with the in-depth evidence of interviews with crucial policymakers and bureaucrats reveals policymakers' motivations behind their political decisions. Quantitative studies of diffusion often have deterministic assumptions about policymakers' decisions to adopt a policy based on its transnational promotion. Meseguer (2004), for example, assumes that politicians observe and learn from the impact of privatizations abroad, which leads them to apply the policy domestically. Even studies that include domestic variables typically use countries' general characteristics, such as income and inequality, socioeconomic conditions, and state capacity (Sugiyama, 2011; Osorio Gonnet, 2019; Osorio Gonnet, 2020), neglecting the political rationale behind policy adoptions. Scholars who include inherently political factors, like a measurement of democracy, often use them as mere controls (Bodea and Hicks, 2015; Cederman et al., 2018; Velasco, 2020) or infer political motivations from the variables included in their model with an inductive logic that does not showcase the mechanisms connecting those causes with the adoption in each country. For example, Knutsen and Rasmussen (2018) argue that autocrats adopt targeted old-age pensions to benefit supporting groups and prevent regime breakdown. The argument is similar to my theory about political expectations, but their statistical results lack evidence from the adoption process and the rationale behind autocrats' decisions. Instead, it simply shows that non-democratic regimes tend to adopt more targeted pension programs.

My in-depth interviews confirm my theory's causal chain. The evidence from policymakers, cabinet members, and bureaucrats unveils presidents' expectations and reasoning about each policy. In other words, that data substantiates my theoretical argument about presidents' fundamental focus on popularity and electoral prospects. Findings from those interviews also match my documentary evidence from all countries about how presidents advanced or blocked these policies, revealing that the logic found in Argentina and Colombia fits presidents' behavior elsewhere. Considering the results of my dissertation, future statistical studies must include elements of domestic politics that consider political expectations about models' effects on electoral prospects.²⁴⁵

Third, the process-tracing analysis unveils political dynamics at each link of the causal chain, which statistical models cannot do. My study provides evidence of each step in the policymaking process to show how expectations about the model's political effects determine presidents' behavior at each stage of policymaking. Quantitative models applied to diffusion generally connect the outcome with causal factors without evidence that their hypotheses include mechanisms connecting all different stages of policy adoption. Ultimately, statistical estimates of independent variables' effects on outcomes cannot show the causal chain. In contrast, my process-tracing analysis follows how presidents' expectations about a policy determined their decisions at each stage of policymaking: the introduction, enactment, and implementation of the policy. By following the process across the whole region, the study reveals how that process was similar for almost all countries in Latin America.

²⁴⁵For an example, see Gilardi's (2010) discussion about right-wing governments adoption of unemployment reforms based on information about these policies' electoral consequences.

In particular, my contribution highlights implementations as part of diffusion processes. Typical studies, particularly those using large datasets for quantitative analyses, rely on the date of enactment to operationalize adoption (e.g., Gilardi et al., 2009: 557; Brooks, 2002: 508; Coêlho, 2021: 196; Karch, 2007: 27). Though much more accessible, that data generates a problematic measurement of diffusion if policies created *de jure* are never adopted *de facto*. Treating enactments as adoptions of a model is misleading, which might have affected many findings in the diffusion literature. Considering the implementation of policies is crucial to the measurement of diffusion patterns. In both the cases of PPPs and EVMs, multiple countries quickly enacted the policies but never implemented them or took multiple years to do so. Moreover, in the case of policies with a significant normative element, many countries might enact the model as window-dressing to receive its legitimizing effects without any intention to implement it.

The attention to each link in the causal chain, including implementation, also revealed that some factors have a different impact at different stages of the policymaking process. In the chapter about CCTs, for example, international organizations promoting the policy might accelerate its introduction and enactment into law. When it comes to implementation, however, they require pilots and studies that delay the inauguration of these programs in countries dependent on their funding. In the case of EVMs, the weakening of traditional parties and the emergence of new political forces were extraordinary conditions necessary to overcome typical presidents' resistance to the model. However, they were insufficient to ensure implementation, which only occurred

when an atypical president still needed to fight an established party. These distinctions between stages of policy adoption deserve more attention from policy diffusion studies.

7.3 – BEYOND THREE CASES: THE PREPONDERANCE OF PRESIDENTS

My research design purposefully aimed to cover the range of policy diffusion patterns to address the collective selection bias of diffusion studies. In doing so, this dissertation's theoretical focus lies on the extremes of diffusion, represented by the surge pattern of conditional cash transfers and the trickle-flow pattern of electronic voting machines. Attention to extreme cases is vital in theoretical development because they present the most explicit images of the causal pathway (Gerring, 2017: 109-114). It allowed my study to trace the causal process in one case with a total presence of presidents' interest in a policy (CCTs), leading to unilateral actions and rushed implementation of the policy, and in a complete absence of presidents' interest in another policy (EVMs), with their exceptional actions to block its adoption. These two cases confirm my theory that presidents' vital interest in maintaining their position makes them apply extraordinary powers to policy models from abroad if they expect them to affect their political future. Between these two policies, the case of public-private partnerships reveals the centrality of presidents by showing how the absence of their extraordinary actions allows adoption to follow the expected institutional policymaking process, resulting in a wave-like diffusion pattern that is not as fast as the surge of CCTs. Moreover, interviews in Argentina and Colombia revealed presidents' rationale behind advancing the policy without fast-tracking its enactment and implementation.

Given my focus on three policies, it is crucial to discuss the generalizability of my argument. The direct applicability of my theory is most evident in policies that lie close to those extremes of diffusion patterns. Policies that presidents believe will help them maintain political power should diffuse in a surge similar to CCTs. That would be the case for most models that allow for fast distribution of money to poor people, like Emergency Social Funds (Graham, 1992) or microcredit programs (Pantelić, 2011). Beyond antipoverty programs, the diffusion of direct state funding for parties and campaigns is another example that fits my argument. Those policies benefit large parties, one of which the president typically controls. As expected, almost all countries in the region quickly enacted and implemented that policy (Su, 2022).

On the lower end of the distribution of diffusion patterns, EVMs are not alone. Policies that might hurt presidents and their allies' electoral prospects diffuse slowly to only a few countries. One example is Brazil's Clean Record Act (Lei da Ficha Limpa), which prohibits politicians from running for office for eight years if they were convicted of corruption by any judicial or administrative court.²⁴⁶ Congress enacted the law in response to massive mobilization in 2010. In 2014, its application made over fourteen thousand candidates ineligible for the 2014 elections (Biasetto and Castro, 2014). Despite the success of this well-known anti-corruption policy, other countries have not imitated the model. Not surprisingly, presidents and their allies fear such a law in Latin America, a region known for corruption scandals involving political offices at all levels.

²⁴⁶This means that the conviction must be at the second level of judicial appeals, in which there must be a decision by at least three judges.

The power of presidents is evident in these extreme cases, showcasing the preponderance of politics in policymaking. Businesses, specialists, organizations, and bureaucrats indeed frame policy debates when presenting a model from abroad. However, politicians still have the upper hand in the process, and presidents have the upper hand among politicians. The political effects of a policy remain the critical element that makes presidents decide whether to use their extraordinary powers to advance or block its adoption. When their political careers are on the line, other influences are secondary. They can rush cash transfers against the recommendations of specialists, bureaucrats, and international organizations that would have preferred a careful implementation. Conversely, they can block voting machines despite the intense interest of bureaucrats, businesses, specialists, and international organizations in promoting the policy.

However, not all models can help or hinder presidents' electoral prospects directly and immediately. Like PPPs, many policies are not silver bullets to save presidents' popularity but do not hurt their electoral prospects either. If they are successful, promoted by international organizations, and normatively appealing, these models will attract some presidents' attention and diffuse slowly across multiple countries. By highlighting the importance of the executive branch in generating extreme patterns of diffusion by using extraordinary powers, this research also invites additional studies about more subtle forms in which the executive might influence the adoption of policies from abroad. Variation in the diffusion of policies that are not extreme cases may be explained by other factors associated with presidents' interests and behavior. When the fundamental interest to remain in power is not affected, their ideology, party platform, professional

background, or donor networks might influence their willingness to adopt policies from abroad.

Moreover, given presidents' less active participation in the adoption of policies that do not affect their ability to remain in power, specialists, businesses, legislators, and bureaucrats have some space to affect the diffusion of those models. First, their role in convincing presidents about introducing the model might have a significant effect. There is no need to convince presidents to adopt a policy that will boost their governments' popular support, and it is nearly impossible to do so in the case of a policy that might limit their chances for reelection. Even businesses willing to sell electronic voting machines failed to do so. In between the two extremes, when their political future is not at stake, presidents should rely more on the multiple sources of information they have to evaluate a policy idea. Lobbyists, party members, congresspeople, specialists, and bureaucrats can influence presidential policymaking in these cases.²⁴⁷

Second, after the president initiates the policymaking process for a model, congresspeople and bureaucrats play a larger role if the executive refrains from exercising its extraordinary powers. The speed at which the model is enacted into law and implemented is not dependent on the executive if presidents do not believe the policy will affect their ability to remain in power. In the case of PPPs, most governments allowed Congress to debate and alter the policy, which took multiple years in many countries. Similarly, multiple agencies in these governments had time to develop projects without

²⁴⁷Ho (2022), for example, shows that bureaucrats played a significant role in convincing presidents to adopt social policies with low visibility, which were not expected to generate a significant political impact in Indonesia.

the pressure received by bureaucrats implementing CCTs. Under these conditions, Congress may determine how quickly a model from abroad is enacted into law, and bureaucrats might determine the time it takes for its implementation. They can also reshape the policy's design more freely, without an immediate political focus on maximizing electoral effects. Therefore, research on the role of these multiple actors may reveal their importance in determining variation among the middle-range of diffusion patterns, beyond the predominant influence of presidents on policies that affect their political future.

7.4 – BEYOND LATIN AMERICA: THE RESISTANCE OF DOMESTIC FORCES

The centrality of presidents who use extraordinary powers is crucial in Latin America, where strong presidents prevail. Naturally, there is some variation in their prerogatives between countries in the region. However, those differences are not relevant to my analysis because the three policies have the same set of countries as potential adopters. Therefore, the models' diffusion patterns are unaffected by institutional differences between countries and can only be explained by political expectations about the models (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion about this topic). However, variation in presidents' powers beyond Latin America may be relevant to evaluate my argument's applicability to regions where diffusion occurs across a completely different set of countries.

Despite Latin America's fame for strong presidents, most other presidential systems also place the executive as the most prominent policymaker in nearly all political

systems. For example, decree powers and veto powers are common in Africa²⁴⁸ (van Cranenburgh, 2008), so African presidents are not significantly less powerful than their Latin American counterparts.²⁴⁹ More famously, the United States' relatively weak presidency is still able to enact and implement policies through executive orders and administrative decisions. From the creation of the Peace Corps by John F. Kennedy to Barack Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), unilateral decisions by American presidents have shaped multiple policies throughout history.

Beyond presidential countries, parliamentary systems ensure a vertical connection between the executive and the legislature. In parliamentarism, governing coalitions can pass policies advanced by the cabinet without the powers of Latin American presidents. Therefore, these cabinets can rely on their control of the parliament to pass their favorite models and block the ones they fear. Though prime ministers might not have the same level of control over their cabinets as Latin American presidents, debates about the presidentialization of politics in parliamentary countries (Foley, 2000; Poguntke and Webb, 2005; Iwasaki, 2023) point to the similarities in the centralization of power around the individual controlling the executive branch. Therefore, the argument that diffusion patterns depend on presidents might also extend to the behavior of prime ministers. However, additional research on the topic might reveal an interactive relationship with political parties, as prime ministers need more support from their coalitions.

²⁴⁸Like in Latin America, decree provisions have some form of congressional limitation that does not undermine the presidential ability to advance a policy unilaterally.

²⁴⁹See the PRESPOW dataset (Doyle and Elgie, 2014), available at <https://presidential-power.net/>

A somewhat different question refers to the applicability of my theory in non-democratic regimes. My argument builds on elected officials' expectations about the effect of policy models on their electoral prospects. Therefore, my work expands the debate about democratic dynamics in diffusion (e.g., Brooks, 2015; De La O, 2015; Diaz-Cayeros et al., 2016; Garay, 2016; Linos, 2013)²⁵⁰ by revealing a causal pathway through direct actions of the executive, and presenting in-depth evidence of the political rationale behind those actions. The central motivations of those rulers remain similar across democracies, irrespective of their particular institutional designs. Unsurprisingly, the diffusion patterns analyzed in Latin America follow similar patterns across the globe for the three policies. Conditional cash transfers' focus on extreme poverty limits its attractiveness to developing countries,²⁵¹ and yet the model spread like wildfire. A recent calculation points to over eighty countries adopting CCTs (Parker and Vogl, 2021). On the other hand, electronic voting machines failed to diffuse widely despite being suitable for all countries holding elections. Data from International IDEA counts twenty-nine countries with electronic voting in national binding elections, representing only 15% of the dataset.²⁵² And the PPP model has spread across most developed and developing nations since the early 1990s (Alcaraz et al., 2022).

However, more research might be needed to analyze policy adoptions in non-democratic regimes. Authoritarian leaders are arguably more motivated to remain in

²⁵⁰See Chapter 2 for a discussion about those authors' arguments and how they relate or contrast with my theory.

²⁵¹For an exception, see the CCT program Opportunity NYC (Morais de Sá e Silva, 2017).

²⁵²Note that this count overestimates those numbers, because it includes countries adopting optical scans for paper ballots (e.g., Mongolia), countries with EVMs only for voting from abroad (e.g., New Zealand), and countries using EVMs in a very small scale (e.g., Albania and France). Data available at:

<https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/icts-elections-database>

power than democratic ones, given the potentially dire consequences of being ousted after ruling a country as a dictator. Once their power is gone, these rulers are often assassinated, ostracized, or judged for the violence and corruption with which they governed. Therefore, they should eagerly adopt models that increase their chances of maintaining the ruling position. However, these policies are not necessarily the same that help elected rulers get reelected. Dictators' expectations about the effect of policy models in domestic politics might differ from those of democratic presidents. It is symptomatic that authoritarian regimes in Latin America did not adopt conditional cash transfers: Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Fidel Castro in Cuba, and Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua²⁵³ never adopted the model. The types of policies that attract these rulers' attention and the diffusion patterns of policies among dictatorships deserve additional research. In contrast to CCTs, they seemed to prefer unconditional transfers that are more susceptible to political control. Chávez's set of social policies, called *Misiones*, included a program of social funds that suffered from clientelist use (Penfold-Becerra, 2007), while Ortega created a program for in-kind food transfers for rural families (Martínez Franzoni, 2013: 20).

What remains valid, irrespective of political regimes, is the need to focus on adoptions in the study of diffusion. Presidents or prime ministers, democrats or dictators, Latin Americans or not, all policymakers that receive information about a policy model from abroad think about its impact on domestic politics. The international transmission of policy ideas is necessary for diffusion. The availability, success, promotion by

²⁵³Nicaragua's CCT program from 2001 was discontinued by the presidency of Enrique Bolaños, and Ortega's administration did not reinstitute the policy.

international organizations, and attunement to global norms are important factors without which policymakers might not even consider a policy. However, these factors may lead nowhere if the most influential policymakers in each country decide to gatekeep the policy idea. Even in today's globalized world, domestic politicians can still resist the international and transnational pressures for diffusion. And they do it looking at domestic political disputes to maintain their domestic political power.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Argentina

Autonomous computer scientist in Argentina (May 2020) - Videoconference
Brazilian diplomat in Argentina (June 2018)
Bureaucrat of electoral management in the Province of Buenos Aires (March 2020)
Bureaucrat specialist in Social Policy at SIEMPRO #1 (March 2020)
Bureaucrat specialist in Social Policy at SIEMPRO #2 (March 2020)
Computer scientist in public-private think tank (March 2020)
Computer scientist member of CONICET #1 (February 2020)
Computer scientist member of CONICET#2 (February 2020)
Consultant specialized in public infrastructure in Argentina (June 2018)
Economist specialist in cash transfers programs in Argentina (June 2018)
Former bureaucrat at ANSES involved in implementation of AUH (February 2020)
Former bureaucrat at Dirección Nacional Electoral (March 2020)
Former bureaucrat in the PPP Office in Argentina (April 2020)*
Former UNESCO representative in Argentina (June 2018)
Infrastructure specialist in Macri's presidential office (April 2020)*
International consultancy firm representative in Argentina (April 2020)*
Lawyer involved in drafting the PPP law in Argentina #1 (April 2020)*
Lawyer involved in drafting the PPP law in Argentina #2 (April 2020)*
Lawyer involved in Macri's political reform (March 2020)
Lawyer specialized in electoral law (February 2020)
Member of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's cabinet (June 2018)
Member of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's cabinet (March 2020)
Member of the electoral justice in the province of Salta (May 2020)*
Member of Mauricio Macri's cabinet (March 2020)
Member of PRO who participated in the adoption of EVM in CABA (February 2020)
Member of the Cámara Argentina de Construcción (June 2018)

Peronist politician involved in implementation of AUH (March 2020)
Politician and former senator in the opposition against the Kirchners (February 2020)
Politician specialized in social policy (June 2018)
Representative of EVM company in Buenos Aires (March 2020)*
Researcher and director at ANSES (March 2020)
Researcher of electoral policy in Argentinian think tank (June 2018)
Researcher of social policy in Argentinian think tank (February 2020)
Specialist involved in implementation of PPP projects under Macri (April 2020)

Colombia

Brazilian diplomat in Colombia (August 2019)
Bureaucrat at *Agencia Presidencial de Cooperación* (September 2019)
Bureaucrat involved in the implementation of *Familias en Acción* (October 2019)
Bureaucrat working at *Familias en Acción* (October 2019)
Congressman from Centro Democrático (October 2019)
Electoral delegate of the Liberal Party (August 2019)
Engineer specialist in PPPs in Colombia (September 2019)
Former bureaucrat at *Agencia Nacional de Infraestructura*(December 2019)
Former bureaucrat in the Ministry of Finance (November 2019)
Former bureaucrat in the Ministry of Transportation #1 (October 2019)
Former bureaucrat in the Ministry of Transportation #2 (November 2019)
Former bureaucrat in the Registraduría Nacional de Estado Civil (October 2019)
Former bureaucrat involved in the implementation of *Familias en Acción* (September 2019)
Former member of the *Consejo Nacional Electoral* (October 2019)
Former member of the *Fondo de Desarrollo Nacional* (October 2019)
Former National Planning Department bureaucrat #1 (September 2019)
Former National Planning Department bureaucrat #2 (November 2019)
Former representative of electoral management company (September 2019)
Former representative of the *Camara Colombiana de Infraestructura* (October 2019)

Lawyer and former representative of the *Camara Colombiana de Infraestructura* (November 2019)

Lawyer involved in drafting the PPP bill in Colombia (October 2019)

Lawyer specialist in PPPs in Colombia (September 2019)

Member of NGO focused on political use of technology #1 (August 2019)

Member of NGO focused on political use of technology #2 (August 2019)

Member of NGO focused on political use of technology #3 (August 2019)

Member of NGO of electoral observation #1 (August 2019)

Member of NGO of electoral observation #2 (August 2019)

Politician formerly involved in the implementation of social policy (August 2019)

Politician member of Pastrana's and Santos's cabinets #1 (August 2019)*

Politician member of Pastrana's and Santos's cabinets #2 (October 2019)

Politician member of Pastrana's and Santos's cabinets #3 (October 2019)

Politician member of Pastrana's cabinet (November 2019)

Politician member of Santos's cabinet (September 2019)

Representative of American NGO working on democratic promotion (September 2019)

Senator from Centro Democrático (October 2019)

Other Countries

Bureaucrat involved in the implementation of *Red de Protección Social* in Nicaragua (August 2020)*

Bureaucrat involved in the implementation of Superémonos in Costa Rica #1(May 2020)*

Bureaucrat involved in the implementation of Superémonos in Costa Rica #2 (May 2020)*

Bureaucrat involved in social programs in Nicaragua (August 2020)* - Videoconference

Politician involved in the implementation of National *Bolsa Escola* in Brazil (May 2020)*

** Identifies interviews conducted online through videoconference.*

APPENDIX B: PRESIDENTS' POLITICAL TRAJECTORIES

The table below lists Latin American presidents who had at least one mandate that ended between 1995 and 2020, identifying if they ran in elections or held any party position after the end of the first mandate in the period.²⁵⁴

Table B1: Latin American presidents' and post-mandate positions

Country	Period	President	Post-Mandate Electoral and Party Career
Argentina	1989-1999	Carlos Menem	Reelected, Ran for presidency in 2003, Senator (2005-2021)
Argentina	1999-2001	Fernando De La Rúa	
Argentina	2002-2003	Eduardo Duhalde	Ran for presidency in 2011
Argentina	2003-2007	Néstor Kirchner	Party president (2008-2009, 2009-2010), Member of the House (2009-2010)
Argentina	2007-2015	Cristina Fernández de Kirchner	Reelected, Senator (2017-2019), Vice-President (2019-)
Argentina	2015-2019	Mauricio Macri	Ran for reelection (2019)
Bolivia	1993-1997 2002-2003	Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada	Ran for Presidency in 2002 (elected)
Bolivia	2001-2002	Jorge Quiroga Ramírez	Ran for Presidency in 2005, 2014, and 2020 (but gave up before elections in the last one)
Bolivia	2003-2005	Carlos Mesa	Ran for Presidency in 2019 and 2020
Bolivia	2005-2006	Eduardo Rodríguez Veltzé	
Bolivia	2006-2019	Evo Morales	Reelected (three times), leader of MAS
Bolivia	2019-2020	Jeanine Áñez	Ran for Presidency in 2020 (but gave up before elections)
Brazil	1992-1995	Itamar Franco	Governor of Minas Gerais (1999) and Senator (2011)
Brazil	1995-2003	Fernando Henrique Cardoso	Reelected, President of Honor of PSDB
Brazil	2003-2011	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva	Reelected, Ran for presidency in 2018 (but was arrested before elections), Ran for presidency in 2022 (elected)
Brazil	2011-2016	Dilma Rousseff	Reelected, ran for senator in 2018

²⁵⁴Presidents Manuel Merino de Lama, Pedro Carmona Estagna, and Diosdado Cabello excluded because their presidencies lasted less than one month. President Hugo Banzer excluded because he died less than one year after his resignation and had no time to run for future elections.

Brazil	2016-2019	Michel Temer	National Counsellor of party MDB
Chile	1994-2000	Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle	Senator (2006), Ran for Presidency in 2009
Chile	2000-2006	Ricardo Lagos	Announced candidacy for presidency in 2017 (but gave up before official candidacy)
Chile	2006-2010 2014-2018	Michelle Bachelet	Ran for Presidency in 2013 (elected)
Chile	2010-2014 2018 –	Sebastián Pinera	Ran for Presidency in 2017 (elected)
Colombia	1994-1998	Ernesto Samper	Member of Partido Liberal’s Consultive Council
Colombia	1998-2002	Andrés Pastrana	
Colombia	2002-2010	Álvaro Uribe	Reelected, Senator (2014-2020)
Colombia	2010-2018	Juan Manuel Santos	Reelected
Costa Rica	1994-1998	José María Figueres Olsen	President of PLN (2015), Ran for presidency in 2016 (but gave up before elections)
Costa Rica	1998-2002	Miguel Ángel Rodríguez	
Costa Rica	2002-2006	Abel Pacheco	
Costa Rica	2006-2010	Óscar Arias Sánchez	
Costa Rica	2010-2014	Laura Chinchilla	
Costa Rica	2014-2019	Luis Guillermo Solís	
Dominican Republic	1986-1996	Joaquín Balaguer	Ran for Reelection in 1996, Ran for Presidency in 2000
Dominican Republic	1996-2000 2004-2012	Leonel Fernández	Ran for Presidency in 2004 (elected), Reelected (2008), President of party Fuerza del Pueblo
Dominican Republic	2000-2004	Hipólito Mejía	Ran for Reelection in 2004, Ran for Presidency in 2012
Dominican Republic	2012-2020	Danilo Medina	Reelected, President of PLD (2021)
Ecuador	1992-1996	Sixto Durán-Ballén Cordoves	Member of the House (1998-2001), Ran for Member of Parlamento Andino in 2006
Ecuador	1996-1997	Abdalá Bucaram	Ran for Presidency in 2013 (but had his candidacy rejected by the electoral court)
Ecuador	1997-1997	Rosalía Arteaga	Ran for Presidency in 1998
Ecuador	1997-1998	Fabián Alarcón	Ran for Member of the House in 2002
Ecuador	1998-2000	Jamil Mahuad	
Ecuador	2000-2003	Gustavo Noboa	
Ecuador	2003-2005	Lucio Gutiérrez	Ran for Presidency in 2006 (but had his candidacy rejected and his political rights banned for two years), in 2009, and in 2013, ran for Member of the House in 2017
Ecuador	2005-2007	Alfredo Palacio	
Ecuador	2007-2017	Rafael Correa	Reelected (twice), ran for vice-president in 2021 (but

			had his candidacy rejected for being outside Ecuador)
El Salvador	1994-1999	Armando Calderón Sol	President of Honor of ARENA
El Salvador	1999-2004	Francisco Flores	President of Honor of ARENA, political aide in Norman Quijano's campaign for the presidency in 2014
El Salvador	2004-2009	Elías Antonio Saca	Ran for Presidency in 2013
El Salvador	2009-2014	Mauricio Funes	
El Salvador	2014-2019	Salvador Sánchez Cerén	
Guatemala	1993-1996	Ramiro de León Carpio	Member of the House (2000-2002)
Guatemala	1996-2000	Álvaro Arzú Irigoyen	Founded Partido Unionista, Mayor of Ciudad de Guatemala (four mandates: 2004-2018)
Guatemala	2000-2004	Alfonso Portillo	Ran for Member of the House in 2015 (but had his candidacy rejected by the Electoral Court)
Guatemala	2004-2008	Óscar Berger	
Guatemala	2008-2012	Álvaro Colom	Spouse Sandra Torres ran for presidency in 2015, 2019, and 2023 (defeated in all three)
Guatemala	2012-2015	Otto Pérez Molina	
Guatemala	2015-2016	Alejandro Maldonado Aguirre	
Guatemala	2016-2020	Jimmy Morales	
Honduras	1994-1998	Carlos Roberto Reina	
Honduras	1998-2002	Carlos Roberto Flores	Active leader in PLH
Honduras	2002-2006	Ricardo Maduro	
Honduras	2006-2009	Manuel Zelaya	Founded Partido Libertad y Refundacion, president of Partido Libertad y Refundacion, spouse Xiomara Castro ran for presidency in 2013, 2017, and 2021 (elected in the last one).
Honduras	2009-2010	Roberto Micheletti	
Honduras	2010-2014	Porfirio Lobo Sosa	Founded Todos por el Cambio (political movement inside PNH)
Mexico	1994-2000	Ernesto Zedillo	
Mexico	2000-2006	Vicente Fox	
Mexico	2006-2012	Felipe Calderón	Founded Party Mexico Libre in 2018 (rejected as official party by INE in 2020), spouse
Mexico	2012-2018	Enrique Peña Nieto	
Nicaragua	1990-1997	Violeta Barrios de Chamorro	
Nicaragua	1997-2002	Arnoldo Alemán	Ran for Presidency in 2011
Nicaragua	2002-2007	Enrique Bolaños Geyer	
Nicaragua	2007 –	Daniel Ortega	Reelected (twice)
Panama	1994-1999	Ernesto Pérez Balladares	Ran in PRD primaries for presidency in 2018

Panama	1999-2004	Mireya Moscoso	President of Partido Panamenista, former Partido Arnulfista, 2004-2005
Panama	2004-2009	Martín Torrijos	General-Secretary of PRD (2009), President of Socialist International's Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean
Panama	2009-2014	Ricardo Martinelli	
Panama	2014-2019	Juan Carlos Varela	
Paraguay	1993-1998	Juan Carlos Wasmosy	
Paraguay	1998-1999	Raúl Cubas	
Paraguay	1999-2003	Luis Ángel González Macchi	
Paraguay	2003-2008	Nicanor Duarte	Ran for Senate in 2008 (elected but could not take it because his resignation as president was rejected)
Paraguay	2008-2012	Fernando Lugo	Senator (2013 and 2018)
Paraguay	2012-2013	Federico Franco	
Paraguay	2013-2018	Horacio Cartes	Ran for Senate in 2018 (elected, he could not become senator because his resignation from the presidency was not accepted)
Peru	1990-2000	Alberto Fujimori	Reelected (twice, two elections after self-coup)
Peru	2000-2001	Valentín Paniagua	Ran for Presidency in 2006
Peru	2001-2006	Alejandro Toledo	Ran for Presidency in 2011
Peru	2006-2011	Alan García	Ran for Presidency in 2016
Peru	2011-2016	Ollanta Humala	President of PNP, Ran for Presidency in 2021
Peru	2016-2018	Pedro Pablo Kuczynski	
Peru	2018-2020	Martin Vizcarra	Ran for Member of the House in 2021 (elected, he was banned from holding public office)
Uruguay	1990-1995	Luis Alberto Lacalle	Ran for Presidency (1999 and 2009), ran in primaries for presidential candidacy (2004), President of Partido Nacional (2009-2011), and senator (2010-2015)
Uruguay	1995-2000	Julio María Sanguinetti	Ran in primaries for presidential candidacy in 2019, Senator (2005 and 2019), Secretary General of the Partido Colorado (2004 and 2019)
Uruguay	2000-2005	Jorge Batlle	Ran for Senate in 2004 (elected, but resigned before to the position)
Uruguay	2005-2010 2015-2020	Tabaré Vésquez	Ran for Presidency in 2014 (elected)
Uruguay	2010-2015	José Mujica	Senator (2015 and 2020)
Venezuela	1994-1999	Rafael Caldera	
Venezuela	1999-2002 2002-2013	Hugo Chávez	President of PSUV, Reelected three times (2000, 2006, and 2012)
Venezuela	2013 –	Nicolás Maduro	Reelected

APPENDIX C: POLITICAL CONTEXT IN THE ADOPTIONS OF CCTs

Argentina

In 2008, President Cristina F. de Kirchner faced a political dispute with the agricultural sector. Landowner organizations mobilized an agrarian lockout with road blockages around the country. Motivated by the government's attempt to increase export taxes, the protests gained political support from the opposition (Pucciarelli, 2017). They sparked mass demonstrations from the middle classes in major cities, asking the president to resign. The dispute weakened Kirchner's political position, and her approval ratings plummeted. As a result, the incumbent *Partido Justicialista* was defeated in midterm elections for the House and the Senate in 2009 (Gené, 2017, pp. 392-393). The results showed a loss of support among low-income voters, which motivated the president to announce a conditional cash transfer program only four months later.

Bolivia

Evo Morales became president in 2006 with a popularity of 70%. However, the long process to nationalize the gas industry (La Nación, 2006) and the controversial convocation of a new Constitutional Assembly took its toll on his political standing (Marirrodriga, 2006). The media emphasized his decreasing support (Semana, 2006), which reached "the lowest popularity ratings since he came to power" (Marirrodriga, 2006). Adopting conditional cash transfers was a sudden decision at that critical moment. Just four months before the enactment of Bono Juancito Pinto, the government's

development plan showed little interest in the model. The document does not cite CCTs directly in its 240 pages and criticizes these kinds of policies promoted by international organizations.

Poverty reduction policies designed by neoliberal colonialism, first, were misdirected and, second, [suffered from] inefficient application, because they were not aimed at suppressing the causes that originated it, but rather at alleviating its manifestations (Ministerio de Planificación del Desarrollo, 2006).

Antipoverty measures described in the plan revolved around community-based organizations, programs to distribute food, and specific benefits to fight child labor. Rather than belonging to a systematic government plan, Bolivia's CCT was "hastily constructed in order to render the redistribution of the nationalization of hydrocarbons effective and to respond to the population's more and more pressing demands for 'real' changes in their daily lives" (Nagels, 2014: 10-11).

Brazil

President Fernando Henrique Cardoso faced a serious popularity downturn in transitioning to his second mandate. An economic crisis weakened his political image centered on the successful fight against inflation in 1994. He reached low levels of popular support in mid-1999 (Toledo, 1999) and faced corruption scandals among members of his cabinet alongside a nationwide crisis in the supply of electricity. News reports show the president was concerned with his loss of popularity and even hired a new marketing specialist "to take care of his personal image" (França, 2001). Cardoso's

diaries also reveal a recurrent concern with his decreasing popularity and his allies' weak electoral prospects. He wrote frequent comments about polls in his personal diaries during the second mandate (Cardoso, 2017; Cardoso, 2019)²⁵⁵. To reverse this situation, in 2001, he unilaterally folded the multiple local CCT programs into a national program called *Bolsa Escola*.

The political rationale behind the creation of *Bolsa Escola* is also apparent in the choice to place the program in the Ministry of Education. At the time, in 2001, Minister Paulo Renato de Souza was one of the potential candidates considered within Cardoso's party (PSDB) for the upcoming presidential elections in October 2002 (Alencar, 2001).²⁵⁶

Colombia

The turn of the century marked Colombia's worst economic crisis, and President Andrés Pastrana paid for it. His approval ratings were the lowest any president had ever had in the country up to that point. His image also suffered from the failed peace process with guerrilla groups. The government sought support from the United States and international organizations, which led to the adoption of stringent austerity policies to curb the crisis. Members of the cabinet saw conditional cash transfers as a lifeboat for

²⁵⁵President Cardoso wrote very often about polls conducted by the three main poll companies in Brazil at the time (DataFolha, Ibope, and Vox Populi) in his personal diaries. These diaries were published as books many years after he left the presidency. In Cardoso (2017), he discusses those polls on pages 37, 84, 95, 125, 188, 216, 279, 317, 326, 373, 418, 451, 571, 645, 664, 698. In Cardoso (2019), he cites the polls on pages 120, 121, 364, 482, 490, 540, 541, 565, 583, 602, 613, 626, 639, 716, 723, 736, 749, 766, 767, 772, 779, 785, 811, 819, 833, 842, 849, 857, 871, 877.

²⁵⁶In the end, the party nominated Minister of Health, José Serra, as a candidate. His ministry had also implemented a cash transfers program, focused on children up to six years old, called *Bolsa Alimentação*.

poor families, and also for themselves in the government. Their main fear was that political unrest and riots could erupt in Colombia, as they had in Venezuela in 1989.

Costa Rica

Miguel Ángel Rodríguez faced a decrease in presidential approval throughout the first half of his mandate, reaching a bottom of less than 25% (Carlin et al., 2019). The leading cause of that lack of support was the proposal to allow foreign investment in the communications and energy sectors to increase competition. Approved in Congress in the first of three required votes, the bill motivated social organizations to mobilize the people against the government, framing the proposal as the first step towards privatization. The result was a series of riots in early 2000, described as “some of the largest demonstrations in the nation’s history, paralyzing the country and forcing the government to alter its policy choices” (Frajman, 2009). It was no coincidence that the president announced the first CCT program in July 2020.

Dominican Republic

After four years out of office, Leonel Fernández returned to the Dominican presidency in 2004 and faced a severe ongoing economic crisis. Average real income had decreased by 40%, and riots had already affected the previous president. Fernández started his government fighting inflation’s effects on the poorest sector with a preliminary form of cash transfers called *Comer es Primero*²⁵⁷ (Alonso and Dotel, 2007: 49). He also

²⁵⁷ This program did not follow the CCT model due to an unclear targeting strategy and the lack of education conditionalities.

established, by decree²⁵⁸, a new database to record information about poor families (Regalia and Robles, 2007), which is a precondition for the CCT model. After a short honeymoon period, the president suffered a sharp decline in his popularity. To make things even worse, social movements and unions announced, in August 2005, a series of strikes and marches against his government's policies (Diario Libre, 2005). As a response, he unilaterally²⁵⁹ created a full-fledged CCT program called *Solidaridad* in September 2005 (Fearon & Laitin, 2006: 11).

Ecuador

The adoption of CCTs in Ecuador was convoluted due to the severity of the government's political instability, which led to a coup and delayed the policy's enactment and implementation. The president's attempts to remain in power motivated the adoption process. An economic crisis hit the country in 1998 and 1999. Unemployment soared from 9.2 to 14.4, poverty levels increased, and poor families suffered the effects of inflation (Sanchez-Paramo, 2005). President Jamil Mahuad created an unconditional cash transfer program as an immediate response in 1998 (Osorio Gonnet, 2020: 177). In 1999, Mahuad also started negotiations with the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank to receive support for a more extensive CCT program (Lana & Evans, 2004, pp. 203-205). But he lost his presidency before securing the funds to adopt the policy. His popularity had plummeted to six percent of support in January 2000, and a 60% cut in the defense budget made the armed forces unhappy as well (Barracca, 2007:

258 Decree 1073 from August 31st, 2004.

259 Decree 536 from September 26th, 2005.

143-144). A military coup ousted Mahuad. The vice-president, Gustavo Noboa, came to power and restarted negotiations with the World Bank, but the organization did not approve his government's plans. It took the government some time to find financial and technical support from UNICEF before it could establish a pilot in 2001. Noboa finally managed to adopt a full-fledged CCT program in 2002 (see Lana & Evans, 2004, for a complete analysis of the adoption of CCTs in Ecuador).

Guatemala

Álvaro Colom won the 2007 presidential elections in Guatemala, ending decades of right-wing governments in the country. He described himself as a social democrat, had Lula as one of his role models, and adopted the informal title of “president of the poor” (El Mundo, 2008). The government plan he presented in the campaign referred to “focalized transfers” without specifying the use of conditionalities typical of CCTs (Colom, 2007: 18). Even if the policy was already in Colom's plans, the speed in adopting it reflects the dire political situation right at the beginning of his mandate. There was no honeymoon for his presidency. His approval ratings plummeted by almost 20 percentage points in three months (Carlin et al., 2019), and leftist social movements pressured the government to follow through with the discourse focused on the poor. The indigenous labor organization *Comité de Unidad Campesina* organized protests for days in April. The government had to negotiate to avoid similar protests from teachers (Solis, 2008: 14). Simultaneously, a series of attacks against bus drivers and internal disputes in the cabinet required changes of three ministers in the same period (Solis, 2008: 19-21).

This troubled beginning motivated Colom to fast-track the CCT program *Mi Familia Progresá* (MIFAPRO), enacted unilaterally in 94 days and quickly implemented in a top-down process (Gaia, 2010: 216).

Panama

Martín Torrijos became president in 2004 and implemented neoliberal reforms. New fiscal rules that increased prices for consumers, and a comprehensive change in the pension system made it more difficult for people to retire (BBC, 2005). Both laws had been adopted in an agreement with the World Bank, in exchange for funds to expand the Panama Canal. But the public did not like them, and Torrijos's popularity plummeted (Delgado, 2005; Carlin et al., 2019). The pension reform, in particular, provoked the mobilization of unions and social movements. These entities marched against the government and paralyzed construction work in a month-long strike across the country (Gandásegui, 2005: 202-205). The quick erosion of his support base made Torrijos shift his attention to social policies. He established the Ministry of Social Development²⁶⁰ and started to work on a CCT program with the World Bank.²⁶¹ The organization provided funds and technical support for the policy. After initial developments and pilot tests in 2005, the program *Red de Oportunidades* officially started in April 2006.

²⁶⁰ Ley 29, August 1st, 2005.

²⁶¹ World Bank's Report 32887PA.

Peru

Alejandro Toledo became president in 2001 as the former opposition leader against the strongman regime of Alberto Fujimori. But his popularity soon fell from 60% to 32%, with even higher dissatisfaction among the poor. They resented his unfulfilled promises and suffered from growing unemployment (Relea, 2001). A series of strikes and protests in 2002 (BBC, 2002) and 2003 (BBC, 2003), along with internal disputes within the government, took Toledo to the historically low support rate of 11% (El Universo, 2003). He faced additional challenges in 2005, with a military uprising (Puertas, 2005a), accusations of fraud, and a cabinet crisis that undermined his coalition and put his presidency at risk (Puertas, 2005b). In that context, Toledo enacted the CCT program *Juntos* in a decree and rushed its implementation in only five months.

APPENDIX D: PROBLEMS IN CCTS' IMPLEMENTATIONS

The table below is based on more than 50 published studies about the implementation of CCTs in Latin America (see sources per country below). They allowed for the identification of the most important implementation problems, categorized into seven types (see discussion in Chapter 4).

Table D1: Problems identified in evaluations of CCT programs

Countries	Types of Implementation Problems						
	Targeting Errors	Control of Conditions	Supply of Conditions	Institutional Coordination	Human Resources	Incomplete Database	Payment Systems
Argentina	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Bolivia	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	
Brazil	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes	
Chile	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes	
Colombia	Yes	Yes				Yes	
Costa Rica	<i>(NA)²⁶²</i>						
Dom. Rep.	Yes		Yes	Yes			
Ecuador	Yes	Yes			Yes		
El Salvador	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
Guatemala	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Honduras	Yes	Yes		Yes			Yes
Mexico	<i>(Innovator)</i>						
Nicaragua				Yes			
Panama	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	
Paraguay	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Peru	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	
Uruguay	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Venezuela	<i>(No Adoption)</i>						

²⁶²Costa Rica's CCT program *Superémonos* was short lived. Very few publications discuss its implementation, and they do not highlight its problems (Castañeda and Lindert, 2005).

Sources describing implementation problems per country

Argentina

- Targeting Errors (Cetrángolo and Curcio, 2017, pp. 25, 31)
- Control of Conditions (Díaz Langou, 2012, p. 27; Feijoo and Corbetta, 2014; Straschnoy, 2017, p. 151)
- Supply of Conditions (Cetrángolo and Curcio, 2017, p. 43; Gluz and Rodríguez Moyano, 2011, pp. 11, 14; Goldschmit, 2017, p. 349)
- Institutional Coordination (Gluz and Rodríguez Moyano, 2011, p. 12)

Bolivia

- Targeting Errors (Medinaceli and Mokrani, 2010, p. 249; Cecchini and Madariaga, 2011, p. 28; Marco Navarro, 2012, p. 28, 41; Tapia Huanaco et al., 2011, pp. 100-102)
- Control of conditionalities (Marco Navarro, 2012, pp. 45; Tapia Huanaco et al., 2011, pp. 101, 107)
- Supply of Conditions (Medinaceli and Mokrani, 2010, pp. 250; Marco Navarro, 2012, pp. 28; McGuire, 2013, pp. 28-29)
- Human Resources (Barrientos et al., 2010, p. 17; Cecchini and Madariaga, 2011, p. 45)
- Incomplete Database (Marco Navarro, 2012, p. 52; Tapia Huanaco et al., 2011, pp. 103-104)

Brazil

- Targeting Errors (de Janvry et al, 2005, pp. 18, 29; Britto, 2004, p. 26; Santos et al 2011, p. 1827)
- Control of conditionalities (de Janvry et al, 2005, p. 23)
- Institutional Coordination (de Janvry et al, 2005, p. 13-14, 18; Santos et al., 2011, p. 1827)
- Incomplete Database (Lindert et al., 2007, p. 36; Santos et al., 2011, p. 1827)

Chile

- Targeting Errors (Larrañaga and Contreras, 2010, pp. 12-13; Raczynski, 2008, p. 29)
- Supply of Conditions (Ruz and Palma, 2005, p. 58)
- Institutional Coordination (Ruz and Palma, 2005, pp. 49-50, 99; Palma and Urzúa, 2005, p. 25; Larrañaga and Contreras, 2010, p. 15; Trucco and Nun, 2008, p. 22; Raczynski, 2008, p. 39)
- Incomplete Database (Larrañaga and Contreras, 2010, p. 15)

Colombia

- Targeting Errors (Angulo, 2016, p. 7; Barrientos et al., 2010, p. 25)
- Control of conditionalities (Combariza, 2010, p. 182; Acción Social. 2005, pp. 55, 111-112)
- Problems in Database (Angulo, 2016, p. 6; Combariza, 2010, p. 250; Acción Social. 2005, p. 93)

Dominican Republic

- Targeting Errors (Carrasco et al., 2016, p. 28-32)
- Supply of Conditions (Cecchini and Madariaga, 2011, p. 176; Gámez, 2010)
- Institutional Coordination (Cecchini and Madariaga, 2011, p. 176; Gámez, 2010)

Ecuador

- Targeting Errors (Grosch et al., 2008, p. 405; Barrientos et al., 2010, p. 30)
- Control of Conditions (Osorio Gonnett, 2020, p. 189; Cecchini and Madariaga, 2011, p. 91; Grosch et al., 2008, p. 317; Schady et al., 2008, p. 69-70)
- Human Resources (Lana and Evans, 2004, p. 207)

El Salvador

- Targeting Errors (Oficina de Evaluación y Supervisión BID, 2015, p. 22)
- Control of conditions (Oficina de Evaluación y Supervisión BID, 2015, pp. 16, 29)
- Supply of Conditions (Oficina de Evaluación y Supervisión BID, 2015, pp. 18, 35)
- Human Resources (Britto, 2008, p. 8)
- Database Incomplete (Britto, 2008, p. 14; Veras Soares and Britto, 2007, p. 10)
- Payment Systems (Oficina de Evaluación y Supervisión BID, 2015, pp. 16-18, 33)

Guatemala

- Targeting Errors (Oficina de Evaluación y Supervisión BID, 2015, p. 22; Cecchini et al., 2009, p. 45)
- Control of conditions (Gaia, 2010, p. 208; Oficina de Evaluación y Supervisión BID, 2015, pp. 29-30; Cecchini et al., 2009, p. 42)
- Supply of Conditions (Oficina de Evaluación y Supervisión BID, 2015, p. 18; Cecchini et al., 2009, p. 44)
- Institutional Coordination (Barrientos et al., 2010, p. 32)
- Incomplete Database (Barrientos et al., 2010, p. 32; Oficina de Evaluación y Supervisión BID, 2015, p. 21)
- Payment Systems (Oficina de Evaluación y Supervisión BID, 2015, pp. 18, 30)

Honduras

- Targeting Errors (Moore, 2008, p. 10; Oficina de Evaluación y Supervisión BID, 2015, p. 22; Franco, 2008, p. 20)
- Control of conditions (Moore, 2010, p. 108; Cecchini and Madariaga, 2011, p. 89; Oficina de Evaluación y Supervisión BID, 2015, p. 29)
- Problems of institutional coordination (Oficina de Evaluación y Supervisión BID, 2015, p. 34)
- Payment Systems (Moore, 2010, p. 108; Moore, 2008, p. 16; Oficina de Evaluación y Supervisión BID, 2015, pp. 18, 33, 41)

Nicaragua

- Institutional Coordination (Cecchini et al., 2009, p. 76; Regalia and Castro, 2007, p. 44; Moore, 2009, p. 15)

Panama

- Targeting Errors (Him Camaño et al., 2019, pp. 204-205; Waters, 2010, p. 684; Cecchini and Madariaga, 2011, p. 29)

- Control of Conditions (Him Camaño et al., 2016, pp. 140-142)

- Supply of conditions (Him Camaño et al., 2016, p. 142; Waters, 2010, pp. 683-684)

- Institutional Coordination (Him Camaño et al., 2016, pp. 134-135; Him Camaño et al., 2019, p. 201)

- Incomplete Database (Him Camaño et al., 2016, p. 142; Him Camaño et al., 2019, p. 207)

Paraguay

- Targeting Errors (Serafini Geoghegan, 2015, pp. 23-25; Veras Soares and Britto, 2007, p. 10)

- Control of Conditions (Rivarola, 2006, p. 381; Cecchini and Madariaga, 2011, p. 91; Serafini Geoghegan, 2015, p. 26; Veras Soares and Britto, 2007, p. 17)

- Supply of Conditions (Serafini Geoghegan, 2015, p. 26)

- Institutional Coordination (Veras Soares and Britto, 2007, pp. 20-23)

- Human Resources (Serafini Geoghegan, 2015, p. 28)

- Problems in Database (Serafini Geoghegan, 2015, p. 23)

- Payment Systems (Serafini Geoghegan, 2015, p. 30)

Peru

- Targeting Errors (Dirección Nacional de Presupuesto Público, 2008, p. 3; Stampini and Merino Juárez, 2012, p. 69; Arróspide Medina, 2009, pp. 39-42; Jones et al., 2008, p. 261)

- Control of Conditions (Dirección Nacional de Presupuesto Público, 2008, pp. 4-5; Stampini and Merino Juárez, 2012, p. 69; Arróspide Medina, 2009, pp. 45, 51, 56)

- Supply of Conditions (Arróspide Medina, 2009, p. 20; Jones et al., 2008, p. 267-268)

- Incomplete Database (Jones et al., 2008, p. 268)

Uruguay

- Targeting Errors (Borraz and González Pampillón, 2009, p. 249; Baráibar Ribeiro, 2012, p. 223; Amarante and Vigorito, 2010, pp. 421-425)

- Control of Conditions (Rossel et al., 2016, p. 10; Amarante and Vigorito, 2010, p. 418)

- Supply of Conditions (Rossel et al., 2016, p. 11)

- Coordination problems (World Bank, 2007, p. 22; Amarante and Vigorito, 2010, p. 418)

APPENDIX E: POLITICAL CONTEXT IN THE ADOPTIONS OF PPPs

Argentina

The first enactment of PPPs in Argentina came from the hands of President Néstor Kirchner via a decree signed in 2005. However, that decree was never implemented. It took eleven years and a different president to revitalize the policy with a bill presented to Congress in June 2016. The text had been carefully drafted for six months by a team of lawyers, with the input of multiple interest groups and different governmental agencies. Lacking a majoritarian coalition, the president waited five more months in negotiations to adapt the policy before it could pass in Congress in November 2016. Despite the president's interest in infrastructure, bureaucrats only started working on projects in March 2017, and the first project was presented to investors in November of that year.

Brazil

The full adoption of the PPP model in Brazil started at the end of Lula da Silva's first year as president. His government introduced the bill in Congress in November 2003. Though the economy had improved only slowly since the beginning of his presidency in January, Lula maintained more than 40% of popularity and an ample support base in Congress (Folha de S. Paulo, 2003). The bill included a letter from the minister of planning, budget, and management (Guido Mantega) and the minister of finance (Antonio Palocci) justifying the proposal. They highlighted the long effort spent

debating the policy within the government and with external stakeholders before writing the bill.

The current proposal concludes an extensive effort developed under the coordination of the Ministry of Planning, Budget, and Management, with the participation of the presidential Chief of Staff, the Ministries of Finance, of Cities, and of Transportation, the Special Secretary of the Economic and Social Development Council, and multiple governmental bodies, as well as public and private entities.²⁶³

The excerpt shows the government did not rush when drafting the policy. Cabinet members and bureaucrats carefully devised the bill for almost one year, incorporating the inputs of different stakeholders. They introduced the bill with an urgency provision, but the “long process of negotiation” (Peci and Sobral, 2007: 10) in Congress took more than one year.

The slow and careful approach to the adoption of PPPs is even more evident in the implementation of projects. It took five years for the federal government to present its first PPP project. Initial plans for a railroad and a highway, predicted to be implemented right after enactment, were canceled after an evaluation concluded they were unfit for PPPs (Peres, 2009).

Colombia

Juan Manuel Santos’ electoral campaign for the 2010 elections established infrastructure as a priority. Once in power, he started working on PPPs to fulfill the promise of developing Colombia’s highways. However, even focusing on the issue was

²⁶³PL 2546/2003

not enough to accelerate the bill, which the executive only introduced in Congress in November 2011, more than one year after Santos came to power. The enactment process was quick because ministers had negotiated with congresspeople and other stakeholders before introducing the text. The law was passed in January 2012, but implementation would take almost ten months (see more details in the next section, with Colombia's in-depth case study).

Costa Rica

The executive presented a bill in 1996 to reform Costa Rica's law about concessions, including the core elements of the PPP model.²⁶⁴ President José María Figueres Olsen suffered an accentuated decline in popularity after his inauguration in 1994 due to unfulfilled promises and an increase in the cost of living (Martínez, 1995). However, the reform did not provide any immediate solution to that situation. It was introduced in Congress like any regular bill. During two years of negotiations, the representatives took the short bill and transformed it into a full-fledged law. Its approval came only in April 1998, twenty-four days before the end of Figueres Olsen's term.

The new government of Costa Rica, led by the opposition, implemented the law in a new project presented to investors in 2000. It was the construction of a road connecting the capital to the Pacific Ocean, known as Ruta 27 (Suárez Alemán et al., 2019). The project suffered a series of setbacks and reverted to a regular concession.

²⁶⁴Proyecto de Reformas a la Ley General de Concesión de Obra Pública, No 7404/1994.

Dominican Republic

A senator from the president's party, PLD [Partido de la Liberación Dominicana], proposed the policy in December 2019. Congress quickly passed the law in February 2020. However, the executive only presented the first project in November 2021, under a new president.²⁶⁵

El Salvador

President Mauricio Funes maintained high approval ratings throughout his mandate (Carlin et al., 2019) from 2009 to 2014. In 2010, his Ministry of the Economy started working on a project for public-private partnerships in the country (Ministerio de Economía de El Salvador, 2011: 32). Crafting the bill took until November 2011, when it was finally introduced in Congress by the executive (La Prensa Gráfica, 2013). Negotiations with the legislature took eighteen months (Editorial UCA, 2013). Implementation was also not rushed in El Salvador. The government had announced plans to expand the country's main airport using PPPs even before the law had passed. However, the project was only officially presented for bids from private investors in 2017, when Funes was no longer the president.

Guatemala

Álvaro Colom became president in 2008. He faced strong protests, a surge in violence, and internal disputes in the cabinet (Solis, 2008). Those circumstances led him

²⁶⁵Information about PPP projects in the Dominican Republic is available at <https://dgapp.gob.do/banco-de-proyectos/>

to fast-track conditional cash transfers as a top-down initiative implemented in less than four months. By contrast, his adoption of public-private partnerships took much longer. On January 29, 2009, Colom announced the National Emergency and Economic Recovery Program [*Programa Nacional de Emergencia y Recuperación Económica - PNERE*] that included a bill for PPPs (Gobierno de Guatemala, 2009). Though the government presented the matter as urgent, it did not push Congress for a quick turnaround on the policy. The bill's approval only happened in April 2010. After that, the government would take until October 2011 to publish the law's regulatory documents. With so many delays, Colom was unable to implement the policy. The law remained untouched until 2017 when Jimmy Morales's government announced the country's first PPP project: the rehabilitation and operation of a highway (BNAmericas, 2017).

Honduras

In Honduras, after the ousting of Manuel Zelaya, Porfirio Lobo was elected president and came to power with widespread support from Congress in January 2010. Lobo and the legislature had expressed a strong interest in developing the country's infrastructure using PPPs (República de Honduras, 2010: 21, 112, 122, 138). The president introduced the bill in February, which the legislature approved in seven months. Implementation took some time, mainly because of Congressional control over the agency created for the policy, but the government announced a project in May 2012 (COALINZA, 2012).

Mexico

In the middle of his presidential term, in November 2009, Felipe Calderón sent a bill about PPPs to the Senate. The text does not reveal any sense of urgency, stating that “the high demographic growth” puts “pressures on public finances, with formidable challenges for infrastructure projects”.²⁶⁶ Without being rushed, the Senate started discussing the bill in April 2010, and the law was fully enacted only in January 2012. Similarly to Guatemala, Mexico’s government also took its time to publish regulations for the law, which came only in November of 2012.²⁶⁷ Right thereafter, Enrique Peña Nieto substituted Calderón in the National Palace. The new government had other priorities and only announced the first PPP project for investors in January 2016.²⁶⁸

Panama

Among the latest in the region, Panama enacted public-private partnerships in 2019. President Laurentino “Nito” Cortizo introduced the bill in Congress one month after taking office. His campaign had a strong focus on the development of infrastructure. Of forty-one proposals for a “Competitive economy that generates jobs” in Cortizo’s government plan, fifteen referred to projects like highways, roads, bridges, and public transport systems (Cortizo, 2018: 12-15). Congress evaluated and passed the law in less than two months. However, the president himself was not in a hurry. The government

²⁶⁶Iniciativa del Ejecutivo Federal, Oficio No Oficio No. SEL/UEL/311 /1957/09, Gaceta No. 47.

²⁶⁷Reglamento de la Ley de Asociaciones Público Privadas, DOF November 05, 2012.

²⁶⁸The list of PPP projects in Mexico is available at <https://www.proyectosmexico.gob.mx/proyectos/>

published this law's regulation more than a year later, in December 2020 (Lasso, 2021). Until today, the law has not been implemented in a project presented to investors.

Paraguay

Four congresspeople presented the bill²⁶⁹ in March 2013, nine months after the impeachment that deposed Fernando Lugo. They were part of the PLRA and the ANR, two parties that led the impeachment and formed the new government (Marsteintredet et al., 2013: 114). The proposal was only passed in November 2013, after elections and the inauguration of a new president. The government announced its first PPP project in April 2014, with support from Korea and Deloitte's consultancy services. However, its official bid for investors only occurred in 2015 (Última Hora, 2015).

Uruguay

President José Mujica faced a decrease in popularity during his first year in office because of security concerns (Reuters 2011), but his support remained around 60% (Carlin et al., 2019). Therefore, the introduction of public-private partnerships in November 2010 was unrelated to those polls. The president did not fast-track the policy, and Congress took nine months to approve the text. Though that time can be considered fast (Fuentes, 2017: 1013), it pales compared to the two months it took to pass CCTs.²⁷⁰ PPPs' enactment happened in July 2011. The first project under the new law was

²⁶⁹Bill D-1325952 from 2013.

²⁷⁰Uruguay was the only country to adopt CCTs through Congress. The government imposed urgency provisions to that bill, forcing Congress to approve the text in two months (see Chapter 3).

announced four months after the law. It was a prison complex on the capital's outskirts (Corporación Nacional Para el Desarrollo, 2011).

APPENDIX F: INTERNATIONAL PROMOTION OF EVMS IN LATIN AMERICA

International Conferences

This is a list of international events organized by domestic or international institutions in which electronic voting machines were presented or discussed and that included representatives of Latin American countries.

1998

TSE Ecuador. Seminario Internacional Sistemas Electorales y Automatización.

https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/17559/libro_6.pdf?sequence=2

IIDH CAPEL. XII Conferencia de la Asociación de Organismos Electorales de América Central y el Caribe: La Automatización del Voto – Tecnología del XXI.

<https://www.iidh.ed.cr/capel/>

2003

OAS. I Reunión Interamericana de Tecnología Electoral.

https://www.oas.org/es/centro_noticias/comunicado_prensa.asp?sCodigo=C-176/03

Global Electoral Organization and IFE Mexico. II GEO Conference.

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OAS. V Reunión Interamericana de Autoridades Electorales

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2018

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Cooperation Agreements with Brazil

This is a list of cooperation agreements signed between Brazil and Latin American countries for support and transference of information about Brazilian electronic voting machines. In some cases, it includes lending machines for use in pilots or even in binding elections. This data was provided by Brazil's Tribunal Superior Eleitoral.²⁷²

2001

Paraguay: Convênio de Cooperação Técnica com a Secretaria-Geral da OEA para executar o Plano Piloto de Automatização do Voto nas Eleições Municipais, que foram realizadas no Paraguai em 18/11/2001, assinado em Assunção.

2003

Mexico: Ajuste Complementar ao Acordo Básico de Cooperação Técnica e Científica entre o Brasil e o México para implementação do Projeto "Demonstração e Divulgação do Sistema Eleitoral Brasileiro de Votação e Apuração Eletrônicas na Cidade do México".

²⁷²I am thankful for Ana Luisa Farias Barros and Gabriella Coletto for their work collecting this data with the TSE.

Argentina: Acordo complementar ao Acordo de Cooperação técnica entre a Argentina e o Brasil, como objetivo de implementar o sistema de votação eletrônica na Província de Buenos Aires.

2004

Ecuador: Convênio de Cooperação Técnica entre o Governo da República Federativa do Brasil e a Secretaria-Geral da Organização dos Estados Americanos para a realização de um Plano Piloto de automatização do voto na República do Equador. Assinatura em Washington-EUA.

Panama: Acordo de Cooperação Técnica com a Secretaria-Geral da OEA para impulsionar o voto eletrônico no Panamá assinado em Washington, D.C.

2005

Argentina: Acordo complementar ao Acordo de Cooperação Técnica entre o Governo da República Federativa do Brasil e o Governo da República Argentina para Implementação do Sistema de Voto Eletrônico na Província de Buenos Aires.

Panama: Convênio Suplementar de Cooperação Técnica com a Secretaria-Geral da OEA para a realização de um Plano Piloto de Automatização do Voto no Panamá, assinado em Washington, D.C.

Paraguay: Convênio de Cooperação Técnica entre o Brasil e a Secretária-Geral da OEA, para automatização do voto no Paraguai. Convênio Suplementar número 4.

Honduras: Convênio de Cooperação Técnica entre o Governo Brasileiro e a Secretaria-Geral da OEA para automatização do voto na República de Honduras.

Paraguay: Convênio de Cooperação Técnica Brasil/OEA/TSJE para envio de urnas às eleições do Paraguai.

2007

Paraguay: Renovação de Acordo com o Paraguai em matéria de cooperação técnica e suprimento de urnas eletrônicas para as eleições presidenciais de 2007. Empréstimo de 20.000 urnas para as eleições de abril de 2008 e pessoal técnico para auditoria mês de dezembro de 2007.

2010

Argentina: Cooperação em matéria eleitoral do Tribunal Superior Eleitoral com a Província de Córdoba na Argentina, por meio do IDEA Internacional.

APPENDIX G: IMPLEMENTATION OF EVMS IN LATIN AMERICA

Table G1: Elections in which EVMS were implemented in Latin America

Country	Year	Description	Voters using EVM	Details
Ecuador	2014	Sectional Elections	10%	EVM applied in provinces Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas and Azuay, and the sector of La Morita in the province of Pichincha.
Panama	2014	General Elections	0.2%	EVM used in one school in Panama City.
Panama	2019	General Elections	0.25%	EVM used at the Centro de Convenciones Atlapa, in Panama City.
Paraguay	2001	Municipal Elections	1.5%	Paraguay borrowed 152 machines from Brazil, distributed in seven municipalities.
Paraguay	2003	General Elections	46%	Paraguay borrowed 3811 machines from Brazil, distributed in 33 districts.
Paraguay	2006	Municipal Elections	58%	Paraguay borrowed machines from Brazil.
Peru	2011	Presidential Elections (2 nd round)	0.01%	EVM implemented in the district of Pacarán for 1754 voters.
Peru	2012	Consulta Popular de Revocatoria	0.9%	EVM implemented in the district of Pacarán in the province of Cañete for 1348 voters, in elections to maintain or not current elected officers in a subset of provinces.
Peru	2013	New Municipal Elections	0.8%	EVM implemented in the district of Pacarán in the province of Cañete for 1361 voters, in elections to substitute officers defeated the year before.
Peru	2014	Municipal and Regional Elections	0.24%	Machines different from previous years implemented in the district of La Punta in the province of Callao, Pacarán in the province of Cañete, and Pucusana, Punta Hermosa, Punta Negra, San Bartolo, and Santa María del Mar in the province of Lima.
Peru	2015	Municipal Elections	NA	Special elections for mayor (<i>alcalde</i>) in the municipality of a new district, called Mi Perú, in the province of Callao.
Peru	2016	General Elections	3.2%	EVM implemented in 16 districts in the province of Lima.
Peru	2017a	Special Elections in three districts	86.2% ²⁷³	EVM implemented in the districts of Neshuya and Alexander Von Humboldt in the province of Padre Abad, and in the district of Pucacolpain the province of Huanta.
Peru	2017b	Special Elections in twelve districts.	59.2% ²⁷⁴	EVM implemented in 12 districts in the departments of Huánuco, Apurímac, Huancavelica, Ayacucho, Cusco, and Tacna.

²⁷³These were special elections for a subset of the population, with a total electorate of only 6685 voters.

²⁷⁴These were special elections for a subset of the population, with a total electorate of only 30532 voters.

Peru	2018	Regional and Municipal Elections	10.7%	EVM implemented in 39 districts in the departments of Apurímac, Ayacucho, Callao, Cusco, Huancavelica, Huánuco, Lima, Tacna, and Ucayali.
Peru	2020	Congressional Elections	7.1%	EVM implemented in 39 districts.
Venezuela	2004	Referendum	87.1%	After years with optical readers in elections, EVM is first implemented in a contract with Smartmatic.
Venezuela	2004	Regional Elections	100%	First election with EVM implemented for all voters.
Venezuela	2005	Parliamentary Elections	99.8%	Smartmatic's EVMs received criticism for allowing ordering votes' files chronologically, which could potentially lead to breach of vote secrecy. The company claimed to have solved the problem later.
Venezuela	2008	Regional and Local Elections	100%	EVM implemented in contract with Smartmatic.
Venezuela	2010a	Parliamentary Elections	100%	EVM implemented in contract with Smartmatic.
Venezuela	2010b	Regional Elections	NA	--
Venezuela	2012	Regional Elections	100%	Biometric identification of voters was implemented together with e-voting.
Venezuela	2013	Presidential Elections	100%	EVM implemented in contract with Smartmatic.
Venezuela	2013	Municipal Elections	100%	EVM implemented in contract with Smartmatic.
Venezuela	2014	Municipal Elections	NA	--
Venezuela	2015	Parliamentary Elections	100%	EVM implemented in contract with Smartmatic.
Venezuela	2017	Elections to Constitutional Assembly	100%	EVM implemented in contract with Smartmatic, after which the company's CEO accused Venezuela's <i>Consejo Nacional Electoral</i> of fraud because the official numbers published after the elections did not match the results from Smartmatic's systems.
Venezuela	2017	Regional Elections	100%	Venezuela broke the contract with Smartmatic, and continued to use the company's hardware and software. The government prohibited independent observation and reduced audits of the EVM system, which led to criticism from international organizations.
Venezuela	2017	Municipal Elections	100%	CNE used software and hardware previously acquired from Smartmatic, but the company did not participate in the management of the elections.
Venezuela	2018	Municipal Elections	100%	CNE used software and hardware previously acquired from Smartmatic, but the company

				did not participate in the management of the elections.
Venezuela	2020	Parliamentary Elections	100%	A fire in CNE's center destroyed all machines previously owned. New voting machines were acquired in a rushed manner, with little transparency about where they came from and what company would help manage the elections.

Sources describing the implementation of EVMs in national elections by country

Ecuador

2014: Villacís, 2014, pp. 60-62; Tapia, 2014, p. 71.

Panama

2014: OAS, 2014.

2019: Telemetro, 2019.

Paraguay

2001: Tuesta, 2007, p. 972.

2003: IFES, 2003, pp. 6-7.

2006: Justicia Electoral, 2007, p. 188.

Peru

2011: Cucho, 2013, p. 98; see also ONPE, 2012, p. 53.

2012: Cucho, 2013, p. 98.

2013: Cucho, 2013, p. 98.

2014: ONPE, 2015, p. 381.

2015: NA.

2016: ONPE, 2017a, p. 108.

2017a: ONPE, 2016.

2017b: ONPE, 2017b.

2018: ONPE, 2018.

2020: Dazarola Leichtle, 2020, p. 10; see also ONPE, 2019.

Venezuela

2004a: Delfino and Salas, 2011, p. 3.

2004b: Velázquez Trujillo, 2010, p. 108.

2005: OAS, 2006, p.27.

2008: Smartmatic, 2008.

2010a: Smartmatic, 2010.

2010b: NA.

2012: Smartmatic, 2012.

2013a: Smartmatic, 2013a.

2013b: Smartmatic, 2013b.

2014: NA.

2015: Smartmatic, 2015.

2017a: Globovisión, 2017.

2017b: OAS, 2017.

2017c: Abdul et al., 2020, p. 30.

2018: Abdul et al., 2020, p. 30.

2020: Abdul et al., 2020, p. 29.

APPENDIX H: EVALUATIONS OF EVMs TESTS AND SUBNATIONAL USES

The table below is based on more than 50 published studies about the implementation of CCTs in Latin America (see sources per country below). They allowed for the identification of the most important implementation problems, categorized into seven types (see discussion in Chapter 4).

Table H1: Evaluations of EVMs tests and subnational implementations

Country	Year	Binding for Govt. Position	Free of Fraud Accusations	Free of Major Problems	Voters Considered Easy/Simple	Voters Considered Safer/Better
Argentina	2003a	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Argentina	2003b	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Argentina	2005	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Argentina	2007a	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Argentina	2007b	Yes	Yes	No	NA	NA
Argentina	2009a	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Argentina	2009b	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Argentina	2010a	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Argentina	2010b	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA
Argentina	2011a	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Argentina	2011b	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Argentina	2011c	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Argentina	2013	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Argentina	2014	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Argentina	2015a	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Argentina	2015b	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Argentina	2015c	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Argentina	2015d	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Bolivia	2013	No	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Chile	2007	No	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Chile	2016	No	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Colombia	1992	No	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Colombia	2007	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colombia	2009	No	Yes	Yes	NA	NA

Costa Rica	2002	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dom. Rep.	2019	No	No	Yes	NA	NA
Ecuador	2004	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA
Mexico	2003	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mexico	2005	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mexico	2006a	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mexico	2006b	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mexico	2008	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Mexico	2009a	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mexico	2009b	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mexico	2009c	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mexico	2012	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Panama	2011a	No	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Panama	2011b	No	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Panama	2012	No	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Peru	1996a	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Peru	1996b	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Peru	1996c	No	Yes	No	NA	NA
Peru	2003a	No	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Peru	2003b	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Peru	2003c	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA
Peru	2004	No	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
Peru	2005a	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA
Peru	2005b	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA
Peru	2008	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Peru	2009	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Uruguay	2009	No	Yes	Yes	NA	NA
		26/51	50/51	48/51	29/29	24/24

Sources describing evaluations of pilots and subnational uses of EVMs per country

Argentina

2003a: Piana, 2012, pp. 248-249; Tula et al., 2005, p. 231-234.

2003b: Ministerio de Interior, 2003, pp. 6-7 and 12-13; Tula et al., 2005, p. 243.

2005: Olivella, 2005

2007a: Cicione et al, 2007a; Cicione et al, 2007b.

2007b: Busaniche et al., 2008, pp. 37-45.

2009a: Page et al., 2016, p. 5.

2009b: Hernández Trejo, 2014, p. 118.

2010a: Hernández Trejo, 2014, p. 118.
2010b: Fundación Ejercicio Ciudadano. 2012.
2011a: Pomares et al, 2011.
2011b: Ciudadanos 365, 2012; Defensor del Pueblo de la Provincia de Córdoba, 2011.
2011c: CMInd, 2011.
2013: Pomares and Zárate, 2014; Page and Lenarduzzi, 2015.
2014: Decara, 2014, pp. 119-127.
2015a: Lozano, 2015, p. 130.
2015b: Page and Lenarduzzi, 2015.
2015c: Defensoría del Pueblo de CABA, 2015a.
2015d: Defensoría del Pueblo de CABA, 2015b.

Bolivia

2013: Erbol, 2013; Mendoza, 2013.

Chile

2007: Flores Leiva, 2010.
2016: El Buinense, 2016.

Colombia

1992: Cepeda Zuleta, 2003, p. 7; Galindo Vacha, 2007, p. 308.
2007: Álvarez et al., 2009, pp. 6-8.
2009: Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil, 2009a; Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil, 2009b.

Costa Rica

2002: Sobrado, 2008, pp. 34-45.

Dominican Republic

2019: González, 2019.

Ecuador

2004: Villacís, 2014, p. 59; Tapia, 2014, pp. 66-67; CMind, 2014, p. 6.

Mexico

2003: Romero Flores and Téllez Valdés, 2010, p. 205; Hernández Trejo, 2011, p. 62 and pp. 69-70.
2005: Romero Flores and Téllez Valdés, 2010, p. 229.
2006a: Romero Flores and Téllez Valdés, 2010, pp. 236-237.
2006b: Romero Flores and Téllez Valdés, 2010, p. 241; Figueroa, 2014, pp. 510-515.
2008: Romero Flores and Téllez Valdés, 2010, p. 210; Téllez Valdés, 2010, p. 30.
2009a: Téllez Valdés, 2010, p. 32; Hernández Trejo, 2011, pp. 67-68, and 72.

2009b: Figueroa, 2013; Figueroa, 2014, pp. 517-521.

2009c: Figueroa, 2014, pp. 522-526.

2012: Figueroa, 2013; Figueroa, 2014, pp. 530-535; Gómez y Macedonio, 2013, p. 207.

Panama

2011a: Tribunal Electoral de Panamá, 2011a; Tribunal Electoral de Panamá, 2012a.

2011b: Tribunal Electoral de Panamá, 2011b; Tribunal Electoral de Panamá, 2012a.

2012: Tribunal Electoral de Panamá, 2012b; Tribunal Electoral de Panamá, 2012c.

Peru

1996a: ONPE, 2011^a, p. 70; Seifert, 2014, p. 102; ONPE, 2011b, pp. 57-60.

1996b: ONPE, 2011^a, pp. 72-74; ONPE, 2011b, pp. 60-63.

1996c: ONPE, 2011^a, p. 70.

2003a: Seifert, 2014, p. 103; ONPE, 2011a, pp. 59-61.

2003b: Cucho, 2014:98; ONPE, 2011a, p. 74; ONPE, 2011b, pp. 64-67.

2003c: ONPE, 2011a, p. 84; ONPE, 2011b, pp. 67-69.

2004: ONPE, 2011, p. 61.

2005a: ONPE, 2011b, p. 74; ONPE, 2012, p. 68; Seifert, 2014, p. 106.

2005b: ONPE, 2011b, p. 76; ONPE, 2012, pp. 68-69; Seifert, 2014, p. 106.

2008: ONPE, 2011b, pp. 80-81; ONPE, 2012, pp. 58-59; Seifert, 2014, p. 108.

2009: ONPE, 2011b, p. 95; Seifert, 2014, p. 112.

Uruguay

2016: Concejo del Municipio de Maldonado, 2016.

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